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**BIBLICAL MEDIATION AS A SHORT-TERM METHOD FOR
RECONCILIATION IN TROUBLED MARRIAGES:
A PASTORAL STUDY**

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DEDICATED TO:

The Directors and staff of
PEACEMAKER MINISTRIES.

May God bless the work Christ is doing
through you and may the fruit thereof be to
the glory of His Name, in all parts of the
world.

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ABSTRACT AND KEY TERMS

BIBLICAL MEDIATION AS A SHORT-TERM METHOD FOR RECONCILIATION IN TROUBLED MARRIAGES: A PASTORAL STUDY

The central theoretical argument of this study is that biblical mediation may be a useful short-term method for use in pastoral care, specifically within the bounds of reconciliation in troubled marriages.

The goal of formulating a basis theory was to explore what the Biblical teaching is on marriage, marital conflict, mediation and reconciliation. In general, a revelation-historical approach was followed. Specific cases of marital conflict in the Bible were examined. In researching reconciliation the role of Jesus Christ and pastors as mediator was explored. A grammatical-historical exegesis was done on Mat. 5:9, Mat. 18:15-17 and Rom. 14:19. It was concluded that marriage is a union of companionship based on a covenant and ordained by God and foreshadowing the eternal joyous relationship between Christ and the Church. God hates divorce, which is permitted only in certain circumstances. It was found that biblical teaching on conflict in general may be applied to marital conflict. It was concluded that although not all conflict is caused by sin, sinful attitudes and behaviours, including sinful desires or legitimate desires elevated to demands and distortion of the husband – wife roles designed by God before the Fall, do play a part in causing conflict. With regard to reconciliation it was concluded that Jesus acted as Mediator on the cross, making possible reconciliation between God and man, which also reflects God's will for the horizontal relationship between his people, particularly in marriage. Several examples of informal mediations and of calls to peacemaking were found in the Bible. It was found that Mat. 18:5-17 allows for mediation or counselling by one or two others in the church in certain circumstances.

For establishing a meta theory the goal was to examine biblical mediation as a third party intervention in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages. A literature study was conducted on mediation, biblical mediation as taught by Peacemaker Ministries and on marital conflict and intervention methods resembling mediation by a survey of the literature in the social sciences. A qualitative empirical study was conducted, by doing biblical mediation with three Christian couples. It was concluded that mediation, and particularly the biblical mediation model used by Peacemaker Ministries, may be used to advantage by pastors for reconciliation in troubled marriages.

The aim of establishing a practice theory was to propose a biblical mediation model to guide pastors in working toward reconciliation in troubled marriages. This was done by an analysis and synthesis of the basis – and meta theory in hermeneutical interaction.

KEY TERMS:

- Mediation
- Biblical mediation
- Reconciliation
- Troubled marriages
- Pastoral

OPSOMMING EN SLEUTELTERME

BYBELSE MEDIASIE AS 'N KORTTERMYN METODE VIR VERSOENING IN KONFLIK-GETEISTERDE HUWELIKE: 'N PASTORALE STUDIE

Die sentraal teoretiese argument van hierdie studie is dat bybelse mediasie 'n nuttige korttermyn metode kan wees vir gebruik in pastorale sorg veral binne die gebied van versoening by konflik-geteisterde huwelike.

Die doel van die formulering van 'n basisteorie was om ondersoek in te stel na wat die bybelse lering is oor die huwelik, huwelikskonflik en versoening. In die algemeen is 'n openbaring-historiese benadering gevolg. Spesifieke gevalle van huwelikskonflik in die Bybel is ondersoek. Met die navors van versoening is die rol van Jesus Christus en van pastors as bemiddelaar ondersoek. 'n Grammaties-historiese eksegesi is uitgevoer op Mat. 5:9, Mat. 18:15-17 en Rom. 14:19. Die slotsom is bereik dat die huwelik 'n samevoeging van kameraadskap is, gebaseer op verbond en verordineer deur God en dat dit 'n vooruitblik is op die ewige vreugdevolle verhouding tussen die Kerk en Christus. God haat egskeiding, wat slegs in sekere omstandighede toelaatbaar is. Dit is gevind dat bybelse lering oor konflik in die algemeen toegepas kon word op huwelikskonflik. Die gevolgtrekking is bereik dat alhoewel nie alle konflik aan sonde toegeskryf kan word nie, sondige gesindhede en gedrag, insluitende sondige begeertes of regmatige begeertes verhef tot eise, sowel as die versteuring van die man-vrou rolle bepaal deur God voor die sondeval, 'n rol speel by die veroorsaking van konflik. Wat betref versoening is die slotsom bereik dat Jesus opgetree het as Bemiddelaar op die kruis, wat die weg gebaan het vir versoening tussen God en die mens, wat ook God se wil weergee vir die horisontale verhouding tussen sy mense, veral in die huwelik. Verskeie voorbeelde van informele mediasies en van oproepe tot vredemaak is in die Bybel gevind. Daar is tot die slotsom gekom dat Mat. 18:15-7 voorsiening maak vir mediasie of berading deur een of twee andere in die kerk in sekere omstandighede.

Vir die vasstel van 'n metateorie was die oogmerk om bybelse mediasie as 'n derde party ingryping in pastorale sorg met die oog op versoening by konflik-geteisterde huwelike, te ondersoek. 'n Literatuur studie is gedoen van mediasie, bybelse mediasie soos onderrig deur Peacemaker Ministries en van huwelikskonflik asook ingrypingsmetodes wat naastenby ooreenstem met mediasie deur 'n oorsig van die literatuur van die sosiale wetenskappe. 'n Kwalitatiewe empiriese studie is geloods, deur bybelse mediasie met drie Christen pare uit te voer. Die slotsom is bereik dat mediasie, besonderlik die bybelse mediasie model gebruik deur Peacemaker Ministries, met goeie vrug gebruik kan word deur pastors vir versoening in konflik-geteisterde huwelike.

Die doel van die daarstel van 'n praktyksteorie was om 'n bybelse mediasie model vir die leiding van pastors voor te stel vir die nastreef van versoening in konflik-geteisterde huwelike. Dit was gedoen deur 'n analise en sintese van die basis- en metateorie in hermeneutiese wisselwerking.

SLEUTELTERME:

- Mediasie
- Bybelse mediasie
- Versoening
- Konflik-geteisterde huwelike
- Pastorale

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CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The divorce rate appears to be unacceptably high – even amongst the Christian community. In a study conducted in the United States by Barna (2001), it was revealed that in 2001 “33% of all born again individuals who have been married have gone through a divorce, which is statistically identical to the 34% incidence among non-born again adults”. The researcher is not aware of any statistics on divorces amongst Christians as compared to non-Christians in the Republic of South Africa. The Department of Statistics does not have any statistics pertaining to the divorce rate amongst Christians, and is unable to assist in this regard. The latest published figures, namely for 2002, show that there were 31 370 divorces recorded in that year, which represent 526 per 100 000 married couples. The only distinction that is made by the Department of Statistics as far as religion is concerned, is that made by differentiating between marriages solemnised by either civil or religious rites. Under “religious” is to be understood *Christian* or *Jewish* wedding rites. Of the total of 31 370 divorces, 17 668 occurred in marriages solemnised by religious rites (STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA, 2005: viii, 149-150). Observation and one’s personal experience also show, however, that unresolved or mismanaged marital conflict appears to be commonplace in Christian homes.

Mediation, although it has existed as a means of conflict resolution amongst various cultures since ancient times, has been gaining ground in the western world in the latter half of the previous century as a useful conflict resolution mechanism (as opposed to the adversarial legal system) in the area of labour disputes, environmental disputes and more recently, in the area of divorce settlements (Folberg & Taylor, 1984:1-13, 161; Boule & Rycroft, 1997: 181-185). From the material at hand, it would appear, however, that mediation is not commonly used for dealing with marital conflicts, either in the secular world or within the context of pastoral care. This, in the light of the fact that most literature on mediation that points out the various areas in which mediation is being used, omits any reference to the area of marital conflict (Cf. Folberg and Taylor, 1984; Ellis & Stuckless, 1996; Roberts, 1997; Boule & Rycroft, 1997; Barsky 2000; Erickson & McKnight 2001).

The researcher could locate few written sources that refer to mediation for marital conflict (cf Sande, 2002:195; Erickson & McKnight, 2001: 6, 161; Worthington & McMurry, 1994:67). The type of mediation Sande refers to is *biblical mediation* which is different to mediation as it is generally understood in our society (Sande & Kolber, 2005:19, 21,22).

Negative sentiments have been expressed about the value of mediation in restoring marriage relationships. Erickson & McKnight (2001:161) write:

“Numerous clergy have become trained in mediation.... Although most have become excellent mediators, some have made mediation a platform for continuing their religious mission. They advertise as ministers who mediate, but they act as ministers, not mediators. They tend to make negative judgments about divorce and encourage couples to reconcile.”

Ironically, the same authors sound a more positive note earlier in their book:

“An interesting trend reported by many mediators is that a small but growing number of couples use mediation to strengthen and preserve their marriage relationship particularly when financial or other issues not typically addressed in a therapeutic setting are at the couple’s relationship dysfunction” (Erickson & McKnight, 2001:6).

De Klerk, a “tentmaker” minister, (as quoted by Van Eeden, 2006) lays stress on the fact that divorce mediation is not marriage counselling and that some couples wait too long before they get divorced. Meltsner (1993: 263) writes that both mediation and therapy are forms of problem solving and that there is a great deal of overlapping in how mediators and couples therapists work, the major differences being that in mediation the problems are usually concrete and specific with the focus on fostering agreement, whilst in therapy the problems are usually internal, emotional and general with the focus on healing. Biblical mediation, however, as taught by Sande (1993:2), although it is to be regarded as a short term process, seeks to delve deeper than the surface issues in order to get to the root issues. (The reader is referred to the description of biblical mediation above.)

1.2 CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

There is a variety of books, resources, marital enrichment programs and other tools for pastors in helping parishioners deal with their troubled marriages. It has been stated that biblical mediation is helpful, especially as a short term intervention model, in resolving troubled marriages (Sande, 1998; McCune 2004). It would, however, appear that little research has been done about mediation or biblical mediation as a method to be utilised in pastoral care in saving troubled marriages.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

In view of the above, the following question presents itself: how can biblical mediation be utilised on a short-term basis in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to research the concept of biblical mediation as a possible short-term method for use in pastoral care and suggest guidelines as to how it can be applied, specifically within the bounds of troubled marriages.

The specific objectives are:

- to investigate what the biblical teaching on marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation is;
- to investigate what can be learnt from the social sciences about mediation and from Peacemaker Ministries about biblical mediation as a method for dealing with troubled marriages;
- to do empirical research on biblical mediation, as a short-term method for reconciliation in troubled marriages;
- to propose biblical mediation as a marriage intervention method in certain circumstances and to offer guidelines as to the way in which it is to be applied in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this research is that biblical mediation can be a useful short-term method for use in pastoral care, specifically within the bounds of troubled marriages.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The method followed here is based on the model suggested by Zerfass, which encompasses a basis theory, a meta theory and praxis theory (Zerfass, 1974: 164-177; cf. Heyns & Pieterse, 1990: 33-36; Heitink, 1993: 117, 309).

In order to compile a basis theory, a revelation – historical survey was generally followed to ascertain what the Bible teaches on marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation, whilst on the topic of reconciliation, a grammatical – historical exegesis was performed on selected passages in the Bible. The selected passages are Mat. 5:9; 18:15-17 and Rom. 14:19.

A survey of the literature available in the social sciences, *inter alia*, sociology and psychology, was conducted in order to establish a meta theory for mediation as a method of intervention in troubled marriages. In addition to that, a study of the materials of Peacemaker Ministries regarding the use of biblical mediation as a short-term method for reconciliation in troubled marriages was done. As part of the process of establishing a meta theory, a qualitative empirical study was done by conducting mediations based on the biblical mediation model of Peacemaker Ministries between three Christian couples that were experiencing troubled marriages. A follow up session was conducted with the couples after the conclusion of the mediation sessions. Based on the input received from the couples as to the effectiveness and value of the mediation sessions as a marriage intervention method, an assessment was made.

The question as to how mediation can be applied in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages was dealt with by an analysis and a synthesis of the basis- and meta theory. The materials of Peacemaker Ministries were examined to help in the determination of a model that would be particularly useful to the pastor in the present context.

1.7 GENERAL REMARKS

In this dissertation the English spelling of words as used in the Republic of South Africa, according to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2001), was used, subject, however, to the principle that direct quotations were quoted verbatim. Hence, one will find *counsellor* and *counselling* in the text instead of *counselor* and *counseling* as in American usage. Unless stated otherwise, the New International Version of the Bible was used for all references quoted from the Holy Bible. References to the masculine include the feminine and *vice versa*, unless the context indicates otherwise.

1.8 KEY WORD DEFINITIONS

The researcher wishes, for elucidation purposes, to clarify what is meant by various keywords used in this dissertation.

1.8.1 Mediation

According to several mediation experts, mediation is not easy to define. "It does not provide a single analytical model which can be neatly described and distinguished from other decision-making processes." (Boulle & Rycroft, 1997:3). Well-known authorities on mediation, Folberg and Taylor (1984:7), in similar vein explain that the practice of mediation "falls along a spectrum that defies a strict definition." In their Preface, however, they describe it as "an intervention that is intended to resolve disputes and manage conflict by facilitating decision making," and in the following chapter they offer this definition:

"It can be defined as the process by which the participants, together with the assistance of a neutral person or persons, systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives, and reach a consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs. Mediation is a process that emphasizes the participants' own responsibility for making decisions that affect their lives. It is therefore a self-empowering process" (Folberg & Taylor, 1984: 7-8).

Mediation can be defined as a third-party facilitation to help parties in conflict to systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach resolution of issues in dispute, or failing that, acquire a

clearer understanding of the issues and underlying interests, paving the way for improved conflict management. (cf. Folberg & Taylor, 1984: 7-8; Anstey, 1991:249; Barsky, 2000:121; Roberts 1997:99).

1.8.2 Biblical (or Christian) mediation

Biblical mediation, according to Sande and Kolber (2005:19-20) is based on four basic convictions which are named and discussed below.

1. *The centrality of Christ.* Since genuine peace between people can only be achieved through Jesus Christ, people in conflict are encouraged to believe the gospel and trust in Christ, to faithfully rely on the promises and obey his commands in Scripture. References are made *inter alia* to John 14:27 and 2 Cor. 5:18-19.
2. *The responsibility of the Church.* Peacemaking should be an essential ministry of the local church.
3. *The necessity of counselling.* "We believe that destructive conflict comes from desires that battle within people's hearts." Therefore parties are counselled to find their fulfillment in Christ, renounce sinful desires and actions that have contributed to the conflict, and seek genuine reconciliation.
4. *The comprehensiveness of God's Word.* "We believe that God's Word is totally authoritative and completely sufficient for all aspects of life, and that his peacemaking commands and promises apply to every conflict a Christian can encounter."

There are similarities with "secular" mediation, but the following differences should be noted (Sande, 1993:2):

- the motivation of the mediators is to please and honour God;
- the Bible is regarded as the authority for establishing transcendental and moral principles;
- whereas in secular mediation the mediator relies mostly on his persuasive powers, in biblical mediation the power of the Holy Spirit is invoked to help change people's hearts;
- in Christian mediation the mediators go beyond surface issues and seek to resolve root issues – that is, what lies in the heart of the person;

- the parties are required to focus on and deal with their own responsibilities first, before focusing on others;
- tactful confrontation and discreet directive biblical counselling may be used where necessary, by the mediator;
- the mediator will actively promote true reconciliation through repentance, confession and forgiveness.

Regarding the first point mentioned above, the ministry, headed by Sande, stated the following in an e-publication:

“The world highly esteems ‘win-win’ negotiation, in which parties negotiate an agreement advantageous to both sides. But biblical peacemaking esteems the glory of God much more highly than the satisfaction of the human parties involved. Peace, in other words, is not the greatest good of peacemaking; the glorification of God is. It is entirely possible for two parties to reach complete agreement with each other and yet do grave disservice to God. This is not biblical peacemaking, but is nothing more than a pragmatic agreement among ‘consenting adults’ predicated on human wisdom and happiness.”

(Peacemaker Ministries, 2005:1).

1.8.3 Pastoral

When the researcher refers to “pastor” or “pastoral”, it refers to the one who is understood to be the pastor in his congregation or denomination as he fulfils the role of a shepherd caring for his people, but it also refers to the believer who fulfils that role, whether he accepts the role as officially assigned by the church leadership or merely assumes it. Adams refers to the minister as being *pastor pastorum* (shepherd of shepherds) and states that all believers have a ministry to all others. (Adams, 1970:42; Collins, 1988:16; cf. Tan 1991:24; Crabb, 1997: 98).

The term “pastoral” is, according to Adams, a uniquely Christian term that expresses a fundamental concept that is deeply embedded in every biblical portrayal of Christian ministry. The term refers to a rich Scriptural figure that finds its beginning and end in God - He who is the “shepherd of Israel” (Ps 80:1) (Adams, 1986 :5).

1.8.4 Troubled marriages

Here the reference is to marriages in which there is tension experienced by either or both parties,

- which may lead to a breakdown in the marriage relationship; or
- which is so unpleasant that either or both of the parties seldom experience the peace (1 Cor. 7:15; Col. 3:15) and joy (John 15:11; 2 Cor. 1:24) to which believers have been called; or
- which destroys the parties' ability to be a Christian witness (Sande, 2004:12) .

The definition must be wide enough to encompass all kinds of typical or commonplace marital problems that may potentially lead to divorce. It also includes cases of serious unresolved conflict as well as cases of the parties' living, or drifting towards living, separate lives.

On the other hand, the definition will not include marriages experiencing conflict which is not serious enough to threaten the marriage or the parties' peace of mind. According to Gottman & Silver (2000:11) even happily married couples can have screaming matches. Conflict in marriage by itself is not the evil, for it can be regarded as normal (Van Staden, 1991/2:36) and an opportunity for growth (Sande, 2004:30-31).

1.9. CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapter division in this dissertation is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Problem statement and objectives
- Chapter 2: Basis-theoretical perspectives on marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation
- Chapter 3: Meta-theory on mediation as a third party intervention method for reconciliation in troubled marriages
- Chapter 4: Practical theoretical perspectives on using biblical mediation for reconciliation in troubled marriages
- Chapter 5: Conclusions and suggested further research

1.10. SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

Problem statement	Research objectives	Methodology
What is the biblical teaching on marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation in troubled marriages?	To investigate what the biblical teaching is on marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation in troubled marriages.	A a revélation – historical survey as well as a grammatical – historical exegesis is to be performed to establish what the Bible teaches on marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation in troubled marriages.
What can be learnt from the social sciences about mediation as a conflict resolution method and from Peacemaker Ministries about biblical mediation as method for reconciliation in troubled marriages?	To investigate what can be learnt from the social sciences about mediation and from Peacemaker Ministries about biblical mediation as a method for reconciliaton in troubled marriages.	A literature survey will be conducted in the social sciences regarding the use of mediation and a literature study of the materials of Peacemaker Ministries regarding the use of biblical mediation as a method for reconciliation in troubled marriages.
What can be learnt through an empirical study regarding the use of biblical mediation as a method for reconciliation in marriages?	To do empirical research on biblical mediation, as a method for reconciliaton in troubled marriages.	A qualitative empirical study will be done by conducting biblical mediations with three active Christian couples. A follow-up session will be conducted to assess the effectiveness and value of biblical mediation as a method for reconciliation in troubled marriages.
How can in pastoral care biblical mediation be applied as a method for reconciliation in troubled marriages?	To propose guidelines for the use of biblical mediation in pastoral care as a method for reconciliation in troubled marriages.	Data gleaned from the basis- and meta-theories, as well as the empirical study will be synthesised to form guidelines for using mediation in pastoral care as a method for reconciliation in troubled marriages.

Table/Illustration 1.1

CHAPTER 2: BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MARRIAGE, MARITAL CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a basis theory by examining Scripture and the comments of Bible expository authors. Basis theory, in the context of practical theology, means the theoretical perspectives (or theological tradition) that can be extracted primarily from Scripture (Venter, 1993:247).

Since Scripture is the inspired Word of God, "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16) and "the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:25), Scripture has to be the basis of a Christian worldview (Wolters, 1988: 6) and therefore the starting point in this type of research. This researcher agrees with Powlison that when God is included in the picture, "it changes the way you think about 'problem', 'diagnosis', 'strategy', 'solution,' helpful', 'cure', 'change', 'insight', and 'counselor.'" (Powlison, 2003:2). Louw (1993:59) likewise suggests that in order to understand the meaning of marital love, it is necessary to view marriage through the eyes of God.

The "fundamental points of the biblical compass" are the three realities of (1) creation (which includes marriage), (2) the fall and (3) redemption (Wolters, 1988: 72). Aligned with these three concepts, an attempt will be made in this chapter to put forth a biblical perspective of (1) marriage, (2) marital conflict and (3) reconciliation by considering certain passages and the comments of expositors thereon.

The approach followed in dealing with the topic of marriage is to survey first the Old and then the New Testament, using the revelation-historical approach (Van der Walt, 2006: 22-23). The pattern followed will be that of dealing with various subtopics except where it is expedient to deal with a particular Bible book, or group of books, or the teachings of a particular individual. After dealing with the Old and New Testament Scriptures, two subtopics that warrant more elaboration remain, namely, the marriage covenant and the purpose of marriage from a biblical perspective. Marital conflict is dealt with by considering

first the cause of conflict as a phenomenon and the causes themselves in a more immediate sense, then the examples of marital conflict according to Scripture and finally the specific references in Scripture to marital conflict. The last section, reconciliation, will commence with a discussion of the triune God as Peacemaker, then Jesus Christ as Mediator and finally the pastor's role as mediator, with reference to mediation in Scripture, the call to peacemaking and the implications of the gospel. Passages such as Mat. 5:9, Mat. 18:15-17 and Rom. 14:19 will be examined applying grammatical-historical exegesis.

2.2 THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MARRIAGE

2.2.1 The Old Testament

2.2.1.1 Ordination of marriage

After God had created man He said that it was not good for the man to be alone (Gen. 2: 18). In both Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 5:1-2 a connection seems to be made between the fact that man was created in God's image and the fact that He created them male and female. Since this happened before the fall, one may conclude that man was created for enjoying harmonious interpersonal relationships (Stanley *et al.*, 2002: 14; Grudem, 2005: 454).

God ordained marriage for humanity by introducing it to the first human being. After He had shown Adam the animals, amongst which he could not find a "suitable helper", he made Eve from one of Adam's ribs or from flesh and bone in the general area of his ribs (Ellison, 1986:117; Walton, 2001: 177) and introduced her to him (Gen. 2:19-22). We read in Gen. 2:24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Paul wrote that marriage was created to be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:3-4; Wolters, 1988: 22; Ridderbos, 1975: 3050).

Adams (1983:18-19) emphasises the importance of understanding that marriage is of divine origin, because that being the case, it [marriage] should continue unless God ordains otherwise and the guidelines and ideals that God has laid down must be followed. It would seem that this is a fundamental point of departure in establishing a basis theory.

Becoming "one flesh" does not merely refer to sex or sexual desire (Walton, 2001: 179). Neither does it mean that one's identity is to be lost in the other's. It is rather a third identity that is born – the "Us" that comes about through the union of "You" and "Me" (Mason, 1985:58, 115; Stanley et al., 2002:17). Louw (1993:13) has the same viewpoint, but adds that in the Christian marriage, it is husband plus wife plus Christ, three becoming one, joined with God into a "threefold chord" (Eccl. 4:9-12; Stanley et al, 2002:15), which makes it very difficult to break (Prince, 1978: 24-26). It denotes a spiritual and emotional bond (Hudson, 1973:42); it is like being a single organism - and it follows then that divorce would be "like cutting up a living body" (Lewis, 1996: 96-97). The concept of a man leaving his parents to be united to his wife and becoming one flesh seems to preclude polygamy.

The effect of the fall on marriage and Old Testament examples of marital conflict will be dealt with later.

2.2.1.2 Marriage in the nation of Israel

According to the Old Testament, parents usually contracted for the marriage partners of their children (Gen. 21:21; Gen. 24; Judg. 14:2). This custom was recognised by the Mosaic Law (Ex. 22:17) and later by the Lord in his message to those who were carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon (Jer. 29:6).

No formalities are prescribed in the Old Testament for a marriage ceremony (cf. Freeman, 1972:32; Stander and Louw, 1990) and there was no designated marriage officer in the Old Testament. The payment of dowry by the fiancé to the girl's father (De Vaux, 1973:26) was a custom prior to the Law of Moses (Gen. 24:53; 34:12) and prescribed in at least one instance, namely the seduction of a virgin (Ex. 22:16-17; Deut. 22:28-29). De Vaux (1973:33) asserts that marriage was purely a civil contract, not sanctioned by any religious rite and that the marriage covenant was probably in the form of a written contract.

Two of the Ten Commandments protect the sanctity of marriage, namely the prohibition against adultery (Ex. 20:14) and that against coveting one's neighbour's wife (Ex. 20:17). The Law of Moses furthermore exempted the bridegroom from military and other service in the first year of the marriage "to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife..." (Deut. 24:5).

Marriage was to be a delight and joy, in companionship and sexual pleasure (c.f. Prov. 5:18-19; Eccl. 9:9; S. of S. 4:10-16).

2.2.1.3 Marriage according to the Wisdom Books

Marriage as an institution is not dealt with *per se* in the Wisdom Books – Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and Job (Fee and Stuart, 1993: 206). There are references to the value of a good wife (e.g. Prov. 18:22, 19:14) and to the unpleasantness of a quarrelsome one (Prov. 19:13, 21:9), and there is also encouragement to enjoy sexual intimacy with one's wife (Prov. 5:18, Eccl. 9:9).

The Song of Solomon has been interpreted allegorically in various ways, but it seems that taking it at its plain, literal meaning, namely as a sweet love song between a man and his bride, is the most natural and logical approach (Orr, 1986: 703-704; Curtis, 1988:23-32; Lotter and Steyn, 2006:70-89). In that case the Song is a celebration of married love. Viviers (2006:92) postulates the view that the couple pictured in the Song is not necessarily married (but see the references to "bride" in 4:8 and 5:1).

2.2.1.4 Marriage as a metaphor for God's relationship with Israel

Several prophets have depicted the relationship between God and Israel as a marriage relationship. It is compared to a young man taking care of an abandoned child until she is ripe for marriage (Ezek. 16:1-8) and in marriage giving her the best treatment (Ezek. 16:9-14), only for her to break the covenant between them later (Jer. 31:32; Ezek. 16:59; Hos. 2:2-5) by becoming a prostitute (Ezek. 16:15-19). The Northern Kingdom of Israel is said to have been given a certificate of divorce (Jer. 3:8) whilst Judah experienced God leaving her (Isa. 54:6-7). In both instances a future restoration is prophesied (Israel – Ezek. 16:60-63; Hos. 2:14-23) Judah – Isa. 62:4).

2.2.1.5 Malachi and divorce

In the last Book of the Old Testament containing the prophecy of Malachi, we are given God's charges against Judah, one of which has to do with marital unfaithfulness and divorce (Mal. 2:13-16). It is contended that from this passage the following conclusions about marriage can be extracted (Gasque, 1986: 993; Barnes, s.a.):

- marital unfaithfulness displeases God, regardless of whether the offender continues the practice of sacrifices or other outward forms of worship or not;
- God is witness of the marital covenant (vows) and any violation thereof (See also Prov. 2; 17; Ezekiel 16:8);
- God makes the two spouses one entity;
- spouses are intended to be partners (*companions* – New King James Version) of one another;
- God hates divorce;
- husband and wife individually must “guard yourself in your spirit” not “to break faith” with the spouse (Henry, s.a.).

Adams (1982: 23, 51) states that God does not hate all divorce, but He hates what occasions every divorce and the pain it causes. “All divorces are caused by sin, but not all divorces are sinful.” This view seems to be in harmony with Scripture.

2.2.2 The New Testament

2.2.2.1 The teaching of Jesus

In the New Testament Jesus confirms that the marriage union was ordained by God, as is stated in Gen. 2:24 and concludes, “Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Mat. 19:6). He adds that Moses permitted divorce “because your hearts were hard”, but this was not so from the beginning. Jesus teaches that anyone divorcing his/her partner for a reason other than marital unfaithfulness and remarrying, actually commits adultery. Earlier, He mentions that even looking upon a woman lustfully is tantamount to adultery (Mat. 5:28). This is discussed in Mat. 5:31-32 where Jesus denounces divorce for any other reason than marital unfaithfulness. Different views (which will not be dealt with in this dissertation) have been expressed regarding how Jesus’ teaching is to be understood in relation to the divorce and remarriage question (cf. Hudson, 1973: 40-58; House, 1990: 9-11; Retief, 1990: 59-74; Instone-Brewer, 2002: 133-188; 238-299). It is interesting to note that Jesus does anticipate with apparent approval the possibility that a husband may leave his wife for the sake of the kingdom of God (Luk. 18:29).

It is noteworthy that the first miracle Jesus performed, that of changing water into wine, took place at a wedding, and that it can be said that the first recorded miracle after creation was the creation of Adam's future wife from his own body (John 2:11; Gen. 2:21-22 cf. Mason, 1985:34).

Whilst Jesus states that angels do not marry and that in the resurrection, people, like angels, will not be married (Mat. 22:30), at least two of his parables hint at the eschatological implications thereof. In both He illustrates the kingdom of heaven. The first parable recounts the story of the king who invites guests to his son's wedding banquet (Mat. 22:1-14) and the second tells of the vigilance of the ten virgins who are waiting for the coming of the bridegroom (Mat. 25:1-13; cf. Van der Walt, 2006:81). Here we have two parables, one picturing invited guests as the special called-out ones (see also Mat. 9:15) and the other picturing them as brides-to-be. The use of the different metaphors may be confusing to the reader, but it will hopefully be clarified in paragraph 2.2.2.7 below. As will be seen *infra*, the eschatological implications are further expounded by Paul, in the Letter to the Ephesians, and by John in the Book of Revelation.

2.2.2.2 The teaching of Paul

Paul confirms that marriages should be monogamous (i.e. between one husband and one wife) (1 Cor. 7:2) and should last until the death of one of the spouses (Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor.7: 39; Ridderbos, 1975: 306-310).

2.2.2.2.1 Eph. 5:22-23

In Eph 5:22-33 he brings some illumination to what is "a profound mystery", namely, that which is being pictured or foreshadowed by the marriage institution: the relationship between Christ and the Church with whom He will live in union throughout eternity (Ridderbos, 1975: 379; De Klerk, 1997:74; see also 2 Cor. 11:2).

From this passage (Eph. 5:22-23), it is suggested that the following can be gleaned regarding the roles of husbands and wives (Ridderbos, 1975: 307-308; Eggerichs, 2004:46-47; 216-219):

- the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church;

- as the church submits to Christ, the wife should submit to her husband in everything;
- the submission of the wife is to be done as if it is to the Lord;
- the husband must love his wife as his own body, as he loves himself, just as Christ loves the church;
- the husband must deny himself for the sake of his wife, providing for her and caring for her, just as Christ gave his life for the church and feeds and care for her;
- the wife must respect her husband.

2.2.2.2.2 Eph. 5:21

A question that needs to be dealt with is how Eph. 5:21 is to be understood in the context of the husband-wife relationship. The following section, Eph. 5:22-33 twice calls upon the wife to submit to her husband and once to respect him. Three times in the same section the husband is enjoined to love his wife, but he is not specifically commanded to submit to his wife. Does Eph 5:21, that calls for mutual submission, have any bearing on how the following section is to be understood?

Closely associated to this is the further question as to whether verse 21 is to be regarded as the beginning of a new paragraph – in other words, as falling within the same pericope as the rest of Eph 5. Should the answer be affirmative it would lend support to the notion that verse 21 should be allowed to colour the meaning of the rest of the section.

As remarked by Liefeld (1997: 139), “[c]ommentators and translators have failed to reach agreement on how to place this verse” (cf. Joubert, 1996: 46 – footnote 5). *Submit* in verse 21 is actually a participle (“submitting”), similar to the verbs in verses 19-20, which fact ties it to the previous verses (Lenski, 1961: 623; Perkins, 2000: 442; Hoehner, 2002: 716). On the other hand, verse 21 introduces a new motive, namely, reverence for Christ, and the theme of reverence is repeated in verse 33 and in 6:6. Furthermore, verse 22 is without a verb and is thus dependent on the participle in verse 21: “Submit to one another” (Dreyer, 1996: 96). It seems to be an introduction to the household code material (“Haus tafel”) in the last section in Eph. 5 (Barth, 1974: 608-610; Joubert, 1996: 43; Liefeld, 1997:139).

Some see verse 21 as a transition verse linking the two sections (Lincoln, 1990:365; Dreyer, 1996: 96; Liefeld, 1997: 139). For the purposes of this study it will be assumed that verse 21 can be treated as a transition verse linking what otherwise would be two unrelated sections.

The question still remains: how can the instruction to submit to one another be reconciled with the following section where only the wife is expected to submit to her husband and not vice versa? "If A submits to B, then B is not submitting but ruling..." (Hoehner, 2002:717). Lincoln (1990: 366) argues that somehow "justice has to be done both to the force of verse 21 and to the force of the specific types of submission in the household code" (Lincoln, 1990: 366). The most plausible view seems to be that put forth by Lincoln, who compares this verse to 1 Pet. 5:5 where the young men are told to be submissive to the older men, followed by the exhortation: "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." Lincoln argues as follows:

Similarly, here in Ephesians, mutual submission coexists with a hierarchy of roles within the household. Believers should not insist on getting their own way, so there is a general sense in which husbands are to have a submissive attitude to wives, putting their wives' interests before their own, and similarly parents to children and masters to slaves. But this does not eliminate the more specific roles in which wives are to submit to husbands, children to parents, and slaves to masters.

(Lincoln, 1990: 366; cf. Littleton, 1988: 14)

It can be said that Paul did not advocate any change to the hierarchal marital system of that time, namely the headship of the husband and the submission of the wife, but he did give it a radically new content and meaning, by introducing a new motivation.

The wife is no longer to be submissive because she is inferior or economically dependent on the husband, but because of her relationship with Christ. Likewise, the husband's headship is not to be based on any right to rule but on the selfless love of Christ for the church (Dreyer, 1996: 102; Joubert, 1996: 44).

Therefore, headship is not a right to command and control. It's a responsibility to love like Christ: to lay down your life for your wife in servant leadership. And submission is not slavish or coerced cowering. That's not the way Christ wants the church to respond to his leadership: he wants it to be free and willing and glad and refining and strengthening.

(Piper, 1998:1).

Mack (1999:16-17), acknowledging that the idea of the wife's submission is not a popular concept these days, often because of a false picture of what it involves, explains what submission is not, by making the following points:

- submission is not merely a concept for women – it is a concept for all believers (The author refers inter alia to Eph. 5:21);
- submission does not mean that the wife becomes a slave;
- submission does not mean that the wife never opens her mouth, never has an opinion, never gives advice;
- submission does not mean that the wife becomes a wallflower who folds up and allows her abilities to lie dormant;
- submission does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband.

Mack (1999: 18-20) describes this submission as a continuous lifestyle, which is mandatory - "as to the Lord". It is a positive concept in the sense that it emphasises what she should do rather than what she should not do, as her husband's team-mate. The submission is "in everything" involving her attitudes as well as her actions, except when it is contrary to God's command.

2.2.2.3 The teaching of Peter

Peter, who unlike Paul, was a married man (Mat.8: 14; 1 Cor. 7:7), gives specific instructions to husbands and wives in 1 Pet. 3:1-7. The instructions to wives to be submissive to their husbands and husbands to be considerate to their wives are very similar to those of Paul in Eph. 5:22-33. It is interesting to note that both Paul and Peter first address the wives and then the husbands. Both also deal specifically with the case of a believing wife who is married to an unbeliever (1 Pet. 3:1) where the former is encouraged to win over her husband

not with talking but by exemplary behaviour. She is encouraged to do what is right without giving way to fear (1 Pet. 3:6; Polkingthorne, 1986:1557). Peter urges husbands to treat their wives with respect. In this regard he makes three observations that should be noted, namely that:

- the wife is the weaker partner;
- husbands and wives are together heirs “of the gracious gift of life”;
- husbands’ treatment of their wives can have a negative impact on their (the husband’s) prayers.

Since the teaching of Paul and Peter is so similar regarding the requirement of husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to their husbands, it may be helpful to summarise what they have stated on these topics, and hence the following two sub-paragraphs.

2.2.2.4 The husband’s love:

Three times within the space of a few verses in Eph. 5 the husband is called upon to love his wife. The reasons appear to be that husbands don’t love naturally and wives have such a great need of love (Mack, 1999: 38, 41; cf. Eggerichs, 2004: 70) .

- His love should be similar to Christ’s love for the church. It is therefore a self-sacrificing love (cf. Lloyd-Jones, 1973:140-141).
- In a general sense, the husband should also submit to his wife’s legitimate needs, putting her interests above his own, as envisaged in Eph. 5:21.
- He must love his wife as his body, that is, as a part of himself. (Cf. Lloyd-Jones, 1973:215).
- It is in order if the motive for the self-sacrifice is to make her a happy, responsive, adorable life partner for him (Piper, 1996:175-176).
- The Greek word for love, *agape*, describes the love God has for his Son and for (unworthy) mankind and is not dependent on one’s natural inclinations (Vine, s.a.: 703). It is the kind of love that comes through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Rom.5: 5). It is the “Divine Gift-love” which enables man “to love what is not naturally lovable” and is to be distinguished from the “natural loves” like affection (Greek: *storge*), friendship (Greek: *philia*), and romantic love (Greek: *eros*). (Louw,

Christian marriage, there should be *eros* and *philia* according to Lloyd-Jones (1973:136-137), but the *agape* love will elevate the other two types of love and lend them a certain splendour and glory.

- The husband must be considerate toward his wife.
- He should treat her with respect as the weaker partner.

2.2.2.5 The wife's loving submission:

- The wife's submission to her husband should be as "unto the Lord".
- She must submit as the Church submits to Christ "in everything." This means in all things over which God has granted husbands authority and limited in that any sinful act is to be excluded because God never authorises sin (Adams, 1983:110; Mack, 1999: 20).
- The submission is to be voluntary and not to be enforced by the husband (Mack, 1999: 18).
- The submission includes respect and obedience (Adams 1983:108; Mack. 1999: 20).
- The submission is to her own husband, not to any other husband or her father. (Cf. Lloyd-Jones, 1973:86).
- The fact that the husband is an unbeliever makes no difference. In fact, it creates the further incentive that it may lead to his conversion – although Scripture gives no guarantee in this regard (1 Pet. 3:1-2; Mack, 1999: 18).

2.2.2.6 Hebrews

In his concluding exhortations the author of Hebrews writes that "[m]arriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Hebr. 13:4). The sanctity of marriage and the sacredness of sexual intimacy within the marriage union are upheld in this verse (Hawthorne, 1986: 1530).

2.2.2.7 Revelation

In a vision the author, the apostle John, hears something like a large crowd shouting words of praise to the Lord "[f]or the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). The imagery of a wedding is used to express the intimate relationship between the Messiah (the Lamb) and the messianic community (the bride) (Bruce, 1986:1623), which has its

roots in the Old Testament passages mentioned in 2.2.1.4 above as well as Eph 5:32. In verse 9 we read: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb." The apparent confusion of the bride and the guests as metaphor of God's called-out ones can be explained by looking at the church community as the bride and the individual members of the church body as the wedding guests (Bruce, 1986:1623).

Considering revelation history with regards to marriage in the New Testament (cf. Van Der Walt, 2006:22-23), it is clear that from the beginning the deep union and companionship of husband and wife have been God's ideal made known to his people. Divorce and polygamy were not ordained, but were tolerated by God. The eschatological meaning was not revealed in the Old Testament. In the Gospels the parables used by Jesus hint at the eschatological meaning. By the time Paul writes to the Ephesians, it is still a mystery, at least to the members in Ephesus, which he then proceeds to clarify.

2.2.3 The marriage covenant

Marriage is described as a covenant (Hebrew: *berith*) throughout the Old Testament (Instone-Brewer, 2002:1-3). Proverbs 2:16-17 refers to the wayward wife who left her partner "and ignored the covenant she made before God". Malachi 2:14 shows that one of the witnesses to any "marriage covenant" is God himself.

A covenant in the Ancient Near East, according to Instone-Brewer (2002:3-4) was primarily a binding agreement between two parties, and thus a marriage covenant included stipulations about the payment of dowry and the penalties for non-payment. The covenant referred to in the Scriptures mentioned above clearly does not refer to any payments but to a vow of fidelity and companionship. See for example Mal. 2:15b: "...you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant."

One question to be dealt with is how one can refer to a covenant or vow if marriages in biblical times were apparently not entered into voluntarily, but by parental arrangements. The answer seems to be that parental involvement did not eliminate the need for a vow or covenant. The bridegroom could tell his parents what his preferences were (Gen. 34:4; Judges 14:2) and he could

make his own decisions, even against his parents' wishes (Gen. 26:34-35; de Vaux, 1973:30; Stander and Louw, 1990).

The Hebrew word for covenant, *berith*, is derived from a word which means "cut" (Strong, s.a. H1285; Adams, 1983:25) explains that the Hebrew implies that "[o]ne does not *make* a covenant, but literally 'cuts a covenant'". The solemnity of a covenant required that it be accompanied by the death of animals, which were cut into two (see Gen. 15:10; Jer. 34:18-20; Prince, 1978:34; Girdlestone, 1981:214). Adams comments that in doing so, "one declared that he would keep his promises under the pain of death" and that should he fail to keep his covenant promises, he was willing to be cut into pieces. Prince (1978: 43-44) believes that the death of the animals symbolizes the death of each party to the contract, in the sense that each renounces all rights to live for himself.

Although there are only a few references in Scripture to substantiate the point, it is clear that the covenant or vow of fidelity is an important element of marriage as intended by God.

2.2.4 The purpose of marriage

Nowhere in Scripture is the purpose of marriage specifically stated.

Man, being created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), is a relational being (Grudem, 2005: 447). We read that after God has put man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it, He notes that it is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:15, 18). Following on that observation, God says, "I will make a helper suitable for him." The deduction can be made that the "helper" was to alleviate man's loneliness by being his companion.

Apart from Gen. 2:18, the partnership or companionship aspect of marriage is also mentioned in Prov. 2:17 and Mal. 2:14. Thus, leaving the eschatological reasons aside and considering the matter from an immediate perspective, it can be said that the purpose of marriage is to provide companionship to man, who has been made a relational being (Adams, 1983:20; Gushee, 2004:94).

Since God is sovereign and omniscient (Grudem, 2005: 190-191, 217-218; Isa. 46:9-10, 1 John 3:20), in a broad sense it can be said that God created

marriage with the eschatological implications in mind. Marriage was patterned after the relationship that God had planned for Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:32; Piper, 1996:181).

Other purposes that can be derived from Scripture are:

- Sexual fulfilment (Song of Sol. 1:13, 15; 1 Cor. 7:9, 36; Gushee, 2004:97)
- Procreation of children (see Gen. 1:28; Mal. 2:15; Gushee, 2004:98)

2.2.5 Preliminary conclusions on a basis theory for marriage

From the above the following basis theoretical guidelines could be proposed:

- marriage has been ordained by God and is therefore a divine institution;
- marriage as *mystery* pictures the relationship between Christ and the Church;
- as the Church submits to Christ, the wife must submit to her husband and as Christ loves the Church, having given his life for his people, the husband must love his wife sacrificially and in a general sense submit to her real needs;
- marriage is an unconditional covenant of companionship, to which God is both witness and party;
- God did not prescribe formalities or details of the wedding or wedding ceremony;
- God intended a monogamous marriage between a husband and wife;
- the marriage union between the spouses ought to be so close that a third identity ("us") is formed;
- marriage should last until the death of one of the spouses;
- God hates divorce and it is not part of what He originally intended;
- the two legitimate grounds for divorce mentioned in Scripture are marital unfaithfulness and the decision of an unbelieving spouse to terminate the relationship. Unhappiness with one's marriage is not *per se* a cause for divorce.

2.3 THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MARITAL CONFLICT

2.3.1 Conflict in general

Conflict can be defined as "a difference of opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires" (Sande, 2004:29).

2.3.1.1 Peace in the beginning

The triune God, consisting of three persons, has always been dwelling and working in harmony (cf. John 1:1-3; Gen.1:26, John 3:35, John 14:31, John 17:4-5). God is called the God of peace (Rom. 15:33, 1 Cor. 14:33). It is part of his character (Grudem, 2005: 202-203; Poirier, 2006:78). The Son is called the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) and one of the functions of the Holy Spirit is *inter alia* to impart peace (Gal.5:22). All indications in the Bible point to joy and harmony as a law of creation being in force prior to sin's entering the picture (Wolters, 1988: 41; Gen. 1:1, Job 38:4-7).

2.3.1.2 The first conflict

Gen. 3:1-4 introduces the crafty serpent casting doubts in the mind of Eve as to whether God's commandment about the forbidden fruit is really for their own good. The serpent is Satan (Rev. 12:9). Thus before man sinned, Satan (meaning *adversary* in Hebrew) (Girdlestone, 1981: 288) was already corrupt and in sin. It seems that Satan led a rebellion in the angelic world some time between the description of Gen. 1:31 (when everything God had made was very good) and Gen. 3:1. See 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6, Isa. 14:12-15. This rebellion must have been the first conflict ever.

2.3.1.3 Results of Adam's sin

Adam and Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit was man's first sin - an act of rebellion against God. That "original sin" had catastrophic consequences for all of creation (Wolters, 1988: 44). Creation, according to Wolters (1988:21-22) has a much wider scope than commonly recognised, since it is the correlation of law and cosmos (or subject), and includes marriage, "which God created to be received with thanksgiving." (cf. Rushdoony, 1973: 341).

Gen. 3:8-12 records the immediate consequences of Adam's sin, namely:

- their hiding from God which reflected a desire to avoid being close to Him (verse 8-10);
- fear (verse 10);
- shame (verse 10) and
- the shifting of blame (verse 12).

Then God pronounces a curse on the earth, which *inter alia* includes:

- enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent (verse 15);
- painful childbearing (verse 16);
- the woman's desire being for her husband and his ruling over her (verse 16). (This point will be dealt with more fully in par. 2.3.4.1);
- the cursing of the earth and the need for painful toil in order to eat its produce (verse 17);
- the eventual death of man's body (verse 19) and
- banishment from the Garden of Eden (verse 23).

Thus it can be said that as a result of sin, God allows conflict (Rom. 11:36, Poirier 2006:75). He uses hardship such as conflict to discipline his people and to refine their characters (Rom. 5:3-4, Heb. 12:14, James 1:2-3). From Genesis 3 onwards "conflict is the very drama of biblical history" (Poirier, 2006:76). In the first human family one brother kills another; in the family of the patriarch Abraham, he, his wife and his concubine get drawn into strife; Moses, Elijah, David and the prophets all experience serious conflict; even Jesus comes to bring the sword and division and He himself suffers throughout his life of ministry as a result of conflict (Mat. 10:34, Isa 53:3, John 15:18, 1 Pet. 1:11). The fall has also led to an attack on marriage as an institution in the modern western world, with divorce and serial monogamy as examples of the perversion of God's design, according to Wolters (1988: 45).

2.3.1.4 Jesus Christ as Reconciler

Though Jesus Christ in his first coming brings the sword and division, ultimately He becomes the mediator of the New Covenant between God and his people and is instrumental in the reconciliation between God and people in the world (Heb. 12:24, 2 Cor. 5:18-19). This theme will be expounded in the section on reconciliation *infra*. However, conflict will continue after Jesus' death and resurrection as predicted by Him (John 16:33).

2.3.1.5 Peace in the end

The time of restitution (the consummation) of all things will come (Acts 3:21). Then there will be no more enemies around (1 Cor. 15:25, 28; Ridderbos, 1975: 556), but instead a new heaven and new earth where nothing can cause

conflict (Rev. 21:4, 27) and where everyone will be in complete unity with the Father and the Son (John 17:20). As remarked by Poirier (2006:74): “Conflict is an aberration in God’s good creation. Peace will reign once again when Christ returns.”

2.3.2 Causes of conflict

Sande (2004: 30) lists four primary causes of conflict with examples from Scripture as follows:

1	Misunderstandings resulting from poor communication	Josh 22:10-34
2	Differences in values, goals, gifts, calling, priorities, expectations, interests or opinions	Acts 15:39 1 Cor. 12:12-31
3	Competition over limited resources, such as time or money	Gen 13:1-12
4	Sinful attitudes and habits that lead to sinful words and actions, causing or aggravating conflict.	James 4:1-2

Table / Illustration 2.1

In Gen. 23:10-14 we read of a conflict between Ephron and Abraham about a burial place for Sarah (which can be classified under cause 2 above), involving no evil or sin. Thus, not all conflict is bad, since differences in people’s preferences and priorities are merely the result of God-given diversity (1 Cor. 12:21-31; Sande, 2004:30).

The passage in the Bible that addresses directly the sinful cause of conflict of a particular group of people (the recipients of James’s letter), is James 4:1-4:

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?

The Greek word for *desires* is *hedone* from which the word *hedonism* is derived. It literally means *pleasure* (Vine, s.a.:707), or *desire for physical*

pleasure, often sexual... (Louw & Nida 1993:25.27) and is “commonly applied to the pleasures of sense, and thence denotes desire, appetite, lust” (Barnes, s.a.).

As is pointed out by Vosloo and van Rensburg (1999) in their commentary on this passage, the source of fighting and quarrels here is wrong desires within people, not external factors such as poverty or childhood years. It is interesting to note that the passage also makes no mention of the unmet needs of a person as the source of conflict.

The passage in James illustrates some of the dynamics of desires, according to Poirier (2006:53-50), namely

The Dynamic	Verse
“Wants” become “coveting” or demanding desires	4:2
The opponent is being judged and damned	4:11-5:6
Innocent desires can be deceitful when they begin to rule people	4:2
Desires can easily become idolatry	4:4 (with Ezek. 23:37)

Table / Illustration 2.2

The deeper cause of sinful conflict is the inner desires that reign in a person’s heart. In Matt. 15:18-19 Jesus said, “But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean’. For out of the heart come evil thoughts....” Tripp laments the fact that so few books on marriage and conflict resolution focus on the heart. He writes, “Any agenda for change must focus on the thoughts and desires of the heart” (Tripp, 2002: 65).

2.3.3 Examples of marital conflict in Scripture

Examples will merely be briefly mentioned, as a detailed exegesis is not considered necessary for the purposes of this study. Apart from the examples mentioned below, one may surmise that Lot and his wife, Isaac and Rebekah, as well as Jacob and Leah, also experienced conflict to some degree (Gen. 19:26, Luke 17:32; Gen. 25:28; 27:5-10; Gen. 29:30).

2.3.3.1 Adam and Eve

A hint of perhaps a low-key conflict, or at least a placing of blame between spouses, occurs in the very first marriage, soon after the fall when Adam replies to God, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the

tree, and I ate it" (Gen. 3:12). Instead of calling her by name or referring to an aspect of her beauty, Adam refers to "the woman you gave me" – not "my beautiful wife"; or to "the lovely soul-mate you gave me."

2.3.3.2 Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah

When Hagar becomes aware that she is pregnant, she begins to despise her own mistress, Sarai. Even though the conception of Ishmael has been Sarai's own suggestion to Abram, she now tells him, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me." (Gen. 16:5)

Conflict brews again over Ishmael some years later, when Sarah asks Abraham to get rid of Hagar and her son (Gen. 21:10). This causes Abraham considerable distress until God tells him to do as Sarah asks.

2.3.3.3 Job and his wife

After Job has been afflicted with painful sores on his body, his wife tells him, "Curse God and die!" He replies, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:9-10).

2.3.3.4 Moses and Zipporah

On Moses' return to Egypt with his wife and sons, to approach Pharaoh as commissioned by God, he is confronted and almost killed by God because Moses' son has not been circumcised. "But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched [Moses'] feet with it. 'Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me,' she says. (Ex. 4:25). Nothing more is stated about this conflict or about the relationship between Zipporah and Moses except that in Ex. 18:2-3 we read that Moses has sent her and her children back to her father.

2.3.3.5 Samson and his wives

Contrary to God's command against intermarriage with the inhabitants of the promised land (because they would lead the Israelite men to commit idolatry) (Ex. 34:16), Samson takes Timnah, a Philistine (Judges 14:1-8), as wife; then sleeps with a harlot of Gaza (Judges 16:1) and then marries or lives together with Delilah, also a Philistine (Judges 16:4). Both Timnah and Delilah, being

urged by their own people, entice Samson to reveal confidential information with the manipulative, "You don't love me anymore" (Judges 14:16-17; 16:15-16), to which he eventually yields to his own detriment.

2.3.3.6 David and Michal

When David, wearing only a linen ephod, leaps and dances for joy that the ark of God has been brought into Jerusalem, his wife Michal despises him. When he returns home she criticizes him "for disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would". David defends his conduct saying that it has been before the Lord and that he will become even more undignified and still be honoured by the slave girls. (2 Sam. 16:16-22). The comment that she "had no children to the day of her death" in verse 23 contains a hint that God was displeased with her criticism.

2.3.3.7 Nabal and Abigail

Underneath the story of Abigail's tactful approach to David lies the untold story of the marriage between the wise Abigail and the wicked and sour Nabal, whom she criticizes openly (1 Sam. 25:23-25).

2.3.3.8 Hosea and Gomer

God tells Hosea to marry an adulterous wife. Three children are born from the union between Hosea and Gomer. Hos. 3:1 indicates that she has become estranged from Hosea by once again having an adulterous affair. God instructs Hosea to be reconciled to her "and love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods..." (3:1b). Hosea obeys and tells her to live with him for many days without being intimate with any other man (3:2). We are not told how long this relationship lasts.

2.3.3.9 Dealing with foreign wives in Ezra's time

The exiles that have intermarried with foreign women agree to send them and their children away (Ezra 10:1-17). The Hebrew verb could denote separation rather than divorce, according to Laney (1990: 26), but Heth (1990: 89-90) argues convincingly that in Ezra's mind these marriages have been illegally contracted and are therefore to be justifiably nullified. Scripture indicates that this is in accordance with the will of God (10:11) and it does not describe the grief or agony that will necessarily accompany this event.

2.3.3.10 The New Testament

The researcher could not find one specific example of marital conflict between a couple mentioned by names in the New Testament. 1 Cor. 7:1 suggests that there have been cases of marital conflict resulting in some questions being asked of Paul.

2.3.4 Specific references to marital conflict

We now turn to specific references in Scripture concerning the issue of marital conflict. Since the question of divorce has been dealt with above, it will not be covered here.

2.3.4.1 Gen. 3:16b

God tells Eve as part of the curse (see 2.3.1.3 above) after the fall, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

The word *desire* (Hebrew: *teshuqah*) was originally used in the sense of stretching out after; hence *a longing* or *a desire*. (Strong, s.a.: H8669) The word "rule" is *mashal* in Hebrew, meaning *to have dominion, bear rule, have power* (Strong, s.a.: H4910).

It refers here to "a deep overpowering desire" that the wife will have toward her husband and the way he will take advantage of it to rule over her (Ellison, 1986:118) or "an aggressive desire against her husband, one that would bring her into conflict with him (Grudem, 2002:41). The wife's desire referred to here is clearly not sexual desire, one reason being that Adam and Eve must have had sexual desire for one another prior to the fall, for God had told them to be fruitful and multiply (Grudem, 2002:41).

As a result of the fall, the wife would henceforth be more or less a slave under fallen man (Barnes, s.a.). Eldredge (2001; 72-73) explains that every man carries a wound in this broken world. "Men either overcompensate for their wound and become driven (violent men) or they shrink back and grow passive (retreating men)" and sometimes they exhibit "an odd mixture of both".

From the fall emanated a tendency toward distortions in the behaviour of both husbands and wives towards each other, ranging from obsequiousness to

insubordination in some wives and from hostile domination to lazy indifference in some men (Piper, 1996:186-187; cf.; Grudem, 2002:45; Grudem, 2005:467).

Piper's description is illustrated by the following diagram – the words in brackets being those used by Grudem:

	God's intention	As corrupted in practice
Husband	Loving leadership	1. Hostile domination (tyrant) 2. Lazy indifference (wimp)
Wife	Intelligent, willing submission	1. Manipulative obsequiousness (usurper) 2. Brazen subordination (doormat)

Table / Illustration 2.3

Piper (1996:186) calls upon the husband to take his special cues from Christ as the head of the church and the wife to take her cues from the church as submissive to Christ and then the damaging results of the fall will begin to be reversed.

It can be said that the fall has brought alienation in man's relationship to God, which in turn has also violated the mutual complementariness between husband and wife through *inter alia* guilt, disharmony and conflict (Tiemensma and Venter, 1990:340). As will become clearer in the section on *Reconciliation* (2.4 below) the barrier between God and man as a result of the fall reaches also into marriage by bringing about a natural tendency amongst spouses toward conflict between them. This, in turn, exerts pressure on the ideal of a pleasurable marriage-bond as intended by God.

2.3.4.2 1 Cor. 7

In 1 Cor. 7:12-16 the situation of a believer married to an unbeliever is addressed. If the unbeliever is willing to live with the believer, the latter must not pursue divorce. However, if the unbeliever wishes to leave, the believer should not stand in his or her way. "A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace" (7:15). The observation that God has called us to live in peace may be difficult to reconcile with Mat. 10:34-37. The answer seems to be that since God is a God of peace (1 Cor. 14: 33), He wants all men to dwell in peace (1 Cor. 1:3), but that in view of the fall and his plan of redemption He has ordained conflict for some, in order that His Name should be glorified through their graceful handling thereof (1 Pet.

1:7; 4:12-19) and that they may develop their character through adversity (James 1:12).

2.3.4.3 Observations

It may be concluded that the Bible does not say much about marital problems and it does not analyse them (Collins, 1988:409). Stanley *et al.* (2002:28) points out that there are more Scriptures that tell us what *not to do*, than what *to do*, with regard to relationships (such as Prov. 12:18; 20:3; Mat. 5:22; 7:1-5; Gal. 5:13-15). The destructive behaviours outlined there are corrosive in all relationships, but even more damaging in marriage, according to the authors. Mason (1985:34) states that a summary of what the Book of Proverbs teaches about marriage is that nothing in the world is worse than a bad marriage and at the same time nothing better than a good one.

Our sinful and deceptive hearts (Jer. 17:9) that continue to have an influence even on converted believers (James 4:1; Rom. 7:23); the pull exerted by society (Rom. 12:2; James 1:27, 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17) and the attacks from the devil will exert pressure on any marital relationship (1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 4:26-27). The devil is out to drive a wedge between spouses (Adams, 1983: 1; Louw, 1993: 116). For that reason Paul admonishes spouses not to go to bed angry with each other, and thereby give the devil a foothold (Eph. 4:26-27).

Marital conflict is often a symptom of deeper sin, such as unwillingness to forgive, bitterness, self-centredness, materialism, greed, sinful anger or simply rebellion against God. These topics are addressed more fully in Scripture.

2.3.5 Preliminary conclusions on marital conflict

- Conflict in general gets extensive coverage in Scripture. What is revealed about conflict can be applied to marital conflict.
- God is a God of peace. For most of history, there was no conflict. Conflict entered the picture when sin was committed. There will be a time when all conflict will come to an end and peace will reign forever.
- Since Satan's rebellion and Adam's sin (the fall), God has ordained conflict for this world, until the time when all opposition against Him will be subdued, according to His decree.

- One of the curses emanating from the fall is distortion in the behaviour of husbands towards wives and *vice versa*, embodied in oppressive domination or lazy indifference in the case of husbands, and cringing, fearful submission or outright rebellion in the case of wives.
- Some conflict is not caused by sin, however, it is often caused by sin, and then specifically, desires that are either sinful in themselves, or become sinful because of being elevated into demands. Poverty, childhood experiences and unmet needs are not causes of conflict.
- The Old Testament (but not the New Testament) mentions several instances of marital conflict in passing. Not much is said in Scripture about marital conflict *per se*. However, sinful attitudes and sinful behaviour in its many forms, as outlined in Scripture, have a corrosive effect on all relationships, particularly marriage. Guidelines are given in the New Testament on how husbands and wives should treat one another.
- Even believers experience the onslaught on their marriages arising from their own sinful hearts, the lures of society and the divisive attacks from the devil.
- Marital conflict is often a symptom of deeper sin.

2.4 RECONCILIATION

The reader is referred to Chapter 1 for a definition of reconciliation. The word *reconciliation* (Greek: *katallage*) denotes a change from enmity to friendship between people (Vine, s.a.: 942-944). In Louw and Nida (1993: 502) the word falls in the domain of *Reconciliation, Forgiveness* where the words generally have meanings opposite to those in Domain 39 *Hostility, Strife*. The components into which the concept can be broken down are: "(1) disruption of friendly relations because of (2) presumed or real provocation, (3) overt behavior designed to remove hostility, and (4) restoration of original friendly relations..." (Louw and Nida, 1993: 502)

It has been noted (see 2.3.1.1 above) that God is a God of peace and that peace has reigned for most of history. We have seen that conflict in the world exists as a result of the fall, as a brief interlude until the restoration of all things, when peace will once again reign, this time forever.

2.4.1 The triune God as peacemaker

As the triune God, living in perfect harmony from the beginning, foreknew before its creation that sin would be committed on earth, and that sin causes separation between God and the sinner (Isa. 59:2), it was agreed in the heavenly courts that the Son, the second Person of the Godhead, would play the part of the perfect Lamb to be slain (1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8; Berkhoff, 2000:265-270; Grudem, 2005:577). It was a sacrifice for both God the Father and the Son, because the Father knew He had to inflict this pain on his own deeply loved Son (Rom. 5:8) and Jesus knew that He would bear the incredible pain of the cross (Rev. 13:8). The reason why a price like that had to be paid can be gleaned from Rom. 3:23-26:

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement [propitiation – King James Version], through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.

The Greek word for “sacrifice of atonement” or “propitiation” is *hilaskesthai*, meaning “as a means by which sins are forgiven” (Louw & Nida, 1993: 40.12 sub-domain of *forgiveness*) or “expiation” (Vine, s.a.: 905). The idea is that Christ’s sacrifice has paid the price for all of mankind’s sins in order for man to be justified in God’s sight (Rom. 3:25; 5:9-10; Eph. 2:13-14; Ridderbos, 1975: 186-193). The passage in Isa. 53:10, which at first glance seems to be perplexing, states that it pleased God to bruise his Son. The perplexing question is: how can it please God to do so to his beloved Son? The answer appears to be that God, by virtue of his own righteousness, is so committed to upholding the worth of his own glory that any sin, which by its very nature desecrates that glory, incurs his holy wrath (Rom. 3:23; Psalm 38:1-2; Ezra 8:22; 10:14; Piper, 2006: 157-166). Christ’s death satisfied God’s demand that sin be atoned for and in that way made reconciliation with man possible (Piper, 2006: 191). Poirier (2006:187) puts this truth elegantly into perspective by stating, “The story of Christ’s substitutionary, reconciling death is the ultimate drama of biblical peacemaking. Every other conflict pales in comparison.”

It is noteworthy that the initiative for reconciliation has come from God and that He has done so for sinful mankind, motivated by his love for them. (Rom. 5:1, 10-11; 1 John 4:10; cf also Poirier, 2006:80).

More about Christ's role as mediator and the resulting reconciliation will appear in the following subparagraph.

2.4.2 Jesus Christ as Mediator between God and man

In the King James Version the word "mediation" does not appear, but "mediator" appears six times, all of it in the New Testament, namely in Gal. 3:19, Gal. 3:20, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 8:6, Heb. 9:15, Heb. 12:24. The Greek word in every instance is *mesites*. It comes from the word *mesos* which means "middle" and the word *eimi* which means "to go" thus literally a go-between (Vine, s.a.: 736). Vine mentions two ways that the word is used in the New Testament: (1) one who mediates between two parties with a view to producing peace as in 1 Tim. 2:5 and (2) one who acts as a guarantee or surety. The following meanings are given by Louw and Nida Vol. 1 (1993: 503, 368) (1) under no. 40.6 in the sub-domain of *Reconciliation*: "a person who acts as a mediator in bringing about reconciliation" and (2) under no. 31.22 in the sub-domain of *Agree, Consent*: "one who causes or helps parties to come to an agreement, with the implication of guaranteeing the certainty of the arrangement." This corresponds with the second meaning of a guarantor that Vine mentions. The closest word (with regard to the first meaning) according to Louw and Nida Vol. 1 (1993: 503) under no. 40.5 is the word *peacemaker* as in Mat. 5:9.

2.4.2.1 Christ as intermediary

In Gal. 3:19 Moses is spoken of as a mediator of the Law. Gal. 3:20 gives one of the essential characteristics of mediation: "A mediator ... does not represent just one party..." 1Tim. 2:5 points out that the man Christ Jesus is the one mediator between God and men. In his death Christ represents God to men and He also represents men to God (Ridderbos, 1975: 190). This can be illustrated by the following table:

Christ representing God to men	Christ representing men to God
God being reconciled to man	Man being reconciled to God
God's love demonstrated by sending forth his Son to be a sin offering (Rom. 5:8; 8:3)	His obedience unto death on the cross (Phil. 2:8; Rom. 5:18-19)
He reveals God the Father and gives his disciples the ministry of reconciliation to induce sinners to accept atonement by Christ (Mat. 11:27; 2 Cor. 5:18-20)	His death as propitiation of God's just wrath for man's sin by expiating the guilt of sin (Rom. 3:25, 26; 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 John 4:10)
Acting as Prophet Christ represents God to man as He reveals God's will to the people (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22-24)	Acting as High Priest, Advocate and Intercessor on behalf of men (1 John 2:1-2; Hebr. 2:17-18; 10:19-22)

Table / Illustration 2.4
(Ridderbos, 1975:186-193; Berkhof, 2000:282-283; 356-358; Piper, 2006:164-175)

The point that God is also (actually primarily) to be reconciled to man (Berkhof, 2000:373) can be misunderstood as to mean that God's love and mercy toward man do not equal that of Christ and that Christ has to intervene to make God change his attitude. Some scholars reject this notion for that very reason (Vine, s.a.:943; reference in Grudem, 2005: 575 footnote 11; references in Piper, 2006: 166 footnote 4;). These objections are based on a misunderstanding of what is meant by propitiation and in some cases on a failure to appreciate how God's righteousness and holiness cause his wrath to be incurred because of sin, which by its very nature desecrates God's glory (Ridderbos, 1975:191; Piper, 2006: 157-166). This understanding does not detract from the fact that God is in any event the Author and Initiator of reconciliation with man (Ridderbos, 1975: 182, 190).

The two ways in which Christ acts as intermediary are closely linked with each other. Berkhof (2000:373) explains that "the fact that Christ reconciles God to the sinner results in a reflex action on the sinner, in virtue of which the sinner may be said to be reconciled to God."

2.4.2.2 Christ as guarantor

The role of Christ as mediator in the sense of guarantor of the New Covenant can be found in passages like Heb. 8:6, 9:15 and 12:24. Christ not only plays the role of "go-between" but also takes the guilt of sinners upon Himself. Christ,

“armed with plenipotentiary power”, has done all the necessary to establish peace (Berkhof, 2000:282). In that sense He is the guarantor of the New Covenant (Heb. 7:22). The Greek for guarantor, *enguos*, means surety, one who guarantees the reality of something (Vine, s.a.: 1120; Louw and Nida, 1993: 668 (70.8)).

2.4.2.3 The implications of Christ’s role as mediator

As explained in the preceding section (2.4.1) reconciliation between God and man and peace with God for those who embrace this truth, have come through Christ’s shedding of his blood on the cross (Col. 1:20-22; Eph. 1:7) and He is continuing to plead for us as our High Priest and Advocate in heaven (1 John 2:1-2; Hebr. 2:9-17). We now have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). It is in both senses of the word that Jesus is mediator (*mesites*) – in brokering peace between God and his people (1 Tim. 2:5) and in being the surety or guarantor of the New Covenant (Heb. 7:22).

The implications of Jesus’ role as mediator are well explained by Poirier (2006:184-185):

Mediation and arbitration are not the privileged domain of the legal community. Mediation is about being a mediator, and the gospel itself is the grand meta-narrative of the God-man Mediator and his redemptive mediation...From Genesis 3 to Revelation 21, the Bible is a book abounding with conflict – man against God, God against man, man against man. But the Bible is more. The Bible is God’s special revelation of his Reconciler. It is the good news of God’s promise of a Mediator – the coming Prince of Peace. The story of redemption is a story of reconciliation, and that reconciliation is all about assisted peacemaking. Redemption calls for divine action; we cannot save or reconcile ourselves. Reconciliation demands another. Reconciliation requires the Messiah as Mediator. ... [T]he good news is that the Mediator stands between God and humans.

2.4.3. The gospel and peacemaking

The “gospel of peace” (Rom. 10:15) refers to peace in all its dimensions, including the horizontal dimension of brother towards brother. Those who have their minds controlled by the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9), the Mediator (Heb. 8:6) are life and peace oriented (Rom. 8:6; Gal.5: 22). That is why Poirier (2006:184) states that peacemaking is not an option or tool but a way of being, and then asks the rhetorical question: Since God is zealous about peacemaking, should believers who are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20) not share his passion?

2.4.3.1 The horizontal relationship

It has been shown in 2.4.2 how the gospel reveals Jesus as mediator in the vertical relationship between God and man. What will be examined now is the impact of the gospel on the horizontal relationship between man and man, especially those who constitute the Church. This aspect of reconciliation, according to Lotter (2000:227) has been neglected in South African theological circles.

Two prophecies concerning Jesus, before and at the time of his birth, refer to peace. In the song of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, prophecies about the Lord who will "guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luk 1:79). The angels appearing to the shepherds to announce the birth of the Christ child, praise God with the following words, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests" (Luk. 2:14). It seems that the peace referred to here would include both peace with God and peace between people. This peace between people, which was not to be an immediate reality (see 2.3.1.3 above and Mat. 10:34) will be within his church (Eph. 4:3-4; Rev. 19:7-8) and amongst nations (Isa. 2:4).

Eph. 2:14-16 refers to Christ - "he himself is our peace"- who has removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile, the two groups being made one by Him and in Him (Harpur, 1986:1434). It is through the gospel that the Gentiles and Israel are together heirs of what has been promised in Christ (Eph. 3:6). The gospel itself "is the grand metanarrative of the God-man Mediator and his redemptive mediation" (Poirier, 2006: 184-185).

In both the Letter to the Ephesians and the Letter to the Colossians Paul elaborates on the gospel and the reconciliation between God and his people brought about by the cross and then, in the light of the gospel, pleads with his readers to change their hearts and lifestyles, resulting in different conduct for wives, husbands, children, slaves and slave owners (Eph. 5:21-6:9; Col. 3:18-4:1). In Eph 4:3, Paul, urging his readers to live a life worthy of their calling, pleads with them to "[m]ake effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace". Later in the same chapter, still in the same context, Paul warns against sinful anger and letting the sun go down whilst continuing to harbour anger (verse 26).

There are a number of exhortations that believers should forgive one another, just as they have been forgiven in Christ (Eph. 4:32, Mat. 6:14-15; Mat. 18:21-35). There can be no reconciliation without forgiveness (Lotter, 1996:2). As children of God, believers are urged to live lives of love, just as Christ loved his people (Eph. 5:1); to be perfect and holy as God the Father is (Mat. 5:48; 1 Pet. 5:15) and to be willing to suffer, if necessary, even for doing good, following in the footsteps of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21).

2.4.3.2 The believer's position in Christ

The gospel enables the reconciler (who should be mindful of God's mercy toward himself) to approach those in conflict in a spirit of love rather than in one of condemnation, or using guilt or shame (Gal. 6:1). God's grace and the good news that God wants believers and enables them to be free from sin should be the starting point (Sande, 2004:142).

The believer is called upon to follow God and walk in love as Christ has done for him and all other believers (Eph. 5:1-2). This should follow naturally from the reality that since being born again (John 3:7; Litzman, 1996: 34), the believer is actually indwelt by Christ (John 14:23; Rom. 8:9-10; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27) and is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), having died with Christ on the cross (Rom. 6:2-7), made alive together with Christ (Rom. 6:8,11; Eph. 2:4) and possessing a divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). The Christian life is not so much a believer living for Christ, as it is Christ living through the believer (MacArthur, 1983; Campbell, 2006: 11).

There is tremendous power and hope embedded in this position in Christ that the believer enjoys (2 Cor. 13:3-5; Eph. 3:16-21; Maddex, 1994: 119-120; Kollar, 1997: 50; Tripp, 2002: 259-263). It empowers the believer (through Christ's dwelling in him and his believing the fact) to imitate God in love and as reconciler and to be clothed with the victory of Christ (1 John 5:4; Nee, 1977: 22-23; Poirier, 2006: 100-101). Thus the pastor may emphasize the gospel of Christ and grace to the believer experiencing conflict (Rom. 8:20b; Adams, 1979: 180). He may encourage him that any attitude or activity that God may require can be acquired through Christ (Adams, 1979: 236) offering hope of the restoration of a broken marriage-relationship between believers to a state even

beyond that of the marriage prior to the problems that impinged on the relationship, leading toward new heights of joy and peace (Adams, 1979: 182).

2.4.4 The Pastor as mediator

The question that needs to be dealt with now is whether Scripture supports the role of pastor as mediator in the conflicts between the members of his flock and therefore also in their troubled marriages. (The reader is again referred to Chapter 1 for the definitions of "mediation" and "troubled marriages".) The term *mediator* as it appears in Scripture has already been examined in 2.4.2 above. It seems appropriate to look first at instances of mediation between people in conflict in Scripture, and then at the biblical perspective on peacemaking, and after that to consider whether the ministry that God has given to pastors includes mediation, by examining Scriptures such as Mat. 5:9, Mat. 18:15-17 and Rom. 14:19.

2.4.4.1 Biblical examples of mediation

Examples of mediation, in the sense of assisted peacemaking between people in conflict that can be found in Scripture are:

- Reuben's pleading for Joseph – Gen. 37:21,22;
- Moses' trying to bring reconciliation between two fighting Israelites – Acts 7:26; Ex. 2:13;
- Jonathan's pleading with Saul for David – 1 Sam. 19:1-7;
- Abigail's pleading with David not to carry out his impending attack on Nabal – 1 Sam. 25;
- Joab's pleading with David for Absalom – 2 Sam. 14:1-24;
- the way the complaint about the distribution of food in the early church was dealt with by the apostles – Acts 6:1-7;
- Barnabas's pleading with the church leaders in Jerusalem to accept Paul – Acts 9:26-27;
- Paul's urging his "loyal yokefellow" to help Euodia and Syntyche to agree with each other – Phil. 4:2-3;
- Paul's urging Philemon to take Onesimus back and Paul's taking responsibility for his debts to Philemon. – Philem. 8-18.

These examples may not all speak directly to pastors. They nevertheless reflect the heart of God as the ultimate Peacemaker and Reconciler.

2.4.4.2 The call to peacemaking

Throughout Scripture we come across appeals to seek after peace. In some cases they apply more to personal peacemaking and in others they include, or may include, calls for assistance to those who are in conflict in becoming reconciled. The following are some of the verses calling for peacemaking:

“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.” (Ps 34:14);

“There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace.” (Prov. 12:20);

“It is to a man’s honour to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.” (Prov. 20:3);

“The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence for ever.” (Isa. 32:17);

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” (Mat. 5:9)
(See 2.4.3.4 *infra*.);

“Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50);

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
(Rom. 12:18);

“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.” (Rom. 14:19). (See 2.3.3.4 *infra*);

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”
(Eph. 4:3);

“Live in peace with each other.” (1 Thes. 5:13);

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14);

“Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.” (James 3:18).

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another.... Do ...repay evil ... with blessing... because to this you were called... For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days.... Must seek peace and pursue it...’ (1 Pet. 3:8-12).

2.4.4.3 Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

This verse in the Synoptic Gospel primarily addressed to Jews (Morris, 1992: 2-3) forms part of the Beatitudes (derived from the Latin *beatus*, which meant “a state of utmost felicity or bliss” (Lioy, 2004:120)), which form part of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon apparently took place during the early part of Jesus’ Galilean ministry (Lioy, 2004:89-90). It seems that although Jesus was primarily addressing his disciples, a large crowd was also listening (Mat. 5:2; 7:28; Harrington, 1991:76, 78; Luz, 1995: 122; Lioy, 2004:93).

Since the Sermon on the Mount deals with related topics and “is not a mere patchwork of isolated and unrelated sayings” (Lioy, 2004:92) it should be viewed as a complete literary unit. It has been called the “constitution of the Kingdom of God” since it identifies Christ as King and Lawgiver (Rushdoony, 1973 :699) and sets out how a citizen of God’s kingdom is supposed to conduct himself (Van der Walt, 1988:108, 112; Hagner, 1993b: 97; Lioy, 2004:117, 119). Several theories of how the Sermon should be structured have been propounded, of which the macro-chiastic structure of Lioy (2004:98) is preferred by the researcher. Here follows an outline based on that of Lioy:

A. 5:1-2 Prologue

- B. 5:3-16 The joy, fulfilment and responsibilities of Christ's followers
- B1 5:3-12 Blessedness as a follower of Christ (The Beatitudes)
 - B1.1 5:3 The poor in spirit
 - B1.2 5:4 Those who mourn
 - B1.3 5:5 The meek
 - B1.4 5:6 Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
 - B1.5 5:7 The merciful
 - B1.6 5:8 The pure in heart
 - B1.7 5:9 The peacemakers
 - B1.8 5:10-12 The persecuted and insulted
 - B2 5:13-16 Being salt and light in the world

C. The moral law of God and the nature of its absolute requirements

- C1 5:17-20 The moral law fulfilled by Christ
- C2 5:21-26 The moral law properly interpreted by Christ (six antitheses)
 - C2.1 5:21-26 Murder
 - C2.2 5:27-30 Adultery
 - C2.3 5:31-32 Marriage and divorce
 - C2.4 5:33-37 Taking oaths
 - C2.5 5:38-42 Seeking revenge
 - C2.6 5:43-48 Loving your enemies
- C3 6:1-7:12 The moral law properly applied by Christ
 - C3.1 6:1-4 Giving to the needy
 - C3.2 6:5-15 Praying appropriately
 - C3.3 6:16-18 Fasting with the proper attitude
 - C3.4 6:19-24 Shunning greed
 - C3.5 6:25-34 Forsaking worry
 - C3.6 7:1-6 Ceasing to judge others
 - C3.7 7:7-12 Praying persistently

B 7:13-27 The direction, lifestyle and spiritual foundation of Christ's followers

- B1 7:13-14 The two ways
- B2 7:15-23 The two fruits
- B3 7:24-27 The two foundations

A 7:28-29 Epilogue

Table / Illustration 2.5

Verse 10 can also be viewed as the closing Beatitude since it rounds off the collection by an *inclusion*, i.e. referring as in verse 3, to "the kingdom of heaven". (Hagner, 1993a:95). The following Beatitude can be seen as an elaboration of the one in verse 10.

The arrangement above indicates that the absolute requirements of the moral law of God are of central importance to grasping the overall thrust of the Sermon. As suggested by Lioy (2004:98) the outlying frames (section B in the diagram above) imply that when disciples of Christ practise the moral law, their lives will be filled with joy, purpose and eternal hope, whereas those who don't, will experience sorrow, futility and despair. It is important to note that, similar to the introduction to the Ten Commandments, reference is first made to what God has given before that which He requires is outlined. In Ex. 20:2 the people of Israel are reminded that God is the One who has led them out of Egyptian slavery and in the Beatitudes each statement begins with, "Blessed are...". Again, in the Sermon on the Mount, before expounding the depth of the moral law, in 5:13-16 He reminds his audience who they are in Christ, namely the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The imperative follows on the indicative (Van der Walt, 1988:109).

The Greek word for "blessed" is *makarioi*, meaning happy or enjoying favourable circumstances (Vine, s.a. :135; Louw and Nida, 1993: 25.119) which state is not based on feelings but is a condition of exuberant joy emanating from God (Van der Walt, 1988:109; Hagner, 1993a: 95; Lioy, 2004:120). It is a condition that God Himself enjoys (1 Tim. 1:11; 6:15). The blessedness relates mostly to the eschatological reward, "though there may be some anticipation of the reward in the present" (Harrington, 1991:78, 82; Hagner, 1993a: 95).

The word *peacemakers* is found only here in the New Testament (Morris, 1992:100; Hagner, 1993a: 94). The Greek *eirenopoios* is the conjunction of *eirene* (peace) and *poieo* (to make), that is, one who works for peace where the focus is not so much on the cessation of war, but rather on active reconciliation between persons (Vine, s.a. :853; Louw and Nida, 1993: 40.5; Boring, 1995: 180). According to Harrington (1991:79), the peace referred to is the Old Testament idea of *shalom*. The word *peacemaker* is not qualified in any way, which probably means that peacemakers within the religious, social and political arenas are intended - in large scale conflicts (such as wars) as well as in small scale (quarrels) (Morris, 1992:100; Lioy, 2004:129). The reference is to striving toward peace and stability both in the life of the individual himself and in his relationships with other people (Lioy, 2004:129). It also includes bringing the gospel by explaining to others how they can have peace with God (Lioy, 2004:130). Thus, all three dimensions of peace, that is (1) peace with God, (2)

peace with others and (3) peace with oneself, are applicable (Sande, 2004:44-47).

The promise that peacemakers will be called children of God is taken by Harrington to mean that they will be invited to join the angels of God (Harrington, 1991:79) with reference to Gen. 6:1-4 where the words "sons of God" in the author's view, according to him, refer to angels. Since man is destined to become higher than the angels and believers are actually called children of God in Scripture, Harrington's view is not convincing (Grudem, 2005:402; Ps. 8:4-6; 1 Cor. 6:3; Hebr. 1:14; Hebr. 2:7; 1 John 3:1-2). Being a child of God embraces much more than joining the angels. Therefore the explanation of Morris is to be preferred:

It is people like this who will be called God's sons. There is something godlike in bringing peace to people and people to peace. There is, of course, a sense in which all believers are members of the family of God, whether they are distinguished as makers of peace or not. But those who make peace are fulfilling what membership in the family really means, and this is something to which all the members of the family must aspire. The verb "to call" may be used in a variety of ways, but here the point is that the call signifies that the person called really is what the name indicates.

(Morris, 1992 :101; cf. Poirier, 2006:90, 92)

In Jesus' day, the rabbis used the expression "sons of God" exclusively with reference to the children of Israel (Lioy, 2004: 129). According to Boring (1995: 180) the Roman emperors also called themselves "peacemakers" and "sons of God". It is probably more accurate to say that some emperors insisted that they be honoured as gods (Du Toit, 1997: 213). Christ, in declaring that all peacemakers (that belong to his kingdom), regardless of nationality or status, will be called "children of God" must have astonished the national zealots whose driving passion was to be liberated from Roman rule (Lioy, 2004:129). The underlying message seems to be that there are those in the world who proudly call themselves "peacemakers" and "sons of God", but the truth is that God expects his true followers to be genuine peacemakers and He will ensure that they are called "sons of God" in the consummation of the kingdom.

Since the promise refers to the familial relationship with God and the Church is now the household of God - people who call God their Father and who are considered brothers and sisters of Christ - it can be concluded that

peacemaking within the Church should be a matter of top priority (Poirier, 2006:102; cf. Mat. 5:23-24).

Other peacemaking implications can be derived from the Sermon on the Mount: First, it must be remembered that all the beatitudes should be characteristic of the life of a child of God's Kingdom (Boring, 1995: 178). Virtues such as meekness and mercy, particularly, should go hand in hand with any peacemaking efforts. The peacemaker may experience opposition and even insults and persecution (Mat. 5:10-11). Mat. 5:14-16 depicts the ideal of a church that shines her light in a dark world and acts as the salt of the earth. Peacemaking within the Church is one way of fulfilling that ideal (Sande 2004:289-292). Unwarranted anger and name-calling mentioned in 5:21-22, work against peacemaking. Mat. 5:23-34 makes peacemaking and reconciliation an even higher priority than acts of outward worship: "First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Mat. 5:25-26 urges the believer to work for reconciliation in legal conflict (Lioy, 2004:146). Since sinful conflict begins with lustful thoughts in the heart (see above), 5:27-30, which equates sexual lust with adultery, it is also relevant to peacemaking when marital conflict has resulted from such sin. Instead of taking vengeance or seeing restitution when wronged, the believer is urged to "turn the other cheek" or walk the extra mile in Mat. 5:39-42 (Lioy, 2004:152). One of the most powerful antidotes against an unreasonable person in a conflict situation is to love him, since believers are called in Mat. 5:43 to love even their enemies. The right kind of prayers can have a powerful impact on peacemaking efforts. The "model prayer" (Mat. 6:9-13) contains a prayer for God's will on earth (which includes peacemaking) and refers to forgiveness which is often vital for bringing peace. Serving the money god often lies at the root of conflict (Mat. 6:24) and a critical attitude will stand in the way of peacemaking, whilst honest self-examination and confession of wrong can lead to peacemaking breakthroughs (Mat. 7:1-5). Anyone who really and earnestly seeks peace with God will find it (Mat. 7:7-11). The "Golden Rule" in Mat. 7:12, doing to others as you would have them do to you, applies especially in the context of peacemaking.

2.4.4.4. Matthew 18:15-17:

15 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may

be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...

The chapter includes four references to the kingdom of God (18:1,3,4,23) and it depicts a community brought into existence by that kingdom, with practices and relationships, which differ greatly from those of the Roman Empire. In contrast to the Roman Empire this community practises humility, it includes those marginalized and exercises care one for another. "Instead of exterminating or excluding dissenters, it seeks inclusion and relationship (18:15-20), forgiveness and reconciliation (18:21-35)" (Carter, 2000:361).

Mat. 18 begins with the question the disciples pose to Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He replies that it is those who are like little children. Jesus then starts speaking about "the little ones". These little ones should not be offended. The discussion then moves on to the parable of the lost sheep. The lost sheep is linked to "the little ones" in verse 14 where Jesus says, "In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost." Verses 15 to 17 should thus be read in the context of restoring a fellow believer who has strayed from the right way. The words, "your brother", indicate that it is the community of disciples that is meant here (Hagner, 1995:53; Davies & Allison, 2004:782).

The view has been expressed that, in view of the serious consequences, the sin referred to here, is not merely a trivial offence (Hagner, 1995:531; Borag, 1995:378). MacArthur (1988:126) does not make that distinction. To him the Greek word *hamartano* for sin, which has the literal meaning of missing the mark of God's standards, is inclusive of all kinds of sin. If we consider that sin includes wrong attitudes and motives and that all believers probably sin at least in that sense every day, it is this researcher's view that the exclusion of trivial sin is probably correct.

The words "against you" do not appear in all ancient manuscripts (Harrington, 1991:268). As is pointed out by MacArthur (1988:126), it does not really matter which reading one wishes to follow because even indirectly all sin by believers affects all other believers, like a little leaven that affects all (1Cor. 5:6). (Harrington, 1991:268; Davies & Allison, 2004:782).

It is clear that the idea here is not that the offender be scolded or verbally abused, but rather that the offence be brought to the attention of the offender in the hope that he will repent. (Hagner, 1995:531; Carter, 2000:367; Davies & Allison, 2004:783;). The injunction seems to be based on Lev. 19:17 which prohibits hatred in the heart against one's brother but encourages reproof when necessary (Bornkamm, 1995:103; Davies & Allison, 2004:786).⁴

The confrontation takes place privately "just between the two of you". Only if this first stage has proven fruitless, does the second stage come into play. The procedure is repeated now in the presence of "one or two others, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses," apparently based on the two-witnesses-rule in Deut. 19:15 (Harrington, 1991:269; Carter, 2000:368; Davies & Allison 2004:784).

The situation here is, however, not exactly the same as in the two-witness-rule, because the witnesses in the Old Testament were witnesses of the deed itself, whereas here they serve as witnesses of the correction and the appeal for repentance (Hagner, 1995:532). Poirier explains that in verse 16 the meeting is informal and without anyone acting as a judge and therefore the one or two others taken along are not acting as witnesses for the prosecution. Three reasons for taking this view are submitted by Poirier. (1) At this stage there is still the possibility that the offending brother would listen and thus the need for taking the matter further may be redundant. (2) Another reason is that the words "refuses to listen" imply that the "witnesses" are speaking, counselling, exhorting and rebuking – "making every effort to compel their brother to listen". The witnesses are primarily acting as counsellors, whilst also acting as witnesses to establish the validity of the case presented by each. (3) The citation of Deut. 19:15 is probably in anticipation of step three when the two or three will act not merely as counsellors but as witnesses in a church court (Poirier, 2006:207-208).

According to Borag (1995:378) the witnesses are there to protect both the alleged offender and the one who claimed to have been offended from misrepresentation. Carter (2000:368) writes that the witnesses "represent the community's authority and desire for reconciliation". The Greek word for witness is *martus* from which the English word martyr is derived, i.e. one who bears witness by his death. (Vine, s.a.:1248; cf. Louw Nida, 1993: 419 (33.270)).

In the third injunction, “tell the church” (Mat. 18:17) “church” apparently refers to the local congregation (Harrington,1991: 269; Bornkamm, 1995:102; Davies & Allison 2004:787) and church discipline is seen as a last resort (Adams, 1982: 45).

The important point to note is that Mat 18:16 envisions a ministry of mediation in the local church. Poirier asks, quite rightly, in this researcher’s view, “If this is true for its members, how much more for those who exercise authority within the church. Mediation is part of our pastoral agenda.” (Poirier, 2006:208).

2.4.4.5 Romans 14:19:

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

The context in Romans 14 is how to deal with those weak in the faith, especially with regard to “disputable matters” (verse 1) such as what one may allow oneself to eat and what not. Allen (1986:1341) mentions two possible scenarios that Paul has in mind: (1) since meat purchased at the market may have been consecrated to pagan gods, some Christians with tender consciences have preferred to be vegetarians, and (2) a Christian from a Jewish background may wish to continue the habit of observing certain days as holy. Paul is saying that in these non-critical but contentious matters we need to accept one another. In verse 17 Paul gives the reason, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...” In verse 19 he implores the readers to “make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.” No specific procedure is outlined by Paul. The point is, however, that whatever may work toward peace and edification must be employed. This may, therefore, entail mutual admonition, encouragement, warning, patience (Ridderbos, 1975:437) which may be done through discussions, the writing of letters, mediation or any other peacemaking effort.

2.4.4.6 The pastor’s role

The Bible pictures the pastor as shepherd to a flock of sheep (see Chapter 1 and Luk.15:3-7; John 10:1-18). This suggests leadership, protection from outside danger, guidance, edification and care (Ps. 23; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). He should know his people (John 10:14, Prov. 27:23) and be available to them, whilst they should trust him as one who is sensitive to their needs, capable of helping and one who really cares (Acts 20:28). He should contribute to their joy (2 Cor.

1:24) and work towards unity and peace among them (Eph. 4:11). Even members with no training or equipment, being part of the church family, can play this part (Gal. 6:1-2; Venter, 1988:36; Tiemensma and Venter, 1990:343). Wolters (1988: 60) argues that if God's people have been given "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18) on behalf of Christ who is the reconciler of all things, they have a redemptive task wherever they find themselves.

Although the fact may not necessarily be widely recognised in the church community at present, the pastor, as pictured in Scripture, seems to be ideally suited to acting as mediator or helper in disputes between members of his congregation, including cases of troubled marriages (Clinebell, 1984: 250; Lombard, 1985:231-233; Adams, 1986: 227; Rassieur, 1988: 17; Venter 1988:34-35). Louw, (1983:3) believes that more should be done to help people identify problem areas at an early stage. The alert and caring pastor who has regular contact with his parishioners, may be well positioned to detect any difficulties that his people may have in their marriages and this will enable him to attempt to deal with the problems at an early stage (Oates, 1964: 161-164; Arnold, 1982:200; Rassieur, 1988: 10; Adams, 1986:227; Eyrich, 1991:148). The pastoral meeting is metaphorically a meeting between God and man, where Christ mediates through the pastor (Louw (2003: 92-93; cf. Venter, 1993:258; Poirier, 2006: 186). The pastor should be an example to his parishioners (Phil. 3:17) by taking the lead in being a peacemaker (Mat. 5:9) and fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18; Venter, 1988: 32), motivated by the love of Christ (Lombard, 1985:231). In being an example, the pastor is actually following the example of the Great Shepherd (Christ) who gave his life for his flock (Adams, 1986:5). Where there has been a breakdown in communication, the pastor can assist in re-establishing communication, by taking the role of mediator or communication-facilitator (Adams, 1970: 216; Clinebell, 1984:264-265).

Like Paul, the pastor may have to urge one or both parties to forgive (Col. 3:13). As has been stated in 2.4.3.3 above, there can be no reconciliation without forgiveness. The question of where mediation fits in when forgiveness of one or both parties is required can be illustrated with reference to Lotter's model of forgiveness:

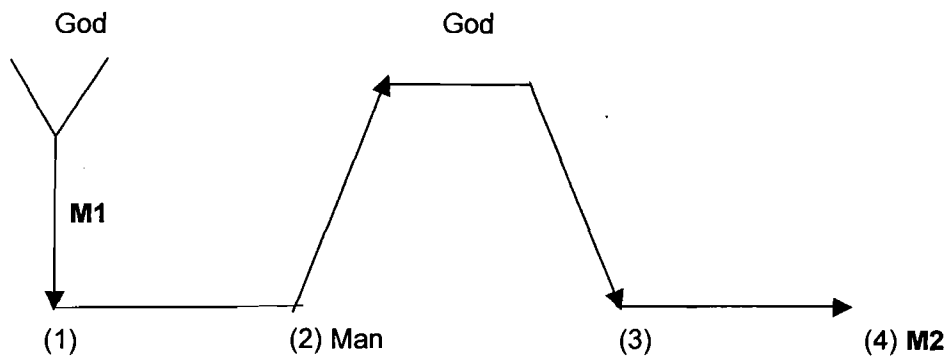


Table / Illustration 2.6
(Lotter, 1987: 160)

The process begins with God convincing the person of his sins (1) whereafter the person seeks forgiveness from God (2). God grants his forgiveness (3) setting the person free so that he is henceforth able to forgive others (4). Areas in which biblical mediation may typically occur are marked as M1 and M2 on the above diagram. The mediator, acting as confronter and exhorter (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 21), may be used by God as his instrument to help the parties come to grips with the truth of their sinful ways (Gal. 6:1), which fits in at M1 on the diagram. Sometimes the biblical mediator acts as “proclaimer of forgiveness”, by reminding people to forgive as they have been forgiven (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 22). This is depicted by M2 on the diagram.

The local church and its leaders have the right and the responsibility to deal with personal problems between its members (1 Cor. 6:12, 13; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Thes. 5:12, 13; Pieterse, 1983:18; Rassieur, 1988:17; Laird, 2006;); present the gospel (Poirier, 2006: 60-61); bring restoration through nurturing and confrontation with meekness (Venter, 1993:254; Bubna, 2000) and to reclaim its jurisdiction over marriage (Sims, 2001; Poirier, 2006: 202). Formative and, if necessary, corrective Church discipline as envisaged in Mat. 18:12-20, should be used as a tool to preserve and heal marriages (Sande, 2003). Ultimately, the pastor’s objective is to not only restore the status quo, but also improve the marriage relationship to beyond what it has been before (Adams, 1979:182) and also to offer paracletal care towards the spiritual growth of the couple (Tiemensma and Venter, 1990:349), “for at the heart of broken relationships is a broken relationship with the Lord” (Poirier, 2006: 66, 198). Pastors should

represent Christ and Christ mediates through pastors (2 Cor. 4:5; Poirier 2006: 186, 188).

In short, pastors are waiters serving the Lamb to sworn enemies. Pastors are busboys washing the dirty dishes of our hatreds, anger, lusts, deceits malice, and filthy words in the purifying stream of Christ's blood. It is tiring work. It is battle work. It is Messiah work. But we are compelled to persevere, because serving this way is at the heart of our calling as pastors, as mediators.
(Poirier, 2006:188).

2.5 Preliminary Conclusions on the basis theory

On the three aspects covered in this chapter, the following preliminary conclusions are submitted.

2.5.1 Marriage

- Marriage has been ordained by God, as a lifelong monogamous union of companionship between husband and wife, "united as one", with a deep emotional and spiritual bond, based on a covenant between them and God.
- Scripture esteems marriage as honourable and a foreshadowing of the joyous intimate relationship that will exist forever between Christ and the Church. The relationship between Israel and God was also pictured as a marriage.
- God hates divorce. It is permitted only in the event of sexual misconduct on the part of one, or an unbeliever's wishing to terminate his or her marriage with the believer.
- The love of the husband toward his wife should be as the love of Christ for the Church, for whom He has given his life. The submission of the wife to her husband should be as the submission of the Church to Christ.

2.5.2 Marital Conflict

- Biblical coverage of conflict in general can be applied to marital conflict.

- God is a God of peace. He does, however, allow conflict during the period until Christ's return, as a result of man's sin.
- One of the consequences emanating from the fall is a tendency amongst both husbands and wives to distort their ideal roles as designed by God. Not all conflict is caused by sin, but when sin is involved it is usually caused by sinful desires or desires that become sinful when being elevated into demands.
- Marital conflict is often a symptom of deeper sin.
- Believers also experience an onslaught on their marriages, caused by their own sinful hearts, the attraction of the world or divisive attacks from the devil.
- Sinful attitudes and behaviours have a corrosive effect on marital relationships.

2.5.3 Reconciliation

- God is a God of peace. Before sin entered there had always been peace.
- Sin causes separation between God and the sinner. Before creation it was determined by the Godhead that Christ would be slain to pay the penalty for the sin to be committed by man.
- Jesus acted as Mediator by His death on the cross, its being the sacrifice of atonement which made reconciliation between God and man possible.
- Peace, being an attribute of God's, is God's will not only for the vertical relationship between God and man, but also for the horizontal relationship between people, especially God's people, and particularly in marriage.
- There are several examples of informal mediations and many calls to peacemaking throughout Scripture.
- The Gospel of peace exhorts believers to forgive one another as God forgives his people.
- Rom.14:19 exhorts believers to make every effort to do what leads to peace.
- Mat18: 15-17 outlines the conflict-resolution process Christ prescribes for the Church, which entails 1) private discussion between disputants;

should that fail 2) mediation or counselling by one or two others; and should that fail 3) referral to the Church for adjudication.

- Conflict between members, including marital conflict, should be dealt with by the Church, according to 1Cor.6:1-6.
- Pastors, as shepherds who are to strive to add to the joy of their members, are ideally positioned, and, in fact, obligated in terms of what Scripture requires to play the role of reconcilers or mediators.

CHAPTER 3

META THEORY ON MEDIATION AS A THIRD PARTY SHORT TERM INTERVENTION METHOD FOR RECONCILIATION IN TROUBLED MARRIAGES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been stated (Heitink, 1993: 117) that the theological tradition (or theory) by itself often does not provide the answers to questions within the field of practical theology. Heitink explains that not only the theory but also the praxis needs to be considered with the assistance of research done in the social sciences. Praxis has been defined as follows, "In practical theology, praxis, in a nutshell, is concrete action or actions by individuals or groups in the church or society aimed at furthering the kingdom of God" (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990: 26). As has been stated in Chapter 1, the model of Zerfass will be utilised here to deal with the bipolar relationship between theory and praxis. The meta theory then is formulated from the situation analysis of what has been learnt in the social sciences from the relevant literature, which is to be taken into account in developing a new practice theory (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990: 36). For the purposes of this dissertation, social sciences will be taken to include relevant developments in the legal field as well as the writings of Christian authors on typical marital conflict issues. The findings of empirical research are part of the meta theory and will therefore be incorporated in this chapter.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Chapter is to establish a meta theory for short term third party intervention with its implications for biblical mediation, as a method in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages. In doing so, the following methodology will be employed:

- a literature study on mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism will be conducted, including a brief overview of the biblical mediation model used and taught by Peacemaker Ministries;
- an overview of typical modern-day marital conflict issues mentioned by Christian authors and counsellors in the social sciences and their advice on those issues will be explored in the light of mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism

- a literature survey of marital intervention methods resembling aspects of mediation;
- a qualitative empirical study will be done, by conducting mediations based on the biblical mediation model of Peacemaker Ministries with three Christian couples who are experiencing troubled marriages. An assessment will be made based on the input received from the couples as to the effectiveness and value of the mediation sessions as a pastoral tool.

3.3 MEDIATION AS A CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISM

3.3.1 Introduction:

The reader is referred to the definition of mediation in chapter 1 (see 1.8.1) where it is described as a third-party facilitation to help parties in conflict to systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach resolution of issues or at least improved conflict management. Sometimes communication between parties in conflict has deteriorated to such an extent that all attempts to restore communication are unsuccessful. In such a situation the only solution may be for an outsider to assist the parties in re-establishing communication (Adams, 1970: 216; Leviton & Greenstone, 1997: 9; Isenhardt & Spangle, 2000: 77). The outsider who fulfils that role, whether he is aware of it or not, acts as a mediator.

In literature sources those who go through the mediation process are referred to in various terms, depending on the type of mediation, namely: as the parties, the disputants or the participants-- but for the purposes of this study, the term *participants* will be used.

3.3.2 The elements and characteristics of mediation

- Mediation is usually voluntary.
- It is a non-adversarial process.
- It is a decision-making process.
- It is facilitated by a neutral third party (the mediator).
- The mediator attempts to improve the process of decision-making.
- The mediator's function is to assist the participants in conflict to reach their own agreement.

- The mediator has no power to impose agreement on the disputants.
- Usually the participants to the mediation can withdraw from the mediation process at any time.

(cf; Deutsch, 1973, 386; Lemmon, 1985:36-37; Meltsner, 1993: 261-262; Boule and Rycroft, 1997: 7; Barsky, 2000: 121)

In what is still perceived as a standard work although written 23 years ago, Folberg and Taylor (1984: 8-11, 15), mention the following characteristics of mediation:

- It is a goal-directed, problem-solving intervention. Even if it does not lead to a resolution of all elements of the dispute, it can lead to a better understanding of the underlying conflict and reduce it to a manageable level.
- It has definite stages involving a series of techniques for accomplishing the necessary tasks.
- It is usually a short-term process rather than a long-term intervention.
- It is cognitive and behavioural in perspective.
- It is more concerned with the present and the future than with the past. The past history of the participants is only important insofar as it relates to the present or as a basis for predicting future needs, intentions, abilities and reactions to decisions.
- It helps to reduce obstacles to communication between the participants; maximize the exploration of alternatives; address the needs of everyone involved and provide a model for future conflict resolution.
- Trust and confidence by the participants toward the mediator are necessary for an effective process.
- Mediation is task-directed and goal-oriented. The focus is more on results than internal causes of conflict.
- It can be a useful intervention technique when the situation calls for a structured agreement to a conflict.

- The ultimate authority in mediation belongs to the participants themselves. They may construe a unique solution suited to themselves, without being bound by precedent.
- Since a consensual agreement reflects the participants' wishes and preferences, they are more likely in the long run to adhere thereto, than in the case of an agreement imposed on them by others.
- Mediation tends to diffuse hostilities by promoting cooperation through a structured process, as opposed to litigation which tends to have an opposite effect.
- Mediation helps to reduce the obstacles to communication between the participants.
- It helps to maximise the exploration of alternatives.
- It helps to address the needs of every participant involved in the process.
- It helps to provide a model for future conflict resolution.
- It works well for many types of disputes as has been confirmed by post-mediation evaluations.

The same authors also stress what mediation is not:

- It is not a new therapy method.
- It is not a panacea for all psychological and interactive problems.
- It will not replace present theories of behaviour or therapy, or long-term therapy of behavioural, perceptual, or personality problems.
- It will not replace the need for legal information and advice.

(Folberg & Taylor, 1984: 9)

3.3.2.1 Objectives of mediation

As has been noted above, the primary objective of mediation is for the participants to reach a settlement or agreement or, as argued by Boulle and Rycroft (1997: 7-8), to reach a decision, even if there is not a resolution of

dispute. Anstey (1991: 259-260) warns against the tendency to view settlement of the dispute as the only purpose of mediation, with the result that if settlement is not achieved, the mediation is regarded as having failed. There are also other secondary objectives that may be reached in spite of no settlement, such as:

- clearer definition of the issues at stake;
- better assessment of how wide the gap is between the participants on the various issues ;
- tension reduction in the relationship;
- removal of obstacles to future bargaining;
- preparation of the participants to accept the consequences of continued conflict;
- improved communications or understanding between the participants.

(Anstey, 1991: 260, 263; Roberts, 1997: 127; Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 8-9)

This will be an important point to bear in mind when evaluating mediation, because, should it fail to produce settlement of all issues, one should not overlook the less obvious benefits derived from the process.

Erickson and McKnight (1988: 41) mention that meeting each participant's needs is one of the goals of mediation. Meeting their needs and serving their self-interests are equated with one another as will be clear from the following quote:

Mediators serve a very important function when they help people define their interests and needs. By focusing on each person's needs, the mediator reinforces the principle that a goal of mediation is to get each person's needs, met. If mediators assume that most individuals are basically motivated by self interest, then an important strategy of the mediator is to see that each person's self interests are met by the arrangements that settle the conflict.

(Erickson and McKnight, 1988: 41).

Whilst this equation may be true in many cases, putting it in terms of an absolute statement may be questionable. In a divorce mediation dispute about the rights of

access of the non-custodian parent one may, for instance, envisage the mediator's reminding the participants of the children's interests, which should prevail over their self-interests.

3.3.2.2 The process of mediation

The process is substantially the same for all situations, but techniques and tasks to be accomplished will " vary to match the circumstances, the participants, and the uniqueness of the mediator" (Folberg & Taylor, 1984: 15).

The authors describe mediation as a seven step process (Folberg & Taylor, 1984: 32):

1. Introduction – creating trust and structure.
2. Fact-finding and isolation of issues.
3. Creation of options and alternatives.
4. Negotiation and decision making.
5. Clarification and writing a plan.
6. Legal review and processing.
7. Implementation, review and revision.

It is submitted that in some types of mediation, for example marriage or family conflict mediation, step 6 will not be applicable and step 7 will usually occur after the actual mediation has been completed.

3.3.3 Functions of mediation

Roberts (1997: 99-100) describes the main functions of the mediator as *catalyst and facilitator*. The mere presence of the mediator usually affects the way the participants interact with each other, leading toward more constructive discussions instead of misunderstanding or polarisation.

Meltsner (1993: 262) mentions six kinds of behaviour that are typical of a mediator. They are listed here with some comments by this researcher added in brackets.

- The mediator manages conflict by either intervening to temper harsh wording used by the disputants or by stimulating disagreement when he believes that the apparent agreement is passive or superficial (cf. Lemmon, 1985: 66).

- He often urges the participants to examine their positions in the light of their larger interests. (One may add that for Christian participants, the Bible should be upheld as standard against which their positions should be examined.)
- He focuses the participants on present interests rather than past grievances (cf. Erickson and McKnight, 1988: 12; Barsky, 2000: 117).
- He informs the participants of the way the world outside the consulting room (i.e. judges, lawyers, children, etc.) may view their arrangements. (Again one may add that for Christian participants, it would be appropriate to remind them to consider how God would view their arrangements).
- He gathers data and shares information so that options can be generated and serious negotiation can take place.
- He helps to produce a workable agreement.

Deutsch (1973: 384-387) describes the common functions of mediators in various situations, as follows in his groundbreaking work:

1. Helping the conflicting parties identify and confront the issues in conflict.

The author points out that conflict is often suppressed or avoided and as a consequence displaced. A married couple, for example may be irritated with each other over trivia because they have not faced directly their conflicting views about their respective household responsibilities. One of the major functions of the mediator is to assist the conflicting participants to identify and confront the issues about which they disagree (cf. Lemmon, 1985: 36; Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 120).

2. Helping provide favourable circumstances and conditions for confronting the issues.

The third party can help create an atmosphere within which meaningful discussions can take place by providing a meeting place on neutral ground, away from the immediate pressures and interruptions. He can also “regulate the degree of tension between the parties” by suggesting that they move to less controversial issues, or by introducing restraints to inhibit certain kinds of destructive behaviour, or by using encouragement to promote constructive actions (cf. Ellison and McKnight, 1988: 38).

3. Helping remove the blocks and distortions in the communication process so that mutual understanding may develop.

The mediator can stimulate communication so that the less articulate as well as the more articulate can express their views fully. The author notes that in marital conflict it is not uncommon that one spouse is more articulate and more dominant than the other. The mediator can coach one in order to communicate more effectively and he can translate or put into other words what was said so that communications will be understood by both sides in the same way. "A skilled third party will understand the socio-cultural differences that lead one side to misunderstand the other and will not only serve as a translator but will also help the two sides understand the contexts and frameworks that give the other's communications their meaning." Deutch (1973: 384) comments that misunderstanding between husbands and wives are often due to the "particularistic language of a personal-emotional relationship" that wives use more often while husbands tend to employ "the universalistic language of impersonal social relations, in which statements are objectively verifiable". The husband may take his wife's statement "I'll be ready in a minute" literally in clock time, while she meant "I'll be ready in what I feel will be a short time". (cf: Boule and Rycroft, 1997:121; Erikson and Mcknight, 2001: 37).

4. Helping establish such norms for rational interaction as mutual respect, open communication, the use of persuasion rather than coercion, and the desirability of reaching a mutually satisfying agreement.

The third party's role includes helping the conflicting participants "fight" fairly. He may see to it that unbiased rules, which are intended to prevent unfair fighting, are in place. "Adherence to such rules implies that each of the conflicting parties is willing to let the other do unto him that which he does unto the other. Such rules give both sides equal opportunity to state positions and respond to the other". Another objective that the third party can aim for is promoting a social framework that is conducive to cooperative negotiations rather than merely fair combat. This is done by recognizing the legitimacy of both sides, by treating each participant with respect, by encouraging directness of communication, and by stressing that stable agreements are based on mutual satisfaction.

5. Helping determine what kinds of solutions are possible and making suggestions about possible solutions.

By careful listening and asking the right questions, the mediator can often ascertain the aspirations and expectations of each side and learn how entrenched they are. Sometimes a solution requires that the aspirations of one or both of the conflicting participants be altered and made more realistic.

If each conflicting party is expecting the other side to do the impossible, each has to redefine his aspirations before a solution is possible. One cannot expect one's introverted spouse to become a gregarious extrovert.

The third party may go even further by offering suggestions for potential agreements that could be mutually acceptable. This may entail his helping the participants to redefine their problem so that options not previously thought of may be considered". An example of this is when the participants are at loggerheads as to who should get what share from the financial pie, to suggest that efforts be pooled to enlarge the pie that is to be shared. The mediator should then make his suggestion in such a way that the participants will feel that they may accept or reject the suggestion, that it is a solution that they 'own' and for which they are responsible if they agree to it.

6. Helping make a workable agreement acceptable to the parties in conflict.

A stumbling block to a feasible compromise may be the fear one participant has that accepting the agreement may seem like a retreat and result in a loss of face. A number of tactics are available to the third party in overcoming this kind of resistance: (1) He may emphasize the futility and costs of false pride. (2) He may try to portray the agreement in such a way that each participant can think he has won a victory. (3) He may apply pressure to bring about agreement by threatening to withdraw if agreement is not reached within a specified time, confining the participants to a locked room until they agree and enlisting outsiders in support of the agreement. It must be stated that such forced agreements are generally not desirable because the participants may not feel committed to them, but sometimes they have to be forced to accept an agreement.

7. Helping make the negotiators and the agreement that is arrived at seem prestigious and attractive to interested audiences, especially the groups represented by the negotiators.

The researcher believes that this factor is probably more relevant in labour and business disputes and will therefore not elaborate on this point.

Regarding the third point above, Erickson and McKnight (1988: 40) observe that many people in conflict, "have a great deal of difficulty in formulating a statement of what they want. This is due to the fact that it is easier to complain about what is wrong than it is to state with specificity what will solve the problem." This is why it is an important function of the mediator to help the participants define their interests and needs.

Other functions of the mediator are:

- building rapport with the participants and gain their trust and confidence (; Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 116; Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 61);
- reversing the escalation of conflict by immediately intervening to nip in the bud coercive communication statements, by trying to minimize the negatives or discuss negatives in such a way that they may bring about positive change, and by keeping the participants task-focused (Erickson and McKnight, 1988: 8, 17, 39);
- coping with any power imbalance between the participants. (It may be a challenge to do so without inhibiting the participants from reaching their own agreement.) (Lemmon, 1985: 133; Anstey, 1991: 277; Meltsner, 1993: 267; Barsky 2000:126);
- creating a climate where the mediator can adopt a less active approach to the discussions because the participants themselves have become so involved in their own pursuit of solutions (Erickson and McKnight, 1988: 40, 41);
- focusing first on the true nature of the issues at stake and the needs and interests of the participants before addressing solutions (Erickson and McKnight, 1988: 41; Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 41);
- acting as an agent of reality by questioning certain irrational statements of values made by a participant (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 81-82; Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 127);
- encouraging the participants from the beginning of the process by working toward "small, manageable agreements having a high likelihood of success that will start to form the basis for a more trusting relationship, (Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 40);
- encouraging interest-based bargaining instead of positional bargaining. (It is important to understand the difference between the position taken by a participant, the issues at stake and the underlying interests) (Lemmon, 1985: 48; Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 49; Sande and Friesen, 2006: 51);
- educating the participants, explicitly or implicitly, on various issues, including decision-making and problem-solving (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 123);
- modelling, by his own example, basic communication skills of listening, clarifying, questioning, reframing and empathizing (Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 64).

Another function of the mediator is to assist the participants on agreeing to the facts. It is important to reach agreement on the factual basis which underlies the decision-making process, although it may not be possible or necessary to reach total agreement on all factual issues that have been raised. One of the main differences

between the adversarial system of litigation and mediation is that the facts become an important basis for future planning rather than for determining who the guilty participant was. The mediator must be prepared to distinguish between faultfinding and necessary discussions about past facts with the view of finding future solutions (Erickson and McKnight, 2001:43).

Another function of the mediator is the drafting of agreements. He should help the participants to express their solutions in a way that is clear, written in plain language, and in such a way that the reasons for the chosen solutions are recorded. One word of caution expressed by the authors underlines the importance of another function already mentioned, namely that of educating the participants in how to negotiate. "Care should be taken to help the couple realize that while written agreements are important, no document, no matter how carefully and completely it is drafted, can ever substitute for the ability of the parties to renegotiate future changes when necessary." (Erickson and McKnight, 2001:46).

3.3.4 Qualities of the ideal mediator

Although mediators should be impartial, they "are directly involved in influence activities designed to move disputants toward settlement," according to Moore as quoted by Anstey (1991: 272).

The qualities that mediators should have, according to Deutch (1973: 388) in his authoritative work, are that they should be known, readily accessible, prestigious, skilled, impartial and discreet. For those who operate in the other helping professions, the most difficult transition to make, is being impartial (Barsky, 2000, 163). Impartiality is especially important in labour and family dispute situations (Anstey, 1991: 256). Neutrality and impartiality can be distinguished from one another in that the former refers to the relationship with the disputants, while the latter relates to the attitude with which a dispute is approached (Anstey, 1991: 251). The emphasis on neutrality has been challenged by several researchers (cf Anstey, 1991: 252-253; Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 17-20). Some believe that impartiality, and not neutrality, should be the requirement (Barsky, 2001: 125). If one of the goals of the mediator requires alteration of the participants' belief system, which is often the case, then the process is not completely neutral (Meltsner, 1993: 264). Barsky (2001: 124) writes, "whereas traditional mediators such as clergy and elders were able to influence people to conform to religious or community norms, most contemporary, professional mediators would not find this acceptable."

Barsky also refers to facilitation skills, active listening skills and the ability to help people express their feelings. An effective mediator will have a sound conceptual understanding of conflict and the ability to assess whether the problem presented is really the issue at stake (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 18; Anstey, 1991: 281-283).

3.3.5 Types of mediation models or styles

Erickson and McKnight (2001: 18, 23, 42) identify at least three models, namely (1) client centred mediation, (2) law-focused mediation and (3) labour mediation. Boule and Rycroft (1997:26) mention four models: (1) settlement mediation (or compromise mediation), (2) facilitative mediation (or interest-based, problem solving mediation), (3) therapeutic (or transformative) mediation and (4) evaluative (or advisory, managerial mediation).

Barsky (2000: 120-121) distinguishes between four primary models:

- structural mediation;
- interest-based mediation;
- therapeutic mediation and
- transformative mediation.

According to Kressel referred to by Ellis & Stuckless (1996: 11-13), there are basically two models:

1. the problem-solving (PSM) model and
2. the settlement orientated (SOM) model.

The differences between these two models can be set out as follows:

	SOM	PSM
Main objective	To reach agreement relatively quickly – focus on settlement	To reach durable agreement that reflects integrative problem solving.
Role of mediator	Neutral. No advocacy. No probing questions. Likely to acquiesce in what participants desire.	In leadership role. Present creative solutions. Use probing questions to determine underlying interests.
Role of participants	High degree of control over the process.	Provide only information and ideas or suggestions.
Advantage - Disadvantage	Speedy agreement, but may not be lasting.	Harder work for mediator and advocacy may jeopardize chances of reaching settlement, but agreement reached likely to be more durable.

Table / Illustration 3.1

(Ellis & Stuckless, 1996:12-13)

Folberg and Taylor (1984: 131) suggest that, since the nature of conflict, the setting, the resources and experience of the disputants and the background and training of the mediator are so diverse, attempting to define mediation models is “illusionary”. According to the authors it is better to refer to different styles, although in reality the distinctions are not always clear and the same mediator may use several styles and even develop a hybrid personal style. (The researcher has found their list of styles to be extensive and illuminating. It appears in summary form in Appendix A). It is suggested that the styles mentioned in the appendix that would be relevant to the pastor are the following:

- therapeutic mediation;
- supervisory mediation;
- crisis mediation;
- team mediation;
- transformative mediation.

The biblical (or Christian) model of Peacemaker Ministries is dealt with under 3.4 below.

3.3.6 The dividing line between counselling, therapy and mediation

Opinions vary as to whether counselling and therapy are one and the same. In a recent work Nelson-Jones (2006:1) argue that it is, whilst George and Cristiani (1990:4) believes that it is better viewed as two different points on a continuum in regard to various elements such as goals and methods, where the goals of therapy are more likely to “involve a quite complete change of basic character structure”, whereas that of counselling are more limited, “more directed toward aiding growth, more concerned with the immediate situation, and more aimed at helping the individual function adequately in appropriate roles.” It seems that much depends on one’s definitions before an opinion can be expressed on this issue. It appears likely that under “counselling” George and Cristiani also had short-term counselling in mind. Smith, (1992:81) using the terms “short term counselling” and “short-term care” interchangeably, describes it as “helping people in immediate emotional and spiritual trouble” when it usually involves addressing an immediate crisis or event in someone’s life or helping one through the aftermath of significant loss or through an important transition, for example premarital counselling, marital disputes, job loss or grief. The said author states that it is by definition brief: four to eight weeks.

Although it is not fitting to deal here with the debate regarding biblical counselling versus other types of counselling, it should be noted that the purpose of biblical counselling has been described in the following terms: causing a change in the inner man, spiritual growth, sanctification, becoming more like Jesus Christ, making the person or marriage better than ever before (Adams, 1979: 180-182; Crabb, 1987: 130; MacArthur, 1994c: 9). It requires skilful employment and application of Scripture, and offers the perspective of a God who deals with sin in love, the perspective of a lustful human nature, and the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified in the place of sinners (MacArthur, 1994c:3; Swanson, 1994: 363-364). Biblical counselling is normally a short term process (Swanson, 1994: 369).

The primary goals of long-term counselling or therapy on the one hand, and mediation on the other hand, are also different. The difference is explained as follows:

In mediation the primary goal is to reach agreement that will guide future actions between the participants, whilst also improving their communication skills. In counselling and therapy the goal is to change behaviour and perceptions without the use of a signed agreement (except in behavioural contracting). (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 33).

Boulle and Rycroft (1997: 64) set out the difference thus:

While the primary object of mediation is to make practical and efficient decisions about disputes, the primary object of counselling is to address long term issues of behaviour, growth, or moral development. Mediation does not offer long-term intervention therapy, nor is it concerned with psychological or behavioral problems, other than to the extent that these prevent the parties from making decisions. The focus in mediation is not on personal change, as in counselling, nor does it require a therapeutic relationship between professional and client..... Counselling deals more with the past, in relation to the causal factors which lead to the problem, whereas mediation deals mainly with the present and future and gives less attention to past causes.

Meltsner (1993: 263) explains the basic difference between mediation and therapy as follows:

Mediation is a form of problem solving, and the problem to be solved is usually concrete, specific, and worldly rather than internal, emotional, and general. Mediators must deal with the strong feelings and emotional tangles of the parties to the dispute but their focus in doing so is to foster agreement, not healing.

Gadin and Oullette explain that “[w]hile the primary goals of mediation and therapy are different and distinct, the secondary goals of one process are often similar to the primary goals of the other (cf Meltsner, 1993: 263) .” This can be illustrated by using the example of a family requesting help when there are conflicts between the parents and the child over curfew, household responsibilities and allowance, as follows:

	PRIMARY GOALS	SECONDARY GOALS
THERAPIST	Changing the quality of relationships. Improving communications within the family.	As a by-product of primary goal: resolution of conflicts
MEDIATOR	Resolution of conflicts.	As a by-product of primary goal: changing the quality of relationships; improving communication.

Table / Illustration 3.2

Although the roles of therapist and mediator are different, they are complementary. Kessler (1979: 196) calls mediation “an exciting new service in the counselling arena”. Many therapists have found that they are better equipped to serve their clients and their families by having gone through mediation training (Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 10,11).

Barsky (2000: 128-129) differentiates between emergent and contractual mediation. The former takes place when a professional helper whose primary identification is not being a mediator, nevertheless draws from a broad range of mediative techniques. One example is that of a therapist, working with a family in which a teenager has rejected his parents' religion, who employs mediative techniques to help them come to a mutual understanding. The contractual mediator, on the other hand, is hired specifically to mediate.

Folberg and Taylor (1984: 28) state, “Counseling can be used as a conflict management or conflict resolution process primarily for *intrapersonal* conflicts, although some therapies apply counselling to *interpersonal* conflicts as well.” Intra-personal conflicts refer to the underlying conflicts within the individual that are the

“cause” of the problem (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 19, 33), Counsellors and therapists typically see their role as dealing with intrapersonal conflict and not with interpersonal problems. Mediation is primarily concerned with interpersonal conflict (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 19). Folberg and Taylor (1984: 33) believe that although most counsellors do not work with clients simultaneously, whereas mediation requires at least two participants, and counsellors can use mediation during the problem assessment phase.

Meltsner (1993: 261) refers to the “jagged line between mediation and couples therapy.” He writes,

Distinguishing between the disciplines is complicated by the frequency with which therapists – who do not think of themselves as mediators- mediate and mediators- who do not think of themselves as therapists- work from a therapeutic perspective. These role conflicts have spawned a host of ethical dilemmas which are compounded when the same person actually practices both as therapist and mediator.

Meltsner believes that there is much that therapists and mediators can learn from one another. Notwithstanding the differences mentioned above, the therapeutic model of mediation does have counselling features (Boulles and Rycroft, 1997: 65).

Therapeutic mediators and counsellors have the following in common: They both

- remain impartial, although their goal may be to change the belief system of the parties. (Here their style, language and emphasis will differ);
- engage in positive reframing. (Presenting the functional side of what the clients have previously viewed as problematic);
- will intervene to see that feelings do not become too explosive;
- will intervene to ensure certain levels of communication;
- will focus clients on the issues that are at hand. (A mediator often engages in “reality therapy”) and
- will tend to facilitate movement of a couple from past grievances to future plans. (This is at the very heart of mediation whilst it is a discretionary tactical choice for the therapist).

A therapist may think that mediation is an approach suitable for “intact” people who are able to make important decisions together with the help of a skilled outsider, but not suitable for rowdy, angry and distraught couples (Meltsner, 1993: 264). The key

question in the author's view, "is not whether therapists can or should mediate but whether a meditative stance can serve the therapist in aid of therapy".

Gadlin and Ouelette, referred to by Meltsner (1993: 263) argue that certain therapeutic techniques are extremely valuable to family mediators. These would be techniques that do not stress exploration of feelings to "transform the personality and functioning of the person" or seek "an understanding of present situations in the light of past experiences".

According to Meltsner, 1993: (264) the primary area where a mediative stance can be useful in therapy is in the assessment process. "Assessment is critical because, unless a therapist has carefully pinpointed the issues and the strategies that should be employed, there is a great risk of wandering fitfully from technique to technique."

Several working models of therapeutic family mediation have been developed in the United States where the models begin with a therapeutic stage in which the participants receive counselling individually before the actual mediation commences (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997:65). The advantage of this, according to the authors, is that it avoids the necessity of choosing between two potentially beneficial forms of skilled help. Furthermore, co-mediation provides a structure where two professionals, one with counselling and one with mediation skills, can combine their expertise.

It is evident from the above that the line between mediation and therapy is not very clear-cut. Although therapy or counselling is not typically associated with mediation, there is no general principle or rule that a mediator, for example a pastor, may not act in the same matter as counsellor, whether it follows from a completed mediation or runs concurrently with the mediation process.

3.3.7 Mediation in ancient times and cultures

Although mediation has only gained credibility in the modern era during the past three decades, it was used in many ancient cultures. The reader is referred to Appendix B.

3.3.8 Mediation in the church

In Old Testament times the function and office of the priest was to be mediator between God and his people (Orr, s.a.). Part of the gospel is that God encounters his people in this world and that He does so through mediators like the Son and the

Holy Spirit, but also through human mediators. Parents teaching their children from infancy to believe in Christ mediate the gospel. In the same way, the pastor who proclaims the gospel in church acts as mediator (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990: 6).

In western societies, especially where the influence of Christianity was strong, "mediation was based on ideas of forgiveness and charity" (Barsky, 2000: 118). "In sixth-century Gaul, bishops and other clergy were seen as natural peacemakers. They would be chosen to mediate because of their prestige, wealth, education, diversity of function, knowledge of how to settle particular cases, and ability to inspire confidence" (Barsky, 2000: 118). For centuries the church or temple played an important part in resolving conflict amongst its members. The local priest, minister or rabbi was frequently called upon to serve as a mediator. (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 3).

Folberg and Taylor, 1984: (3) writes,

There is a rich New Testament tradition of mediation stemming from the recognition that Paul talked to the congregation at Corinth, suggesting that they should not take their disputes to the court but ought rather to appoint people of their own community to settle their disputes. (1 Corinthians 6:1-4). Mediation is consistent with, if not central to, the biblical values of forgiveness, reconciliation, and community...

This researcher is of the view that what Paul probably envisaged was arbitration rather than mediation.

The early Quakers in the United States practised both mediation and arbitration to resolve their commercial disputes and marital disagreements without resorting to litigation (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 3-4). "Mediation is a natural way in which people help others deal with problems. Friends, neighbors, elders, parents, or other family members frequently assume the role of mediator on an informal basis" (Barsky, 2000: 117)

Gerkin (1997:81) in referring to the heritage which modern pastors can take with them from the past, mentions *inter alia* the role of the early leaders of the New Testament and post New Testament church as mediator and reconciler.

Worthington and McMurry (1994:67) write the following about pastors assessing the conflict areas in a marriage:

Areas of conflict are important more for your information than for their use in resolving conflicts. Common areas of disagreement in marriage are sex, money, childrearing, chores, in-laws, personal habits, and use of time. Pastors may identify areas of conflict rapidly by using a powergram ... or simply by asking.

It is important not to become a mediator whose sole function is to resolve conflicts for the couple. Rather, help the couple learn how to resolve conflicts themselves without having to depend on you as their referee.

This passage, it is submitted, does not wipe mediation *per se* from the table. What the authors seem to warn against is the kind of mediation where the pastor or mediator resolves the conflicts for the participants without allowing the participants themselves to make any input and without giving them any guidelines on how to deal with conflict in the future. By implication, the authors acknowledge that mediation may be used as long as the mediator's "sole function" is not "to resolve conflicts for the couple".

In a judgment of the Witwatersrand Local Division of the High Court of South Africa in 1995, Judge Cameron (as his title was then) acknowledged the role of the priest or spiritual advisor in our society "and that these counsellors perform a socially valuable function in comforting and guiding their congregants, and attempting to conciliate and mediating their disputes" (*O v. O* 1995(4) SA 482 WLD).

The concept of Christian conciliation experienced a rebirth in 1977 with the Christian Legal Society in the USA, when a group of attorneys began to explore ways to apply biblical peacemaking principles in legal conflicts. The concept includes individual counselling on dispute resolution, mediation and arbitration. Conciliation ministries were formed where conciliators (individual Christians and church leaders) were trained to help people and churches to settle their differences in a biblical manner (Sande, 1997:249, 262). In 1982 Peacemaker Ministries was established to equip and assist Christians and their churches to respond to conflict biblically, which includes biblically based mediation. (Sande, 2004:271, 287).

Mediation as a conflict resolution method, whether it was coined as such or not, was a familiar concept in both the Old and New Testament (see 2.4.4.1 and 2.4.4.4

above), as well as throughout the history of the Church. Pastoral divorce mediation is fairly common, even in South Africa (Combrinck, 1996: 15; Botha, 2004: 3-6). Pastors acting as peacemakers and who have learnt mediation skills, are well positioned to play a mediative role in their congregations, as has been shown in 2.4.4.6 above.

3.3.9 Mediation in law

Dealing with the use of mediation in the legal field falls outside the ambit of this study except insofar as matrimonial matters are concerned. For more information the reader is referred to the Appendix C.

As was stated in Chapter 1, mediation is not commonly used for resolving marital conflicts. It has however been employed increasingly in recent years to deal with issues that accompany divorce matters such as custody of children, division of assets and maintenance. The Act on Mediation in Certain Divorce Matters, 24 of 1987, provides for contested cases regarding custody or guardianship of or access to minor or dependent children, to be mediated by the Family Advocate with the assistance of a Family Counsellor. Certain sections of the Children's Act, 38 of 2005, which is expected to come into operation later in 2007, provides for mediators to assist divorced parents who have joint parental responsibilities toward their children (previously known as "joint custody"), to negotiate mutual and joint decisions and in drawing up a parenting plan (Family Life Centre, 2007). There appears to be a movement underway to plead for more use of mediation in South Africa, as opposed to the adversarial system, in dealing with family-law matters (De Jong, 2005: 46).

3.3.10 Indicators of unsuitability :

Authors have identified some situations where mediation may not be appropriate or may be less likely to succeed:

3.3.10.1 Domestic violence

In cases of domestic violence, mediation may be seen by some as a condonation of violence between family members. On the other hand, according to Lemmon (1985:12) mediation in conjunction with court action has worked well in stopping family violence. As pointed out by the author, the limitations of court protection orders are: (1) that it is possible for the man to continue his misdemeanour – it is still possible for him to follow his wife to work and accost her; and (2) they only prohibit certain behaviour – they do not as a rule provide plans for what should be done.

Mediation may give the man a chance to tell his story and it may be the vehicle through which the disputants can work out detailed behaviour for the future. (Lemmon, 1985:13).

Family mediators who try to settle conflicts between spouses whose marital histories include violence, should be aware of the violence for a number of reasons.

1. Concern for the safety of a participant. When one of the partners has been guilty of assaulting or emotionally abusing his or her partner during the marital relationship, this is likely to continue during and following the negotiations or mediation.
2. The fact that one possesses greater "harm resources" than the other and at the same time shows a willingness to use it against the other may jeopardize the principle that they are to bargain as equals. This "may cast a coercive shadow over the process of mediation..." (Ellis & Stuckless, 1996: 29).

It is not easy to determine whether mediation is appropriate when there is a history of violence. The web site of the South African Association of Mediators indicates that where the abuse was not severe and involved only isolated incidents, parties often mediate successfully (SAAM, 2007). Lemmon cautions against mediation where one of the parties is so dangerous that the other is frightened of being in his presence. "Unless the mediator can control the process when all three meet and assure her that the negotiations are not making her plight worse the rest of the time, mediation should not be attempted" (Lemmon, 1985: 14). Retief (1990: 152) argues that family violence is a breach of the marriage covenant in the light of Mal. 2:6, which leaves the wife (since it is usually the wife who is the victim) no other choice than to leave the home, and, if there is no change in the guilty spouse's behaviour, to pursue divorce. It may be questioned whether these circumstances could give rise to a valid ground for divorce from a biblical standpoint, but what appears to be very clear, is that continuing domestic violence will put a damper on any mediation proceedings.

3.3.10.2 Extreme Conflict

If the conflict has been so intense that even minimal co-operation is out of the question, then mediation will not succeed. One example is in the event that there has been prior litigation between the parties (Roberts, 1997: 128; Anstey, 1991: 261). Roberts (1997: 129) believes mediation is inappropriate where there are in place criminal or child protection implications, which complicate the issues (in the South African context one would refer here to protection orders under the Domestic

Violence Act, No. 116 of 1998). The parties should not be seen together if there is a restraining order in place in terms of the Domestic Violence Act (McCune, 2000). The caring pastor will not pressurise anyone who has been deeply hurt, e.g. the wife who has been subjected to sexual abuse or wife-battering by her husband, to participate in mediation proceedings with her husband. If mediation is to be attempted, it should only commence after there has been healing and counselling and the hurt spouse has willingly indicated a readiness to participate in the process (Winfrey, 1996: 156-160).

3.3.10.3 Serious imbalances of bargaining power

There must be no inequality that would render an unfair outcome unavoidable (Roberts, 1997: 129).

3.3.10.4 Involuntary participation

Neither participant must feel that they are participating in mediation against their will (Roberts, 1997:129).

3.3.10.5 Participant mentally unfit

Dealing with those who exhibit “the most serious mentally disordered behavior” or with one who is “chemically impaired” – that is under the influence of drugs-- will be counterproductive. No binding agreement can be reached with chemically impaired participants. Reaching a workable settlement seems hardly possible if the participants are not alert. (Lemmon, 1985: 14).

3.3.10.6 Unsuitability of dispute

The dispute must be negotiable – it must not be a case of a purely legal question that needs to be answered or one making it necessary that a complicated finding of fact must be made because of conflicting versions (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 74-75; Roberts, 1997: 129) or one dealing with values or fundamental principles which are not open to negotiations (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 75). “Family disputes are in most cases suitable for mediation because they involve the making of decisions relating to the future by two people bound together by an enduring common interest – their children.” (Roberts, 1997: 129), Where the dispute is largely about facts, unless the parties can agree on how to determine the facts, mediation will not be appropriate since mediators lack mechanisms for investigating or testing the truth (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 36).

3.3.10.7 Abuse of mediation

If one or both of the parties intend to use the mediation to achieve something other than joint decision-making, for example the ulterior motive of hoping to gain some tactical advantage in subsequent litigation by participating in the process, mediation may be found to be unsuitable. In divorce mediation non-acceptance of the end of the relationship is seen by Roberts (1997: 130) as an abuse of mediation: "Where one party uses mediation to try to cling on to the marriage, they will in all probability sabotage decision-making relating to its dissolution." (As has been noted, mediation is generally not viewed as a marriage restoration process, but more often as a vehicle for reaching a settlement on divorce or separation terms.) (Roberts, 1997: 130).

3.3.10.8 Referral that is too early or too late

"When emotions are intense and raw, as in the early stage of breakdown or where a commitment to litigating the dispute is already established, ... mediation is unlikely to be of use." (Roberts, 1997: 130). In the context of pastoral intervention in troubled marriages, it can be argued that it is never too late to mediate.

3.3.10.9 An unfavourable environment

Powerful third parties, such as combative lawyers, may fuel hostilities and jeopardize agreements. This researcher's view is that the pastor should normally be in a position to create a favourable environment.

3.3.10.10 Final remarks

Some of the above situations may, in the context of the pastoral relationship, not necessarily be an impediment to mediation. This will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 4. In any event, it seems obvious that the above situations would also be a barrier to any type of short-term intervention other than mediation (cf. Freeman, 1982:210-211). "Mediation has a distinct advantage over some other methods of conflict resolution in obtaining constructive outcomes because it promotes resolution of the conflict in the mutual gain or win/win mode." (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 24). *Win-win* means that "the conflict is resolved in such a way that both parties win and the relationship is strengthened" (Moll, 2001: 81).

3.3.11 Mediating troubled marriages

Whilst divorce mediation is generally accepted as a sound practice (Milne, 1986: 198-203; Nel and Pretorius, 1996: 172; Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 160),

marriage intervention mediation is often frowned upon. As has been noted above, the usual objections appear to be that

- (1) once the parties have opted for divorce mediation, it is disrespectful of their wishes for the mediator to embark on mediation intended to bring about reconciliation and restoration of the marriage;
- (2) in order to save a marriage, long term therapy which falls outside the ambit of mediation, is required.

Regarding the first objection, the reader is referred to the comments of Erickson and McKnight in the Problem Statement in 1.1 above where the authors seem to disapprove of clergy using mediation as “a platform for continuing their religious mission” (Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 161). Apparently the authors have in mind mediators who are contracted to do divorce mediation and then try to save the marriage. This comes out more clearly in the following quote from the same authors:

Many people attending our [divorce mediation] training sessions have disclosed that they really would prefer to mediate a reconciliation of the marriage relationship and prevent the divorce. A mediator who interjects this underlying motivation into a divorce mediation consultation may find one very agreeable client and one who is very distressed. It takes a lot of thoughtful preparation for a couple to actually seek a consultation with a divorce mediator. The mediator who makes the assumption that the couple should be reconciling discounts the couple by not respecting their wishes.
(Erickson and McKnight, 2001: 68).

While one can understand the sentiments expressed by the authors, it does not account for the fact that there may be many couples that seek divorce mediation that should rather have sought marriage intervention to save their marriages. The mediator who can sense this will do them no disservice by at least probing for that possibility. In the event of a pastor being asked to work out a divorce settlement for his parishioners, one would expect (in the light of the sanctity of marriage as explained in chapter 2) that he would refuse to do so until he has been satisfied that all reasonable attempts to save the marriage have failed. After all, the pastor is in the first place accountable towards God and not to his parishioners.

A Christian counsellor is called by God to work toward reconciliation of spouses with each other and with God (Sande 1998; Worthington, 1984: 287; Instone-Brewer,

2002: 300). Chapman (1998:31) writes that divorce should be the last possible alternative. "It should be preceded by every effort at reconciling differences, dealing with issues, and solving problems." It is to be noted that "reconciling differences", "dealing with issues" and "solving problems" are typical functions of a mediator – see paragraph 3.3.3 above.

With regard to the second objection, a few observations need to be made.

- (1) It has already been noted (see 3.3.5 and Annexure "A") that therapeutic mediation models have been developed where counselling takes place prior to the mediation. Even during the mediation process, there is nothing to prevent the mediator or his co-mediator calling for a caucus or separate counselling session with the parties. Narrow definitions of the concept of mediation should not be allowed to restrict "out of the box" thinking. Many pastors with skills in mediation should be well-equipped to provide the necessary marital counselling for their parishioners.
- (2) It may be questioned whether long term therapy is really needed in most marital counselling cases. According to Smith (1992:81) short term counselling can be a very effective tool even in dealing with marital disputes. Some of the distress signals mentioned by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, which would require professional therapy, are (Davidson and Moore, 1996: 409):
 - feelings of marital and family dissatisfaction;
 - sexual problems or concerns;
 - complaints of "unexplainable" fatigue;
 - feelings of loneliness ... moodiness, or depression;
 - repeated requests for tranquillizers;
 - excessive abuse of substances such as alcohol and/or drugs;
 - inability to set or attain goals and
 - repeated employment difficulties.

One gets the impression that in some sectors of the secular world, concepts such as sin and spiritual counselling are not to be seriously entertained and that Christian or biblical counselling is irrelevant for today's problems (Adams, 1970: 17-19; McMinn, 1996: 128-132). Since the concept of sin hardly figures in secular literature one would not expect the concepts of gentle admonition, and, if necessary, stern warning by the mediator or counsellor, to be mentioned. Neither does one find the concepts of repentance and change by the power of the Holy Spirit being

mentioned. However, many divorced people remarry without undergoing counselling or being required to do so. In any event, it seems that those advocating therapy acknowledge its limitations. Davidson and Moore (1996: 410) write: "Couples seeking marriage and family therapy should remember that the role of the therapist is to point out aspects of reality and to serve as a facilitator, not to resolve marital problems." This begs the question: is it really therapy that is needed for 40% of our adult population (those estimated to have been through a divorce) or is it, at least in the case of Christians, sound counselling, or perhaps mediation, by their pastors? Crabb (1997: 97) writes,

We've come to a time in our culture when therapists have been asked to take over the functions formerly handled by priests, a function that properly belongs to biblical elders who listen because they've had the courage to listen to their own hearts, to face what's bad and discern the Spirit...

Change in a person cannot be brought about through therapy, but rather the miracle of transformation performed by the Holy Spirit (Buckley, 1993: 121; Almy, 2000: 41).

- (3) Even if it is accepted that some form of therapy will be helpful in dealing with troubled marriages, apart from what is mentioned in (1) above, one can add that there are aspects of mediation that by itself are therapeutic. Merely the fact that an impartial facilitator is present can be therapeutic. This is especially true in the case of the presence of a caring pastor who comes alongside his people in times of stress (Oates, 1964: 166-167). The fact that some structure or order is created out of chaos by the mediation process can be therapeutic (Erickson and McKnight, 1983: 4). The mere fact that one is allowed to share one's story and express emotions in the presence of the other participant and mediator in a safe environment without being interrupted can be therapeutic.

Worthington (1989: 355) writes, "For years I tried to act as a mediator in marriage disputes but was effective only about half of the time. Couples often know that their expectations differ, but still stubbornly pursue their ends." It is not clear what mediation style or model the author used and whether he also did some coaching or counselling in private caucus, as is done with biblical mediation. His comments will probably be valid if the mediation he has in mind did not include coaching or

counselling. In another book published five years earlier, he recounts a case where a couple agreed to increase intimacy and to spend more time together, by doing together certain household chores, previously done by one of them alone, for an hour each Saturday morning. (Worthington, 1989: 224). There is no doubt a mediative flavour in what he has described with approval and one wonders if such a situation has been or will be dealt with differently by the author since moving away from a mediative approach.

Kessler (1979: 194) reports, "At the end of divorce mediation, I have heard many partners state, 'I wish we could have talked to each other like this in our marriage. It might have survived.'" At the Counselling Centre of Georgia State University mediation has been used by couples to resolve conflicts about child rearing, in-laws, whether to have a child, budgets and personal habits (Kessler, 1979: 195). Mediation, being a flexible intervention method with numerous different models or approaches being used in practice, should not be discounted as a viable option for dealing with troubled marriages – particularly the therapeutic and biblical or Christian model.

Sperry and Carlson report that even in marriage therapy, the therapist can also serve as a mediator (Sperry and Carlson, 1991:244). In the fifties marriage counselling "was described in terms much closer to reconciliation than psychotherapy" and a well known marriage counsellor and author of that time, Mace, listed three aspects of the role of the counsellor as (1) catharsis (offering the client the opportunity "to get it off his/her chest"); (2) elucidation (helping people to see the nature of the problem); and (3) mediation of their difficulties (Lewis, Clark and Morgan, 1992: 27).

Clinebell (1984:264-265; 271-272) describes a modern day case where marriage crisis counselling was done, but where the pastor also played the role of mediator. He describes the role of the pastor as follows:

The presence of the minister allowed the Sheltons to talk more effectively about the issues that caused their suffering. Their marital diad, paralysed by mutual attack, became a three-person group with the pastor taking the role of mediator and communication-facilitator. As in a deadlocked labor-management dispute, a neutral third party changed the dynamics and interaction of the Sheldon's 'group', enabling the

couple gradually to reopen communication. The presence of the pastor as a person outside the marriage system also helped interrupt the escalating cycle of mutual retaliation in which they were caught.....

"The Pastor was ... a 'participant observer', but also an 'observant participant'. She was a referee who saw that both persons had a fair chance to express their views and participate equally in decisions affecting them both. The minister was also a coach,... a teacher who suggested or recommended actions for them to consider. She was a communications-facilitator ... she was a reality-tester for them, allowing them to check their perceptions of the realities of their relationships against hers. She was a guide who encouraged them... also a role-model.

Van Staden (1992: 222), writing about intervention strategies, states that any help in the negotiation process between the spouses to allow each party to express his or her opinions can contribute toward better understanding and interaction. Although *mediation*, as such, is not mentioned by the author, this is typically a mediation function that can occur during a therapy session (see 3.3.6 above).

Peacemaker Ministries use and teach biblical mediation *inter alia* as a short-term method for dealing with troubled marriages (McCune & Sims, 2004). They also offer advanced mediation training in marriage intervention (Peacemaker Ministries, 2007).

It is possible to virtually enforce mediation (or counselling) on Christian couples in South Africa by encouraging them to insert the appropriate wording in an Antenuptial Contract or Marriage Covenant entered into during the subsistence of the marriage (Grobler, 2002:98, 106-109; cf. Sims, 2001; Sande, 2002: 193-194). An example of an Antenuptial Contract making provision for obligatory biblical mediation or counselling by their pastor before either of the spouses may consult a divorce lawyer is attached as Appendix D to this dissertation.

3.4 BIBLICAL (OR CHRISTIAN) MEDIATION OF PEACEMAKER MINISTRIES

3.4.1 Introduction

Enquiries made by this researcher revealed that the model or approach advocated by Peacemaker Ministries is the only known model or approach that is called *biblical* or *Christian mediation*.

As was pointed out in Chapter 1, biblical mediation is based on four basic core convictions, namely (1) the centrality of Christ; (2) the responsibility of the church; (3) the necessity of counselling; and (4) the comprehensiveness of God's Word. The pertinent differences between this type of mediation and "secular" mediation have been set out in Chapter 1 above. Some of the important differences are that the Bible is regarded as the authority for establishing principles; the power of the Holy Spirit is invoked; the mediator will go beyond surface issues and seek to resolve root issues; directive biblical counselling may be used by the mediator; and the mediator will promote reconciliation through repentance, confession and forgiveness.

Mediation is regarded as one of several conciliation responses as opposed to escape and attack responses, as illustrated in the ministry's diagram outlining typical responses to conflict called *The Slippery Slope*.

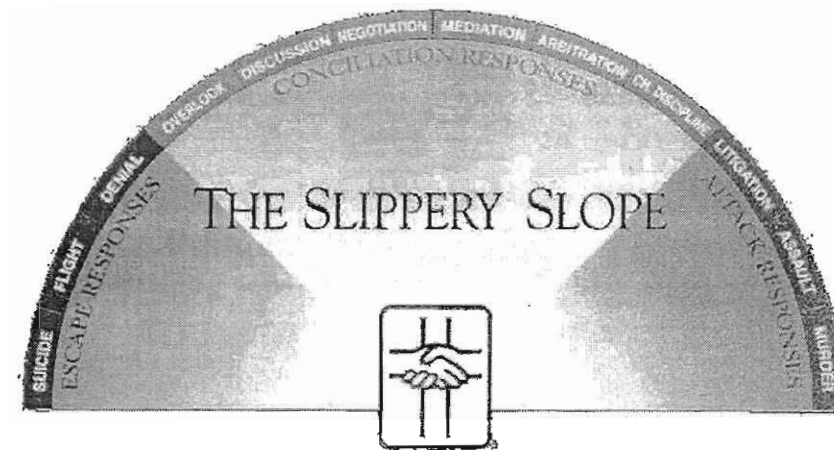


Table / Illustration 3.3
(Sande, 1997: 17)

The "slippery" refers to the natural tendency to slide down towards either escape or attack responses instead of remaining on top of the problem. The Mat.18:15-18 conflict resolution procedure, especially verse 16 ("If he will not listen to you, take one or two others along...") lends itself to the use of mediation in conflict between believers (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 19). (See par. 2.4.4.4 above).

A wide variety of conflicts can be mediated, including marriage conflict. The type of conflict may have a bearing on the process being used. A business dispute will usually be more formally handled than a marriage conflict (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 25).

3.4.2 Various roles of Christian mediator

According to Sande and Friesen (2006: 20) the effective Christian mediator may have to fulfil a variety of roles during the course of a mediation, namely that of:

- intercessor (in prayer);
- convener (taking the initiative to bring the participants together in a safe environment);
- facilitator of communication and understanding;
- model (example in attitude and actions);
- referee and protector;
- trust builder (as between the participants);
- resource expander (mediator locating helpful resources, e.g. professional counselling);
- generator of alternatives (helping to find creative solutions);
- reality tester;
- teacher and counsellor (referring to Mat. 18:15; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Rom. 15:14);
- encourager and coach;
“Even when people know what they should do, they often have a difficult time doing what is right. A mediator helps to dispel ungodly fears and reluctance, affirms wise choices, and encourages people to persevere in doing what is right, even if the world says that doing so is foolish...” (Sande & Friesen, 2006: 20);
- Confronter and exhorter;
“Conflict sometimes involves sinful attitudes and behavior that the parties are unable or unwilling to recognize and confess. A mediator must sometimes use loving confrontation, admonishment, and exhortation to help such people come to grips with the truth, put off sinful ways, and make needed changes (see 2 Tim. 4:2). Since a mediator can exercise great influence over people and their decisions, this role should be carried out with great caution and care!” (Sande & Friesen, 2006: 21);
- proclaimer of forgiveness;
- closer (helping to find closure to a dispute when the matter has been adequately examined);
- witness (where the leaders of the church need to be informed – Mat. 18:16-17)
- judge (where the mediator is asked by the participants who are unable to reach a voluntary agreement, to issue a binding decision).

(Sande and Friesen, 2006: 20-22).

3.4.3 Outline of biblical mediation process

The outline of the biblical mediation process is as follows:

- A. Pre-mediation process

- B. Mediation process
 - Greetings and ground rules
 - Opening statements
 - Story telling
 - Problem identification and clarification
 - Exploring solutions
 - Leading to agreement(Notice the G-O-S-P-E-L acronym)

- C. Post-mediation process
(Sande and Friesen, 2006: 19)

3.4.4 Pre-mediation

Pre-mediation involves gathering information-- the mediator usually speaking at least once to each of the participants--; offering hope; proclaiming the Gospel in all its fullness; contacting other role players; persuading reluctant parties; helping the participants to get their focus off from their rights onto their responsibilities and "heart issues"; preparation of participants and mediator/s; assessing how formal or informal meetings should be and whether a co-mediator should be involved; scheduling meetings and selection; preparation of mediation facilities and giving appropriate homework to the participants (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 25-37). The participants may be prepared through coaching, for example, by going over the four basic conflict resolution principles taught by Sande, namely (1) glorify God, (2) get the log out of your own eye, (3) gently restore your brother, and (4) go and be reconciled (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 13). In some cases where speedy intervention is needed, it may not be possible to do pre-mediation work (Peacemaker Ministries, s.a.).

3.4.5 Greetings and ground rules

Greetings and ground rules include welcoming the participants and orienting them to the process. The various steps of the process are explained, using the GOSPEL outline. Agreement on a tentative schedule and the duration of the meeting is sought. The role of the mediator/s and the purpose of individual caucuses are explained. The ground rules for the conduct of the mediation are discussed and the participants' express agreement to follow them is gained. Typical ground rules would

be that (1) everyone should speak respectfully and honestly; (2) participants would not interrupt one another and (3) the process would be confidential.

The mediator continues with a brief devotional which should always include prayer and reading of an appropriate Bible passage. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 40-41).

3.4.6 Opening statements

The opening statements by each of the participants, although it is usually less than two minutes, gives them the opportunity to briefly state what they believe needs to be accomplished in order to resolve their differences and it allows the mediator to assess the attitudes of the participants. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 43).

3.4.7 Story telling

In the story telling phase the participants share their stories with each other –often the other participant now hears the full story of his or her spouse for the first time. The participants are allowed to vent their feelings (within the ground rules) and to express what they feel. No interruption is allowed except for clarifying questions and reflecting statements by the mediator. When the first participant has finished, the second participant may respond with his or her different perspectives on events and issues already covered and may add any additional information. The mediator takes notes of any repeated themes or key statements that he may wish to address later. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 44-45).

3.4.8 Problem identification and clarification

Problem identification and clarification is the phase where the various issues are identified and listed. Some issues may actually be sub-issues of larger issues and can be grouped together. It is helpful to distinguish between personal issues (feelings, attitudes and emotions) and material issues (substantive matters that must be resolved in order to settle a disagreement). The list can then be prioritized, preferably with the input of the participants. The mediator "must lead affirmatively and cooperatively, so that all the participants willingly support the created agenda". Another important distinction that must be made is between issues, positions and interests. Once the issues are identified the mediator seeks clarification of the participants interests whilst continuing to encourage them to "look also at the interests of others" during this phase (Phil. 2:3-4). The use of open-ended questions e.g. "why is that important to you?" and the recording of the participants' shared and exclusive interests on a flipchart, is recommended. The mediator should be "prayerfully prepared to encourage and guide the parties to develop interests that

glorify God, serve other people, and help them grow to be like Christ". (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 50-51).

3.4.9 Exploring solutions

Exploring solutions begins when the issues and underlying interests have been identified. This phase is about generating options and looking for specific solutions for the issues. The goal of this phase is twofold.

- (1) Regarding personal issues, the mediator should help the participants to pursue personal reconciliation by confessing their sins and forgiving one another.
- (2) Regarding material issues, the mediator "will help the parties resolve the material issues by accepting responsibility for the consequences of their actions, and by thinking creatively in order to generate options, evaluate them objectively, and elect solutions that meet everyone's legitimate interests".

Brainstorming or asking "what if..." questions can be helpful. The mediator helps the parties evaluate their options objectively by referring to Scripture or obtaining verifiable facts or the opinions of trusted advisors or neutral experts, and so forth, as may be required by the circumstances. Various techniques are available for breaking an impasse. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 52-56).

3.4.10 Leading to agreement

Leading to agreement is the final phase of the mediation. The purpose is to help the participants commit to reconciliation and arrive at an agreement that settles the substantive issues. The mediator invites the participants to confess any wrongdoing toward the other that has not yet been confessed. Where there has been confession the other participant is asked whether he or she is willing to grant the other complete forgiveness. Once these personal matters have been fully settled, agreement on the material issues is pursued. A written agreement is recommended since memories may fade over time and it brings closure. The acronym *RESTORE* is used to help remember what information should be recorded in the agreement.

R eference to biblical principles that have helped the participants to reconcile or reach agreement.

E vidence of reconciliation and agreement.

S pecific description of each decision and steps to be taken by any participant.

T ime frame for completing agreed responsibilities.

O utline of process for resolving undecided issues.

Review with attorneys. Use the opportunity to do so where necessary (where there are legal consequences).

Enforcement through a reconciliation clause, e.g. a mechanism for resolving any conflict that may arise from this agreement itself.

The mediator should use the wording used by the participants – it must be their agreement. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 56-58; Sande, 2004: 271).

The mediation can be closed by a celebration such as a shared meal, but it should include noting all that God has done throughout the process. There should be prayer, praising God and asking for guidance, wisdom and strength for the participants as they fulfil their new commitments. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 58-59).

3.4.11 Private caucuses or meetings

Private meetings may be used at any stage of the process, but take place most often during the later phases. It is an opportunity (as agreed to beforehand) for the mediators to meet privately with one of the participants. It may be called for by the mediator or by either of the participants. "Caucusing is largely a 'coaching' activity with a wide range of uses: teaching, evangelizing, clarifying information, offering encouragement, confronting inappropriate behavior, exploring solutions, discussing concerns a party may want to not discuss in front of another party, or helping a party plan a confession or prepare for confrontation." Praying with the participant may be the most important thing to do in a caucus. Since the caucus is a safe environment, it may be that the participant will share facts or feelings that will reveal his or her true heart and attitude. This will present the best opportunity for the mediator to uncover, and assist the participant in gaining insight into, any of his or her controlling desires (idols of the heart). If that does not happen, the coaching may include asking probing questions to help the participant to understand his or her controlling desires. (See par 2.3.2 above). (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 48-49; McCune & Sims, 2004).

In chapter 1 of this dissertation mention was made of the necessity of biblical counselling with reference to Sande and Kolber (2005: 19-20), while in the later work of Sande and Friesen (2006) that term is not used, but rather "coaching". It seems that the word "coaching" is used in a broad sense to include biblical counselling which is usually short term by nature. This will exclude any attempt to apply therapy, as the term is normally understood in the social sciences.

3.4.12 Post-mediation

Post-mediation is crucial since participants will often struggle with second thoughts or waning enthusiasm as time passes. "Follow-up coaching or discipling by a mediator or other advisor can be vital to cementing a lasting agreement." If one partner fails to fulfil his or her commitment, the mediator may need to pursue enforcement, by either making a personal visit, or appealing to the person's pastor or other influential advisors, church discipline or legal action that is not inconsistent with 1 Cor. 6:1-6. (Sande and Friesen, 2006: 59).

The above is merely a summary of the salient features of the biblical mediation process used by Peacemaker Ministries. It must be borne in mind that it is intended for all Christian conciliators, which would include not only pastors, but also professional mediators, elders, counsellors, Christian attorneys and other Christians who have a passion for peacemaking. (It is to be noted that the researcher has not had access to the recently revamped advanced marriage mediation materials of Peacemaker Ministries.)

3.5 TYPICAL MODERN-DAY MARITAL CONFLICT ISSUES

3.5.1 List of most common issues

A variety of issues may undermine marriage stability and harmony. Some of the common issues or causes that Christian and secular authors have proposed for marital conflict are:

- a wrong idea of love (Adams, 1983:27; Louw, 1993: 54; Thomas, 2000: 14);
- the myth that to have a happy marriage one must find one's "soul mate" (Carey, 1984: 74);
- alcohol and drug abuse (Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54; Dobson, 1987: 131);
- the notion that things can be much the same after marriage as before (Adams, 1983:27; Mason, 1985:78; Wright, 1995:13; Thomas, 2000: 250);
- failure to make adjustments to one another (Wright, 1995:11-12);
- the problem of making decisions together (Moll, 2001: 14);
- over-commitment and physical exhaustion (Dobson, 1987:129-134; Mason, 1985:124);
- conflict over money expenditure (Dobson, 1987:129-134; Collins, 1988:413; Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54);

- the wife's working outside the home and all that it entails (Bell, 1983: 15, 271; Van Staden, 1992: 46; Walker, 1989: 147; Harley, 2005: 96);
- unrealistic or unfulfilled expectations (Dobson, 1987:129-134; Wright, 1995:11; Schreur & Schreur, 1997: 137-143; Thomas, 2000: 25);
- disagreements about raising children (Mack, 1999:141; Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54);
- jealousy (Louw, 1993:117);
- spiritual immaturity (Louw, 1993: 117; cf. Adams, 1983: 12 who prefers to call it "sin".);
- emotional difficulties (Wright, 1995:13);
- a natural decline in communication (Retief, 1990: 32-33; Mack, 1999: 55; Moll, 2001: 14);
- negative communication (rather than "no communication") (Louw, 1993: 55; Stanley *et al*, 2002:26);
- negative interpretations (Stanley *et al* , 2002:35);
- external pressures (e.g. criticism by in-laws; over-demanding children; financial crisis) (Collins, 1988:413);
- different views on religion (Collins, 1988:412; Retief, 1990: 40-41; Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54; Strobel & Strobel, 2002:198);
- sexual frustration (Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54; Dobson, 1987:133);
- loss of intimacy (Schreur & Schreur, 1997: 89-100; Rassieur, 1988: 16);
- friends (Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54) and
- lack of leadership from the husband (Walker, 1989: 11-14).

Cloud and Townsend (2003:148) suggest that there are six types of marital conflict, each requiring a somewhat different approach, namely:

- sin of one spouse (against the other);
- immaturity or brokenness of one person;
- hurt feelings which are nobody's fault;
- conflicting desires;
- desires of one person versus the requirements of the relationship;
- known versus unknown problems (weaknesses or habits).

Some major issues or causes that are highlighted by some Christian authors, but apparently not by secular authors, are self-centredness and the rebellion against or misuse of the husband's authority, whilst both Christian and secular authors would

agree on lack of skill in handling conflict as a major issue. This issue will be dealt with in 3.5.3 below.

3.5.2. Self-centredness

Adams (1983:36) expresses his concern about "sinful living patterns" that may be a destructive force in a marriage. He explains how the "pressures of marriage have a way of bringing out defects" in spouses. Even two redeemed sinners living day in and day out under the same roof, often experience so much pressure that it exposes problems that were previously not apparent (1983:2). According to him, the central problem in all marital problems is perhaps self-centredness. (1983:45-46). (Cf. Louw, 1983:21; Stanley *et al.*, 2002) : 21-22). Sande (2002: 115) writes, "Marriage brings two sinners into close proximity, where their selfish desires rub against each other day after day. Friction increases when God adds 'little sinners' to the mix!" A culture of care for oneself and one's own life dreams instead of care for others and one's spouse began to emerge in the Western world after the 1960's (Harley, 2005: 70). Zerof, referred to by Louw (1983: 21), believes that husbands as well as wives are more selfish than before. It is to be noted that this was written more than twenty years ago.

Being married forces one to face character issues that one would never have had to face otherwise, according to Thomas (2000:21), and marriage counters self-centredness more than any other human institution (Adams, 1983:48; Eyrich, 1991:20). Self-centredness is a major barrier to intimate conversation (Moll, 2001: 115). For a successful, godly marriage, self-centredness must make way for a service orientated "us"-unity, according to Louw (1993:67). Mason (1985:59, 61) holds a similar view and explains that metaphorically, marriage attacks people's vanity and pride in a way that few other things can. It allows for brutal sharpening (as iron sharpens iron in Prov. 27:17) to take place, "yet in the gentlest way imaginable". The author believes that marriage is meant to be "the flagship of all other relationships". "One's home is the place where love must first be practiced before it can truly be practiced anywhere else." (Mason, 1985:126).

3.5.3 Inadequate handling of conflict

"Failure to deal with conflict constructively is the most powerful force in dampening marital satisfaction." (Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54). "The key factors that put marriages at risk have to do with how couples think and interact – and, especially how they handle conflicts in marriage" (Stanley *et al.*, 2002: 22). The authors point out that negative patterns during disagreements, such as painful put-downs,

negative interpretations and withdrawal can “wipe out a lot of what’s positive” (Stanley et al, 2002: 28). Louw (1983: 2) writes that it is not so much a matter of having a conflict-free marriage, as of how differences are handled. Gottman & Silver (1999: 11) report that their research has shown that successful conflict resolution is not crucial to having a successful marriage (cf. McGraw, 2000: 6-7). Retief lists a number of conditions under which reconciliation is impossible, e.g. (1) refusal of spouse to communicate; (2) loss of respect; (3) fear; (4) unresolved problems; (5) lack of commitment; (6) opposition to one’s Christian faith; (7) apostasy from faith and (8) unhealthy parental ties (Retief, 1990: 31-48).

One may therefore, in harmonizing these views, conclude that, in order to have a reasonably happy marriage, certain issues need to be resolved if there is to be reconciliation. However, there may be smaller issues which the spouses may argue with “in-your face discussions” without finding resolution of those issues, provided that the arguing is without anger and that there are enough positive things in the marriage that will override their argumentative style (cf. McGraw, 2000: 49; Gottman & Silver, 1999: 13).

3.5.4 Rebellion against and misuse of the husband’s authority

A major problem is the wife’s inherent desire to dominate her husband and the husband’s inherent desire to rule over her (Moll, 2001: 14; Rosberg & Rosberg, 2004: 50; See 2.3.4.1 above.)

There is the injunction in Eph. 5:33 that the husband must love his wife as he loves himself and that the wife must respect – i.e. pay deference to (Lloyd-Jones, 1973:228-229) her husband. Failure by husband or wife to do accordingly is a major cause of marital conflict. (The reader is again referred to paragraph 2.3.4.1.)

This has been vividly illustrated by Eggerichs (2004:1-7). He writes that the major complaint he hears from wives is that her husband doesn’t love her.

Wives are made to love, want to love, and expect love. Many husbands fail to deliver. But as I kept studying Scripture and counselling couples, I finally saw the other half of the equation. Husbands weren’t saying it much, but they were thinking, She doesn’t respect me. Husbands are made to be respected, want respect, and expect respect.
(Eggerichs, 2004:7)

He explains that no husband “feels fond feelings of affection and love in his heart when he believes his wife has contempt for who he is as a human being. Ironically, the deepest need of the wife – to feel loved- is undermined by her respect” (Eggerichs, 2004:4).

This is illustrated by what he calls *The Crazy Cycle* (2004:5):

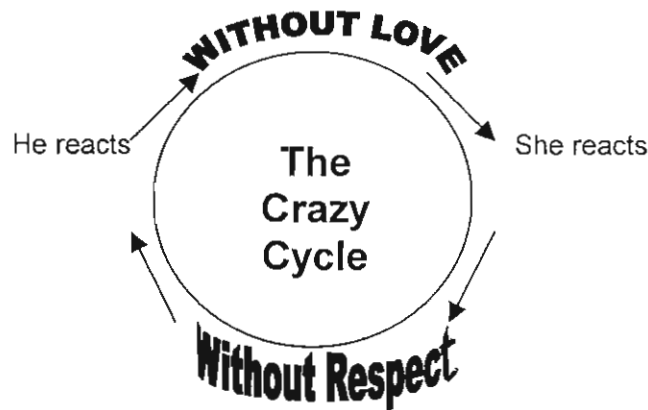


Table / Illustration 3.4

Andelin (1981:61) writes that many women do not realize that the husband’s leadership should be respected as it is divinely appointed. Sande (2002:52; 2004:123) agrees that rebellion against authority (as well as the abuse thereof) is a prime source of conflict. Louw (1983:20) believes that our society should become much more sensitive to the emotions and feelings of husbands, but he focuses on marital love without dealing with the issue of respect for the husband. He does, however, explain that the type of love that the husband desires is showing interest, encouragement, support and motivation, whilst the wife yearns for a kind of love that entails attention, protection, appreciation and heartfelt cherishing (Louw, 1983:67). Walker (1989:166) reports that he has often heard from women about their need of compliments, but that it escapes some of them that their husbands have a need of compliments as well.

Adams (1983:109) believes that a Christian wife can respect “even an uncouth, unbelieving husband, not for what he is *in himself*, but for his authoritative role” which Christ has appointed him to. Strobel, writing about spiritually mismatched marriages, explains how his wife’s conversion after years of no church involvement for either of them and his being an atheist at the time, made him feel that he was losing his wife’s respect. “All of a sudden, after years of being each other’s biggest admirer, she was being attracted towards a whole new bunch of people.” He

reiterates that "respect is a crucial ingredient in marriage, especially to husbands" (Strobel and Strobel, 2002:68).

The best way, according to Eggerichs (2004:266-274) to counter the *Crazy Cycle* and set in motion the *Energizing Cycle*, is simply for the husband to love his wife regardless of her response and for the wife to respect her husband, regardless of his response.

3.5.5 Determining the issues and root problems

The counsellor may easily be misled as to what the real issues are. Crabb (1992: 13) warns that family problems are often wrongly regarded as simple one-issue difficulties. There are a number of reasons why a couple may at first mention only one or two superficial issues.

- (1) They may be testing the waters to see how the counsellor will react, which will be to them an indication as to whether it will be safe to mention the more serious problems.
- (2) They may be too embarrassed to mention the secret deeper issues.
- (3) They may be unaware of the deeper issues.

Gottman and Silver (1999: 22). write:

After watching countless videotapes of couples fighting, I can guarantee you that most quarrels are really not about whether the toilet lid is up or down or whose turn it is to take out the trash. There are deeper, hidden issues that fuel those superficial conflicts and make them far more intense and hurtful than they would otherwise be.

That which is presented as marital problems may be only symptoms of deeper problems (Louw, 1983: 21). It is important for the counsellor to pinpoint the real issues and their causes accurately (Van Staden, 1992: 36) – something couples have difficulty in doing - and to be able to determine whether the cause is sickness or sin (Adams, 1983, 11-17; Sperry and Carlson, 1991: 54). In the case of organic problems, it is a sickness requiring medical help, but in the case of unbiblical concepts and sinful living practices, they need to be labelled as sin. Error must be replaced by truth and sinful practices replaced by a new lifestyle. Each proximate cause requires a different approach from the counsellor (Adams, 1983: 11-16).

Although it is a fairly old source, Adam's approach to determining the issues is still useful. The best way, according to Adams (1983:89-91) to determine the issues is to

see the spouses together, ask them questions and listen to what and how they reply. Adams distinguishes four main categories of marriage problems, apart from the possibility of organic problems:

Unbiblical concepts of marriage	Sinful living patterns	Problem relationships with others	General influences in society
<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong idea of love • That you can be free to do what you want as if unmarried • That marriage to an unbeliever makes no difference 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication breakdown • Self-centredness • Lack of discipline • Money problems • Blame shifting • Wrong priorities 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-law problems, e.g. one spouse still cleaving to parents; or in-law interference • Children, e.g. differences about discipline, children lining up with one spouse against another • With former spouse and children from first marriage, or stepchildren in second marriage • Job or business social contacts 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakness of the Church, especially in having adopted many worldly ideas • Mobility and anonymity instead of being part of a community • The media e.g. glorification of illegitimate sex and subtle acceptance of non-Christian values • Education e.g. fostering humanistic values

Table / Illustration 3.5
(Adams, 1983: 15-88)

Collins (1988:409) reminds his readers that marital conflict is often “a symptom of something deeper, such as selfishness, lack of love, unwillingness to forgive, anger, bitterness, communication problems ... and a deliberate rejection of God’s will.” Louw (1993:21) agrees and adds that what spouses often consider as a problem of conflicting personalities, is nothing other than conflicting wishes and desires.

Powlison (2003:145) believes that it is helpful to ask the person what he or she really desires since that can reveal what is ruling the person’s heart. He makes the following observations:

- One root problem may manifest itself in many different types of symptomatic behaviour or sin (1 Tim 6:10; Powlison, 2003: 152).
- The converse of the previous statement appears to be also true. A single behavioural sin can emerge from several different types of lusts (Powlison, 2003: 152-153).
- If the pastor has good reason to believe that there is a root issue, he must guard against assuming that all people who manifest certain behaviour do it for the same reasons. The pastor should dig for the specific root issues in each case (Prov 20:5; Powlison, 2003: 153).

- Guard against looking for past experiences as the root problem, even if it is clear that the participant has been shaped by them (; Powlison, 2003: 155, cf. also Almy, 2000: 49).
- Guard looking at unfulfilled needs as the root problem (Powlison, 2003: 160).
- Most couples embroiled in conflict do not understand their own motives. Only if they can be led to see what motives rule them, can they come to repentance (Powlison, 2003: 151).
- Many root issues are what Scripture denotes as “lusts of the flesh” – these are often valid desires that have grown so large in a person’s life that they rule his heart instead of God ruling his heart. It is suggested that the following probing questions may reveal what those controlling desires are, “What did you want/ expect/ fear when you ...?” (Powlison, 2003: 158; cf also Tripp, 2002: 189).

Crabb (1992:13) discerns that there is an “upsetting” trend in present thinking about marriage, namely that marriages must be fixed by satisfying and meeting the relational needs of the parties, rather than simply obeying God. A glance back at the common issues and problem areas mentioned above raises the question: what causes or issues cannot be dealt with through biblical coaching, counselling or mediation? It is the researcher’s submission that armed with Scripture, the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, the pastor or elder should be well-equipped to deal with most, if not all, of the problem areas mentioned above.

3.6 MARITAL INTERVENTION METHODS RESEMBLING MEDIATION

In 3.3.6 above, reference was made to the fact that often therapists use mediation techniques unknowingly. In this section the researcher will attempt to mention briefly those aspects of the various marriage therapy models or styles that can be aligned to a typical aspect of mediation.

- Short -term therapy - (Freeman, 1982: 2-3; Smith, 1992: 79-91).
- Conjoint therapy (seeing the couple together) – (Clinebell, 1984: 271; L’Abate and McHenry, 1983: 280; Collins, 1988: 416; Sperry and Carlson, 1991:177).
- Covenant contracting (the couple signing a negotiated behavioural contract) – (Sager 1976: 196; Collins, 1988: 418; Doyle, 1992: 119; L’Abate and McHenry, 1983: 53, 58-59).
- Cognitive therapy (where the mediator is acting as a reality tester) – (Doyle, 1992: 69); Van der Merwe & Louw, 2001: 106-108.

- Behaviour modification (where the behavioural problem is identified and the parties agree on how it is to be modified) - (L'Abate and McHenry, 1983: 107-108; Butler and Joyce, 1998: 86-87).
- Solution-focused pastoral counselling (where instead of focusing on root problems, the counsellor works together with the counselled in finding or creating solutions) – (Kolbar, 1997: 43-44).

Many, if not most, of the approaches mentioned above are humanistic and in essence not compatible with biblical counselling. A Christian counsellor and author, puts it as follows:

... I also know the pitfalls of 'humanistic counseling', in which I and most counselors were trained. We were trained that human beings are basically good and that, when couples provide a positive orientation for change, people will see the good in themselves and become the best they can be. They just need to look inside themselves and rely on their innate goodness to solve their problems. And if that doesn't work, they need to just alter behavior to bring about positive change. It took me about three weeks in practice as a new counselor to begin to reject that belief system.

(Rosberg & Rosberg, 2004: 47-48).

The only reason why these approaches are mentioned is that there are techniques associated with them that are similar to the steps in mediation and even in biblical mediation. It underlines the point that many therapists use mediation techniques often without realising it – see 3.3.6 above.

Harley (2005:182) states that "social science is still ineffective in saving marriages." He refers to a 1995 Consumer Report survey in the U.S.A. which found that marital therapy received the lowest rating when compared to all other forms of psychotherapy.

3.7 EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.7.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 an attempt was made to establish basic theoretical principles according to the model of Zerfass. In this chapter the aim is to establish a meta theory. Thus far literature studies have been used to investigate mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism; to investigate biblical mediation developed by Peacemaker Ministries; and to examine intervention methods propagated in the social sciences that correspond with aspects of mediation. The literature study is only one method of establishing a meta theory. We now turn the spotlight on conducting an empirical study as part of the process.

The term "empirical" refers to what can be ascertained through experience, whether it be observation through the senses, quantified statistics, measurable processes or experience as a network of relationships, actions or processes of acquiring knowledge. (Louw, 1999: 120; Janse van Rensburg, 2007a: 3-5).

3.7.2 The case for empirical study

The question that may arise is whether there is room for empirical study in the field of practical theology. It may be argued that our sufficiency is of God, as stated in 2 Cor. 3:5 and 2 Cor. 9:8, and, that based on Heb. 4:12 and 2 Tim. 3:16, Scripture is sufficient and that consequently no further empirical research would be necessary. A careful reading of Heb. 4:12 shows that it is dealing with the role of Scripture in helping one to examine one's thoughts and motives and in bringing about inner transformation in a person. Likewise in 2 Tim. 3:16 the usefulness of Scripture "for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" is acclaimed. Even a Bible expositor such as MacArthur, who is generally regarded as conservative and strongly in favour of pure biblical counselling (MacArthur, 1994a: 323-332), admits that the Bible does not claim to be a thorough textbook on any of the sciences (MacArthur, 1994b: 368). The Bible is sufficient insofar as essential spiritual truth is concerned (MacArthur, 1994a: 331), but does not necessarily cover in detail the *methodology* to be used by a pastor in helping his parish in troubled marriages, for example, whether the pastor should see the couple together or whether he should give them Scriptures to read or simply pray for them (Collins, 1988: 409). There may be an appropriate time for experimentation and observation (Eccl. 3:1; Prov. 6:6-8) like when Daniel suggests an empirical test on healthy eating to king Nebuchadnezzar's official (Dan. 1:8-15). Tripp (2002: 165-166), referring to Heb. 4:4-

16, asserts that even Jesus Christ himself was a data gatherer as He walked amongst us. Louw (1999: 118-119), whilst conceding that theology is essentially not a science that can be determined by experience, observation and sensual discovery, states that since it cannot be denied that human experience and interpretation do play a part in the field of practical theology, which includes pastoral theology, the empirical dimension cannot be ignored. Heyns and Pieterse (1990: 48) go so far as to say that practical theology can actually be described as empirical theology. These views, as far as this researcher is concerned, can be accepted as long as Scriptural revelatory truth is treated as normative and not relativized.

3.7.3 Qualitative versus quantitative approach

There are presently two well-recognized approaches to empirical research, namely the quantitative and qualitative approaches (De Vos, 2002: 79).

The differences between these two approaches can be set out as follows:

	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
OBJECTIVE	To gain an in-depth understanding of social life and the meaning that people attach to it.	To measure the social world objectively
APPROACH	Inductive	Deductive
METHODOLOGY	Unstructured or semi-structured in-depth interviews or group discussions. Observation by researcher. Case studies. Focus groups. Smaller samples used.	Enquiry mainly by surveys or experiments on social problem, measuring with numbers and analysing with statistical procedures. Larger samples used.

Table / Illustration 3.6

(cf also Yates, 2004: 134-135, 140, 157; Schrank, 2006a: 22; Schrank, 2006b: 169)

Some of the disadvantages of the quantitative approach are:

- Survey questionnaires create an artificial setting in that data is collected in situations which do not correspond with everyday social activity. (Yates, 2004: 140).
- Surveys with closed questions may impose the researcher's theories on the participants by providing only limited responses to what can be complex questions. (Yates, 2004: 140).
- Quantitative surveys are not suitable for the study of issues related to people's subjective experience (Park, 2006: 118).

Janse van Rensburg (2007a: 5) mentions the following characteristics of the qualitative approach:

- Instead of working with facts only, the emotions of the participants are considered.
- The researcher concerns himself with the words used by the participants, instead of figures. The underlying motives of the participants are explored.
- The researcher himself is closely involved in the process and is not operating from a distance.
- The perceptions, experiences and emotions of the participant are dominant in the orientation of the study.
- The study is descriptive and exploratory.
- The structuring and planning of the study can be adjusted according to the contextual circumstances and needs in order to get to the essence of the matter.

The objective of qualitative research is to reach a true and in depth understanding of people's experiences and perceptions (Mouton, 2001: 148), which is best done by asking open-ended questions, such as, "Tell me your story" (Silverman, 2001: 13; Patton, 2002: 10). In order to ensure that the participants' words and expressed emotions are a true reflection of what is inside their hearts, it is vitally important that a strong relationship of trust and integrity be built between participant and researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 13; Janse van Rensburg, 2007a: 6). The researcher's role can be seen as that of an "interpretive subject" (Jensen, 2002: 236).

The choice of which of these two approaches to follow often depends on the research question. Qualitative research is appropriate for studies related to political opinions, social attitudes and easily observable social behaviours (Park, 2006: 118). Surveys are designed to reach a large number of respondents, but they provide limited information on each unit of observation. Quantitative research is therefore generally not well-suited to 'the study of nuanced questions related to identity, subjective experience, or historical causation' (Park, 2006: 118). The qualitative approach is particularly appropriate where the participant's beliefs and values are important for the study (De Vos, 2002: 79).

3.7.4 Methods of Qualitative Research

Janse van Rensburg (2007a:6-7) mentions the following methods of conducting qualitative research:

- observation of people's circumstances, experiences and conduct.;
- unstructured or informal interviews with only the themes predetermined, not the questions.;
- personal documents such as letters, autobiographies, notes or video recordings;
- participatory action research which has two objectives: (1) to assist the participants with their immediate problem in that action; and (2) to provide the social sciences with information in the process.

Participatory action research calls upon the researcher to play the part of "participant-observer", according to Anderson and Goolishian (1998: 372), which entails that he has to become a member of the problem system and work with his meaning system in order to facilitate dialogue in the direction of new alternatives. Janse van Rensburg (2007a: 7-8) believes that this approach actually goes further than the qualitative approach in general in that it has a directive character by guiding the participants towards correction of perspectives, broadening of insights and change in the *status quo*. The same author sounds a warning that a researcher who operates under post-modern epistemology and who wishes to convey biblical norms to the participant will be acting with inherent inconsistency, having regard to the chosen epistemology. On the other hand, Heitink (1993: 125-129) argues that the purpose of empirical methodology in practical theology, unlike in the social sciences, is not to be descriptive in nature but primarily to influence people. It seems that for the researcher who does wish to be directive, the remedy would be to make it abundantly clear to the participants beforehand that that would be his approach.

3.7.5 Ethical issues

It is important that the private information revealed to the researcher be kept confidential (Short, 2006: 111). This is in accordance with the principle in Prov. 11:13: "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a confidence." It takes trust and confidence in the researcher for a participant to open up and reveal sensitive and very personal details. This again brings to mind another passage in the Book of Proverbs, "The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out" (Prov. 20:5).

The principle of informed consent (Yates, 2004: 160), implying being open with the participant in letting him know what may be divulged and what he would be consenting and agreeing to, has also found recognition in Scripture – see Mat. 20:13-15; Luk. 14:28. The individuals concerned must be given adequate information to enable them to decide whether they should participate (Curran, 2006:202).

One way of ensuring that the respondents speak honestly and truthfully without feeling uncomfortable is masking their identity is (Yates, 2004: 159).

3.7.6 Method

As has been alluded to in 3.7.1 above, in order to develop a practice theory regarding the use of biblical mediation as a short term method in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages, the researcher has found it necessary to embark on an empirical study as part of the meta theory. This is in line with the model of Zerfass which is used in this dissertation, as referred to in Chapter 1. The disadvantages of the quantitative approach and the advantages of the qualitative approach set out in 3.7.3 above, persuaded this researcher to adopt the latter approach. The relevancy of the participants' perceptions and experiences and the various subjective reasons and value issues at play in suggesting why a particular pastoral intervention method should be regarded as appropriate or not, were considerations that prompted the decision to follow the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach used consisted in the following methods:

3.7.6.1 Participatory action research

The main thrust of the qualitative research can be labelled *participatory action research* (see above) where this researcher actually facilitated mediations with couples that were having troubled marriages. By observing the whole process first hand and, concomitantly, actually participating therein, this researcher was positioned to form a realistic impression as to how the parties experienced the process and to what extent it brought about reconciliation or better understanding between them. (It must be mentioned that this researcher has had the benefit of conciliation training by Peacemaker Ministries but does not regard himself as an experienced mediator and it is to be noted that he has not had the benefit of the specialized training offered by Peacemaker Ministries specifically with regard to effecting reconciliation in troubled marriages.)

The researcher worked with two couples from an independent denomination and one from a large Reformed denomination. There is no particular reason why three couples, specifically, were used in this study. To engage in a qualitative study the number of participants is immaterial. Janse van Rensburg (2007b:7-8) states that since the qualitative research works with words, not statistics, has a personal quality and is predominantly descriptive, the research works on a smaller scale than quantitative research, to the extent that it is possible to work with one case study only and yet present a valid research project. This researcher's view is that three couples (i.e. six individuals) are more than adequate for the purposes of this study, also bearing in mind that the researcher himself has played a participatory role as mediator.

At first an attempt was made to obtain referrals through a letter to pastors. A copy of the letter marked Appendix E1 is attached. This letter contained a section called *important information for prospective mediation parties*. Although none of the cases used in this study emanated from a referral by a pastor to this researcher, the prospective parties were shown the previously mentioned section containing information about the mediation process and what would be expected from them. A consent form -- of which a copy marked Appendix E2 is attached -- had to be signed prior to the mediation proceedings. Later, researcher was requested to use a different form which had been signed by the three couples. This form is presently prescribed and issued by the University. In order to comply with the ethical considerations regarding protection of confidentiality mentioned above, pseudonyms have been used and details that could provide clues as to the identity of the participants have been omitted in this study. The pseudonyms used for the couples are as set out in the following table:

	HUSBAND	WIFE
First couple	John	Anne
Second couple	Hannes	Ronel
Third couple	Sarel	Maryna

Table / Illustration 3.7

At the conclusion of the mediation proceedings two couples signed a mutual agreement. The first couple, when the time came to consider signing the agreement, were unable to do so because they had fallen back into fighting and quarrelling. After a few weeks, they recovered from the low in their relationship and declared their willingness to go ahead with signing the document. Thus it can be said that ultimately all three couples did sign an agreement. All three were done in Afrikaans. The English translations of those agreements are attached hereto and marked Appendixes E3, E4 and E5.

3.7.6.2 Post-mediation information

At the conclusion of the mediation, as part of the post-mediation, a semi-structured written request for information was presented to the mediation participants asking them how they had experienced the various steps in the mediation process and concluding with an open-ended, "any other remarks?" – question. Except for the first six questions, which served to gather some useful background data, the remaining questions dealing with the state of the parties' marriages and the various elements of the biblical mediation process were open-ended questions. The answers of those who experienced reconciliation have been summarized in a comparative table which is attached as Appendix E6. The third couple did not experience true reconciliation, as it appeared afterwards. By the time they signed the agreement the questionnaire had not yet been compiled. On 20 November 2006, Maryna, of her own accord wrote a note (addressed to writer in Afrikaans) of which a translated version, marked Appendix E7, is attached. On 25 February 2007 the researcher learnt from Sarel that Maryna had left him and, despite his pleading with her to return and work towards a reconciliation, she had decided to institute divorce proceedings. The researcher was informed by Sarel that Maryna had moved to another town and was therefore no longer in the fellowship of their congregation. The researcher wrote an e-mail message to Maryna on 1 March 2007 wherein he confessed that he had erred in not conducting follow-up post-mediation interviews with them and invited her to telephone him. On 5 May 2007 she replied by e-mail, in Afrikaans. Some of her comments translated into English are recorded in Appendix E8.

3.7.6.3 Researcher's impressions

As participant observer, this researcher recorded his own impressions of the conduct and emotions expressed by the participants as he was conducting the three mediations. This document is attached hereto and marked Appendix E9.

3.7.6.4 Interview with pastor

An unstructured interview was held with a South African-based pastor (Pastor M) who received conciliation training in the Peacemaker Ministries model and applied it in dealing with troubled marriages. In conducting interviews care must be taken not to be misled by assumptions, therefore it is crucial to ask the right questions (Tripp, 2002: 168-169, 172). The questions should be thoughtful and gracious, relevant and such that they produce facts (Mack, 1994: 223). The latter objective is achieved by asking open-ended rather than closed questions, that is, questions requiring not merely a "yes" or "no" answer (Mack, 1994: 224-225; Tripp, 2002: 175). The interview referred to earlier was recorded and the verbatim record is attached as Appendix E10. It was decided to include this interview as this researcher does not regard himself as an experienced conciliator and feels the need to include the perceptions of another conciliator that could add more weight to the body of research material. The consent form required, in order to use this interview as part of the empirical study, was signed by the pastor.

3.7.7 Analysis

Qualitative data can be analysed in many different ways (Yates, 2004:192). There appears to be no hard and fast rule as to the particular method to be followed in a particular study (Schrank, 2006c: 217-218). What can be unequivocally stated, is that a qualitative study, as has been noted above, requires an inductive approach.

It seemed that the most logical and practical way of applying that approach was to divide the subject into the various elements of the mediation process as set out in 3.4.3 above.

3.7.7.1 Pre-mediation

In this empirical study, in all the cases that were referred to this researcher, a pre-mediation session of some kind was held, sometimes with only one spouse at first but always including at least one joint session with both present. After the biblical mediation model had been explained to them, they were asked whether they agreed to undergo the process and, if so, whether they had any other suggestions as to how it should be done. They all agreed without offering any other suggestions.

I found it helpful to explain the process, using the GOSPEL acronym (see 3.4.3 above) and inviting them to offer other suggestions about the process. As was also

borne out in Pastor M's interview (Appendix E13) the fact that the pastor uses a model with a logical and easily understandable structure not only gives the participants confidence in the process and in the pastor's functioning as mediator but also lends certainty as to where they and the pastor were heading.

It is helpful to bring in the role of Christ and the full implications of the gospel to the table right from the beginning. To ensure that the pastor and the couple are on the same agenda, it is imperative to stress that the pastor or mediator's function is not primarily to find out who is the guilty party. To those who are out to achieve vindication, this will be a reminder to curb their expectations and to others who are nervous or uneasy, it may help to set them at ease.

It is appropriate at this stage to briefly teach them the four G's of biblical peacemaking. This is something they can begin to apply immediately whilst the process is underway. They can be encouraged to purchase the book *The Peacemaker* and study it.

They should be encouraged to be open and honest about their own shortcomings and wrongful actions or thoughts. In this regard it is helpful if the pastor or mediator reveals his own brokenness and admits that he has often had to apologize to his own spouse. The idea is to break down the barriers that may cause the couple to conceal the real, but perhaps embarrassing, issues.

During this session, the date, time and venue of future mediation sessions are arranged. The couples may be given some homework to prepare before the first session. Here it may be helpful to give some pointers on the general biblical principles of peacemaking. An appropriate way to end the pre-mediation is to pray with the couple asking the Holy Spirit to lead the couple as well as the pastor/mediator into the truth that will bring about reconciliation (John 16:13, 8;32).

3.7.7.2 Greetings and Ground Rules

Under *Greetings* one may include a devotional and would certainly include a joint prayer at the start of every session. The greetings of the mediator should always be warm, setting a positive tone for the rest of the session.

The Ground Rules that have been suggested by the researcher have in all cases been accepted by the participants, namely: (1) to speak respectfully and honestly,

attacking if necessary the problem issue but not the person; (2) not to interrupt one another (3) and to keep whatever is said during the whole process confidential.

The rules are perceived as being fair. As was noted in Appendix E6, one participant felt that they bring order to the process and another one that it helps one to speak without losing control. The rule about confidentiality helps to create a safe environment where the participants may be less fearful about being open about their own mistakes and shortcomings.

3.7.7.3 Opening Statements

This was, perhaps, at first glance an insignificant item in the whole process. Almost all the comments in Appendix E6 were positive. The Opening Statement seemed to have oriented the participants to getting used to saying what they really wish to convey without the fear of being interrupted, ridiculed or vehemently opposed.

3.7.7.4 Story-Telling

Pastor M recounted that in most cases he had to deal with spouses who had not been giving each other the opportunity to talk things out. He has even applied the rule of uninterrupted story-telling fruitfully in other counselling situations. It is interesting to note the comment from one of the participants in Appendix E6 that it paved the way for the other spouse to listen. Since one could not interrupt, all one could do was listen – and that was what was really needed at the time. Another comment was that if interruptions had been allowed, the story-telling could easily have deteriorated into arguments.

It is important that the pastor quickly stop any interruptions by the listener, reminding him or her of the ground rules that he or she has agreed to. It is also important that the pastor listens, observes carefully and makes notes, as the story-telling is the main springboard from which the issues will be defined.

3.7.7.5 Problem identification and clarification

The fact that we were trying to identify the real issues and that it was done in a co-operative manner helped to defuse feelings of hostility between the participants. Focusing on identifying the real issues helped the participants not to focus on their altercations and try to prove that the other one was actually the culprit.

One participant in the evaluation questionnaire remarked that it helped her to think about their problems in a different state of mind. Another said it was helpful that the mediator assisted in clarifying the issues. It became evident that for participants embroiled in serious conflict it was sometimes difficult to think clearly and objectively about their problems and the underlying issues. The help of the pastor/mediator was priceless.

3.7.7.6 Exploring solutions

When it came to the exploring-of-solutions stage, although the researcher encouraged the participants to propose solutions, he observed that they were mostly unable to do so and relied on him to present suggestions. When this was done he tried to be tentative, and clear about the fact that it was merely a proposal and that it was up to them to decide whether they accepted it or not. They were reminded that they had to take ownership of whatever had been agreed to.

The comments from the participants were positive about this part of the process again. One noted that it enabled them to find solutions that they could cope with. Another said that it illustrated that it was possible for them to work together to deal with their problem areas.

3.7.7.7 Leading to (mutual) Agreement

All participants seemed to appreciate the fact that a written agreement was drafted. Their answers included that it was like a written promise, that it "almost forced" them to comply with it and that it was a record of what had been agreed to, that could be referred to in future.

This researcher sometimes found that it was really a challenge to try to be specific enough in framing the wording of an agreed solution. The ideal was to state it in measurable terms, but with some issues, especially heart- or spiritual issues, like dealing with a bad temper, this was virtually impossible. The best we could do was to note the spouse's awareness of the problem, his undertaking to work on it and, if necessary, get outside help like consulting a reputable counsellor or joining a recovery group.

It is to be noted that the participants should not be forced in any way to sign a written agreement, even if it embodies terms that they have agreed to verbally beforehand. In the case of John and Anne, they were not ready and prepared to sign on the

scheduled time. After a few weeks they did sign. In the interim the researcher (and probably the spouses themselves) prayed about the tensions and it seemed that God's intervention put the reconciliation process on track. It is to be noted that this couple was from a neighbouring congregation and that their pastor was unaware of their marital problems.

3.7.7.8 Private caucuses or meetings

As was borne out in my impressions of the John – Anne mediation, the private meeting was a handy and useful occasion for exploring the possibility of sin or wrongful acts on the part of that particular participant. It was important to create a safe environment conducive to admissions and confessions. The pastor or mediator must take care not to force any admission. The change of heart and the repentance are from God (2 Tim. 2:25) and if the mediator exerts too much pressure on the participant he may withdraw from the process or make an admission without his heart being in it. Such a false admission will not produce lasting change and can easily boomerang and undo a lot of good work already done toward bringing about reconciliation. The ideal is that the participant himself or herself be willing to do honest self-examination and from the heart confess any wrongdoing.

Useful probing questions may be:

- “What would make you happy?”
- “Why is that so important to you?”
- “What did you want/expect/fear when you...?”
- “Could it be possible that the reason why you did this was that ...”

The pastor's approach should be to let the participant feel safe about being honest and open in revealing what is going on in his or her heart. Three pointers that are suggested in this regard are (1) that the pastor himself be honest and open about some of his own heart issues and struggles; (2) that any small confession made by the participant not be met by the expression of shock or by disapproving remarks, but rather by empathy and understanding (It is suggested that if stern correction is needed, that will be for another time); (3) that the pastor be tentative in suggesting any root issue, since he cannot really see the person's heart.

There were no negative comments in Appendix E6 concerning the private sessions. One commented that they were conducted very professionally and were fair. This is interesting as directive counselling is often frowned upon in therapy books.

3.7.7.9 Post –mediation

In the questionnaire no specific question was posed regarding post mediation follow-ups because it was one area the researcher did not apply as thoroughly as taught in the Peacemaker model. The importance thereof should, however, not be underestimated as was borne out by the case of Sarel and Maryna (see discussion in Appendix E9).

3.7.7.10 Other suggestions or remarks

The participants could not offer any suggestions except for one who replied, "Possibly to give specific Bible texts to read and do Bible Study on designated aspects of marriage." This underlines the need for pastors to teach biblical marriage principles in sermons or Bible studies to the congregation at large or to a group of married couples. The participants generally expressed their appreciation of the help they had received by means of the biblical mediation process. This was also the case with Maryna, at least initially (see Appendix E7). She did mention in her later reply (see Appendix E8) that the mediation process was not to be blamed for their failure to be totally reconciled.

3.8 Preliminary conclusions

3.8.1 Preliminary conclusions on literature study

From the literature study the following preliminary conclusions were drawn:

- Mediation can be described as a third-party facilitation in order to help parties in conflict to systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach resolution of issues or, at least, improved conflict management.
- Mediation is a voluntary non-adversarial decision-making process and method, facilitated by a neutral third party (the mediator), who attempts to improve the process of decision-making and assists the parties in conflict to reach their own agreement.

- The primary objective of mediation is settlement of the dispute and, if that is not possible, at least secondary objectives such as clearer definition of the issues at stake; better assessment of how wide the gap between the parties on the various issues is; improved communications or understanding between the parties and removal of obstacles to future bargaining;
- There are various ways in which the authors consulted would list the different types of mediation, but to the pastor the following may be of interest: therapeutic mediation, supervisory mediation, crisis mediation, team mediation and transformative mediation.
- Although it may be stated that there is a dividing line between mediation and therapy or long-term counselling, there may be cases where the primary goal of the former may be similar to the secondary goals of the latter.
- Mediation has been present in the Bible, Old as well as the New Testament, and in the Church perhaps from the earliest times, when the pastor was often called upon to serve as mediator.
- There are situations in which mediation may not be appropriate, for example when there have been serious domestic violence, extreme conflict or serious imbalances of bargaining power.
- Despite opinions to the contrary, mediation and, if necessary, therapeutic mediation, may and has been used with good fruit in dealing with troubled marriages.
- The biblical mediation model taught by Peacemaker Ministries is especially tailored to pastors and those doing pastoral care in order to deal with interpersonal conflict amongst believers, including working toward reconciliation in troubled marriages.
- The Peacemaker Ministries' biblical mediation model allows for a pre-mediation process, the actual mediation process and a post-mediation process. During pre-mediation the parties are orientated and prepared and reminded of the full implications of the gospel. During the mediation process the acronym GOSPEL is used as outline of the process, allowing for greetings and ground rules, opening statements, story-telling, problem identification and clarification, exploration of solutions and leading to agreement. At any time

during the process private coaching sessions (caucuses) may take place. The post-mediation involves follow-up coaching or discipling.

- Some of the roles of the mediator in biblical peacemaking may play are prayer intercessor, model-- by being an example on attitude and actions-- teacher and counsellor, encourager and coach, confronter and exhorter and witness when the church needs to be informed as envisaged in Mat. 18:16-17.
- There is a variety of possible issues that may lead to troubled marriages. The best way of determining the issues is to see the couple together, ask questions and listen to what and how they reply, bearing in mind that often the presented problem may merely be the symptom of deeper problems, such as selfishness, anger and unwillingness to forgive.
- There appears to be no reason why the pastor, armed with Scripture, the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, should not be well-equipped to deal with most, if not all, of the possible underlying issues in troubled marriages, through biblical mediation including coaching or short-term counselling.

3.8.2 Preliminary conclusions on empirical study

The following preliminary conclusions were drawn from the empirical study:

- The logical and easily understandable G-O-S-P-E-L steps, when explained beforehand to the participating spouses, help to bring structure to the process and to orientate the spouses, giving them certainty as to what they are aiming for in the process.
- The agreed-to ground rules pave the way for orderly sessions.
- The story-telling phase (during which interruptions are not allowed) contributes toward a more candid and open sharing and expression of thoughts and emotions by the story-teller, and better listening by the other spouse.

- Private meetings in a safe environment conducive to coaching or exhorting, with a view to eliciting heartfelt confession of wrongdoing, play a vital part in the process.
- The pastor's help in identifying the real issues, including the root causes, and in getting the spouses' agreement thereon, is a valuable component of the process.
- The fact that the pastor does not impose his own solutions on the spouses, but merely offers suggestions which they are free to accept or reject, makes it possible to find solutions that the couple concerned may embrace and cope with.
- The signing of a written agreement seems to bring more solemnity and gravity to the agreed solutions and also ensures that what has been agreed to, will not lose its force because of the fading of memory.
- Post-mediation follow-up should not be neglected by the pastor.
- There is value in every step of the biblical mediation process, from pre-mediation to story-telling through to post-mediation sessions.
- Pastors should ensure that there are regular teaching and exhortation about biblical marriage principles and practical guidelines, as well as the nurturing of a peacemaking culture in their congregations.

Chapter 4:

PRACTICAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON USING BIBLICAL MEDIATION AS A SHORT TERM INTERVENTION FOR RECONCILIATION IN TROUBLED MARRIAGES

4.1 INTRODUCTION / OBJECTIVES

The aim of this chapter is to establish practice theoretical guidelines. The practice theory constitutes the practical guidelines that are to be proposed in the light of the research that has been done – see 1.6 above. This is to be accomplished by an analysis and a synthesis of the basis – and meta theory in hermeneutical interaction with each other with the view of proposing a biblical mediation model to guide pastors in dealing with troubled marriages. An attempt will be made to suggest possible guidelines to the pastor (see the definition of the term in 1.8.3 above):

- (1) in deciding whether biblical mediation would be appropriate in a particular case of a troubled marriage; and
- (2) on the conducting of such a mediation process.

A basis theory on the biblical principles relating to marriage, marital conflict and reconciliation was established in chapter 2. The preliminary conclusions of the basis theory pointed towards the sanctity of marriage, God's hatred of divorce, the relationship between Christ and the Church and the causes of marital conflict (often sin) which God, as God of peace, allows at this time. It was also suggested that the reconciliation between God and man made possible through Jesus as Mediator have spilled over into the horizontal relationship between man and man, and that pastors can and should act as reconcilers in marital conflict in their congregations– see 2.5 above.

In chapter 3 a meta theory was established by examining the social sciences' views of mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism, the biblical mediation model of Peacemaker Ministries, typical modern-day marital conflict issues and the marital intervention methods that resemble aspects of mediation. A qualitative empirical study was also conducted as part of the search for a meta theory. It was found in the empirical study that mediation as a conflict resolution method is geared towards helping parties in conflict find their own agreement; that it occurs in the Bible; that in the Church pastors have been using it from early church history; that it can be used in dealing with troubled marriages and that the biblical mediation model of Peacemaker Ministries is especially tailored to pastors for that purpose – see 3.8

Peacemaker Ministries is especially tailored to pastors for that purpose – see 3.8 above. Although only three couples were participators in the empirical research, it still confirmed the validity of the research when it became clear that the principles of biblical mediation could be used in dealing with various kinds of troubled marriages amongst parishioners.

The guidelines proposed hereafter will show that the process of mediation is a viable option and can be utilized by pastors in dealing with such cases. Whilst biblical mediation is not proclaimed as the one and only way of dealing with a troubled marriage, it is proposed as a useful pastoral tool in supporting and helping couples. More research is needed in order to test this process in other areas, but for the sake of this dissertation, researcher believes that the outcomes have been reached and that guidelines can now be given, building on the research described earlier in this dissertation.

The researcher has found the theory and methods of biblical mediation as used by Peacemaker Ministries very helpful. The four core values in which it is grounded, especially the centrality of Christ, have been adopted in this study. As far as method is concerned, it is therefore suggested that the following elements thereof be accepted and incorporated as part of the practice theory of this dissertation:

- the three basic stages of (1) pre-mediation, (2) mediation and (3) post-mediation (see 3.4.3, 3.4.4 and 3.4.12 above);
- the structure given to the mediation process by the G-O-S-P-E-L steps (see 3.4.3, 3.4.5 to 3.4.11 above).

The researcher's proposed guidelines that emanate from his own research and thinking may be listed under the following topics, dealt with later in this chapter:

- stabilisation and evaluation as two steps that occur prior to pre-mediation;
- some of the practical pointers under *Story Telling*;
- the (other) G-O-S-P-E-L steps proposed below specifically for the pre-mediation process;
- some of the guidelines under *Problem Identification and Clarification*, the list of possible problems and the list of stated issues with their possible root problems;
- the list of typical problems that require long-term solutions and the list of possible action plans for some root issues (under *Exploring solutions*);
- some of the guidelines under *caucusing*;
- some of the guidelines under *post mediation*.

4.2 THE PASTOR AS RECONCILER

As has been pointed out in 2.4.4.6 the pastor's role as peacemaker is biblically based and of paramount importance. It is suggested that this role does not fall on his shoulders the moment that he becomes aware of a conflict amongst his parishioners, but rather as a continuous responsibility. In other words, the pastor may be proactive by his teaching throughout the year. More specifically, he should introduce and maintain a culture of peacemaking in the congregation. The core values of the centrality of Christ, the responsibility of the Church, the necessity of counselling and the comprehensiveness of God's Word should be upheld. Certain suggested practical pointers are:

- preaching, teaching and thorough pre-marital counselling (on the sanctity of marriage, the gravity of vows, biblical marriage principles, practical issues in marriage and conflict resolution) – see 2.5 above;
- cultivating a culture of peacemaking - see 2.4.4.2 above;
- cultivating a culture of early calls for pastoral intervention (In the case of John and Anne in the empirical study, it was noted that they did not want their own pastor to know about their problems (see Appendix E12, first paragraph). By often admitting his own shortcomings and stressing the grace given through Christ, the pastor can create a safe environment for openness.);
- where possible, updating church's by-laws or the constitution so as to remove possible legal barriers standing in the way of church intervention – see 2.4.4.4 above;
- encouraging couples to enter into "Christian" antenuptial contracts during pre-marital counselling and urging couples to renew their marriage covenants through sermons dealing with marriage or marriage enrichment camps. (See last paragraph in 3.3.11 and Appendix D).

4.3 SHORT-TERM INTERVENTION

The words "short-term" appear advisedly in the title of this dissertation for several reasons: (1) many pastors may feel that they do not have the time or experience to deal with one couple's problems on a long term basis; (2) as has been stated in 3.3.11 above, most such problems can be dealt with effectively on a short term basis and (3) mediation is in essence a short term method (see 3.3.6 above).

When a situation arises, such as marital conflict requiring quick intervention, it is suggested that the pastor keep in mind the basic steps covering the whole process. It is suggested that the short-term intervention process may be divided into five components:

- stabilization,
- evaluation,
- pre-mediation,
- mediation and
- post-mediation

(The last three components correspond to Peacemaker Ministries' model.)

4.3.1 Stabilization

Very often the situation is extremely tense and the spouses, and possibly their children, are in emotional turmoil. There may have been acts of violence. The situation may look hopeless and the spouses may not be thinking rationally. The pastor should first attempt to stabilize the situation. It is suggested that it would be impossible to delineate four or five steps that would apply to all situations. Wisdom will be required, but the following practical pointers should be helpful in all cases.

The first pointer is prayer. In many cases it may have to be silent and urgent prayer asking for God's wisdom as well as a spirit of calmness for all concerned. The acronym *ABCD* is suggested as source of additional pointers.

- **Avoid further hurt or violence.** The pastor's role as shepherd (see 2.4.4.6, first paragraph) is relevant to this situation.
- **Bring calmness.** Again the pastor will be acting as a good shepherd.
- **Convey hope.** This does not mean that the pastor can always guarantee that there will be reconciliation, as was illustrated by the case of Sarel and Maryna in the empirical study. There is however always, in the case of believers, hope that in Christ the problems may be resolved. In the event of it becoming clear that one spouse is recalcitrant, hope of God's helping the other through the problems can still be offered. The issue of hope was dealt with in the last paragraph of 2.4.3.2.
- **Deal immediately with the most burning issue required by circumstances.** It may be that one spouse refuses entrance to the house to the other or is threatening to kill the other. It is submitted that common sense dictates that that kind of issue demands immediate attention. Even in cases of less serious issues, when there is still a chance of sitting down with both spouses to

discuss the problems, resolving the most burning issue (even if it is merely a temporary solution) can provide the impetus that will provide the momentum for further breakthroughs in following sessions. The importance of peacemaking as a priority matter (taking precedence even over other worshipful activities) is clear from Mat. 5:23-26. See also the last two paragraphs of 2.4.4.3.

4.3.2 Evaluation

The pastor needs to evaluate the situation and ask himself, 'Is this appropriate for mediation or some other type of assistance like coaching, counselling, or referral?'

It is suggested that the suitability of mediation may be questionable in the following circumstances (See 3.3.10):

- Fear because of domestic violence

This, however, should not be an insoluble problem to the pastor. It may be that he will have to deal speedily with the spouse who has caused fear in the other. In some cases where it is clear that one partner has been aggressive over a period of time, loving church discipline may be more appropriate than mediation. Even if the violent partner has shown remorse, the "innocent" partner may still be afraid of staying in the same house as the former. This desire to stay elsewhere should be respected by the pastor, albeit on a temporary basis. Where genuine remorse is evident in the violent spouse according to the pastor's judgment, mediation will probably be suitable, if all other conditions have been met. In that case the pastor will have to comfort and re-assure the victim-spouse and make sure that he compensates for any imbalance of power that may exist between the two during the mediation process.

Applications for protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1984 should, on the strength of 1 Cor. 6: 1-8, not be made by either of two believing, churchgoing spouses, unless all possibilities for in-house church discipline have been exhausted. Where it appears that a court order in terms of the Domestic Violence Act has already been issued, the pastor should try to obtain a copy of the order and strive to act as peacemaker, without being a party to the breaching of that order.

- Extreme conflict - too much fear or danger to one party.

The pastor may be confronted by cases of intense, long-standing conflict between the parties over a period of months or years, when even minimal co-operation is not possible. It is suggested that even such cases do not rule out the possibility of intensive counselling or loving church discipline which may lead to repentance on the part of the offender and pave the way for mediation.

- Serious imbalances of bargaining power

Since biblical mediation empowers the pastor to play a more directive role, he should be able to deal with any imbalance of power. It should not be an impediment.

- Involuntary participation

As has been mentioned in 3.3.2, mediation is usually a voluntary process. It seems to the researcher that voluntarism should be a requirement in marriage intervention mediation, since any solution should be by agreement. If the spouses do not buy into a solution, the chances are that they will not adhere to it – see 3.4.11 above. If the church has a disciplinary policy in place, recalcitrant spouses may have to be faced with disciplinary steps if they are not willing to work with the pastor toward reconciliation – see 2.4.4.4, second last paragraph. In that case they may be unwilling participants in the mediation process, since they may feel forced to co-operate with the pastor. It is suggested that the pastor should rather use counselling in such a case and should that result in a more willing attitude, then proceed with mediation on the unresolved issues.

- Party mentally unfit

Mediation can not proceed and may have to be abandoned or postponed until the impediment has been cleared away – see 3.3.10.5 above.

- Unsuitability of dispute

It is difficult to perceive any marital dispute as unsuitable for mediation. In the empirical research the researcher has found that, although some deep heart- or sin-issues may be challenging, mediation at the very least offers (1) scope for personal confession of the problem and (2) a framework for submission to an agreed rehabilitation program by the offender.

- Abuse of mediation

It is suggested that the pastor's directive role should empower him to guard against any abuse of the process.

- Too early or too late

Again it must be stated that the pastor is, ideally speaking, well positioned to determine the timing of the mediation. The reader is referred to 2.4.4.6 above.

If the matter is at the early stages when emotions are raw, counselling at first may be more appropriate. The pastor that is familiar with his flock should, ideally speaking, be aware of any intended divorce proceedings. Even if divorce proceedings have commenced, they may be withdrawn or stalled pending the outcome of pastoral intervention.

- Unfavourable environment

It is suggested that the pastor should be able to deal with this problem.

- One party clearly not *bona fide*.

The comments under *involuntary participation* above will apply here. The pastor should try to determine what the underlying motives are and deal with them in counselling.

- One spouse not a member and not interested in what other spouse says.

Unless the pastor can persuade the non-member spouse to participate in the mediation, there can be no mediation. The spouse who is a member may receive coaching and counselling in dealing with that situation – see 2.4.3.2 last paragraph.

- Major dispute about facts clouding the issues

For example, one may envisage the case of one spouse believing that the other has committed adultery, which fact is being denied by the latter. It is suggested that mediation cannot proceed for as long as the factual issue remains a barrier to reconciliation.

- Immediate church discipline required

In the event that a serious sin such as ongoing adultery has been committed by one spouse and there has not been repentance, church discipline (see 2.4.4.4) would be more appropriate than mediation, in the judgment of this researcher.

The question whether or when marriage enrichment courses or camps should be recommended has to be addressed. It is suggested that, should there be several burning issues that cause the couples to hardly speak to each other, it would not be advisable. Scriptures, such as Amos 3:3 (“Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”) and Mat. 5:24 (“First go and be reconciled to your brother”) come to mind. Marriage enrichment, it is suggested, must build on a stable foundation, but as long as the relationship is in turmoil, any attempts at enrichment will disintegrate once the cracks of unresolved differences re-appear. Once there has been some reconciliation, then enrichment courses or camps may be considered.

4.3.3 PRE-MEDIATION

Once the pastor has decided on biblical mediation as the method, the pre-mediation preparation needs attention. (See the discussion in 3.4.4). As was remarked in 3.7.7.1, although separate sessions may be held with each spouse, it seems to be wise to hold at least one jointly with both. It is of the utmost importance that the pastor should gain the trust of both spouses. If there is no trust the authority of the pastor alone will, in the long run, not be enough to carry the mediation process to a satisfactory conclusion. It is suggested that the pastor be careful not to be seen choosing sides. The reader is referred to the fourth paragraph of Appendix E9 where the researcher dealt with the pressure felt by the pastor to play the role of referee. Should he deem it necessary to correct, exhort or rebuke either of the spouses at this early stage, it would have to be done in private and where possible in such a way that the spouse does not feel threatened, or that he or she is being unfairly singled out by the pastor.

The researcher again suggests the GOSPEL acronym for the Pre-mediation process.

- G = **Gather information.** Prov. 18:13, John 7:24 and James 1:19 discourage forming hasty judgments before one has made an attempt to gain the pertinent information.
- O = **Offer hope.** The comments in 4.3.1 under *Convey hope* are also applicable here.
- S = **Show the relevance of the gospel.** The contents of 2.4.1 to 2.4.3 will be helpful in reminding the spouses of the bigger picture and the grace and glory that, through Christ, has been imparted to each of them and which surpasses any conflict they may experience presently. The importance of the gospel and the fact that the purpose of the mediation is not to go on a witch-hunt to ascertain who is the “guilty party” should be stressed – see the third paragraph in 3.7.7.1 and the second paragraph in Appendix E9.
- P = **Pray with the spouses.** It is suggested that this point is so obvious that it requires no further argument.
- E = **Explain the process / structure.** This researcher (see 3.7.7.1) as well as Pastor M (see Appendix E10. third paragraph) found it helpful to explain the process to the spouses. If they are then given the opportunity to submit any suggestions in their turn, they will be more inclined to accept the process as finally agreed between them and the pastor. As has

been mentioned in 3.3.11, merely introducing order into the situation is therapeutic in itself.

L = Leading to mediation

- Seek to get agreement from the spouses on the ground rules to be followed – see 3.4.5.

- Consider holding a caucus (private discussion) before commencement of the mediation, if any of the following circumstances are present:

- one spouse's appearing to be an unbeliever and needing to be presented with the gospel;
- the pastor's noticing distrust toward himself or the other spouse;
- there clearly being one major issue that needs to be resolved quickly and one spouse's having to be approached urgently to try to resolve that issue.

- The preparation of the pastor through prayer, study and reflection.

- Decide on the venue, where possible with all the parties' agreement.

This may be the vestry or the pastor's study or even the couple's dining room if it is a safe environment in the mind of both spouses and it offers sufficient privacy and no distractions. Sitting around an oval or round table where no one is at the head of the table and where all present have a surface on which a notepad for taking notes may be placed, would be preferable. There should be an additional room or private place for caucusing or short counselling or coaching sessions.

- Schedule dates and times of meetings.

- Consider whether a co-mediator should be used, e.g. a spiritually mature lady as co-mediator if the pastor is male and the wife may feel more comfortable with another lady present during the process.

4.3.4 MEDIATION

As has been mentioned in 4.1 above, the steps designated by the G-O-S-P-E-L acronym used by Peacemaker Ministries for the mediation process (see 3.4.3 to 3.4.11) will be incorporated as part of the practice theory. This includes the following steps:

Greetings and ground rules;

Opening Statements;

Story-telling;

Problem identification and clarification;

Exploring solutions and
Leading to agreement

4.3.4.1 Greetings, ground rules (and God involvement)

Although this has been dealt with under 3.4.5, the author suggests the following practical guidelines:

- The researcher actually suggests an amplification of the "Greetings and ground rules" element by the addition of "God involvement". God should be brought into the process by prayer and, at times, Scripture reading at the beginning of the process and the beginning of every future session.
- Prior to that will be the greetings. It may sound trite, but the importance of a friendly greeting by the pastor/mediator must not be underestimated, because he is acting as a model and his example may lend a friendlier and more positive tone to the rest of the proceedings.
- The ground rules should be confirmed if the pastor/mediator considers it necessary, for example, in the event of the pre-mediation having taken place some time before the mediation began or of there having been times when the rules were violated during previous meetings. The following ground rules (see 3.7.7.2) are suggested: (1) speak respectfully and honestly, without attacking the other person; (2) do not interrupt each other; (3) honour confidentiality.
- The issue of confidentiality should be explained if it was not done during the pre-mediation. In particular, it should be explained to what extent it applies and, if there is a possibility that the matter, if unresolved, may be referred to a committee of elders or a tribunal for church disciplinary steps, the spouses should be informed of such possibility, but in a non-threatening manner.

4.3.4.2 Opening Statement

In addition to what has been said under 3.4.6 and 3.7.7.3 above, some practical pointers are added below.

- Comment positively if one or both of the spouses express the desire for reconciliation. They may be commended for starting on a positive note and be encouraged to continue in that spirit.
- If the opening statement of either is very negative, accusatory or vindictive, the pastor/mediator should seriously consider calling for a caucus or appropriate Scripture reading.

4.3.4.3 Story-Telling

The practical pointers that the researcher wishes to add to what has been stated in 3.4.7 are stated below.

- The pastor/mediator should try to reach agreement on who is to be first in telling his or her story. As has been mentioned under *General Remarks* in Appendix E9, in the cases of the empirical study, the wife was usually the less reticent and in every case it was agreed that she should start first. It is nevertheless wise, for the sake of acting impartially, to go through the process of inviting their comments and reaching agreement thereon.
- Sometimes, a spouse must be encouraged to open up and express his or her grievances, as the researcher had to do with John in the empirical study (see second paragraph of Appendix E9).
- If either or both admit the problem behaviour mentioned by the other, praise them for their courage, honesty and humility in acknowledging the problem and remind them of the forgiveness and grace that are part of the gospel.
- If the spouses cannot agree on facts, it may sabotage the process— see 4.3.2 above. Determine how important the disputed facts are. If the dispute is not a critical issue, for example, as to whether the husband was drunk every weekend or only every second weekend – it is immaterial and should not be allowed to derail the process.
- Allow time for the spouse who is currently speaking to think, to gather thoughts, to weep or express any other appropriate emotion (within the boundaries set by the ground rules). If a pause occurs, don't assume the speaker has finished his or her story. Make sure he or she has said everything he/she wanted to say. After some silence, the pastor/mediator may enquire, "Is there anything else you wish to add?"
- Allow time for the speaker to find the right words. One should keep in mind (1) that it may be the first opportunity the speaker has had to speak out uninterrupted in the presence of the other spouse; and (2) with emotions running deeply, some may have great difficulty in expressing themselves. There should be no pressure on anyone to rush his or her story. It is suggested that the moments of silence be treated as "holy ground" – that is to say, that they be regarded as wonderful moments during which the Holy Spirit may work in the hearts and minds of both spouses.
- The pastor/mediator should listen attentively and take brief notes – see 3.7.7.4. Notes are especially useful when a spouse needs to be challenged during a private session (see 4.3.4.7 below) and to refresh one's memory during future sessions.

- The pastor/mediator would do well to observe the body language of the spouses, especially the eyes of both speaker and listener. If the speaker's eye contact is with the pastor/mediator only there may still be fear or distrust towards the other spouse. If the speaker is staring down at the floor while speaking, it may indicate insecurity or shame.
- Observe the tone of voice of the speaker. The way something is said often conveys as much as the words.
- Intervene and be firm in stopping interruptions by the other spouse— see 3.7.7.4.
- The speaker may be encouraged to open up when he or she notices that the pastor/mediator shows that he is listening, by nodding or responding with words like “Yes”, “I see...” and so forth.
- The pastor/mediator should feel free to ask clarifying questions without coming across as a cross-examining trial lawyer.
- Assure the parties that if either has forgotten something, he/she can request another opportunity to add to the story, in which case the same rules will apply to both: each will be given an opportunity to respond.
- When the first speaker has come to the end of his or her story, the other may ask him or her questions and then tell his/her story without interruptions.
- It is recommended that the pastor/mediator record the points on which they agree.
- The pastor/mediator should note and record what issues seem to surface.
- The pastor/mediator should note and record rationalizations or excuses for sin or misconduct.

4.3.4.4 Problem Identification and Clarification

In 3.4.8 and 3.7.7.5 this step was covered. The practical guidelines the researcher wishes to submit are stated below.

- Invite the spouses to help identify the issues or problems. The pastor/mediator may find, as this researcher has experienced in the empirical study (see Appendix E12, under *General Remarks*), that the spouses tend to rely on him to offer suggestions. Despite this tendency, it is suggested that encouraging the participation of the spouses is to be recommended so that they are not made to feel remote from the process. As was pointed out in 3.7.7.5 the fact that this was done in the empirical study helped to defuse feelings of hostility and countered the tendency of the spouses to focus on altercations and trying to prove that the other was actually the culprit.

- Again it should be stated that the idea is to focus on the problem area or issue and not on personal attacks. It would, for example, not be appropriate to label an issue as “Peter’s being a drunkard.” A better description would be “ Peter’s drinking habits”. Whenever possible state the issue as neutrally as possible, for example, “We don’t spend enough time together” rather than, “Jack is never at home”.
- Although in 3.4.9 open-ended questions are recommended, this researcher has found that in the marriage mediation cases in the empirical study, it was at times more effective to ask closed questions, for example, “What is it about Amy’s cooking that upsets you? Is it her choice of meals or food, or is it the way it is prepared?”
- Make sure both spouses agree on the description of the problem before it is noted.
- Write the problems or issues on a flip chart or large sheet pasted on the wall where it is visible to all present.
- Some issues are related or are sub-issues of a larger issue. It is helpful to draw arrows that connect the related issues, on the flipchart.
- If no progress is being made, it may help if the pastor/mediator reads loudly from his notes of their story-telling versions so that the spouses’ (and the pastor/mediator’s) memories are refreshed.
- A list of some of the most common issues mentioned in 3.5 is provided below:
 - A wrong idea of love. (1 Cor. 13:4-8; Heb. 10:24; Rom. 5:5)
 - The myth that to have a happy marriage one must find one’s “soul mate”.
 - Alcohol and drug abuse.
 - The notion that things are usually much the same after marriage as before. (Deut. 24:5; 1 Cor. 7:32-36)
 - Failure to make adjustments to each other. (1 Cor. 13:5)
 - The problem of making decisions together.
 - Over-commitment and physical exhaustion. (Luk. 10:41; Mat. 11:29-30; 2 Tim. 2:4. There may be other deeper reasons, e.g. being driven by guilt feelings or fear of what others may think or the desire to win the approval of others).
 - Conflict arising out of disagreements about expenditure. (1 Tim. 6:10; Luk. 14:28)
 - The wife’s working outside the home and all that it entails.

- Unrealistic or unfulfilled expectations.
- Disagreements about raising children.
- Jealousy. (1 Cor. 13:4)
- Spiritual immaturity
- Emotional difficulties (ask: what lies beneath these difficulties?)
- A natural decline in communication. (Discover the reason. Are they too busy? Is there unexpressed anger or hurt? Is it because communication tends to escalate into conflict? The answer will determine what coaching to give)
- Negative communication (rather than “no communication”)
- Negative interpretations (Phil.4:8; 1 Cor. 13:7)
- External pressures. (Discover exactly what external pressures are involved. No other relationship (whether with parents, in-laws or children from a previous marriage) should interfere with the union between husband and wife (Gen. 2:24)).
- Different views on religion (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 7:12-16; 1 Pet. 3:1-2).
- Sexual frustration (whether a medical problem or the symptom of a deeper problem).
- Loss of intimacy (Gen. 2:23-25; Mal. 2:14).
- Friends. (Discover exactly what the problem is; suggest that they should, in the first place, be each other’s best friends. Some friendships may be detrimental (Prov. 22:24; James 4:4; 1 Cor. 15:33) but friendship with sinners in order to lead them to Christ would be following Jesus’ example (Luk. 5:29-31; 7:34)).
- Lack of leadership from the husband (Eph 5:23; 1 Pet. 3:1)
- Self-centredness (1 Cor. 13:5)
- Inadequate handling of conflict
- Rebellion against and misuse of husband’s authority (Eph. 5:33)

- The pertinent issues extracted from the three mediations in the empirical study are:

The wife feels neglected
They are not spending enough quality time together
There is too much negative accusatory communication between them
There is not enough open-hearted conversation between them / by husband
The husband fails to provide leadership
The bad temper of one spouse
Disagreements about raising children
Debt – overspending by either or both
Excessive drinking

Table / illustration 4.1

- Think of how issues may be defined to reflect root causes. Although mediation is a short-term process, in the long run it will be counter-productive to ignore the root issues. One may be successful in dealing with surface issues, but for as long as the root issue remains it may resurface later or manifest itself as a different surface issue.
- If the possibility exists that root sinful issues that will elicit a defensive response if raised in a joint session are underlying one or more of the issues presented by the participants, then the pastor/mediator should suggest it tentatively to the offending one during the private caucus. (See the guidelines in 3.7.7.8 above).
- In an attempt to discern the root issues, it is suggested that the following possibilities be borne in mind:
 - One root problem may manifest itself in many different types of symptomatic behaviour or sin (1 Tim 6:10).
 - The converse of the previous statement also appears to be true. A single behavioural sin may result from several different types of lusts.
 - If the pastor has good reason to believe that there is a root issue he should guard against assuming that all people who manifest a certain behaviour do it for the same reasons. The pastor should dig for the specific root issues in each case (Prov 20:5).
- The pastor's approach should be to let the participant feel safe about being honest and open in revealing what is going on in his or her heart. Three pointers that are suggested in this regard are that (1) the pastor himself be honest and open about some of his own heart issues and struggles; (2) any small confession made by the participant not be met with disapproving remarks, but rather with empathy and understanding. (It is suggested that if stern correction is needed, it be reserved for

another time). (3) the pastor be tentative in suggesting any root issue, since he cannot really see the person's heart.

- Guard against looking for past experiences as the root problem, even if it is clear that the participant has been shaped by them (Almy, 2000: 49; Powlison, 2003: 155).
- Guard against regarding unfulfilled needs as the root problem (Powlison, 2003: 160).
- Most couples embroiled in conflict do not understand their own motives. Only if they can be led to see what motives rule them, can they come to repentance (Powlison, 2003: 151).
- Many root issues are what Scripture describes as "lusts of the flesh" – these are often valid desires which have grown so intense that the individual's heart is ruled by them instead of by God. It is suggested that the following probing questions may reveal what those controlling desires are: "What did you want/ expect/ fear when you...?" (Powlison, 2003: 158).
- It is suggested that it may be helpful to consider possible root issues potentially connected with certain stated issues. It is suggested that some of the possible root issues that may be traced from the issues emanating from the three cases mentioned above, are as follows:

Stated Issue	Possible Root Problem or Sin
The wife feels neglected	The husband is self-centred (lack of <i>agape</i> love). The husband is self-willed (lack of total commitment to biblical living). The wife is self-centred (lack of <i>agape</i> love). Lustful craving for attention ruling the wife's heart.
They are not spending enough quality time together	Failure to understand the biblical concept of "becoming one flesh". Lusting after worldly pleasures. Avarice (resulting in being workaholic). Misplaced guilt feelings (lack of inner peace) inhibiting spending time relaxing together.
There is too much negative accusatory communication between them	Unforgiving attitude (resentment). Lack of proper perspective (negative thinking or ingratitude, gospel not fully appreciated). Pride. Lack of inner peace. Lack of <i>agape</i> love. Lack of self-control.
There is not enough openhearted conversation between them / by husband	Guilt feelings associated with unconfessed sin. Guilt feelings that are misplaced (lack of inner peace). Pride. Self-centredness. Fear of man (of ridicule or criticism).
Husband fails to provide leadership	Failure to understand what God expects from husband. Lack of faith or courage. Fear of man (of making mistakes, of criticism). Distorted view of God's attributes. Distorted view of true leadership.
Bad temper of one spouse	Lack of self-control. Lack of proper perspective (gospel not fully appreciated). Pride. Lack of inner peace. Resentment or bitterness.
Disagreements about raising children	Lack of knowledge of what God expects. Lack of understanding of God's attributes. Lack of mercy. Lack of self-discipline. Pride. Failure of wife to submit to husband (possible deeper root: ignorance of God's will on this or lack of total surrender to God or failure to appreciate relevance of Scripture to current issues). Failure of husband to be sensitive to wife's feelings.
Debt – overspending by one or both	Greed (materialism). Vanity (lusting after recognition by others). Pride. Lack of self-control. Failure of wife to submit to husband. Self-will of husband (failure or refusal to be bound to agreed budget).
Excessive drinking	Lack of proper perspective (gospel not fully appreciated). Lack of faith. Lack of joy. Lack of inner peace. Lack of self-control.

Table / Illustration 4.2

- Once the root problem has been identified by the pastor/mediator, it is important that the offending spouse will see and acknowledge it for what it is. It may require a caucus (private session) – see 4.3.4.7 below.
- In the end, ask, “Are these all the issues? If we can find answers to these issues, have we (at least in theory) resolved all the issues causing troubles in your relationship?”
- Remind them the door is open to introduce new issues that come to mind later on.

4.3.4.5 Exploring solutions

In 3.4.9 a brief explanation was given of how Peacemaker Ministries apply this step and, in 3.7.7.6, of the researcher’s analysis in the aftermath of the empirical study. The main idea is that the parties and the mediator together think of possible solutions. Peacemaker Ministries mentions brainstorming as a possible method. The researcher’s experience in the empirical study was that the spouses seemed to be unable to come up with possible solutions. As was the case in the Problem Identification stage, they relied on the pastor/mediator to come up with suggestions and then they would discuss the viability thereof. It was especially in dealing with the personal issues (see 3.4.9) and root issues (see 4.3.4.4) that this researcher could sense that the guidance of the pastor/mediator was much needed.

Some practical guidelines that the researcher wishes to submit are stated below.

- Determine which issue to deal with first. It is usually better to deal with personal issues before dealing with substantive issues, because, if the former have been dealt with adequately it makes it so much easier to deal with the latter. When there are more than one personal issue, it would be wise to ask the spouses which issue they wish to deal with first. If they cannot offer a suggestion, then ask which issue is the most pressing one, i.e. the one that sparked the most recent flare up. Ask whether it will help if that issue is dealt with first. If there is no such specific issue, the pastor/mediator should choose an issue that he anticipates should be resolved fairly quickly, which would help to create momentum for the resolution of the remaining issues.
- Brainstorming by the parties themselves would help, but more often than not they are unable to think logically and calmly, presumably because of the

stress accompanying the marital troubles. In that case the pastor/mediator has to be prepared to take the initiative.

- The mediator must be careful that whatever he may suggest is truly accepted by the parties before he writes it down. If there is any doubt he may ask each of them why he or she has agreed to that particular solution. Ownership of and commitment to the proposed solution come easier if they emanate from the party concerned or if he or she has at least accepted the proposal with conviction and enthusiasm.
- One approach that may be useful is to counter the negative by concentrating on doing the opposite, e.g. deal with bad temper by concentrating on showing patience.
- Another approach that may be considered is that of giving homework and asking each spouse to come up with his or her own suggestions emanating from the homework.
- Whenever there is a deadlock, move to another issue. If the deadlock is due to sinful actions or attitudes, call a private session
- Keep in mind that some issues or root problems will require long-term help. Some problems cannot be addressed merely by short-term “solutions” – e.g. a drinking problem or a bad temper. It is not of much use saying, “He promises that he will not lose his temper anymore.” Here the root cause must be sought. As has been alluded to in 4.3.4.4, usually spiritual problems are at the root of the problem being manifested.
- Typical long-term problems are:
 - Confusion over proper husband – wife leadership roles.
 - Drinking or any substance abuse problem.
 - Bitterness due to childhood experiences or years of suffering.
 - Persistent violent behaviour over a long period.
 - Anger as a habit for years.
 - Sexual frigidity.
 - Persistent self-centredness
 - Lack of good model or very poor role model from parents
- Any attempt to deal comprehensively with all or the most common root issues or sins, and the possible action plans related to each such problem, fall outside the ambit of this study. It appears to be an area necessitating further study.
- It may, however, be helpful to take some of the root issues and tentatively suggest possible plans of action tailored to those issues, as the researcher attempts to do in the following schedule:

Possible Action Plans for some root issues

ROOT ISSUE	POSSIBLE ACTION PLAN
Self-centredness	Focus on Christ-mindedness and God-centredness. Meditate on Phil. 2:3-8 and Gal. 2:20 and pastor/mediator to teach practical application of these verses.
Lack of proper perspective	Encourage person to see the bigger picture. Meditate on Luke 22-24, Rom. 8 and Rev 21 and 22. Read good books on grace, heaven and/or God's sovereign plan.
Lusting after worldly pleasures	Encourage person to find joy and satisfaction in spiritual riches accompanying intimate relationship with God through Christ that dwells in him (Col.1:27; Eph 3:8).
Pride	Study and meditate on God's greatness. Focus on humility. Decide beforehand on doing small menial tasks for others – even those of lower rank or status.
Lack of inner peace	Deal with unconfessed sin – guide person toward repentance, confession and understanding of God's forgiveness. Focus on gospel of reconciliation (2 Cor.5:16-19). Meditating on Phil. 4: 6 and 1 John 3:1-3
Failure of wife to submit to husband: -ignorant of Scriptural teaching -failure to appreciate Scripture's relevance - lack of total surrender to God	Teach Eph 5: 21-32 and let her write what it means for her. Teach inerrancy of Scripture. Teach and confront her with Mat 10:38 and 16:24-26.
Fear of man (of failure or criticism)	Focus on awe and respect for God. Meditate on 1 John 4:18 and focus on love for God and fellowman.
Lack of understanding of God's attributes	Study God's attributes. Read books about it, e.g. <i>God, as He longs for you to see Him</i> by Chip Ingram. Meditate on it. To ask Holy Spirit to reveal Christ (John 16:12-15)
Lack of self-control	Listen to John MacArthur's talk on the Art of Self-discipline; keep journal on daily temptations and how they were dealt with and share information with pastor in post-mediation sessions; join Christian Recovery Group Program.

Table 4.3

- As alluded to before, in some cases a longer-term strategy will be required. Since mediation is a short-term method, long-term assistance will fall outside the mediation process. What may be put forward as a solution is an undertaking by the offending spouse to submit him- or herself to a long-term program that all concerned believe should be helpful.

- Be careful not to be drawn into the role of referee if either of the parties tries to manipulate the mediator/pastor into taking sides against the other in apportioning blame. Rather leave it to the private caucus (see 4.3.4.7) where the offending spouse can be gently encouraged to admit the problem him- or herself.

4.3.4.6 Leading to agreement

The reader is referred to 3.4.10 where the approach of Peacemaker Ministries is dealt with, as well as 3.7.7.7 where the researcher's comments flowing from the empirical study are recorded. In 3.4.10 the acronym RESTORE that stands for the various elements that should be recorded in such an agreement was explained. The researcher has not always followed the acronym meticulously and has never found it relevant to include the "R" of the acronym, i.e. "Review with attorneys" in the kind of cases dealt with in the empirical study.

The guidelines offered by the researcher (some of which may overlap with what Peacemaker Ministries recommend (see 3.4.10), are stated below.

- The agreement should be in writing.
- The agreement should be at least in duplicate (one for pastor/mediator and one for the parties).
- Try to use the actual wording of the spouses so that it would be easier for them to take ownership.
- Be specific, put obligations in measurable terms and, where applicable, insert time frames or an indication of frequency, e.g., "At least once a week...".
- As has been observed in 4.3.4.5, don't try to force commitment wording that may be unrealistic, e.g. "Peter undertakes never to get angry with Anne again". Rather: "Peter will do his best not to get angry with Anne so quickly and if he does get angry, to exercise self-control and be less harsh toward her. He undertakes to do a study on anger and self-control and to report back to the pastor within ?? weeks."
- If the problem is a spiritual issue to which a solution cannot be framed in measurable terms, one possible approach is that of noting the offending spouse's awareness of the problem, his or her undertaking to work it, and a further undertaking that, should the other partner believe that it has not been overcome by a certain deadline, the former will obtain further outside professional or pastoral help or join a specific Christian recovery group.

- In similar vein, as discussed in the previous pointer, any undertaking on long-term action to be taken by either that has been agreed to between the parties should also be recorded in the written agreement.
- Make sure there is reference to God and recognition of His work and grace in their lives.
- Make sure there are conflict resolution mechanisms for any future differences or marital trouble, e.g. getting outside help again if one-to-one discussions prove to be unfruitful.
- The agreement, once finalized, should be signed by both spouses in order to lend more gravity thereto. If, for some reason, either or both are unwilling to sign, it should not be forced. It is then better to agree to a date for reconsideration or more private discussions to get to the underlying cause of the hesitancy or unwillingness to sign.
- A prayer of thanksgiving and a request for help and strength for the couple would be fitting after the signing has taken place.

4.3.4.7 Private caucuses or meetings

The reader may refer to 3.4.11 and 3.7.7.8 to recap what has been stated thus far under this topic. As has been mentioned, these one to one meetings may take place at any stage of the process. It bears repeating that it is not the appropriate opportunity for any long-term counselling or therapy. It is rather the vehicle for short-term biblical counselling, coaching, teaching, or offering encouragement or probing for solutions in the safe environment provided by the private setting.

The practical guidelines that are submitted are as follows:

- It may be necessary for the pastor/mediator to consider the list of *Stated Problems* and *Possible Root Problem* under *Problem Identification* above, in planning the caucus.
- Prayer for God's guidance beforehand is vital. Pray regularly for the couple and for God's intervention in giving them pliable hearts leading to repentance and change where there has been unconfessed sin.
- It is good to bear in mind that this may be the opportunity *par excellence* for the pastor/mediator to let Christ mediate in him and through him – see second paragraph of 2.4.4.6.
- This is the ideal situation for exhorting or confronting the erring spouse about sinful actions or attitudes.

- Any confrontation should be approached tentatively, with humility, in a non-threatening manner, and in a way that will ensure the erring spouse of the pastor/mediator's continued acceptance and respectful treatment, leaving his/her dignity intact, whatever sin is confessed to.
- The pastor must create a safe environment that will be conducive to honest self-examination. One way of fostering the climate described in the previous point is for the pastor/mediator to confess one of his own shortcomings in marriage.
- It would not be possible to deal comprehensively with all the possible lines of reasoning or exhortations that may be used in the private meeting. The following possibilities may be considered and applied as deemed necessary by the pastor/mediator as he is being led by Christ:
 - The centrality of Christ cannot be over-emphasized. (This is one of the fundamentals underscored by Peacemaker Ministries – see 3.4.1.) The researcher suggests that more be said on this important topic. All things are through Christ and for Him, including every marriage between believers (Col. 1:16; Hebr. 2:10). Marriage is a shadow or type of the future relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33) – see 2.2.2.2. Every believer, being born again, has Christ living in and through him or her (John 14:23; Rom. 8:9-10; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27). This position in Christ, once realized by the believer, is immensely empowering, making possible spiritual breakthroughs in his or her life in areas where overcoming is needed – see 2.4.3.2.
 - In the case of an unforgiving spouse, remind him/her of the implications of the gospel, especially Jesus Christ's death on the cross, whereby grace and forgiveness and the ministry of reconciliation that follows from that are granted to him or her.
 - When rebellion against the husband's authority or the husband's lack of love is the issue, it is recommended that the "crazy" and "energizing cycle" taught by Eggerichs (see 3.5.4) be explained to each of the partners in private discussion. Each may be exhorted in private to take the initiative whenever he or she feels that the other spouse is letting him/her down.
 - When sacrifice may be required of one of them (usually the less culpable spouse) the spouse concerned should be helped to see the bigger picture, especially if he or she will have to sacrifice in order to nurture the marriage. (The bigger picture would include God's awareness of the

problems even before they occurred, His perspective and judgment and the eternal reward, based on his or her works, that awaits every believer.)

- Should it appear that one or both spouses have a low view of the sanctity of marriage and their marriage vows, it may be helpful to teach what the Bible says about marriage as set forth in 2.2.3 to 2.2.5.
- During the private meeting, homework may be given tailored to each particular spouse. This may include the reading of selected Scriptures, or reading from a particular book, e.g., *The Peacemaker*, or listening to a particular Christian CD or DVD.
- In many cases the desired outcome would be repentance by either or both, confession to God, and, where it has caused offence to the spouse, confession to his or her spouse. Hopefully there will be forgiveness by the offended spouse and following that an agreed-to action plan. To summarize: Confession → Forgiveness → Action Plan. (Action Plan will fall under "Exploring solutions").

4.3.5 POST MEDIATION

Post-mediation was briefly mentioned in 3.4.12 and 3.7.7.9. Peacemaker Ministries stresses that it is crucial and so the researcher has discovered as was borne out by the case of Sarel and Maryna in the empirical study (Appendix E12; 3.7.7.9).

Some practical guidelines are suggested below.

- Follow up with regular calls to encourage the participating couple and prevent backsliding.
- Speak to each privately to check whether both are complying with their mutual agreement.
- If necessary, visit the couple.
- Remind them that despite the written mutual agreement it is likely that, at times, both will fail to honour what they have agreed to. As long as the heart and intentions are sincere and the violation can be regarded as a rare "act of the flesh", patience and forgiveness will be required.
- Encourage them to attend a marriage enrichment weekend to further strengthen their marriage.
- If the pastor/mediator finds that either of them has reneged on his or her commitments embodied in the mutual agreement, and that this cannot be construed as a rare stumbling, he should immediately call for a private meeting with that spouse. He may have to consider church accountability / disciplinary steps against the obstinate spouse and offer continuous counselling and support

to the other spouse. The “innocent” spouse may have to be advised in serious cases, such as continuous adultery or threat of physical harm, to separate from the offending spouse, allowing time for him or her to repent. In some cases divorce may be inevitable. The spouses may be advised of the benefits of divorce mediation as opposed to acrimonious litigation.

4.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

As was stated in 4.1 above, the proposed guidelines will be related to the decision as to

- (1) whether mediation should be embarked upon in a particular case; and
- (2) the way in which the mediation process should be conducted.

With regards to short-term intervention a process consisting of five components is suggested, namely:

- (1) stabilisation and
- (2) evaluation.

These two points relate to the question whether mediation would be appropriate in the first place. The remaining three components, relating to the mediation process, correspond to those used by Peacemaker Ministries for their model, namely:

- (3) pre-mediation,
- (4) mediation and
- (5) post-mediation

Stabilisation will be necessary if the situation is volatile or if there has been violence or threats. It is suggested that Prayer plus A, B, C. and D be used in that type of scenario, where the mentioned letters stand for the following:

A	Avoid further hurt or violence
B	Bring calmness
C	Convey hope
D	Deal immediately with burning issue

Table / illustration 4.4

Evaluation is needed by the Pastor to assess whether mediation as opposed to counselling or referral, will be appropriate. It is suggested that in the following circumstances, mediation will not be appropriate:

- when one spouse is not a member of the pastor’s church and is uncooperative;
- when there is a major dispute of facts that clouds the issues and
- when there is serious sin that has not been repented of and which requires church discipline.

There are other instances, for example, fear on the part of one spouse because of past domestic violence; serious imbalances of bargaining power or one party abusing the process or not being bona fide that may stand in the way of mediation. However, these circumstances do not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier to mediation as the pastor/mediator may counter with corrective steps.

For pre-mediation, the researcher again suggests a G O S P E L acronym:

- G = Gather information
- O = Offer hope
- S = Show relevance of gospel
- P = Pray with the spouse
- E = Explain the process
- L = Leading to mediation

For the mediation, the G O S P E L acronym that is used by Peacemaker Ministries will be proposed as a workable model:

- G = Greetings, Ground rules (*God involvement* also, suggested by the researcher)
- O = Opening statement
- S = Story-telling
- P = Problem Identification
- E = Exploring solutions
- L = Leading to agreement

Private caucuses or meetings at any stage of the process as decided by the mediator/pastor are suggested as a means of providing a safe environment for short-term counselling or exhortation and for the pastor/mediator to let Christ mediate in and through him when dealing with root issues.

Under *Problem Identification* it is suggested that the pastor-mediator be on the look-out for root issues. Under *Exploring solutions* it is suggested that the pastor/mediator take the initiative in proposing solutions but at the same be careful not to impose his ideas and not to note them as solutions without making sure that both spouses have truly embraced his proposals.

It is suggested that, for post-mediation, follow up calls be made to one or both parties and, if necessary, a visit be made to encourage or exhort them.

The framework of the above guidelines may be set out schematically as follows:

1. STABILIZATION (Prayer plus ABCD)	Prayer A void further hurt or violence B ring calmness C onvey hope D eal immediately with most burning issue
2. EVALUATION	
3. PRE--MEDIATION (G-O-S-P-E-L)	G ather information O ffer hope S how relevance of gospel P ray with the spouses E xplain the process L ead to mediation
4. MEDIATION (G-O-S-P-E-L)	G reetings, G round Rules & G od involvement O pening statement S tory-telling P roblem identification E xploring solutions L eading to agreement
5. POST MEDIATION	

Table / illustration 4.5

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The central theoretical argument of this research is that biblical mediation can be a useful method to pastors, specifically within the bounds of troubled marriages.

The aim of this study was to research the concept of biblical mediation as a possible method for pastors' use and to suggest guidelines as to how it can be applied, specifically within the bounds of troubled marriages.

The specific objectives were:

- To investigate marital conflict and reconciliation. (Chapter 2) and what the biblical teaching on marriage is.
- To investigate what can be learnt about mediation from the social sciences and about biblical mediation as a method in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages from Peacemaker Ministries. (Chapter 3).
- To do empirical research on biblical mediation, as a short-term method for reconciliation in troubled marriages. (Latter part of Chapter 3).
- To propose biblical mediation as a marriage intervention method in certain circumstances and offer guidelines as to the manner it is to be applied in pastoral care for reconciliation in troubled marriages. (Chapter 4).

A review of the theoretical perspectives arrived at in the various chapters will now follow.

5.2 BASIC THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHAPTER 2

On the three aspects covered in chapter 2, the following preliminary conclusions are submitted.

Marriage

- Marriage has been ordained by God, as a lifelong monogamous union of companionship between husband and wife, “united as one”, with a deep emotional and spiritual bond, based on a covenant between them and God.
- Scripture esteems marriage as honourable and a foreshadowing of the joyous intimate relationship that will exist forever between Christ and the Church. The relationship between Israel and God is also pictured as a marriage.
- God hates divorce. It is permitted only in the event of sexual misconduct on the part of one of the partners, or when an unbeliever wishes to terminate his or her marriage to the believer.
- The love of the husband toward his wife should be as the love of Christ for the Church, for whom He has given his life. The submission of the wife to her husband should be as the submission of the Church to Christ.

Marital Conflict

- Biblical coverage of conflict in general can be applied to marital conflict.
- God is a God of peace. He does, however, allow conflict during the period until Christ’s return, as a result of man’s sin.
- One of the consequences emanating from the fall is a tendency amongst both husbands and wives to distort their ideal roles as designed by God. Not all conflict is caused by sin, but when sin is involved it is usually caused by sinful desires or desires that become sinful when being elevated into demands.
- Marital conflict is often a symptom of deeper sin.
- Believers also experience an onslaught on their marriages, caused by their own sinful hearts, or the appeal of the world or divisive attacks from the devil.

- Sinful attitudes and behaviours have a corrosive effect on marital relationships.

Reconciliation

- God is a God of peace. Before sin entered there had always been peace.
- Sin causes separation between God and the sinner. Before creation it was determined by the Godhead that Christ would be slain to pay the penalty for the sin to be committed by man.
- Jesus acted as Mediator by His death on the cross, being the sacrifice of atonement, which made reconciliation between God and man possible.
- Peace, being an attribute of God's, is God's will not only for the vertical relationship between God and man, but also for the horizontal relationship between people, especially God's people, and particularly in marriage.
- There are several examples of informal mediation and many calls to peacemaking throughout Scripture.
- The Gospel of peace exhorts believers to forgive one another as God forgave his people.
- Rom.14:19 exhorts believers to make every effort to do what leads to peace.
- Mat18:15-17 outlines the conflict resolution process Christ prescribes for the Church, which entails 1) private discussion between disputants, and, should that fail, 2) mediation or counseling by one or two others, and, should that fail, 3) referral to the Church for adjudication.
- Conflict between members, including marital conflict, should be dealt with by the Church, according to 1Cor.6:1-6.
- Pastors, as shepherds who are to contribute to the joy of their members, are ideally positioned and in fact obligated in terms of what Scripture requires, to play the role of reconcilers or mediators.

5.3 META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHAPTER 3

From the literature study the following preliminary conclusions were drawn:

- Mediation can be described as a third-party facilitation in order to help parties in conflict to systematically isolate disputed issues in order to develop options, consider alternatives and reach resolution of issues or, at least, improved conflict management.
- Mediation is a voluntary non-adversarial decision-making process and method, facilitated by a neutral third party (the mediator), who attempts to improve the process of decision-making and assists the parties in conflict to reach their own agreement.
- The primary objective of mediation is settlement of the dispute and, if that is not possible, at least secondary objectives such as clearer definition of the issues at stake; better assessment of how wide the gap between the parties on the various issues is; improved communications or understanding between the parties and removal of obstacles to future bargaining;
- There are various ways in which the authors consulted would list the different types of mediation, but to the pastor the following may be of interest: therapeutic mediation, supervisory mediation, crisis mediation, team mediation and transformative mediation.
- Although it may be stated that there is a dividing line between mediation and therapy or long-term counselling, there may be cases where the primary goal of the former may be similar to the secondary goals of the latter.
- Mediation has been present in the Bible, Old as well as the New Testament, and in the Church perhaps from the earliest times, when the pastor was often called upon to serve as mediator.
- There are situations in which mediation may not be appropriate, for example when there have been serious domestic violence, extreme conflict or serious imbalances of bargaining power.
- Despite opinions to the contrary, mediation and, if necessary, therapeutic mediation, may and has been used with good fruit in dealing with troubled marriages.

- The biblical mediation model taught by Peacemaker Ministries is especially tailored to pastors and those doing pastoral care in order to deal with interpersonal conflict amongst believers, including working toward reconciliation in troubled marriages.
- The Peacemaker Ministries' biblical mediation model allows for a pre-mediation process, the actual mediation process and a post-mediation process. During pre-mediation the parties are orientated and prepared and reminded of the full implications of the gospel. During the mediation process the acronym GOSPEL is used as outline of the process, allowing for greetings and ground rules, opening statements, story-telling, problem identification and clarification, exploration of solutions and leading to agreement. At any time during the process private coaching sessions (caucuses) may take place. The post-mediation involves follow-up coaching or discipling.
- Some of the roles of the mediator in biblical peacemaking may play are prayer intercessor, model-- by being an example on attitude and actions-- teacher and counsellor, encourager and coach, confronter and exhorter and witness when the church needs to be informed as envisaged in Mat. 18:16-17.
- There is a variety of possible issues that may lead to troubled marriages. The best way of determining the issues is to see the couple together, ask questions and listen to what and how they reply, bearing in mind that often the presented problem may merely be the symptom of deeper problems, such as selfishness, anger and unwillingness to forgive.
- There appears to be no reason why the pastor, armed with Scripture, the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, should not be well-equipped to deal with most, if not all, of the possible underlying issues in troubled marriages, through biblical mediation including coaching or short-term counselling.

The following preliminary conclusions were drawn from the empirical study:

- The logical and easily understandable G-O-S-P-E-L steps, when explained beforehand to the participating spouses, help to bring structure to the process and to orientate the spouses, giving them certainty as to what they are aiming for in the process.
- The agreed-to ground rules pave the way for orderly sessions.
- The story-telling phase (during which interruptions are not allowed) contributes toward a more candid and open sharing and expression of thoughts and emotions by the story-teller, and better listening by the other spouse.
- Private meetings in a safe environment conducive to coaching or exhorting, with a view to eliciting heartfelt confession of wrongdoing, play a vital part in the process.
- The pastor's help in identifying the real issues, including the root causes, and in getting the spouses' agreement thereon, is a valuable component of the process.
- The fact that the pastor does not impose his own solutions on the spouses, but merely offers suggestions which they are free to accept or reject, makes it possible to find solutions that the couple concerned may embrace and cope with.
- The signing of a written agreement seems to bring more solemnity and gravity to the agreed solutions and also ensures that what has been agreed to, will not lose its force because of the fading of memory.
- Post-mediation follow-up should not be neglected by the pastor.
- There is value in every step of the biblical mediation process, from pre-mediation to story-telling through to post-mediation sessions.
- Pastors should ensure that there are regular teaching and exhortation about biblical marriage principles and practical guidelines, as well as the nurturing of a peacemaking culture in their congregations.

5.4 PRACTICAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHAPTER 4

As was stated in the beginning of this chapter, the proposed guidelines will be related to the decision as to:

- (1) whether mediation should be embarked upon in a particular case and
- (2) how to conduct the mediation process.

For short-term intervention a process consisting of five components is suggested, namely:

- (1) stabilisation and
- (2) evaluation.

These two points relate to the question whether mediation would be appropriate, in the first place. The remaining three components, relating to the mediation process, correspond to those used by Peacemaker Ministries for their model, namely:

- (3) pre-mediation,
- (4) mediation and
- (5) post-mediation.

Stabilization will be necessary if the situation is volatile or if there has been violence or threats. It is suggested that Prayer plus A, B, C and D be used in that type of scenario, where the letters mentioned stand for the following:

A	Avoid further hurt or violence
B	Bring calmness
C	Convey hope
D	Deal immediately with burning issue

Evaluation is needed by the Pastor to assess whether mediation as opposed to counselling or referral, would be appropriate. It is suggested that in the following circumstances mediation would not be appropriate:

- when one spouse is not a member of the pastor's church and is uncooperative;
- when there is a major dispute of facts that clouds the issues;

- when there was serious sin that has not been repented of and which requires church discipline.

There are other instances, for example, fear on the part of one spouse because of past domestic violence; serious imbalances of bargaining power and one party abusing the process or not being bona fide, that may stand in the way of mediation. These circumstances, however, do not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier to mediation, as the pastor/mediator may counter with corrective steps.

For pre-mediation, the researcher again suggests a G O S P E L acronym:

- G = Gather information
- O = Offer hope
- S = Show relevance of gospel
- P = Pray with the spouse
- E = Explain the process
- L = Lead to mediation

For the mediation, the G O S P E L acronym that is used by Peacemaker Ministries will be proposed as a workable model:

- G = Greetings, Ground rules (*God involvement* suggested as well by the researcher)
- O = Opening statement
- S = Story-telling
- P = Problem Identification
- E = Exploring solutions
- L = Leading to agreement

Private caucuses or meetings, at any stage of the process as decided by the mediator/pastor, are suggested as a means of providing a safe environment for short-term counselling or exhortation and for the pastor/mediator to let Christ mediate in and through him when dealing with root issues.

Under *Problem Identification* it is suggested that the pastor-mediator be on the lookout for root issues. Under *Exploring solutions* it is suggested that the pastor/mediator take the initiative in proposing solutions but at the same be careful not to impose his ideas

and not to note them as solutions without making sure that both spouses have truly embraced his proposals.

It is suggested that for post-mediation, follow up calls be made on one or both parties and, if necessary, a visit be made to encourage or exhort them.

5.5 CLOSING STATEMENT

Biblical mediation can be a valuable method that can be utilised by pastors in pursuing reconciliation in troubled marriages on a short-term basis. The role of Christ as mediator and the implications of the gospel can play a major part in such a process.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Pastoral guidance in how to mediate the specific problem area of adultery.
- Pastoral guidance in how to mediate the specific problem area of alcoholism.
- Pastoral guidance in how to mediate the specific problem area of drug addiction.
- Pastoral guidance in how to mediate the specific problem area of domestic violence.
- Research on how the appreciation by the pastoral mediator of the fact that Christ, the Mediator, is living in him (as in Gal. 2:20) will impact on his role as mediator between believers in conflict.
- Research on how the appreciation by the believer in conflict of the fact that Christ, the Peacemaker, is living in him (as in Gal. 2:20) will impact on his attitude, approach and conduct toward a fellow-believer with whom he is in conflict.
- Research on how to include conflict resolution training, including mediation in the formal education of pastors.

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APPENDIX A

DIFFERENT STYLES OF MEDIATION

Diverse styles and approaches with their distinguishing features (somewhat caricatured) referred to by Folberg and Taylor, are:

- Labour mediation
 - a professional mediator dealing with experienced representatives of the various parties, often resorting to separate caucusing and where ratification of the mediation agreement is frequently required.
- Therapeutic mediation
 - with the emphasis on understanding the underlying internal conflicts that promoted the dispute and the emotional aspects, often resulting in individual sessions with participants, especially effective for disputes that are more emotional than legal, such as child custody, juvenile issues and family conflicts.
- Lawyer mediation
 - with the emphasis more on the manifest dispute and less on the underlying conflict and where the lawyer must take care to furnish only impartial legal information (and not legal advice) and to avoid advocating the interest of one disputant over the other.
- Supervisory mediation
 - informal mediations where people of authority or responsibility work toward resolution of conflict between subordinates, where if the disputants cannot come to their own settlement, the mediator may use authority to decide for them, for example teachers, managers, bosses, coaches, parents taking on the role of mediator.
- Muscle mediation
 - described as inappropriate supervisory mediation, more akin to arbitration, where the parties are told what their options are and the mediator who has no personal interest in the outcome, imposes his own authority without being contracted by the disputants to do so.
- Scrivener mediation
 - passive style at the opposite end of the spectrum from muscle mediation where the mediator does hardly more than merely recording the points of agreement and disagreement expressed by the participants.
- Structured mediation
 - where detailed rules of procedure that have been agreed to prior to the mediation, apply.
- Court-connected mediation
 - where the dispute will be subject to court litigation unless it is otherwise resolved and where the mediated settlement is subject to court approval, such as in resolution of divorce and child custody issues.
- Community mediation
 - where peace between groups of people in the community is sought, usually by a non-profit organisation or a non-professional drawn from the community, often utilised by community boards and neighbourhood justice centres.
- Shuttle mediation

- where international disputes are at stake and the leaders of the disputing nations have agreed to confer separately with a mediator from a neutral country or international organisation.
- Crisis mediation
 - where there is a crisis situation and all the disputants are aware of the adversity that will follow if the crisis is not resolved and the mediator's goal initially is to reach a temporary truce by calming the participants, isolating and diffusing the crisis-creating issues in the limited time available and defer the resolution of the dispute to a less critical time – often used by police and medical personnel.
- Celebrity mediation
 - where a celebrity or public figure is used as a mediator to persuade unwilling parties to participate in the mediation.
- Team mediation
 - where a co-mediator or mediators are working together as a team, especially where skills from different disciplines are required such as in divorce or environmental disputes.

Authors Bush and Folger advocate what appears to be a model or style not mentioned by Folberg and Taylor, namely *transformative mediation*. Here the primary objective is the “transformation of the disputants’ character and facilitating their moral growth”. The mechanisms used to bring this about are empowerment (re-instilling to the parties a sense of their own value and strength and their own ability to deal with life’s problems) and recognition (acknowledgement and empathy for their situation and problems). The mediator is directive but “in a very subtle way”.

APPENDIX B

MEDIATION IN ANCIENT TIMES AND CULTURES

Folberg and Taylor, 1984: (1) believe that some form of mediation has probably been practised "since the existence of three or more people on earth."

This may be true, because "[m]ediation is a natural way in which people help others deal with problems. Friends, neighbors, elders, parents, or other family members frequently assume the role of mediator on an informal basis" (Barsky, 2000: 117). In many cultures the patriarchal as well as matriarchal family leaders "have offered wisdom, precedents and models to assist family members in resolving their disputes" (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 2).

It was used in ancient China (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 1; Milne, 1986: 198; Barsky, 2000: 117), in parts of Africa (Folberg and Taylor, 1984: 1-2), amongst the Kalahari San (Barsky, 2000: 117), and by the Zulu and Sotho chiefs or headmen to settle squabbles between tribesmen (Becker, 1974: 69).

According to Erickson & McKnight (2001: 3) mediation is at least as old as the New Testament.

Deutch (1973: 387) refers to Jackson's historical survey of mediation where the latter suggests that mediation is most apt to develop where there are powerful third parties, as in a cohesive community, with an interest in preventing destructive strife because of the damage it does to the community or because of the harm it does to the parties in conflict.

Erickson and McKnight (2001: 3) write: "People have always known that standing between two people in conflict can be helpful. What is new is that mediation has been rediscovered as a replacement for many of the present methods of addressing adversarial conflict."

[For references refer to the bibliography as well as the following that do not appear in the bibliography:

BECKER, P. 1974. Tribe to township. St Albans: Granada Publishing. 256 p.]

APPENDIX C

MEDIATION IN LAW

Mediation has in the latter half of the twentieth century become more popular, as part of the Alternative Dispute Resolution movement which emanated from reactions against court-based litigation and the demand for procedures which are more appropriate, quicker, and cheaper. These developments have been inspired by social philosophies which advocate dispute management processes which are "participatory, responsive and concerned with preserving relationships among those involved" (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997:59). Mediation has in the past thirty years gained recognition in several legal systems of the western world as a useful conflict resolution mechanism. For the purposes of this dissertation, the researcher will confine himself to the law of the Republic of South Africa.

Whilst mediation is in essence a co-operative process, the South African legal system has traditionally largely been based on an adversarial system. In criminal matters a case is cited as *The State versus [the name of the accused]* and in civil matters the name of the claimant (as plaintiff) versus the name of the other party (as defendant). Any accused or litigant in a civil matter may employ an attorney to represent him or her in the matter. In South African law, in civil matters in both the Magistrates' Court as well as the High Court, the losing party may be ordered to pay the legal costs of the successful party. It is often risky for anyone to become embroiled in a legal battle in the sense that it can result in "the winner takes it all" with the corresponding scenario of "loser losing all". This reality fosters a "win at all costs" approach where justice and equity often do not figure.

For many years the uniform Rules of the High Court required that the minutes of the pre-trial conference should indicate whether any issue has been referred by the parties to mediation or other alternative dispute resolution mechanism and the basis on which it has been so referred (Rule 37 (6) (d)). In practice it hardly ever happened that issues were referred to mediation. In 1991 the Short Process Courts and Mediations Certain Civil Cases Act (No. 103 of 1991) was promulgated but never implemented. The Act made provision for the referral of pending legal actions to mediation proceedings where the parties or their legal representatives have agreed to do so. The mediator was to be appointed by the Minister of Justice.

During the early 1990's when South Africa was seeking a resolution of its racial conflict and tensions and a smooth political transition to democracy, several pieces of legislation were promulgated to put in place remedial and preventative mechanisms to ensure peace and social justice by allowing for mediation in certain specific situations (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 175). The Internal Peace Institutions Act 135 of 1992 (now repealed) was promulgated to set up regional and local peace committees to function as mediatory bodies in tense situations. The interim Constitution Act of South Africa 200 of 1993 envisaged the office of the Public Protector to act as a watchdog on abuse by public officials with the power to resolve any dispute by mediation, conciliation or negotiation.

Section 8 of the Human Rights Commission Act 54 of 1994 empowers the Commission to resolve any dispute emanating from or constituting a violation of or threat to any

fundamental right. Section 11 of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995 empowers the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to utilise informal dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation to facilitate reconciliation. Mediation was however seldom if ever used by the Commission (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 177).

Section 24(1)(f) of the Independent Electoral Commission Act 150 of 1993 requires the Chief Director to mediate issues and disputes between registered political parties arising in the course of an election. In terms of section 11(5) of the Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995 the Board is obliged to resolve and settle any dispute arising from language policy or language practice or the violation of any language right by mediation, conciliation or negotiation.

Various statutes concerning land ownership and usage were promulgated during the transition period of the mid nineties to provide for mediation as a possible way of resolving disputes arising from claims to land. Examples that can be mentioned are section 13 of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994; sections 4, 16 and 22 of the Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995; and section 18(3) of the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act 3 of 1996.

The ombudsman for life assurance in dealing with disputes arising from such insurance and the ombudsman for the banking industry may in certain instances use mediation to resolve disputes (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 180, 181).

In the preamble to the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, one of the underlying purposes of the Act is described as

to provide simple procedures for the mediation of labour disputes through statutory conciliation, mediation and arbitration (for which purpose the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration is established), and through independent alternative dispute resolution services accredited for that purpose.

Some important differences between the mediation concept envisaged in the Labour Relations Act and the general norm in private mediation, is that under the Act the process is not voluntary and that the choice of mediator is not agreed to between the parties, but in the hands of the Commissioner (Boulle and Rycroft, 1997: 197).

In the area of criminal law there is a strong movement toward implementing the concept of restorative justice. A pilot program of victim offender conferencing for less serious offences where the accused acknowledged responsibility was held in various areas in the RSA with the cooperation of prosecutors where mediation was used giving the parties the opportunity to share information on the effects of the offence on the victims and the reasons for the offending and an agreement was sought (to be reduced to writing and signed by both parties and the mediator) on the outcome or on recommendations to be made to the Court. Apologies featured in 70% of cases monitored and the feedback from the parties was very positive (Dissel, 2001: 26-30). The National Prosecuting Authority announced in March 2007 a strategy to render the criminal law system more victim-orientated allowing for victims and offenders to resolve the matter with the assistance of the prosecutor (the latter apparently acting as mediator) (Coetzee, 2007: 14).

For information on mediation in family and matrimonial matters, the reader is referred to par. 3.3.9 of the main body of the dissertation.

[For references refer to the bibliography as well as the following that do not appear in the bibliography:

COETZEE, H. 2007. Nuusorsig: Plan teen misdaad. By (Supplement to *Beeld*); 14, 31 March.

DISSEL, A. 2001. Restoring the harmony between victims and offenders. (*In* Conference on Restorative Justice and Community Facilitation: held in Johannesburg on 8 and 9 November 2001. Johannesburg. p.19-32)].

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE OF MEDIATION CLAUSE IN ANTENUPTIAL CONTRACT

A. The parties believe that God, in His wisdom and providence, has ordained and established human marriage as a covenant relationship intended to reflect the eternal marriage covenant established through the death and resurrection of His Son with his church.

B. The parties believe that their intended marriage will be a sacred and lifelong promise, reflecting their unconditional love for one another.

C. The parties believe that God intends for the human marriage covenant to reflect His promise never to leave his people or forsake them because of what He has done for them through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Now therefore, the parties, agree and covenant as follows:

1. To fulfill their marriage vows that they intend to make to one another.
2. To furthermore pledge to exalt the sacred nature, glory and permanence of God's eternal marriage covenant in His Son with the Church through their marriage, and by calling others to honor and fulfill their marriage vows.
3. That if anyone of them gains the opinion that the other one does not fulfill his or her marital vows, the offended one shall tactfully and at the right time and place inform the other party thereof in accordance with Matthew 18:15 and if that does not have the desired result, anyone of them may request that the problem/problems be referred
 - (i) to the pastoral leader in their congregation for counseling by the pastoral leader or a Christian counselor recommended by the latter; or
 - (ii) to mediator/ mediators that will apply Christian mediation.

Upon such a request, for counseling or mediation, as the case may be, unless it is practically impossible, the parties will subject themselves to such counseling or mediation, if regarded necessary by the counselor or mediator, for at least two sessions of three hours each or an equal period. Should mediation be pursued it will be done by a mediator/ mediators nominated by themselves by agreement, and failing such agreement, the mediator/s nominated by the most senior pastor or minister available of the congregation that they at the time of the request for mediation regarded as their spiritual home. Should costs and / or expenses be payable in connection with the mediation, they shall failing agreement thereon, each pay one half of the costs and / or expenses.

APPENDIX E1

11 Merle St
Helderkruijn
Roodepoort
1724

P O Box 6721
WESTGATE 1734
Cel. 082 853-9594

6 February 2006

Dear Dr. / Rev. / Past.

EMPIRICAL STUDY: MEDIATION AS PASTORAL TOOL FOR DEALING WITH TROUBLED MARRIAGES

I am presently busy with my dissertation on the abovementioned topic as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the M.A. degree in practical theology at North West University (Potchefstroom campus), under supervision of Prof. George Lotter of the School for Practical Theology.

In 1998 I completed the "Conciliator Training" presented by *The Institute for Christian Conciliation*, a division of *Peacemaker Ministries* (USA). Since then I have done two or three mediations for couples experiencing marital conflict, but I have not monitored the results.

I plan to do mediations for five couples who are experiencing serious marital conflict, as part of my empirical study. The mediations are done without any charges, but conditions will apply and must be agreed to in writing beforehand by the parties, as set out in the Annexure.

My request is that you refer one or more couples to me for biblical mediation, where both are members of your church, denomination or congregation, both intend to live according to biblical precepts, but they are experiencing serious marital conflict and wish to reach a solution or mutually acceptable agreement. I also wish to invite you to propose someone from your congregation who is spiritually mature and willing, and who is acceptable to both parties, to be present at the proceedings acting as co-mediator or witness.

You can be assured that all case studies will be dealt with confidentially; that pseudonyms will be used in the dissertation where necessary to comply herewith.

Should you refer a couple to me, you will be asked to assist me regarding the follow up meetings as set out in paragraphs 13 or 14 (as the case may be) of the annexure.

More details concerning *Peacemaker Ministries* can be obtained at www.peacemaker.net. You can also contact me for more particulars, or direct enquiries to Prof. George Lotter at 018 299-1840 or by e-mail at KWSGAL@puknet.puk.ac.za.

Yours faithfully

Johann Grobler

ANNEXURE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE MEDIATION PARTIES

1. The proceedings are kept confidential except as indicated below.
2. The mediation is done without charge, but your cooperation will be required to eliminate unnecessary time wasting.
3. One session lasts usually three hours and you may plan for three to five such sessions before the issues will be resolved.
4. The proceedings may be held in an office or boardroom of your local church or at my offices in Northcliff.
5. I reserve the right to communicate with your pastoral leader and to report to him about your case. I will also prefer that a mature member from your congregation, approved by your pastor and acceptable to you, be present at the proceedings as co-mediator or witness.
6. The mediation referred to here is *biblical mediation* in accordance with the guidelines of the Institute for Christian Conciliation – a division of Peacemaker Ministries.
7. Mediation, in simple terms, means the assistance that an intermediary provides to help two parties in conflict to resolve their differences or to facilitate a mutual agreement between them.
8. Biblical mediation differs from secular mediation in *inter alia* the following respects:
 - The motivation of the mediator is to honour God.
 - The Bible is regarded as the authority to determine moral principles.
 - Reliance is placed on the working of the Holy Spirit.
 - The mediator will go beyond surface issues and will seek to resolve root issues, i.e. “matters of the heart”.
 - It is expected of the parties to first deal with their own responsibilities and contribution to the conflict, before they focus on the other person’s faults.
 - Tactful confrontation may be used by the mediator. Where necessary the mediator will exhort a party to consider his or her actions or attitudes in the light of certain Bible passages. This will be done only in a private setting (not in the presence of the other party).
 - The mediator will promote true reconciliation through repentance by the parties, confession of wrongdoing and forgiveness.
 - The parties are encouraged to focus on Christ (Hebr. 12:1-2), to acknowledge the church leadership’s authority (Hebr. 13:17) and to be receptive toward biblical counselling (Hebr. 10:24; 4:12).

9. The process can be summarised by using the acronym GOSPEL:

G	Greetings and Introductions	Also Scripture Reading and prayer. Agreement is reached about the Ground Rules.
O	Opening Statements	In three or four sentences: what does everyone want to achieve?
S	Story Telling	Each one gets a chance to present his/her case.
P	Problem Identification and clarification	Determine what are the real issues and interests of the parties.
E	Explore solutions	Joint brainstorming to explore and evaluate solutions.
L	Lead to agreement	Drafting of written agreement between the parties.

10. The mediator may at any time during the proceedings request anyone of the parties to confer alone with him. The caucus may not be used to discuss negative things regarding the other party.
11. The written agreement is treated as confidential, except that a copy be made available to the pastoral leader.
12. Soon after the termination of the mediation proceedings you will be asked for a written evaluation and your impressions of the mediation proceedings.
13. Where agreement is reached between the parties, both must make themselves available for follow-up interviews with both the mediator and pastoral leader jointly, on two occasions, namely (1) about three to four weeks after the agreement has been reached and (2) about three to four weeks after the first interview. The interview will be conducted with each party alone.
14. Where it was not possible to reach an agreement, the parties must make themselves available for a feedback interview with the mediator and pastoral leader jointly to determine the reason(s) for the failure to reach agreement. The interview will be conducted with each party alone.
15. It will be expected of the parties to:
- 15.1 Sign an agreement that confirms the above arrangements.
 - 15.2 To confirm that the proceedings will be regarded as "without prejudice" proceedings, which means that the mediator/s may not later be called as witnesses in court proceedings between the parties and that discussions leading up to, or during, or in evaluation of the mediation proceedings will not be used in subsequent court proceedings.
 - 15.3 To complete on request of the mediator/s, an intake form prior to the proceedings.

APPENDIX E2

CONSENT

I, the undersigned,

.....

Acknowledge hereby that I have been asked by Mr Johann Grobler for my consent that his biblical mediation/counselling of our marital conflict can be used as a study case for his dissertation on which he is presently working on for the M.A. degree in Theology at NorthWest University, subject to the condition that our identity be kept confidential.

I consent hereby that the mediation/counseling process may be minuted by him and may be used as a study case for the mentioned dissertation and that should my spouse and I reach agreement emanating from the process, copy thereof without our names and signatures may be incorporated in the dissertation.

This consent is given on the condition that neither my or my spouse or our children's identity be revealed in any manner whatsoever or be compromised or information be given that may make our identities ascertainable.

Signed at on

APPENDIX E3

AGREEMENT

Agreement entered into by and between:

JOHN

And

ANNE

Introduction:

The parties have agreed that the following issues were present in their marriage:

1. Anne often feels neglected and that she and John do not spend enough quality time together. John acknowledges the problem.
2. Closely related to no 1 above, Anne feels that John do not open up to her in communication of his feelings. John acknowledges the problem and ascribes it by and large to his child background and present stress at his work.
3. John believes that Anne sometimes say negative things about him toward others. Anne acknowledges that this has happened.
4. There is a power struggle as to who should control the budget. John will sometimes make large purchases without conferring with Anne. John acknowledges this state of affairs.
5. Both acknowledge that they do not trust each other completely with regard to
5.1 relationships with the opposite sex
5.2 spending of money.
6. John believes that Anne's parents have not accepted him.
7. They often do not greet each other.
8. There is too much negative accusatory hurtful communication between them.
9. There are differences between them about which of the two washing machines should be used and how often laundry need to be washed.
10. They have differences over time spending priorities with regard to house tasks, the adding on building work on the house and relaxation.
11. There are differences in respect of discipline of the children and Anne feels that John's daughter is treated more leniently and John feels that Anne often gives more attention to her son, Ron, as to him (John).
12. Anne expects John to assist with house chores.
13. There are differences about the building work added on to the house.
14. Ron (Anne's son and John's stepchild) is too loud and hyperactive for John.

15. Anne sometimes allow the food to be burnt and that angers John.
16. The parties do not know how to deal with conflict.

It is hereby recorded that the parties have reached agreement as follows:

1. Concerning the problem that Anne feels neglected and that there is too little quality time together:
 - 1.1 John will assume leadership to ensure that the two of them will go out together, at least once a month.
 - 1.2 John also wants to go out or spend time with his friends and Anne agrees that he may spend such time after work once a month.
 - 1.3 The parties will strive thereto to spend time with each other at least 30 minutes after work. The two children may then be with them.
 - 1.4 John will look out for other employment where he will have more time at his disposal to spend time with the family.
 - 1.5 Anne will seek half day employment.
 - 1.6 Both will pray about the employment change option and for each other.
 - 1.7 Anne will refrain from phoning John at his work, unless there is a real emergency.
 - 1.8 Ann will give room to John to work overtime and John will communicate to Anne his overtime schedule and obligations.
2. Concerning derogatory communication and dealing with conflict:
 - 2.1 The parties will work toward creating a culture of positive communication having regard to Eph. 4:29 and Prov 10:11.
 - 2.2 During a conflict situation the parties will strive thereto to have the presence of mind to at first resort to a quick silent prayer before saying or doing anything further.
 - 2.3 The parties commit themselves thereto, with God's help, to apply the four G's:
 - 2.3.1 Glorify God in the conflict situation
 - 2.3.2 Get first the log out of your own eye.
 - 2.3.3 Gently restore your spouse.
 - 2.3.4 Go and be reconciled by *inter alia* applying the four promises of forgiveness:
 - 2.3.3.1 will not bring the matter up again
 - 2.3.3.2 will not dwell on the matter
 - 2.3.3.3 will not speak to others about it
 - 2.3.3.4 will not allow the matter to hinder their relationship.
 - 2.4 Peacemaking will be treated as a priority matter in the light of the teaching of Jesus Christ in Mat. 5:23-24.
 - 2.5 The parties will give each other room to use "time out" as a temporary measure to cool off with the understanding that they will as soon as possible after the incident talk it out with each other and in any event never go and

sleep being angry one with the other, in compliance with Mat. 18:15 and Eph. 4:26.

3. Anne acknowledges that she has said negative things about John; that she is sorry and undertakes not to do it again. John accepts her apology, offers forgiveness and remarks that she has already ceased from acting that way.
4. Concerning who is to control the budget and the making of large purchases: No one will make large purchases without the other one's consent. "Large purchases" means R500 or more for one item. The parties will together compile a budget. John will purchase meat, whilst Anne will purchase the rest of the groceries.
5. Concerning that they don't trust each other:
 - 5.1 John undertakes not to be later at home than 7.00 pm.
 - 5.2 Should John find out that there is a crisis at home whilst he is spending time with friends, he will come home immediately.
 - 5.3 John may visit his friends after work twice a month [**contradiction 1.2**] and should Anne not have knowledge of John's plans to do so on a particular day, John will inform her by SMS before he goes. Should Anne try to contact him by cell phone in that situation, John undertakes to take the call. Anne will set her cell phone so that John can identify her as the caller on his phone.
 - 5.4 The parties will in the following three months focus their attention on having deeper conversations. Each will take turns to bring up a subject. One idea is to play 'Check your mate' (Prov. 20:5; 27:19).
 - 5.5 The parties will try to communicate and to explain to each other beforehand any potentially suspicious looking situations that may arise (1 Thes. 5:23).
 - 5.6 Each one will pray that he/she will better understand the other one (Eph. 6:18).
 - 5.7 The parties will strive toward doing Bible study together and praying together on a regular basis.
6. Concerning the use of the washing machine: Anne's washing machine will be used and the other kept as a reserve. The parties will overlook irritations in this regard and give room for each one to do as he or she may find expedient. The parties will work on not becoming easily irritated in accordance with the description of love in 1 Cor. 13.
7. The parties declare that the differences about building additions to the house have been settled and that with regard to the main bedroom, Anne's wishes will be complied with, insofar as it fall within the budget.
8. Household chores: John undertakes to perform certain tasks after work and Anne admits that he has already begun to do so.

9. Discipline of children:
 - 9.1 Chores such as making up the bed, keeping the bedroom tidy, picking up clothing and towels in the bathroom will be expected from both Carol (John's daughter) and Ron.
 - 9.2 If necessary, to address Carol's unhappiness, the parties will jointly write a letter to her to deal with wrong perceptions and misunderstanding.
 - 9.3 John accepts Ron's hyperactivity as inevitable and decides to live with it.
10. Burning food: The parties agree that when that has happened, it was usually when Anne was trying to do two things at the same time. Anne will in future try to avoid doing so. If necessary, she will use an alarm timer. John will in any event treat it as an accident and overlook it should it happen again (Prov. 19:11).
11. Concerning not greeting each other and frigidity:
 - 11.1 John acknowledges that is particularly a problem on his part. He undertakes to work on the problem, will greet her in the morning when they are both awake, before one leaves for work, at their return from work and before they fall asleep. (Mat. 5:47; 1 Pet. 5:14).
 - 11.2 John will concentrate on communicating with Anne even about everyday events, e.g. something he has read in the newspaper.
12. This agreement will be treated as being confidential.

Signed at on 25 June 2007.

JOHN

ANNE

APPENDIX E4

AGREEMENT

Between:

HANNES

And

RONEL

Since various problem areas has surfaced in our marriage which began to trouble our marriage relationship, we have after being helped through biblical mediation, reached agreement to deal with the problem areas as set out below.

I, Hannes, first wish to confess that I have a problem in controlling my temper and that I have hurt Ronel in the process. I have also transgressed by excessive drinking of strong liquor and coming late from work, although I want to believe that for a considerable time it has been a problem of the past. I ask her to accept my apology and to forgive.

I, Ronel, also wish to confess that I have at times been insensitive with my words and have in that way hurt Hannes. I ask him to accept my apology and to forgive.

We both confirm that we forgive each other where we have acted wrongfully or have sinned against one another and that we do so in the light of the grace both of us have received from God through Jesus Christ.

Concerning our finances:

We admit that we are deeply in debt. We agree to set up a budget together, and should we find it necessary, to enlist the help of the congregation's financial ministry or at Ronel's boss' attorney. For the present, whilst we are in debt, each one will only spend money with the other's consent.

Concerning quality spending time together and going to bed together:

We agree that it is a problem that Ronel is working and that Hannes who has now found employment, also arrive at home late, whilst there is a toddler to take care of.

We agree to watch TV sparingly and that each on will only watch with the other one's consent. We further agree that we will go out together as a couple (without child/children) at least once a month.

There was a problem in the past in that we did not go to bed at the same time and I, Hannes acknowledge that at times I was busy on my computer until late at night. We agree that we will go to bed together at least four times per week. Hannes can, if Ronel is already asleep, get out of bed.

We further agree that if one is going to be late from work for whatever reason, that he or she will inform the other one not later than 5.15 pm.

Concerning hurting with words:

We agree as follows:

- We will strive toward thinking before we speak, in view of James 3:3-12.
- If one transgresses, the other one will at an appropriate time in private point it out tactfully to the former.
- We will endeavour to focus on the beautiful and positive things as we are taught in Phil. 4:8 and to rather say positive things for one another.
- As this may ask for a long term strategy, we agree to henceforth focus on the gospel and all that it entails as part of our spiritual growth.

Concerning Hannes' bad temper, self will and tendency toward negativity:

I, Hannes has already joined our church's recovery program and undertake to complete the program and to make the abovementioned problems my focus areas.

I, Hannes, acknowledge that the point above about focusing on positive things, is also applicable here.

I have also listened to John MacArthur's lectures on The Art of Self Discipline, made notes and commit myself thereto to apply it with the strength I receive from the Lord.

Concerning the drinking problem:

I, Hannes, acknowledge that this was a problem I had. I would like to believe that this is something of the past, but to make sure that I do not fall into that trap again, we agree as follows:

- Should social occasions occur at work where strong liquor will be available, I Hannes will mention that to Ronel beforehand so that she is aware and that there will be opportunity for us to pray together about that. I, Hannes make a commitment not to drink more than three beers on such an occasion and if it is stronger liquor, even less.
- Where we are together at a social event and Ronel thinks that Hannes is beginning to exceed his limits, she may take the liberty to subtly admonish him.
- I, Hannes, have received certain homework from the mediator in this regard which I undertake to internalise.
- Should the drinking problem rear its head whilst I am in the Church's recovery program, do I Hannes, undertake to bring it up in the program and to get as much support as possible to overcome it.

Signed at on 30 June 2007.

HANNES

RONEL

APPENDIX E5

Confidential

Mediator: Johann Grobler 082 8539594

Agreement entered into by and between:

Sarel

And

Maryna

Introduction:

Whereas Sarel and Maryna are both believers who have become concerned that their marriage relationship was not as it should be and that they have become estranged from one another; And whereas Sarel and Maryna have asked for help from their church and after a mediation process certain problem areas have been identified about which they have reached agreement;

Now therefore the following agreement is recorded:

1. The parties acknowledge and confess before God that they have backslided in their relationship with God and church involvement and that it also contributed toward the breakdown of their marriage relationship. The parties commit themselves thereto to make their relationship with God a priority matter. In this connection it is specifically stipulated that the parties will do regular personal Bible study, will pray daily, will regularly attend church services and allow their son David to attend the church's children ministry. The parties also agree to embark as soon as possible on joint Bible study, Bible discussion or family devotions (even if it is initially without David), every Thursday evening.
2. The parties agree that it was a problem that Sarel should have shown more initiative and assumed more leadership with decision making on family matters. In this connection it is stipulated:
 - 2.1 Sarel will pray about this for help and Maryna will do the same for him.
 - 2.2 Sarel will plan beforehand and record in his diary certain family activities to help him to take initiative in this connection.
 - 2.3 There will be an understanding between the parties that if Maryna makes a suggestion and Sarel does not object to it, Maryna can accept that the suggestion is in order and that she does not have to harbour any fear that it will be held against her if it turns out afterwards that it was not a wise decision.
 - 2.4 Sarel will pay special attention to surprise Maryna now and then with something that is delightful to her.
3. The parties acknowledge that Maryna feels neglected and that they must spend more quality time in each other's company and that the work obligations of both of them, Maryna's special exercise course, Sarel's excessive attention toward David and undisciplined TV habits to one degree or another have contributed to the tendency to neglect one another. The following is specifically stipulated:

- 3.1 The parties will give more attention to spending quality time together and to make it pleasant. They will focus on speaking about pleasant things and at times about deeper things.
 - 3.2 Monday nights will be set aside for time together with one another.
 - 3.3 The parties will greet one another when they see each other first time in the morning, prior to going their different ways in the morning, when they arrive back home after work and before they go to bed.
 - 3.4 The parties plan to go out together without David for a weekend once every six weeks.
 - 3.5 Sarel undertakes to adapt his TV viewing times so that priority can be given to the abovementioned matters.
 - 3.6 Sarel undertakes to give eye contact to Maryna when she wants to share something serious with him and to listen with empathy and acknowledgement.
 - 3.7 The joint Bible study referred on Thursday evenings referred to above, will also be utilised so that it will contribute toward a more intimate relationship between the parties.
 - 3.8 Sarel will focus less on his relationship with David, without neglecting it, and will from now treat Maryna as if she is the most important person in his life, in the light of Genesis 2:21-24 and Ephsians 5:25-33.
4. Sarel says that Maryna's verbal attacks on him, especially his lack of energy and zest, has hurt him deeply. Maryna admits that and explains that she has viewed Sarel's disease diagnosed as multiple sclerosis, as an escape route for him and that initially she could not adapt to it. Maryna asked for forgiveness and Sarel offered it. Concerning forgiveness, Sarel undertook to apply the four principles of forgiveness taught by Peacemaker Ministries set out below.
 5. Maryna says that Sarel is at times moody, especially on Saturday mornings when she returns from her exercise classes. The parties acknowledge that this can happen to both of them and undertake to be sensitive about it. It is specifically agreed :
 - 5.1 The one experiencing moodiness and the one who detects it in the other one, may communicate that openly to the other one.
 - 5.2 Both will strive thereto not to sin against each other in that situation.
 - 5.3 Both (the moody one and the other party) can in that situation feel free to excuse himself or herself by going elsewhere for a limited time (not more than one hour). The one who does so will inform the other one respectfully.
 6. Concerning the parties conduct toward David, there was according to the parties conflict and difference of opinion. The following is stipulated:
 - 6.1 The parties acknowledge that it is important that David be disciplined with love and self-control.
 - 6.2 Should David's conduct reveal a rebellious attitude or stubbornness toward his parents, spanking will be in order.
 - 6.3 Concerning David's health and the parties' conduct when he is ill, it is agreed that both will be considerate toward one another, both will ask God's intervention in prayer and will attempt to act with consensus in deciding on what would be the proper steps to take.
 7. Concerning his lack of zest and libido, Sarel will take affordable medication. Maryna undertakes to show understanding for Sarel's condition of illness and be sensitive for his feelings in that connection.

8. The parties admit that they did not know how to deal with conflict one against the other. After Peacemaker Ministries' four principles for dealing with conflict and for forgiveness were shared with them, the parties decided to embrace them and to undertake to God and to themselves to apply them.

8.1 The four principles of dealing with conflict are

8.1.1 Strive to glorify God in conflict situations

8.1.2 First do self examination (get log out of own eye) before the party's faults are considered.

8.1.3 Where necessary, the offended one will gently restore the other one.

8.1.4 The parties will strive toward reconciliation with one another through forgiveness.

8.2 The four principles of forgiveness:

8.2.1 He or she will refrain from dwelling on the offence.

8.2.2 He or she shall not bring it up again against the offender.

8.2.3 He or she shall not tell other about it.

8.2.4 He or she shall not allow the offence to hinder their relationship.

8.3 The parties further agree that should one try to restore the other one and it appears that it does not have the desired result and the offence is serious enough that it cannot be left alone, that the offended one can request that the problem be referred to their church's counselling or conflict dealing ministry for assistance in accordance with Mat. 18:16 and that if necessary, as a further step, even further steps can be taken as envisaged in Mat. 18:17.

9. The parties hereby give acknowledgement, thanks and praise to the Lord who has intervened in their marriage and placed it on a healthy foundation.

Signed at on 20 November 2006.

APPENDIX E6

QUESTION	A	B	C	D	E	F
	First JOHN	couple ANNE	Second HANNES	couple RONEL	Third	couple
1. Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2. Age	37	32	35	29		
3. How old when you married?	35	30	32	27		
4. How long married?	2 years	2 years	2 years	2 years		
5. Children from this marriage?	17 months female	17 months female	10 months female	10 months female		
6. Children from previous marriage?	I have 11 year old daughter. Stays with us every 2nd weekend.	One 7 year old son who lives permanently with us.	Not previously married	I was married before. No children from that marriage.		
7. Describe marriage before mediation	On the brink of seperation. No communication. No will to make marriage work.	We disagreed about almost everything and there was constant fighting.	Turbulent and unpleasant.	We did not talk much about problems that bothered us.		
8. How did you experience the following:						
8.1 Ground Rules?	Setting tone for positive way of communication and brings order to the process.	Very good idea.	It was good.	It helped that we spoke without losing control.		
8.2 Opening Statement?	I felt exposed and threatened by my spouse's remarks.	Good. It gve each one the chance of speaking without being interrupted.	Good.	Good to be able to express one's own wishes.		
8.3 That you and spouse given opprtunity to tell story uninterrupted?	A good way of expressing oneself and being able to say what are the troubling issues.	Very good.	It worked well because if interruptions were allowed we would have again become embroiled in arguments.	That was very good. It paved the way for the other one to really listen what one is saying and		

				what one really means.		
8.4 That you and spouse were expected to assist the mediator in defining and clarifying real issues?	It fostered good participation by ourselves.	It gave me the opportunity to think about our problems with a different state of mind.	It was good – particularly that mediator could help clarifying issues.	It helped us to identify our real problems.		
8.5 That you and spouse were expected to help mediator finding agreeable solutions to each issue?	It was a helpful experience. It was a fair procedure for handling the various issues.	We could find solutions that we both could and would be able to cope with.	It was a positive experience to be able to talk to each other about finding solutions.	It illustrated that we can work together to deal with our problem areas.		
8.6 The private coaching or counselling sessions?	Very professional and fair.	Satisfactory.	Good	I found it wonderful.		
8.7 Attempts by mediator to encourage you to follow biblical principles?	I was constantly referred to biblical principles and found it particularly helpful with regard to the controlling of my temper.	Very good. It helped me to have a clear biblical view of the issues raised.	Good.	It made me realise that following biblical principles is the only way to deal with our problems.		
8.8 That you and spouse signed agreement?	It is a very good way of ensuring that the points that were agreed upon can be enforced.	Good, because it is like a written promise.	It is helpful that we have a record of what was agreed to, to which we can refer in future.	It made that which we have agreed to do more real in the sense that it almost forces us to do what we have promised.		
8.9 To what extent did process help you and spouse to be reconciled?	To a great extent. It taught me to put my spouse's interests before mine, which paved the way	It reminded me constantly that marriage is an institution from God.	It helped us to give each other time to change and taught us to give each other chance	We now understand each other better and make us think before we say		

	forward for us.		to express our feelings.	something.		
9. How was marriage first week after agreement was reached?	At first there were mixed feelings. I expected my wife to make adjustments but later it became clear to me that I had to change, which I did.	I was nervous hoping not to do something that I promised not to do.	Much better.	It was a learning process.		
10. How was marriage one month after agreement was reached?		I feel that we keep perspective although there are still difficult situations that arise from time to time.	-	-		
11. What suggestions?	None	Possibly to give specific Bible texts to read and do Bible study on specific aspects of marriage.	None	None		
12. Any other remarks?	Thank you for your time and willingness to resolve these burning issues.	Thank you for helping us.		Thank you for helping us.		

APPENDIX E7

Maryna's letter

The "GOSPEL" procedure helped to give structure to the mediation process....
There was a sound balance between Christian principles and life experience...
The final "contract" will help to refresh our memories in future.
An important concept that I take with me is that marriage is intended to be a sanctifying instrument.
Thank you for your time, advice and effort!

APPENDIX E8

Maryna's e-mail reply

I began to feel that the only reason why Sarel went with me through the mediation was to satisfy me. Sorry if we both gave you the impression everything between us was OK.

Sarel and I have both come to the realization that we no longer love each other. We were never asked this question during the mediation.... What is the use of carrying on if we both do not love one another?

I believe God wants us to be happy, rather than working on each other's nerves whilst being together simply because of a covenant we had made toward one another.

Sarel's bad temper did not receive enough attention in the mediation – especially the fact that he would in his rage break objects, even in our son's presence.

The contract we had to sign was very "noble" but unrealistic.

The mediator or mediation process is not to be blamed for what happened. But it delayed what was inevitable and we should have come to this conclusion at an earlier stage.

The Researcher's impressions of the three mediation cases

John and Anne's case

They came from a neighbouring church because they did not want their pastor/s to know about their marital problems. Anne came to me first. In our first session I explained to her the biblical mediation model.

She persuaded her husband to give it a try. At the first joint session I again explained how the model works, but I also stressed that we could by mutual agreement deviate from it, as long as the spirit of the biblical process remained intact. (This I explain to all the parties in the pre-mediation stage, because I want them to take ownership of the process. In my experience no one has ever suggested to deviate from the normal process.) I also told them, as I invariably do in all pre-mediation sessions, that the purpose was to find solutions and reconciliation, and not to find out who was "the guilty party". This was especially important in this case, because John was initially very apprehensive. I could sense that in having given the parties the right to give their input concerning the process to be used and in explaining that it was not in essence an exercise to find out who was to blame, John was more at ease.

It was clear that there were outside factors that compounded the pressures felt by the parties, namely John's work situation where he has been overburdened for several years and the fact that both had a child from a previous marriage.

There were times when I felt I was being pushed to play referee – where one spouse was trying to get me to say that the other one acted wrongfully. (This I recall happened in the case of Sarel and Maryna as well). I did my best to avoid falling into what I regard as a trap. Once I have openly chosen sides, I may have lost the trust of the other one. In the private sessions I asked some probing questions to prod the participant to admit if he or she had been wrong. Although it did not always elicit an admission, it did happen at times.

During the course of the mediation process, several issues that were noted initially could be scratched as the participants had by themselves reached a solution that seemed to work. This was encouraging because it meant that they had learnt how to deal with some of their issues. There was also one instance where the one who was offended decided to overlook the offence (John regarding the burnt meals). That was also heartening because I tried to show them that some offences are not worth fighting about.

It took about six sessions to come to the point where there was agreement on all the stated issues. A day was set aside for signing the agreement. When they arrived at the door I could sense from their facial expressions and look in the eyes that they were tense. During our discussions it came out that they had had a major disagreement and fall-out the day before.. He was adamant that he was going to move out. She was in tears. It was clear that they were not ready to sign any agreement. (The document had been prepared and was ready for signing). I spoke to both alone, but no one was willing

to admit fault. Before they left, I promised to pray for them and told them my door was still open if they want to come back for help.

Anne called me the following day. She was in tears. She wanted advice from me. I told her that she had to pray very hard; she had to be as friendly as possible in any interaction that there may be between them; and then she had to give the matter over to God while giving it time to see how it all panned out.

I made a point of praying regularly for this couple and for the Lord's intervention in softening their hearts. Two or three weeks went by before I called John. The stated purpose was to get feedback for the purposes of this empirical study, and the unstated to find out whether there had been any further developments. He agreed to me. At this meeting, we started working through the questionnaire (Annexure E ?) and when we came to the question "Why do you think you were not able to sign the agreement?", he immediately responded, to my surprise, that they will probably sign the agreement. He explained that they had made substantial progress in the interim and were on speaking terms again. He of his own accord continued by admitting that he had been wrong. This brought tremendous relief to me. We agreed to meet again, this time at their home and I was then to bring the prepared agreement and the other questionnaire (Annexure E??) to get feedback from both participants.

This took place about a week later. They appeared relaxed. They had no hesitation in signing the prepared agreement. In fact, they had already been implementing it before it was signed.

My impression was that it was undoubtedly God's intervention that saved the marriage. The biblical mediation was a handy process, but ultimately it was God who changed their hearts.

Hannes and Ronel's case

This was a young couple referred to me by the Church office. Their immediate problem was financial debt and the fact that Hannes had been unemployed for several months. Both were attending the recovery program that the Church had in place.

In the pre-mediation session I explained the process and the four principles (four G's) of peacemaking. They were eager to learn more. Good progress was made throughout the sessions. Midway through the process Hannes found employment which was a further source of encouragement.

One problem that Hannes tended to wave aside was the drinking problem. He felt it was something of the past. She agreed but expressed concern that it may surface again once pressures mount. It was a difficult situation but in a private session with him, I persuaded him to agree that the fact that in her mind the problem could recur was an issue and that in any event it could do no harm to take precautionary steps. This then explains how it came about that the following words were inserted in their agreement:

I, Hannes, acknowledge that this was a problem I had. I would like to believe that this is something of the past, but to make sure that I do not fall into that trap again, we agree as follows:...

I also felt it wise to get mileage out of the Recovery Program that they were attending. Hannes was counselled to be open to his Recovery Group about any of the problems that may surface again, which he agreed to in the written agreement.

My overall impression was that this was a typical young couple who were experiencing challenges that troubled their marriage relationship, but fortunately sought help before the problems became virtually insurmountable. Their expressions of appreciation for what was achieved through the mediation process made me realize how great the need is for couples to seek help early and to get the right kind of help. Again, the part the Lord played, in giving Hannes a new employment opportunity and in making him humble and ready for counsel, should not be discounted.

Sarel and Maryna's case

The reference to me came from our church office. This was a very busy couple. All the couples that participated in this study had this problem of finding time to spend quality time together, but in this case it seemed that over a period of time some damage had been done by this factor to their relationship. Sarel also had an unnatural obsession to spend time with their son. In private session he disclosed that it was because he was neglected by his own father and he wanted to make sure that he does not make the same mistake.

The participants were at ease with the process and expressed their appreciation and positive sentiments as we continued to deal with the various issues. In a private session Maryna mentioned that she had read one of the books I had recommended, Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas, which she was finding very helpful. She also mentioned that her husband's lack of libido was not a major problem and that she could live with it. After about six joint sessions the written agreement was signed.

On 25 February 2007 the researcher learnt from Sarel that Maryna had left him and despite his pleading to return and work toward reconciliation, decided to institute divorce proceedings. The researcher was informed by Sarel that Maryna had moved to another town and was therefore no longer in the fellowship of their congregation. The researcher wrote an e-mail message to Maryna on 1 March 2007 wherein he confessed that he had erred in not conducting follow-up post-mediation interviews with them and invited her to telephone him. She replied on 5 May 2007 by e-mail in Afrikaans. Some of her comments translated in English are recorded in Annexure E11.

In an open interview with Sarel he felt that what happened was bound to happen and that it was not to be ascribed to any fault in the mediation process. He actually felt that he had to bear responsibility and blame for what had happened. He was devastated and felt that God had to let this happen so that he could wake up from lethargy. He in fact decided to join the Church's recovery program.

Having read Maryna's response in Annexure E11 and given the matter further reflection, I concluded that I have erred and could have been more careful and sensitive to the real deeper issues. I came to see that I should have given more attention to the root issues or causes underlying Sarel's outbursts of anger. It is very likely that I was too focused on rushing toward the participants signing the agreement. I began to realise more than before that a signed agreement, although it is helpful to have, is no guarantee that the

parties will honour it. The value of post mediation sessions was underlined to me as I realised that it was something I have neglected in this case.

General remarks

It was noteworthy that some problem issues were prevalent in all three cases, namely:

- Lack of spending quality time together.
- One would feel neglected by the other one.
- Husband was hurt by wife's insensitive words.
- They don't know how to deal with conflict.

In two of the three cases, the following were issues to be dealt with:

- How money was spent.
- Differences about child discipline.

All of the couples were neglecting personal Bible study, prayer and meditation. Two of the three couples had no regular fellowship with other believers, I had to encourage them to make it a personal habit and also at times to read their Bibles and pray together.

During the story telling phase, I noticed that it was generally easier for the wives to express their feelings than the husbands. Husbands found it more difficult to find the right words. It became evident that the fact that they could not be interrupted helped them to verbalize their own story and also fostered a better listening climate for their spouses.

When it came to the exploring of solutions stage, although I encouraged the participants do propose solutions I found that they were mostly unable to do so and relied on me to present my suggestions. When I did so I tried to be tentative and clear about the fact that it was merely a proposal and that it was up to them to decide whether they accept it or not. I reminded them that they had to take ownership of whatever has been agreed to.

In leading toward agreement, I sometimes found that it was a real challenge to try to be specific enough in framing the wording of an agreed solution. The ideal was to state it in measurable terms, but with some issues, especially heart or spiritual issues, like dealing with a bad temper, this was virtually impossible. For example, in dealing with Hannes' bad temper and related problems, the best we could think of was:

Concerning Hannes' bad temper, self will and tendency toward negativity:

I, Hannes has already joined our church's recovery program and undertake to complete the program and to make the abovementioned problems my focus areas.

I, Hannes, acknowledge that the point above about focusing on positive things, is also applicable here.

I have also listened to John MacArthur's lectures on The Art of Self Discipline, made notes and commit myself thereto to apply it with the strength I receive from the Lord.

It was certainly a breakthrough and a moment of celebration when the parties signed the agreement. I stressed that it would still take hard work to stick to the agreement. They were told that in future, they may want to change something in the agreement and that it would be in order if they both agreed and it was not contrary to biblical principles. After the signing of the agreement a prayer of thanksgiving and praise toward God was offered, as well as a plea for help on the journey ahead.

Recording of conversation held with Pastor M on 27 July 2007:

Researcher: You are a pastor and you have been using the biblical mediation process of Peacemaker Ministries.

How did you experience the using this process in dealing with trouble

Pastor M: I am pastoring in Eldorado Park. The Church is..... I also do counseling. I run a counseling practice under a NGO called "HOPE".

What I've done... I've been practicing since 1997. I have been using different kinds of models, but I found that the mediation model has been most effective – specifically when it comes to domestic violence situations.

I help the SA Police Services in Eldorado Park. I run the NGO on their premises besides my practice. I use this specific model specifically in those situations. I use the GOSPEL model. I use the mediation model a lot – specifically when people do not give each other an opportunity to talk, or with family disputes. Then we get those parties together and we use this model. What I've discovered is, that in comparison with the other counseling models, it is a fairly simple one. It is straight forward and very structured, because you have to work through different models and use that one that suits your specific situation and although I do counseling. And with domestic violence, (note the word "violence") you obviously have a situation where the parties do not give each other the opportunity to talk and then you have to bring a very structured model in working with the couples. When I did the Conciliator Training [of Peacemaker Ministries] in 2007, I found it very straight forward. You have a format that you can use and the GOSPEL program (Greetings, Ground Rules, Opening Statement, Story Telling, Problem Identification, evaluation and leading to Agreement is a very structured model – that I've found very effective – So effective that I even adopted it in my normal counseling setup – when I worked with people with troubled marriages. Because when couples come to you they come to a person that they think (know) will solve their problems. But you don't solve problems. You give direction. When they sit in front of you and you can use this model. And it helped. I had about 10 cases so far where this model helped, because I'm comfortable with it, I even adopted it into my counseling school, teaching people this specific model.

You find that couples want to talk in front of each other. In some cases the people do not have the freedom to discuss sensitive issues – But with this model it works.

Researcher: It helps to let them talk out in a safe environment?

Pastor M: In a safe environment as well as a structured format. I explain to them in the beginning... I will give each one an opportunity to talk. But you find that when one partner speaks, the other one interferes. Then you have to revert to this model, so that each one gets the opportunity to speak and you as a counselor gets the opportunity to make your notes, to identify where the problem lies.

Coupled with that model you also have a model for when you are dealing with a crisis – but this one is the most effective one.

Researcher: You would recommend it for pastors in dealing with troubled marriages?

Pastor M: Correct. I would not only recommend it for troubled marriages but for many different types of disputes – family disputes, Church disputes, even work disputes where you mediate between employers and employees. It works. I must say, having a labour background, I used it [mediation] at work as well – dealing with disputes among employees as well as unions.

Researcher: Any other remarks for pastors?

Pastor M: I personally feel that Christian mediation is the way to go. I would recommend that not only pastors use this model, but also employers; that leads also youth leaders be taught this model – even if it is just basic mediation.

The closing remark would be that I'm working on a book on forgiveness and I would use the same principle – showing people how to resolve their issues in conflict.

Researcher: Thank you.
