
Marriage Impact On Church Growth Paper No. OCCG-034

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The impact of marriage on church commitment and vice versa was assessed using data from a sample of 441 married persons who were members of the religious group known as the Church of Christ. The study revealed that a “conflicted marriage” was more likely to significantly contribute to a falling away from the church than any other variable. The study also revealed that the most vulnerable times in a married couple’s life to remain faithful to each other and to their church membership was between 5 and 10 years. There were also illuminating differences uncovered when the study examined “where couples met” before marriage and how that influenced their commitment to marriage and their church throughout the duration of their marriage. Overall, there are clear indicators of reciprocal relationship influences of marriage on church commitment and vice versa.

KEY WORDS:

Marriage, church of Christ, Christian Colleges

REPORT:

Introduction

The marital system is a real life laboratory that will not only test each spouse’s commitment to each other but also their collective commitment to their religion or church. The conclusion has long since been drawn by researchers, that “experiences in one’s marriage may

influence and modify one’s religious commitments and behaviors” (Terman, 1938; Locke & Wallace, 1959; Spanier, 1976; Hunt & King, 1978). Over the decades, several peer reviewed studies (Albrecht, 1979; Bahr & Chadwick, 1985; Ellison, 1991; Glen & Supancic, 1984; Greely, 1991) have examined aspects of the interacting effects of marriage and religious commitment. In most of these studies a general conclusion has surfaced that sheds light on our purpose to examine “The impact of Marriage on Church Commitment.”

In a 1995 landmark study by Booth, Johnson, Branaman, and Sica (“Belief and Behavior: Does Religion Matter in Today’s Marriage?) they reached a seminal piece of outcome that said: “Despite the weight of attention given to religion’s influence on marriage, changes in marital relations may affect religious involvement.” They also concluded that “... deteriorating marriages may withdraw from religious activities in order to distance themselves from their spouse and to avoid reminders that divorce is immoral or not encouraged.”

The focus of this paper will be to examine aspects of Premarital Meeting (place of meeting and commitment to be a couple), Marital Satisfaction, Marital Spirituality, Marital Dysfunction, and their effects on commitment to the married person’s acknowledged Christian religion or church. Since our aim is to uncover the impact of marriage on church commitment in the Church of Christ membership, we targeted this group very specifically for this study.

Method

Measure & sample

A purposive sample (of the homogenous type) of 441 married persons, mainly from the Church of Christ, responded to a Survey Monkey designed questionnaire. This survey was constructed by a research member of the Oklahoma Christian University and Memorial Church of Christ Think Tank group. The survey contained sixty (60) questions that were aimed at measuring aspects of marital quality, marital satisfaction, marital spirituality, premarital meeting, and marital dysfunction as they relate to the married persons' commitment to "stay with their church group" or "leave." The Think Tank's underlying goal and purpose is to garner information that will help in "closing the back door," i.e. supplying churches with well researched information that could contribute to the prevention of losing members from the Church of Christ.

The survey was sent to prospective participants using the medium of electronic mail (e-mail). The distribution of the survey was done through a double-round method. The first-round batch was sent from the Christian Array e-mail list that is owned by Think Tank Chairperson, Benton Baugh. "It has been developed by personal contacts, some congregational directories given to me, the Churches of Christ in the USA e-mail list I purchased, some collected off church related emails sent to me, and some which have e-mailed me to be put on the list" (Baugh, 2016). About 50% of the e-mail listing is congregations and 50% individuals. The list contains about 8,000 names, and about 2,000 of them are bad/obsolete addresses. The second-round list - which was exactly the same as the first-round list - was sent out but this time it

requested participation in the survey through the Christian Array E-magazine. The entire distribution and response process that resulted in 441 participants took 2.5 months.

The respondents (all married persons) were made up as follows: (1) Almost an equal amount of male and female (49.54% and 50.46% respectively), (2) Ages ranged from 20 to 80 years with the highest age range responses between 51-55 years (12.05%) and the lowest between 20-25 years (1.14%); (3) The race of respondents were as follows: White (not Hispanic) (91.30%), African-American (4.12%), American Indian (0.92%), Asian or Pacific Islander (0.69%), and Hispanic (0.46%); (4) Church of Christ worship stylistic respondents were as follows: Mainline a Capella (92.89%), Instrumental and a Capella (4.13%), and Instrumental only (0.92%); (5) Education levels were as follows: Some graduate work and completed graduate work (37%), some college and completed college work (58%), and some high school and completed high school (6.0%).

Simplistic Method of Data Analyses

For the purpose of this paper, we identified key survey questions that measured the respondents' commitment to the Church of Christ movement. The key survey questions (see survey in appendix) are: 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 49, 50, 57, 58, and 59. These key questions were then fed into Survey Monkey's data comparison analyses for illumination of results on particular questions categorized under marital satisfaction, marital spirituality, premarital meeting, and marital dysfunction. The categorized questions (see survey questions in appendix) are as follows: (1) Questions under premarital

meeting: 6, 56, 57, 58; (2) Questions under marital satisfaction: 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 60; (3) Questions under marital spirituality: 13, 14, 15, 16, 33, 34, 35, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 59; and (4) Questions under marital dysfunction: 29, 31, 40, 41, 42, 43.

In comparing the key questions with the marital, categorized questions we were able to draw reasonable correlational conclusions on the impact of marriage on church commitment. The author recognizes that more complex analyses could get us more definitive scientific results but for the purpose of this paper, this simplistic method of analysis will suffice for reasonable explanations.

Results

The 5- to 10-year itch!

The length of stay (in a congregation) for members between the ages 31 to 60 (79%) is 5-10 years. Ages 31-40 made up 27%, 41-50 made up 31%, and 51-60 made up 21%. Sixty-four percent (64%) of those members who remained at a congregation between 5-10 years went to another congregation and did not necessarily leave the Church of Christ. Forty-five (45%) percent of those who left a congregation after being there between 5-10 years left over doctrinal issues (disagreed with changes in beliefs); 25% made a change to a smaller church; 16% made a change to a larger church; 10% left because of change in worship styles; about 4% left because of moral and/or marital issues. It is also significant to note that those members who remained at a congregation between 5-10 years has a marital range of 5-10 years and they constitute 20% of all respondents. About 15% of these members reported that their "marriage has *sometimes* helped to

undermine their faith," but about 83% reported that it did not undermine their faith. Only about 3% of members with a tenure of 5-10 years in a congregation *considered* completely leaving the church because of their marriage. About 14% *temporarily fell away* from the church during their marriage. Seventy-five percent (75%) of those who temporarily fell away did so because of a "conflictual marriage," and 25% did so because of a separation during the marriage.

In assessing the 5-10-year members' satisfaction about their *congregation's focus on marriage*, 44% (a rank of 4-5 on a scale of 1-5) were satisfied to highly satisfied, whereas 56% were less than satisfied (a rank of 1-3). About 55% were less than satisfied with the congregation's education in the area of marriage vs. 45% being satisfied to highly satisfied with it. Sixty-one percent (61%) of respondents in this group were also less than satisfied with the level of separations and/or divorces that are taking place in the church.

Satisfaction with marital help by church

A total of 113 (n = 441) respondents said that they were "sometimes" (88) and "not at all" (25) "helped in their marriage by the church, worship and support of members." Of this subgroup who did not find the church's support for their marriage totally helpful, 25% were 56-60 years old, and 27% were 31-35 years old. This subgroup is also among those whose tenure at a congregation is from 0-10 years. Of those who said they were "not helped at all" by their church in their marriage, 68% indicated they "changed churches," and 56% changed churches if they were only "sometimes helped by their church in their marriage."

Forty-six percent (46%) of those who said they were “sometimes helped,” attended church three or more times and 36% of those who noted that “they were not helped at all,” did so too. In checking this subgroup’s involvement with other couples of the church, 57% indicated that they were only moderately (ranked a 3 on a scale of 1-5) involved with them. This subgroup’s “couple spirituality – i.e. praying and reading the word of God together,” was at a rank of 1 (scale of 1-5) indicating a high dissatisfaction level.

Falling away from the church during marital years

A total of about 14% (60 individuals) of our total sample reported that they “fell away from the church during their marriage.” Seventy-three percent (73%) of this group of 60 individuals indicated that they did so because of a “conflicted marriage,” 20% because of a “separation during the marriage,” and 7% because of “problem with children.” Twenty-three percent (23%) of those who fell away because of a “conflicted marriage” considered “giving up their faith” completely. However, 68% said that their marriage helped them to “keep their faith.” This particular group was not highly satisfied with the church’s lack of focus on marriage. Fifty-four percent (54%) was moderately to totally dissatisfied with the church’s lack of focus on marriage.

The “conflicted marriage” group who fell away from the church during their marital years indicated moderate to total dissatisfaction (ranking of 1-3 on 1-5 scale) in the following marital satisfaction areas: (1) Personal involvement with each other, (2) Affection and romantic interaction, (3) sexual relationship, (4) Division of household chores, (5) The way decisions are made between them, (6) Conflict management, (7) Money management, (8)

Spouse’s encouragement, and (9) Spouse’s criticism.

Premarital meeting place and commitment to marriage and church

The total sample group indicated that they met their spouses at various venues. Twenty-nine percent (29%) met at church or a Christian event; 12% met at a Christian University; 10% met at a Public University; 9% met in the neighborhood, 4% met through some type of social media (online), and 36% met at some place other than the aforementioned venues.

Met at Church or Christian event

The respondents who met at church (n = 105) or a Christian event (n = 23) were less likely to “change churches” (55%) during their marriage. Those who “changed churches,” (45%) reported that they did so primarily because of (1) Doctrinal issues, and (2) Desiring to move from a larger to a smaller church. About 88% said they had never considered “giving up the faith at any time.” They also reported (98%) that they had never considered “leaving the faith completely” because of their marriage. Seventy-three percent (73%) of this group also reported that they were “helped in their marriage by the church, worship, and the support of members.” Close to 70% attended church “three times or more,” and they were “very involved in the ministries of the church.” They were highly satisfied with their “couple involvement with all church activities” and stated that they “were close” in relationship because of their spiritual beliefs and practices. They were of the firm belief that their marriage would not have survived if it had not been for the church and their active participation in all spiritual activities.

They indicated a high to very high level of marital satisfaction on the following variables: trust in the spouse (95% church; 83% church event); affection and romantic interaction (60% church; 35% church event); sexual relationship (51% church; 26% church event); depth of communication (76% church; 48% church event); household chores and responsibilities (71% church; 65% church event); conflict management (68% church; 49% church event); reconciliation and make-up (78% church; 61% church event); quality of time spent together (76% church; 61% church event); sharing the same Christian values (93% church; 78% church event). This group, however, was not highly satisfied (28% church; 22% church event) with how they did “couple spirituality” – praying and reading the word of God – together.

Met at a Christian University

About 91% of this sub-sample (n = 53) “never considered giving up their faith completely.” They reported that “their marriage helped them to keep their faith (92%) and not undermine their faith” (87%). They also indicated that their marriage largely (87%) did not interfere with their devotion and worship to God. The entire sample (100%) reported that they had never considered leaving church completely because of their marriage. In fact, 77% said that church, worship and the support of members helped them in their marriage. Sixty-six percent (66%) of this sample attended three or more worship services per week and 21% attended at least twice per week. About 77% were “very involved in the ministries of the church” and only 2% indicated “no involvement other than worship services.” Close to 98% of this group have not “fallen away from church at any point during their

marriage.”

They were high to very highly satisfied with their romance, affection, and sexual relationship and their trust in their spouse was at a level of 94%. Their interactions with church friends as a couple was also in the high to very high range (73%) and their church involvement (together) as a couple was at approximately 87% (i.e. high to very high). However, 69% indicated that their satisfaction with their “couple spirituality” (e.g. praying and reading the word together) ranged from very low (12%) to low (15%) to moderate (42%). Only about 31% indicated a high to very high satisfaction with their “couple spirituality.” Seventy-one percent (71%) of this group voiced their displeasure with the level of separations and divorces that were taking place in their churches. This group strongly (98%) indicated that their marriage must include “active involvement in a church.” They also reported that they considered their marriage to be strong because they “shared the same Christian values (93%),” and that “their marriage was helped” (77%) because they attended a Christian university. Sixty-seven percent (67%) also indicated that “having attended a Christian university helped us remain true to our faith.” However, only 36% said that being committed to their church was a direct result of having attended a Christian university. Finally, they reported that they “cannot see their marriage surviving without a commitment to church and church involvement (63%).”

Met at a Public University

Forty-four (n = 44) people said that they met at a Public University. Only 30% of this group said that “they could not see their marriage surviving without commitment to church or church involvement.” Thus, 70%

(a range from very low to moderate) said that they can see that “their marriage could survive without commitment to church or church involvement.” Ninety-one percent (91%) never considered giving up their faith at any time, and about 80% said that “their marriage helped them to keep their faith.” About a quarter (25%) of this group indicated that their “marriage interfered with their worship and devotion to God.” Within this group, 35% attended church more than three times per week, 38% attended twice per week, and 27% attended church once a week. Their involvement in the ministries of the church were as follows: 39% very involved, 50% some involvement, and 11% no involvement. Fourteen percent (14%) of this group indicated that they fell away from the church at some point during their marriage, and 52% indicated a very low to moderate involvement with church friends as a couple. Seventy-five percent (75%) reported very low to moderate “couple spirituality,” but they have a 59% high to very high involvement together in church activities as a couple.

With respect to their level of satisfaction in their marriage, they reported as follows: spousal forgiveness (90% high to very high); spousal understanding (70% high to very high); openness to spousal discussion of issues (59% high to very high); affectionate and romantic interaction (57% high to very high); sexual relationship (46% high to very high); spousal trust (95% high to very high); depth of spousal communication (66% high to very high); division of household chores (73% high to very high); conflict management (64%); quality of time spent together (68%); money management (75%); and spousal forgiveness (91% high to very high).

In this small sub-sample (n = 13), 54% were female and 46% were male. Approximately 92% of this group had a marital range of 1 to 15 years. That means that they met online and married sometime after the year 2000. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of this sub-group were at the same congregation from 1 to 15 years – 31% from 0-4 years, 39% from 5-10 years, and 7% from 11-15 years. About 92% of this group said that “they never considered giving up their faith at any time,” and 92% said that “their marriage helped them to keep their faith.” They reported that “their marriage has not helped to undermine their faith (85%). Seventy-seven percent (77%) indicated that their marriage was helped by church, worship, and the support of members and 46% attended church more than three times per week. This group also had a 77% “involvement in the ministries of the church.” Slightly over half of this group (54%) said that they could not see “their marriage surviving without commitment to church and church involvement.” This group’s “couple spirituality” ranged from very low to moderate at a combined rate of 70% and their “couple involvement with church friends” had a similar very low to moderate range of 69%.

This group scored from high to very high in their satisfaction level on the following variables: daily personal involvement with each other (84%); affectionate and romantic interaction (67%); sexual relationship (62%); trusting spouse (92%); depth of communication (85%); division of household chores and responsibilities (69%); conflict resolution and management (69%); quality time spent together (77%); and money management (85%).

Discussion

The overall results of this study concur with previous studies that there is a relationship between marital satisfaction and religious or church commitment (Hatch, James & Schumm, 1986). The study clearly revealed that couples who perceived that they were helped in their marriage by church, worship, and members were more highly committed, and less likely to fall away or change churches, than others. The data showed that there were couples who “fell away from their church during their marriage” and that conflict within the marriage was the major reason. A depleted level (i.e. from a moderate to very low level) of marital satisfaction contributed largely to the extant conflict within the marriage and its rippling effects resulted in the loss of commitment to the church. Slightly over half of the sample (54%) was not satisfied with the church’s focus on marriage even though about 36% of them attended church three times or more.

The study illuminated an interesting finding that the 56-60-year old (25%) married couples felt unsupported by the church in their marriage. A similar sentiment was expressed by the 31-35-year old (27%) married couples. This is highly informative because these groups fall within the crucial life stages of: (1) the empty nest phase, and (2) families with young children (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). These two stages are fraught with the foci on “facing each other again” after the children have been launched (to college and marriage), and their young children’s needs and early childhood development. This is, especially, the time for these couples to be helped and supported by the church as they face these crucial life developmental phases.

An unexpected finding surfaced in the data

that provides us with two crucial pieces of information that will be helpful to all churches who are serious about retaining their members. The findings reveal that married couples, who are in the 5-10-year marital and membership range, are especially vulnerable to falling away from the church because of a “conflicted marriage.” These are obviously members who are in the preteen phase of their marital and congregational lives who need support and help to face the imminent teen and adolescent phases of their marriage and congregational lives. This should serve as an alert to church leadership that it would be prudent to assess all their members in this double 5-10-year phases (marriage and congregational membership lives) with respect to: (1) their marital health, and (2) satisfaction with how supported they feel in their marriage by the church and its membership. The data also indicated that this group had the tendency to want to move to a different congregation because of doctrinal issues (45%) and a change to a smaller church (25%).

We have always been aware that “where people meet for mate selection” ([wikibooks.org/Relationships/Where Couples Met](http://wikibooks.org/Relationships/Where_Couples_Met)) can be a very important predictor of marital life ahead and this set of data further endorses that notion. In a work by Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels (1994), they found that the number one (#1) place people met their spouses were “other.” That is, about one third (33-34%) of couples met where “no other couples met.” This is exactly true for our study as well. Even though all of our respondents were members of the church of Christ, they did not all meet at the same place. About 36% met at some place other than church, Christian events, Christian universities, public universities, online, or in their neighborhood.

The 128 married persons who met at church or a Christian event had high to very high indicators of their involvement with church and church activities. They reported being very close in relationship because of shared values, spiritual beliefs, and spiritual practices. They were also far less likely to consider “leaving the faith” at any point during their marriage. All the marital satisfaction indicators were very high (i.e. above 70%) and consistently on par with satisfaction in matters relating to their churches.

Married persons who met at a Christian University (n=53) almost mirrored those who met at a church or Christian event but

there are some differences on certain variables. One particular difference this group exhibited was that their marriage was helped by having attended a Christian University (77%). A further difference was that “having attended a Christian University helped them to remain true to their faith” (67%).

In comparing those who met at a Christian University (CU) with those who met at a Public University (PU) and on online/social media, the differences were as follows:

TABLE 1: Comparative view of Meeting Place impact on Church Commitment

Christian University	Public University	Online/Social Media
<i>Involvement in church ministries</i> 77%	39%	77%
<i>More than 3x church attendance</i> 66%	35%	46%
<i>Fallen away from church during marriage</i> 2%	14%	0%
<i>Marriage helped to keep their faith</i> 92%	80%	92%
<i>Marriage did not interfere with devotion and worship to God</i> 87%	75%	85%
<i>Never considered leaving church because of marriage</i> 100%	98%	92%
<i>Interaction with church friends as a couple</i> 73%	52%	69%

“Closing the Back Door” Concluding Summary for Leaders

What we hope will happen because of the results of this study is that church leaders will hone in on some key factors that will help them to be proactive in keeping their members in their congregations and in the church. The following crucial factors should be carefully examined and mechanisms should be put in place to aid with losses through the “back door:”

Extract data from your church database that gives you the information of all those who are married between 5 and 10 years. Survey and assess their marital satisfaction needs to let them know that you care about their marriages and have resources available to assist them in deficient areas. This proactive step will ensure their commitment to your congregation because they will conclude that you care. Follow up with spiritual and educational emphases on the areas of deficiency.

Extract data from your church database that gives you the information of all those who are members at your church between 5 and 10 years. Like the suggestion above, survey and assess their overall church satisfaction needs – worship style, doctrinal issues, children’s needs, youth needs, leadership satisfaction, etc.

If divorces and/or separations are taking place in your congregation at an alarming rate (i.e. significantly more than ever before) then instruct the pulpit and education ministers to focus their lessons on this pertinent issue to show the leadership’s concern and urgent attention on the matter.

Leadership should constantly promote “couple spirituality” and “couple friendships” in the congregation/church. The data showed that “couple spirituality” (i.e. reading the word and praying together) ranged at the lower end of the scale (1-3 out of 1-5) with the entire sample. “Couple friendships” could be remedied by perhaps designing a Mentoring Program where younger married couples are connected with more senior married couples for regular fellowship and connection.

Leadership should develop a plan to gather information about “where couples met.” This could be obtained from the two surveys mentioned above. Knowing this information will give the leadership a good idea of the couples’ marital and spiritual trend or bent in order to better serve their marital and spiritual needs.

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APPENDIX A

Oklahoma Christian University & Memorial Church of Christ Think Tank Marital/Church Growth Survey

Demographic Information

1. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
2. Age Range:
 - 20-25
 - 26-30
 - 31-35
 - 36-40
 - 41-45
 - 46-50
 - 51-55
 - 56-60
 - 61-65
 - 66-70
 - 71-75
 - 76-80
3. Racial or Ethnic Origin
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - African American (not of Hispanic origin)
 - Asian or Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic
 - White (not of Hispanic origin)
 - Other (specify)
4. Church Affiliation
 - Church of Christ (mainline – acapella)
 - Church of Christ (instrumental & acapella)
5. You are currently
 - Church of Christ (instrumental only)
 - Methodist
 - Baptist
 - Presbyterian
 - Catholic
 - Pentecostal
 - Other (specify)
 - Cohabiting
 - Married
 - Separated
 - Divorced
 - Remarried
 - Widowed
6. You met your partner/spouse
 - At church
 - On a Christian University campus
 - On a Public University campus
 - At a Christian event
 - In the neighborhood
 - Online (through a dating site, e.g e-harmony)
 - On Facebook or a related social media site
7. Highest level of education
 - Some grade school
 - Completed grade school
 - Some High School
 - Completed high School

- Some College
 - Completed College
 - Some graduate work
 - Completed graduate work
8. Length of Marriage:
- 0-4 Years
 - 5-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21-25 years
 - 26-30 years
 - 31-35 years
 - 36-40 years
 - 41-45 years
 - 46-50 years
 - 51-55 years
 - 56-60 years
9. How long a member of your current Church?
- 0-4 years
 - 5-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21-25 years
 - 26-30 years
 - 31-35 years
 - 36-40 years
 - 41-45 years
 - 46-50 years
 - 51-55 years
 - 56-60 years
10. Have you ever changed churches?
- Yes
 - No
11. Reasons for changing churches (from one group to another of a different kind?)
- Moral issues (involving yourself or others)
 - Doctrinal issues (you disagree with certain beliefs)
 - Marital reasons (you divorced and it was not allowed)
 - Change of worship styles
 - From a large to a smaller church
 - From a small to a larger church
12. Have you considered giving up “your faith” at any time?
- Yes
 - No
13. Has your marriage helped you “keep your faith?”
- Yes
 - No
14. Has your marriage helped to “undermine your faith?”
- Yes
 - Some times
 - No
15. Has your marriage interfered with your devotion and worship to God?
- Yes
 - Sometimes
 - Most times
 - No
16. Have you considered leaving Church completely because of your Marriage?
- Yes
 - Sometimes
 - Most times

- No

17. Has church, worship and the support of members helped your Marriage?

- Yes
- Sometimes
- Most times
- Not at all

18. How many times per week do you attend Church?

- Once
- Twice
- Three or more times

19. How involved are you in the ministries of your Church?

- Very involved
- Some involvement
- No involvement other than worship services

20. Have you fallen away from Church at any point during your marital years?

- Yes
- No

21. If you answered "yes" to #20, which of the following contributed to falling away?

- A conflictual marriage
- Separation during our marriage
- Problems with children
- Decision to divorce spouse
- Other (not related to marriage/family issues)

THE FOLLOWING GROUP OF QUESTIONS WILL PERTAIN TO YOUR MARRIAGE SPECIFICALLY

Marital Satisfaction: Rate the following on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high)

22. Your daily personal involvement with each other

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

23. Your affectionate, romantic interaction

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

24. Your sexual relationship

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

25. Your trust in your spouse

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

26. The depth of your communication together

- 1
- 2

- 3
- 4
- 5

27. How well you divide household chores & responsibilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

28. The way decisions are made between you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

29. How well you manage conflict

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

30. How well you manage reconciliation (making up)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

31. How well you adjust to one another's differences

- 1
- 2
- 3

- 4
- 5

32. Quality of time spent together

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

33. Your interactions with Church friends as a couple

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

34. Your couple spirituality – e.g. praying and reading the word together

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

35. Being involved with Church together as a couple

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

36. The level of your financial security

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5

37. How well you manage your money

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

38. How your spouse get along with your family (in-laws)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

39. How well your spouse encourages you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

40. How your spouse criticizes you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

41. How willing your spouse is to forgive you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

42. How well you feel your spouse understands you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

43. How open your spouse is to discussing problem issues with you

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

44. How satisfied are you with the way the Church is focusing on marriages?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

45. How satisfied are you with how the Church's educational programs cater for healthy marriages?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

46. How satisfied are you with how the pulpit is emphasizing the importance of marriage?

- 1
- 2
- 3

- 4
- 5

47. How concerned are you with the level of separations and/or divorce taking place in your Church?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

48. How satisfied are you with how your Church's education and pulpit are addressing issues of divorce and remarriage?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

THE FOLLOWING SECTION WILL EVALUATE YOUR COUPLE SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES (1=very low and 5=very high)

49. I believe that our marriage must include active involvement in a church

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

50. My spouse/partner believes that our marriage must include active involvement in a church.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5

51. My partner and I disagree about our spiritual beliefs.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

52. My partner and I are very close because of our spiritual beliefs and practices.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

53. Prayer is an important part of our daily lives.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

54. My partner's actions are consistent with his/her spiritual beliefs.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

55. Our marriage is strong because we share the same Christian values.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

56. Having attended a Christian university truly helped our marriage.

- 1

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

57. Having attended a Christian university truly helped us remain true to our faith.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

58. Being committed to our Church is a direct result of having attended a Christian university.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

59. My partner and I cannot see our marriage surviving without a commitment to Church and Church involvement.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

60. Our marriage is stronger now than in the beginning (years 0-7).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5