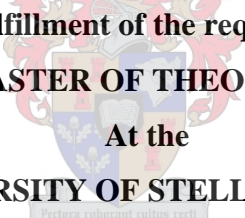


IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON PARENTING IN BUHERA DISTRICT

By

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**Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF THEOLOGY
At the
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

The crest of the University of Stellenbosch is centered behind the text. It features a shield with a blue and white design, topped with a red and white crown. A banner at the bottom of the crest contains the Latin motto "Pectora cubant cultus recti".

Study leader: Professor DJ Louw

APRIL 2006

DECLARATION

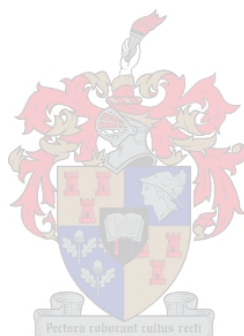
I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my original work and has not previously, entirely or in part, been submitted at any university for a degree.

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K.G.Gwemende

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Date



ABSTRACT

The traditional parenting practices of the Shona people in Buhera District were premised upon the extended family system. Children grew up among relatives who, together with own parents would direct the child along the parts the child should go. Grand parents, uncles and aunts, elder brothers, sisters, cousins and nephews would all make an input in the upbringing of the child. This was such a strong support base that even when parents would go on extended visits, or go to work in the gold mines of South Africa for years, or in the event of the death of one or both parents, the child will still have parents to support and direct its parts in the family network.

Globalisation has torpedoed the system. Traditional practices of parenting and relating have been dealt a mortal blow and individualism is taking its place, thereby scattering both the nuclear and extended families. People of our community who work in towns now do not know whether their home is the rented house in town where they work, or their rural home where their parents, and sometimes their spouses live. Even when their spouses are in the rural community, they go there once a month if their work allows free weekends otherwise they just visit when on leave once a year! The wife will visit the husband here and there but these are really people living in separation, each spouse doing their own thing, in the absence of the other.

This kind of scenario has meant that men who cannot go home often enough have resorted to prostitution for their sexual and sometimes emotional needs. Some have live-in girl friends. Or, is this a modern version of the biblical concubine? These liaisons sometimes result in children being born, who will find it hard to settle in their father's family in the rural area, because they are not very welcome. Children must be born out of a known or acceptable relationship, otherwise their mother is still viewed as a prostitute in the extended family. These sexual escapades have caused the spread of AIDS in our community in a very serious way, which has resulted in the decimation of

many families. Now some children have to run their parent's home and parent other children, thus cutting short their own childhood.

High schools are not as many as the primary schools in our area, so many children walk many kilometers to go to school. The result is those with fathers working in towns will go to town to attend secondary school living with father, and toddlers and primary school children remain in the rural area with the mother. Thus, the family is split in the middle, it will have a mixture of rural and urban values, which in most cases, results in friction in the family. Most of the children in town really live an independent life because the father is at work all day. Often he wakes up 5 am to go to work and comes back 8 pm if transport is available. They have no one to parent them. Even when the parent may be home an hour or so before bedtime, there is little socializing between father and children. Children brought up in this situation are a far cry to the expectations of most parents in our community. They usually are a pain to their parents, but could they are left with little alternative than to go the way they think is right, in the absence of meaningful guidance.

The church presents itself as the messenger of Jesus Christ to shepherd his flock in such a way that these people are assured of the hereafter and have knowledge of how to live life in the now. The church does not seem to have the answer for the parents whose children are having behavioural problems. It is mainly focusing on winning souls to Christ, neglecting existential issues of the members. Their problem children are most likely going to be parents to problem children of their own, since they also lack proper upbringing.

This research seeks to posit that the church is strategically placed to equip parents with the relevant parenting skills in our community, in such a way that this will empower all parents that are Christians, and the coming generations of those children who catch the faith of their parents. The church has to rethink the way it is going about its mission at the present moment. There is need for restructuring itself so that it adopts a family centred structure based on the systems thinking approach. When the church realises that

it is not only a family, but a family of families, it will be energized to become a family friendly church.

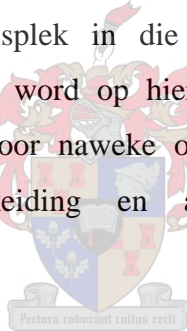
However, to do so, the church will need to adopt a holistic approach that seeks to help its people make sense of their salvation in their social, political, cultural and spiritual contexts. Thus the church has to include, among its usual spiritual programmes, poverty alleviating and community development activities, designed to empower its people economically. To establish an atmosphere conducive to good parental practices, it may need to lobby government to make family friendly legislation that will encourage parents to value family life. Unless the church help the community in which it operates it risks being washed away by whatever floods that engulf the community. When most of its members have problems with their children, the church will have problems in its ranks.



SAMEVATTING

Ouerskapstyl binne die tradisie van die Shonakultuur in die Buhera-distrik was gebaseer op die uitgebreide familie. Die hele familiesisteem en netwerk van verbintenisse het bygedra tot die opvoeding van die kinders. Opvoeding was 'n gemeenskapaaangeleentheid wat ouers in staat gestel het om elders te gaan werk, byvoorbeeld in die goudmyne van Suid-Afrika. Wanneer die ouers sterf, was daar altyd 'n versorgingsisteem in plek.

Die kultuurverskynsel van globalisering en die tendens tot individualisering het egter 'n faktor geword wat bydra tot die verbrokkeling van die familiesisteem en selfs van die nukleêre gesin. Mense raak verskeur tussen hulle werkplek en blyplek. Dikwels is daar die tuisplek in die platteland, maar daar is ook die woning in die stad. Man en vrou word op hierdie manier van mekaar vervreemd. Dikwels sien hulle mekaar slegs oor naweke of tydens vakansies. Soms een keer per jaar. Die faktor van skeiding en afwesigheid beïnvloed direk die funksionering van die gesinsisteem.



Hierdie vervreemdingsprosesse impakteer op die intimiteit van die huwelik. Mans wend hul dan vir hul seksuele behoeftes tot prostitute. 'n Soort van konkubinaat ontstaan waaruit dan ook kinders gebore word. Hierdie kinders is dan nie welkom binne die tuisomgewing van die man se leefarea nie. Die ontwrigting van stabiele seksuele verhoudings dra verder by tot die MIV / vigs-pandemie.

Die ontwrigting van die gesinsisteem beïnvloed veral die kinders. Soms is daar nie voldoende skole nie of van die ouer kinders moet saam met die pa in die stad skoolgaan. Die ouer kinders word so geskei van die kleiner kinders. Plattelandse sisteme en stedelike sisteme met hul verskillende norme en waardestelsels bring 'n soort van gespletenheid of skizofronie midde-in die kern van die familiesisteem. Kinders verstedelik en ontwikkel 'n onafhanklikheid en

individualistiese lewenstyl wat hul verder van hul gesinswaardes vervreem. Hierdie gespletenheid beïnvloed die hele proses van sosialisering. Die vervreemdingsproses veroorsaak dat kinders gedragpatrone ontwikkel wat negatiewe reaksies by ouers oproep. Konstruktiewe leiding ontbreek sodat die proses van verbrokkeling verder voortgaan.

Die situasie in die Buhera-distrik is dat die kerk dikwels nie raad weet hoe om die situasie pastoraal te hanteer nie. Dikwels fokus die kerk so op die bekering van siele dat die gemeente nie daarin slaag om mense die basiese lewensvaardighede aan te leer nie. Vanweë gebrekkige lewensvaardighede word kinders wat in so 'n gesplete situasie grootword, probleemkinders.

Die navorsingstelling is dat die kerk juis strategies geïmplementeer is om ouers te help hoe om ouers in so 'n situasie te wees. Die kerk behoort voorkomend te werk te gaan en ouers te bemagtig om die basiese ouervardighede en lewensvaardighede te ontwikkel. Om dit te kan doen moet die kerk se hele ekklesiologie self verander. Dit moet beweeg vanaf 'n klerikale paradigma na 'n familie-gestruktureerde en sisteembenadering. Die kerk moet 'n gesin vir gesinne word en 'n familie-vriendelike gemeenskap en samesyn ontwikkel.

Vir so 'n sisteembenadering bepleit die navorser 'n holistiese model geskool op die lees van Friedman se sisteembenadering. Spiritualiteit moet geïntegreer wees met sosiale, kulturele en politieke behoeftes en kontekste. Bedieningsbehoefte moet gefokus wees op armoede, gemeenskapsontwikkeling en die ekonomiese bemagtiging van mense. Dit is die taak van die kerk om in belang van die ontwikkeling van hegte familieverbande met die owerheid te skakel. Soms behels dit 'n pleidooi vir nuwe wette wat sal help om gesinswaardes te ontwikkel wat identiteitsontwikkeling by kinders stimuleer. Indien die kerk nie die gemeenskap help ontwikkel nie, raak dit irrelevant. Kinder- en gesinsprobleme spoel dadelik oor na die gemeentesisteam. Vandaar die pleidooi vir 'n geïntegreerde sisteemmodel vir gesinsepastoraat in gemeentes in die Buhera-distrik.

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Chapter 1

The Research problem and design

1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.

1.1.1 Introduction

Parenting has become a difficult and confusing task to many parents in our country today. Buhera District, though quite rural by modern standards, equally suffers the same predicament. Hardily do I visit this district of my birth and come back without meeting parents complaining about their children. Many would ask me “You are a pastor and meet many families do you see this problem where you are working?” Relatives would appeal to cultural expectations and ask me as brother, uncle or brother – in – law to help discipline their child. There are many behavioural problems like drinking, outrageous dressing patterns, drugs, premarital sex resulting in sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, to mention but a few. Parents are at their wit’s end. Many of these problems are a huge embarrassment to the families concerned and may be quite costly in financial and emotional terms. The coming of AIDS has made many parents whose children have deviant behaviour particularly anxious. To them their children are courting certain death. Death of children in our society is like loss of insurance and all life savings on retirement.

Many parents are worried because “It is generally concluded that parents are the primary socialization agents. Socialization in simple terms refers to the development of behaviour which is customary and acceptable to the normative standards of a social group.” (Ngwisha, 1983:229). Parents feel they are failures and indeed many societies, such as ours, view this situation as such. In some societies even asking for help is considered a weakness as Smith observes, “Society has huge expectations of parents, and yet at the same time undervalues the role of parenting; the pressures on parents to perform, to bring

up perfect children and not to make mistakes, are heavy and may include guilt and anxiety” (Smith, 1996:2). The church, using scriptures such as Prov. 13:24; 22:6, presents itself in a judgmental position. But, on the other hand, the church has not been of much help to these struggling parents up till now.

1.2 THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY.

A reknown medical doctor and professor in the medical school at the University of Zimbabwe, Dr. Micheal Gelfand¹, who worked in Zimbabwe from the 1950s to the 1980s, who wrote more than 10 books on the Shona people and their culture, states in one of his books: *Growing Up in Shona Society: From Birth to Marriage,(1979:1)*, that:

“Having been to Shona villages frequently over many years I have found the customary way of bringing up a child most fascinating . The pleasant behaviour of the child right up to adolescence stood out vividly. I have often envied this aspect of Shona society for besides behaving well the children seem happy.”

These words fill me with nostalgia and ask myself like many of my relatives referred to above “ What went wrong, that we should have children who answer back rudely to their parents, engage in premarital sex with pride and not shame, and many other vices?” If parents are the primary agents of socialization, why should it be difficult to bring up one’s own children? Children are a gift from God to be enjoyed rather than be endured by their parents. When they become a source of pain the Church needs to intervene and see how it can help. This is not an issue among non-Christians only, but is happening to all parents, whether Christian or not. In fact helping non-Christians might become an effective evangelistic outreach tool among the non-believers! If this problem is unchecked, we will leave an unpalatable legacy to our children because:

“The problem is self perpetuating because the broken home becomes a breeding ground for broken homes. This surely is not always the case but a child with negative familial

experiences is a candidate for the construction of another deteriorating family situation resting on social, psychological, and often spiritual deficiencies.” (Gangel, 1972:17,18).

What was most painful for me in this study is to find out that of the 80 parents interviewed and given questionnaires to complete, 77 professed to be Christians but some of them have horrific parenting experiences that include being beaten up by a drunken own child. Most probably such a child was brought up as a Christian. What went wrong? The problem is not of the community of Buhera district alone, the Church needs to address these issues as its own problems.

Buhera district has been chosen for this study because it is a community far away from the main urban centres (being about 120 km from the nearest big town) and still practising a degree of cultural norms and values that would be better to be preserved than be sacrificed on the altar of modernity being driven by globalisation. It is also a community whose traditional values we know, because we grew up there, and so we would be in a better position to see how far globalisation is eroding community values and make a well informed comparison. Besides, many books have been written on the church as a family, mainly in urban areas, but we have yet to see the fruit of such teaching. Would it not be best to encourage the church to introduce and promote pastoral care and education programmes in our rural community which still has family values that resonate well with biblical culture? Would these programmes not succeed in our communities were people still value living as, and being family so that even urban congregations can be given hope for family and enjoy their parenting responsibilities again? Would the church not operate better as a family in a rural than urban setting?

1.2.1 Problem statement.

What should parenthood be within a changed social environment, and how can the church support parents in their parenting task, in other words, how can the church foster norms and values in an integrated approach to child development? In this regard, we have to find out:

1. What is the impact of globalization on the task of parenting in Buhera district?

2. Is the Church able and in a position to make a positive intervention helpful to parents in this community? If so how can this be done?
3. What will be the impact of this new context on the church's strategy to family pastoral care and family enrichment?

1.2.2 Hypothesis

The Church as a messenger of hope needs to move away from a judgmental approach to a more preventative approach which focuses on programmes for family care and enrichment, which support parents and help them to understand the mutual interaction between family members. In this regard, the importance of norms and values in a Christian spirituality, and its impact on child development should be reassessed. With enough commitment, utilizing and developing its human and other resources adequately, the church should clearly and effectively occupy its God ordained position in our society, that of being salt and light of the earth, (Mt. 5:13 – 16). In order to undergo this paradigm shift and to move from a more clerical to a family paradigm, a systems understanding of the church community could be more appropriate in this regard.

1.3 THE GOAL OF THE RESEARCH.

This research aims at investigating whether globalization has impacted negatively on parenting skills of parents in Buhera district of Zimbabwe and to see if the Church cannot restructure its programmes in such a way as to give support and parenting skills to the parents in the community under study. The church still carries respect among young and old, as such, it then is strategically placed to make a positive input among the laity and non believers in the communities where it is working.

1.4 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

Much of this research will be a literature study from various sources on the market. There will be analysis and critical reflection on data collected from interviewees and

questionnaires given out to sampled out people from different areas of Buhera district. It is hoped that an empirical approach here will help us see how the findings of the study affect this particular area under study and also at the same time authenticate the research data. Another method will be participatory observation of what goes on with the task of parenting in the district since it is my birth place and, though I now work in Harare which is hundreds of kilometres away, the district is still home, since I have a home, parents, livestock and relatives there. Memories of my childhood will be visited in order for the problem to be clearly charted. From the study a model for the way forward will be proposed by way of critical reflection and a hermeneutical approach.



CHAPTER 2

Traditional Parenting Features in Buhera District

When I was growing up and a stranger arrived at our home our parents would ask him/her where he/she comes from, and on giving the name of the area of residence the following question would be “Whose family do you belong to?” If the stranger was a young person the question would be “Whose child are you?” We are known by our family names and these names have a character. Each family was concerned to keep their name clean, that is why Gelfand, in his book, *Ukama, 1981:24* repeats “ In my contact with traditional Shona families, I have been impressed with their pleasant well behaved children. Great effort goes into their upbringing”. On the following page he even dared to make a comparison and says “Having seen how Western and traditional Shona children are brought up I must confess that I am very taken with what I have learned about the training in Black society.”

He also rightly observed that the Shona are traditionalists whose faith dictates all they say and do. Life is not compartmentalized, you do what a muShona would do in all situations. Of course this is not to say there was no deviant behaviour at all, there were some whose behaviour fell short of the communal and traditional standards. This is the reason for finding out your name, place of birth and your family name. You would have nothing to do with children from families known for their ill manners. Good people from these families would suffer because of the wrong doing of their family members. You would need a respectable member of your society to show the community that although you belong to that family you were different. Every child had to be brought up to understand and to follow the normative values of his community. That is why “Shona children are disciplined more strictly than most Western ones and much greater stress is placed on the dignity of others and the necessity to accord them the right degree of respect.” (Gelfand, 1981:24). This is inculcated through a lot of beatings when undesirable practices are detected.

Children are greatly valued so much that a childless marriage is a great pain to the whole extended family, so much that a kind of secret surrogate parentage would be arranged by the family of the man involved. “Among the Shona a childless marriage is almost always a bitter disappointment. So strong is this insistence on the issue that if the husband find for some reason that he is unable to perform the sexual act or that his semen appears abnormal and that the failure for the wife to fall pregnant rests with him, his young brother or nephew may have sex relations with his wife provided that she agrees (kupindura). After all the blood is the same as his and a child resulting from this arrangement belongs to him” (Gelfand, 1973). If it was the woman her young sister or paternal niece would be married by her husband so that the marriage would have children. This practice is discouraged by Christianity and modern medical knowledge is proving helpful in some cases, so it is on its way out.

There are several key features of Shona parenting that we need to look at briefly of which Gelfand, in *The Genuine Shona*, (1973), in his preface, concludes that “The concept of brotherhood, the love of good family life, with close support for its members and good neighbourliness are the pillars of Shona culture. Africa has something to offer the world in human behaviour and this the Shona man and woman can give by their fine example.” On one hand Seymour (1983:2) agrees with Gelfand when he sites that “Several highly regarded qualities that are to be instilled in a child are responsibility, sociability, obedience and humility.”

2.1 Responsibility.

The dream of every parent is to bring up children who would become responsible family members and citizens whose names would be respectable. My own bringing up may be a window through which we could see what every parent in our community would hope to instill in their children. I am a first born, much is expected of first born children. They are expected to takeover family reigns from their fathers. I was made to understand that it was my responsibility to look after the members of my father’s family, including his responsibility in the extended family. Cousins are brothers and should never be

discriminated against in favour of your mother's children. My position was harped upon by the whole family, paternal aunts and grand parents were the main proclaimers of this fact. They would introduce me as their " real brother, the heir in the family". Younger siblings would hear such introductions. When eating, small children whether boy or girl, would eat from the same plate. As we grew older and graduated to join other men at the *Dare* (A fire place outside where men of the home sit and watch over the family) boys would eat from the same plate and fathers likewise, (Gelfand, 1973:21). A son would never eat from the same plate with his father. It was regarded as causing the son to lose respect of his father. When you eat parents present would watch to see whether the eldest of all the boys/girls present took the first morsel followed by the next in age until the turn of the youngest. When the food is about to be finished the eldest who ate first must be the one to stop eating first and the youngest the last to finish any remaining food. If food was little the eldest needed to just take a bite and leave the youngest to eat well.

We were brought up to understand that human beings must work in order to survive and that the best time for work is early in the morning when you are still fresh and strong. We have a saying in Shona (*Basa mangwanani*), which means "Work is best done in the morning." Only lazy people would have the sun rise when they are still asleep unless they were ill, (Gelfand, 1973:98). Even when it was Sunday or the traditional weekly holiday "*Chisi*" you still needed to wake up go to the cattle and goats pens and fowl run to see if they were all there then you would go back into the house. In older days you would go to the *Dare*, to make fire so that you would warm yourselves and give way to women to work in the house. Men were not supposed to be brushed by women's skirts as they worked in the house! You would be branded a "woman". By the age of five I was the main baby minder to allow my parents to work in the fields or at home. Mother and the girls did mainly domestic work while father and the boys did the out of door work but we would all go to the fields or help women carry firewood if logs were needed for brewing beer or cook things that needed more lasting fires. At six years I was the family herd boy responsible for grazing the cattle and goats and milking them, a responsibility that stopped when I went to boarding school for secondary education.

The herding of cattle was done in turns with cousins and nephews in the extended family or we would go as a group when the cattle were considered too many for our age. When your turn was over you would give a report whether any was missing to the father or the one whose turn followed after you. When not herding cattle I would be assigned other duties at home or fields. I remember that from about four years my father made a small hoe for me so that I could be part of the weeding with them. He would watch me closely to see that I was able to differentiate between crops and tares. When I got tired after a few minutes I would be assigned something else like watching over the sleeping baby or baby minding. Thus work was cut to your size and you needed to do something to earn your keep whatever age you were. At fifteen years I was able to go into the forest select and cut poles to build a house. No one was allowed to date until you could build your own bedroom, and be able to span oxen and plough, or do other key jobs for the survival or well being of the family. Childhood play was mainly during winter and spring when there was less agricultural related work. During cropping seasons you would only do that if you were herding cattle or on Sundays or traditional holidays “Chisi”.

Truthfulness is greatly cherished and lying would earn you a very bad name. We were taught to own up to our mistakes even if it meant a good hiding. If you lied or cheated you would be beaten up until you confess that you will not do it again, (Gelfand, 1973:65). Much of the teaching was done as you did mundane things of life. During the evenings when sitting at the *Dare* or in the house we were taught through stories, riddles, games or proverbs. All these songs, games, riddles and proverbs had lessons for life, (Gelfand, 1979:120 – 216). These taught us to think and find solutions to life problems. You were assigned tasks commensurate with your age and capabilities and if you failed because you did not know you were then taught what you should have done. But if you failed what you were taught before, you would be scolded or beaten up depending on the severity of the matter.

We were taught respect and look after other people’s property if you found it lost, and give it to them, if you knew them or give your parents who would know what to do. If they are stray cattle you looked after them until the owner came looking for them. If no

one comes after a long time it would become your fathers beast. Theft was hated and feared at the same time. Some people would bewitch you if you stole their property and you would be put to public shame, because you would not steal and get away with it. I never forget my aunt who took pumpkins and melons from someone's field in an adjacent village to ours. She kept walking round the edge of the field all night until she was discovered the following day at noon. Meanwhile people in our village were looking for her. It is said the owner had known that someone had stolen his things the very night. Early in the morning he went for a beer party a few kilometers from his home. When my aunt was discovered they had to follow this man where he had gone to, that is why she was released about noon because the man had to perform his rituals on my aunt which included verbal reprimand and whipping with a special whip he kept for the purpose. So if you stole when he was on a journey you would be stuck until he was back. It was a great shame and embarrassment and her children had a hard time at school. Not everyone had this kind of juju, but you would not know who until you stole and got caught!

I used to marvel and wonder what actually was used by these people. Now that I am grown up and am a Christian, I now understand that witches use devilish powers, although sometimes for good things like stopping people from stealing. Unfortunately because of Christianity, these practices are dying and our faith has not stopped theft in our communities. I am not giving credit to the devil but I am lamenting the fact that our way stops theft among Christians but not non Christians, in fact Christian properties are now targeted because people know that Christians do not practice these secret security measures of the dark world!

When a sister was married in the family one of the brothers (including cousins), would be picked to be the official "father" to the sister being married. The go between would then be ordered to talk through the brother "father" who would in turn tell the eldest brother who will in turn tell the youngest father, that is the youngest of our father's brothers and cousins. This taught us that boys were responsible for their sisters if they got divorced or their husbands died. You would assume the same responsibility over your paternal aunts should they meet the same fate in life. On the other hand girls were also taught their

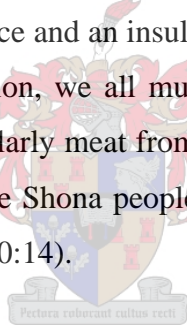
feminine responsibilities from an early age. I learned to cook and grind grain at six years because I had no elder sister, my mother had to teach me those “feminine” responsibilities so that I could cook for my younger siblings if mother was away for any reason. By the time I became a teenager I knew the responsibilities I had in the family very well through direct teaching as we lived life or by observation. Ancestral worship responsibilities were learnt by observation when you are a child. The only involvement was fetching firewood, carrying water or other tasks during the brewing of beer. The eldest in the whole clan would say the corporate prayers at public worship when need arose, otherwise everybody else would talk to the ancestors on your own if there was reason to do so. It was not routinely done as in Christianity, it was only when the occasion necessitated it.

2.2 Sociability.

The concept of brotherhood was stressed in the life of our community that left you with no doubt that we belong together. Usually, villages were really homesteads of one or two extended families with a few people of different tribes. But in most cases they would be relatives, for example, son – in-laws may come to live among his in laws or it could be a foreigner altogether who comes to live in the village. Every person was thus a relative and children were children for all adults in the village, hence the saying “*Vana ndeve munhu wese*” which means “children belong to all people”. (K.C.James, 2003:65) takes issue of this fact as expressed in the Ashanti saying: “It takes a village to raise a child”. This is no surprise to us and does not necessarily mean to take responsibility from biological parents but simply to show that you need the cooperation of your community in raising a child. It is the community that sees your children away from you, as they implement what you teach them about life. If the community does not show you how your children behave away from home then you may live to regret. In our community all adults were your parents and were to be listened to. You would be disciplined by any parent who saw you misbehaving. Normative standards of that community were known by all adults so they would expect you to behave accordingly, and because you were their child they will be your parents wherever you saw them. If you needed help they would

give you and inform your parents later. Even if they gave you financial help they would not expect a refund. Unfortunately this is changing today.

People matter. You grow up with a strong impression of this which engendered deep respect for human life and a strong inclination to enjoy the presence of other people above everything else. We grew up hearing the saying: “Only witches do not like people” over and over again. (Gelfand, 1981:26) says: “They do not seek their pleasure from material comfort but from the company of living people. They enjoy their families, their children and their social gatherings. People can be a source of joy to one another”. Occasions like weddings, religious ceremonies, social dances, beer parties and funerals were for all the community. Everyone was invited to enjoy or take part in the occasion with the whole village, and even relatives from other villages are invited. It is an offence to pick some and leave some. They would ask you “ So which family do I belong to? Am I a witch?” It is a terrible offence and an insult to leave out a relative or a neighbour at such occasions. It is our occasion, we all must be present. These occasions were times when food was plenty, particularly meat from cattle and goats. Possession of such livestock is greatly priced among the Shona people. These show your social status and are a measure of wealth, (Kileff, 1970:14).

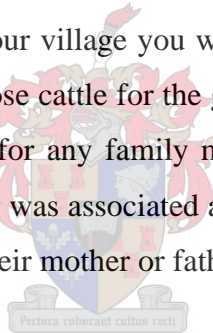


Murder and witchcraft were great antisocial offences of which if found guilty you would pay heavy fines. It was not uncommon to hear that someone was charged 50 head of cattle plus a person if you murdered someone. The cattle is the fine and the person will replace the one you killed. It had to be the same sex as the one you killed. If you killed a female and your father does not have a female child, they would take from your paternal uncle’s family.

Respect had to be accorded all people particularly older people. You were expected as a child to help the elderly whom you meet carrying heavy loads on the way and they go same direction as you. You should help them until your paths parted. Disabled people were never to be jeered or ridiculed for it could befall you as well, the saying, “*Seka urema wafa*” (laugh at disability when you are dead), sums it up well. We also were

taught giving because stinginess is antisocial. Such a person is difficult to live with because he would like to take from others but is not willing to share what he has with his family members. We were taught that “*Chabikwa chaora*” which means “What is cooked gets rotten so it must be given people to eat before it goes bad” so why refuse those who need it? Or “*Mweni haapedzi dura*” which means literally “A visitor cannot finish what is in the granary”. This teaches that a visitor only eats one or two meals he would not impoverish you because of those few meals. Much of this was to underline the importance of sharing. One family shares what it has fairly with other families.

There was a kind of common ownership of property. If I own many cattle and my brother or another relative does not have enough oxen to span, he would come and get those oxen I am not using. If there was only one span of oxen then they would plough all the fields of the uncles in turns. This was the same with cows for milk. If a needy relative stays some distance from your village you would give them some of your cattle “to look after”. They would use those cattle for the good of their family. It was a great shame on relatives and neighbours for any family member to die of hunger or to be a beggar in your community. Begging was associated and understood when it was done by someone cursed because they beat their mother or father as explained in the next section.



2.3 Obedience.

One of the pillars of Shona culture that showed whether any child was well brought up was obedience. We were taught to obey parents and elders without question. Children were seen but not heard, as the old adage says. This does not mean they were encroaching on children rights. Children had recourse to redress should they be ordered to do something unbecoming or out of way. You would not object or refuse to do what you are told to do, but would immediately go to your grand parent nearest or the oldest of the uncles or other appropriate relations and explain to them what you have been ordered to do. These would then confront your parent or older relative who would have dealt unfairly with you. You never answer back to your parent. That would leave your parent speechless with pain, embarrassment and anger. You obey elders because of their positions and relationships to you. They do not choose to be that, it is simply the order of

life. We were taught that these people occupy positions of honour in society. I remember an incident with our local chief Nyashanu when I was a teenager in the late sixties. He had married my aunt, so I was his in-law and him our son-in-law. In our culture sons-in-law enquire first about health when they meet their wife's male relatives or aunts. But chiefs are leaders of the whole community. I had come from boarding school to see my aunt who was one of the 20 wives of the chief then (he eventually married 35 and had 120 children!), the chief expected me to enquire about health to him but I kept my mouth shut. We did not talk until we parted. My aunt then gave me a teaching and told me that I had to do it because of the position he occupied. But when he came to our home then he would behave like any son-in-law, (Gelfand, 1973:49).

We grew up to know that parents are to be deeply respected and never to be spoken to roughly, let alone to be beaten, however wrong they may be (Gelfand, 1965:16). However angered you may have been, parents are not scolded, shouted at, or beaten up, particularly the mother, whose ancestral spirits you would not be able to appease. Mothers are considered aliens in the family because their ancestral spirits could only be appeased for by her kith and kin. Such wrong against your parent would attract a terrible curse that would visit your family for generations to come, until it was atoned for. Hitting a parent was punishable by putting on sackcloth, then you would go about begging for grain and a goat in villages far away from yours. You would then use the grain to brew beer to appease the grieved parent and the whole village. When you beg you will be dancing and singing, verbalizing your mistake. Those who hear you would scold you and hurl insults at you, but would give you the grain you are begging for.

When the beer is brewed you would then tell the officiating parent that you regret your deed and apologise publicly. If the parent refused to forgive you then it became a permanent curse. But this would normally not happen because the relatives would remonstrate with your parent to forgive. In my own life time I have witnessed a man who used to hit his father and mother when he was drunk. The father is now late but the mother is alive in her eighties. His sons have also hit him and is practically experiencing

hell from his own children at this moment in his life. He committed his sin in the early seventies but is only reaping its fruit now. His ordeal started in the mid nineties. His children have not done well in life though they received secondary education and one of them exceptionally bright, but is a heavy drinker and womanizer today and unemployed. Their girls are a sad story though not violent. The question whether this is a coincidence will need further research. But that is my own lifetime experience. I was told a lot more with my parents and saw two people in the early sixties who were begging under force of such a curse.

Self control was a virtue that was taught and expected of everyone to have in full. This would save you from embarrassment when you react violently to situations where you might have acted without a fuller appreciation of the situation. You needed to control yourself when wronged, eating and drinking, sexual relationships and a host other things. When you have yourself well under control you find obedience and humility virtues you can espouse. The church does not sweat in teaching these values in our community.

2.4. Humility.

Pride was viewed as an embarrassment and denounced in the community. Even leaders in the community were encouraged to be humble, if they were expecting those they lead to be humble. We would be told, “*Gudo guru peta muswe maduku agokutya*”. Literally this means “Leader baboon fold your tail so that followers would respect you”. In other words be respectable so that you would in turn be respected by others, (Gelfand, 1973:65 – 66). We were told “*Mwana washe muranda kumwe*” That means you cannot always be leading. Sometimes you lead sometimes you are lead, so you needed to be humble in life. Humility encourages self control which allows you time to get a clearer appreciation of the issues before giving your contribution. But we sometimes mistook humility for cowardice. We would feel our parents wanted us to be walked over by our peers. However, over the years and even now as Christians, I thank God that I was taught humility. It is easier for me to relate to my God.

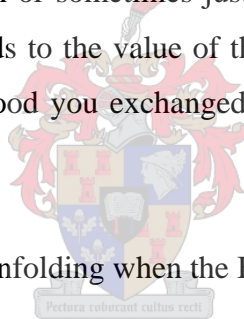
When I look back to my childhood years I appreciate very much the pain parents in my home area are going through. Children answer back to their parents, they use foul language even in the presence of parents. Traditional normative values are questioned left right and centre. Young people have little appreciation of these values so parents are at a loss and ask “ What can we do?” Thus, it is hoped that this brief look into the traditional ways of bringing up children will give us an understanding and appreciation of the reasons why parents in our community are in pain. They hoped to pass on the values they believe to be wholesome and necessary in life. They hoped to do parenting the way they saw it being done. But now those ways and those values seem not to be appreciated by their children. This background brings into focus the need to undertake this research as it shows us where this community is coming from in such a way that we appreciate more the results of the research.

In doing this, we do not need to idealise the past (Hancock, 1999:9), conditions today are different from then, but the task of parenting still has “the overall goal to guide children towards maturity through all the development stages of life” (Louw, 2005:61). A nostalgic looking back into the past, while we may learn from it, will not equip us to handle the future. The past will never come back. To answer the question in our community we need to understand how the community got into that situation in the first place, so that we can chart a way forward. This may be appreciated more clearly when we look at the role globalization played in ushering in this difficult situation.

CHAPTER 3

Impact of Globalization on Parenting Styles in our Community

In the past, life was lived in the village only. “Families functioned as economic units. They shared their income and served the needs of those included. Family life provided protection and created job opportunities. It was an organism and functional structure arranged according to hierarchy and patriarchyDuring industrialization the work place moved away from family life and became a public enterprise outside the home” (Louw, 2005:59). So work was done from home, the whole family was involved. Trade was by bartering. Even when I grew up this was the main form of trade except when you went to buy clothes or salt from the store, when you would need to have money. The shop owners bought our grain or sometimes just told you that your groundnuts are worth so, much then you get goods to the value of that money. We did not need sugar nor bread! If you did not have food you exchanged with what you had which the one with grain wanted.



Momentous changes then started unfolding when the British came, as Ngwisha says:

“ Up to the entry of the British administration the economic system functioned without dependence on external factors. The balance between production, distribution and consumption kept supply and demand factors in tolerable balance. In other words, self sufficiency was the cornerstone of the economic system. ...The disequilibrium was set in by the demands of the economic system resulting from the BSAC. These diverted the local adult manpower into towns to work the new factories that were springing up – thus they were channeled into wage earning economy. Coercive methods were used to get people to work in towns, mines and farms until people got hooked in the new wage earning economy. Taxation was introduced , this forced many people to work to get money for taxes and other things” (1983:9).

3.1 Definition of Globalization.

Globalisation is a term that is hotly debated globally, and is seen from many points of view, as such, it is also defined differently. For our purposes in this study we will use Held and McGrew's rendering which says " Globalization, simply put, denotes the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of transcontinental flows and patterns of social interaction" (2002:1). This includes transformation or shifts in traditional patterns of social, economic, political and cultural organisation, facilitated by great technological advances in transport and communications, (Giddens, 2002:10). He goes on to say that, " in many respects it is not only new, but also revolutionary." Held and McGrew agree when they say: " By eroding the constraints of time and space in patterns of social interaction, globalization creates the possibility of modes of transnational social organisation, for instance global production networks, terrorist networks, and regulatory regimes" (2002:7). (Giddens, 2002:4) says that globalisation is really restructuring our lives in very profound ways and is driven from western countries, "bearing strong imprint of American political and economic power, and is highly uneven in its consequences." A clearer picture of globalisation emerges when we look at some of its effects which follow:

1. It has brought in transformation of the traditional economic organisation in many countries. Powerful transnational companies, many of them richer than some national governments, operate all over the world, bringing in a lot of foreign currency to their mother countries often at the expense of the poor nations. (Held and McGrew, 2002:48) say that these multinational companies are the main players in global economy and "national governments are having to constantly adjust to the push and pull of global market forces." In 2002 there were 60 000 companies with 820 000 foreign subsidiaries, with a turnover of \$15.6 trillion, handling 25% of world production, and 70% of world trade. These companies move families across the world wherever they want to work, (2002:56). Uprooting of families is not the issue but their profits matter more.

Influential international policy making organisations like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, G8, World Trade Organisation originate from the west and dictate the terms under which Aid will be given to poor countries. Our country, Zimbabwe suffered a lot from the economic structural adjustment ordered by the World Bank and IMF in the 1990s. These measures severely reduce the national government's capacity to deliver on social issues like health, education or agriculture. These bodies like the WTO fix prices of raw materials, mainly produced in the South without consultation and agreement with producer countries. The European Union and America for example, subsidize prices of their farm products, thus protecting their farmers against world market forces. But poor nations are not able to do so to their farmers, so these farmers and their countries suffer. Regional trading blocks like SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS or EU Common Market are formed to try and make sense out of globalisation and cushion its effects on member countries.

2. Global activism by various groups and organisations like women's groups, or Greenpeace, have brought many changes, for instance, the emancipation of women. This has triggered changes in female – male roles in the home, leadership in companies and so called democratic leadership and parenting styles in the home. These changes have no one to help parents properly adjust into them, instead even when they stand for a lot of good they have brought friction in families. In the church now women are being ordained for ministry and thus taking leadership positions in an area that was totally men's domain. In denominations that have not embraced this, hot and divisive debating is raging today.

There is a global youth culture griping the world. Now, suddenly old age is no longer admirable but to be resisted. Cosmetic companies are making a killing with their “anti ageing creams” that keep you looking young. Advice from older people is taken as out of date and has to make way for the youth. Advertising companies exploit the female body that is always used when young, to sell anything from cars, plates or medicines.

3. Globalisation is behind the expansion of democracy (Giddens, 2002:4) so autocratic and monarchical governments are under intense pressure to embrace the globally driven form of democracy. World policy making forums like those financial institutions mentioned above demand change in governance as a precondition to giving aid. Procurement of goods for national consumption cannot be done without regional or international cooperation. Poorer nations often agree to economic or governance measures that may be inappropriate for their situation, resulting in many hardships for their peoples.

4. Globalisation has unleashed insecurity in many countries due to the activities of international terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda. Since the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York many people are living in fear and governments are spending huge sums of money on security for their countries (Scholte, 2005:313). International drug trafficking is growing at alarming proportions. South African television programmes have reported from time to time about drug cartel busts and raids on drug making factories in South Africa. The result is the formation of world policing agencies like Interpol, to try and deal with these sources of insecurity to member nations.



5. Communicable diseases like AIDS, Ebola fever, bird flu and others are stretching health budgets of many countries and cause whole populations to live in fear and anxiety for their safety.

Globalisation unleashes deep structural changes as (Covey, 1997:120) observes, “When infrastructure shifts, everything rumbles.” Covey sees our culture, laws, economy and technology as our infrastructure, areas where enormous changes have and are taking place. He explains why these changes happen by saying: “when we encounter extremely powerful influence sources, such as a powerful social culture, charismatic people, or group movements, we experience a kind of conscience or spiritual vertigo. We become disoriented. Our moral compass is thrown off, and we don’t even know it”. This shifts affects all of us “personally and profoundly in our families, our homes”. Giddens,

(220:19) agrees with him when he says: “For globalisation is not incidental to our lives today. It is a shift in our very life circumstances. It is the way we now live.” There was that kind of shift in our community. This shift was of such magnitude that our community buckled at its knees. In our brief discussion about this shift we will follow the main areas mainly affected by globalisation as Covey suggests:

3.1.1 Culture.

While the old adage “Culture is dynamic” is true, it is equally true that it does so as a response to external pressure. Globalization caused increased transnational cultural interaction of immense proportions facilitated by advances in communication technology. Ideas backed by graphic images move across the world at the click of a computer mouse, whether good or offensive. Pornography is extremely difficult to control for the same reasons. Many governments lack resources to control these harmful information movements. The following figures show the growth in World Communication Service (Held & McGrew, 2002:32):



	1990	2002
Telephone Lines	520 million	1 115 ml
Cell phone subscribers	11 ml	1 000 ml
Personal Computers	120 ml	670 ml
Internet users	2.6 ml	500 ml

Transport communications have shrunk the size of the globe so that people fly out to other countries for business and come back with in hours or a couple of days. People take what they see in other countries back to their countries as they travel. Their ways of dressing, food, entertainment and other cultural activities are suddenly challenged by new

ones. They are faced with a multiplicity of choices, and the desire to flirt with the new is always difficult to resist.

In Zimbabwe this process is duplicated between people from rural areas and those working in towns, mines and farms as these town people maintained links with their homes in rural areas. This also facilitates a constant flow of traders in agricultural produce from rural areas into towns, and of money from towns to rural areas, and a circulation of ideas and values (Raftopoulos and Yoshikumi, 1999). A lot of our beliefs and values have started being questioned by those exposed to other cultures, some of our beliefs were exposed and shown to have resulted from ignorance, like the killing of twins. The radio and then TV followed which fast tracked movement of ideas and suddenly the our rural community, the whole country, and world could interact on a daily basis. As schools increased and high schools came within reach of the majority of young people in our community they became more powerful by knowing more than their parents. As more and more people got educated, jobs became more difficult to get if you have not gone to school. More education meant more exposure to foreign cultures. Thomas observed that “Industrialization is an anglicizing force that swept through the whole country” (1972:179). Such is what is happening to our community. Our children not only have lost touch with our values and norms but no longer speak our language well. Its almost their second language!

This is the situation (Giddens, 2002:53), describes when he says: “The family is the site for the struggle between tradition and modernity,..... There is perhaps nostalgia surrounding the lost haven of the family than for any other institution with its roots in the past. Politicians and activists routinely diagnose the breakdown of family life and call for a return to traditional family”. Giddens goes on to say that the family is one example of institutions he has called “shell institutions”. He says these institutions look the same as usual from outside but inside they have changed their basic character. Giddens proposes that family is an institution that must change because it retards development “The persistence of the traditional family – or aspects of it – in many parts of the world is more worrisome than its decline. For what are the most important forces promoting democracy

and economic development in poor countries? Well, precisely the equality and education of women. And what must be changed to make this possible? Most importantly the traditional family” (2002:65). When such top people occupying important positions speak, (Giddens is Director of London School of Economics) their word is heard in many circles through the process of globalisation. These ideas are more painfully experienced in areas where traditions are still relatively in place.

I think Giddens goes too far when he suggests that the traditional family must change because it retards development. Because members of a family do not fail to embrace new ideas simply by belonging to a traditional family. The family cannot be blamed for the failure of activists to make careful assessments of their operating environments that result in them packaging their product the same way in Europe and in Africa, or other parts of the world. People do not have to be, or look the same throughout the world. No culture has a monopoly of the good in life, and therefore has to dictate to other cultures in the world, except that which the Creator himself expects out of his people. (Giddens, 2002:64) proposes what he calls “democracy of emotions” which he says engenders open dialogue, respect for one another with no one having arbitrary power in the family, and in the same vein says “A democracy of the emotions would draw no distinction between heterosexual and same sex relations.” He shows himself to be advocating the unnatural same sex marriages. When such unions are allowed to adopt children, is there democracy of emotions with the children? Will they be in a situation to appreciate what that means to them? If introduced carefully, the traditional family is capable of making adjustments that do not violate the original intentions of the One who created the family.

3.1.2 Economy

As the cash economy established itself more firmly in the country more and more people were forced out of their homes to work in towns, mines and farms in order to make ends meet. Those who got employed soon became objects of admiration in the community because they now had money to develop their homes and buy implements that would develop their homes further. Their social images were improved. This encouraged more and more people to move into towns to look for employment to enhance their images as

well. These people ended up having two homes, one in the rural area and one in town or their place of work. Colonial rules did not allow non unemployed women in towns and accommodation for the men was in hostels. They had no security of tenure in their places of work so they had to keep their rural homes. Those who worked in farms and plantations could stay with their families on the farms because the whole family became employees of the farmer. Farmers in Tea plantations in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe employed school children who woke up early in the morning to pick tea and go to school after they had finished their quota for the day.

In the rural community people now needed money for everything. They embarked on all sorts of activities to make ends meet. Some brew beer to sell, cut trees to make carvings to sell in towns and at tourist resorts, grow vegetables, mould bricks, start pottery projects, or do anything lawful that could earn them money. Global tourism provided welcome markets for art objects like pottery, wood and stone carvings. But it has caused much deforestation and uncontrolled quarrying. People were and are still on the move. Parents no longer had time for their children, if they were all home children would be assigned chores to do while parents did something else in order to earn a living. Some of the activities people are doing to find money to enhance their living standards are causing severe environmental degradation in the district. Gold panning has caused horrible holes and pits causing severe siltation of many dams, One of Zimbabwe's main inland rivers which forms the eastern border of our district, a perennial river in the past with vast pools full of hippos is virtually a dead river now. Hippos are now nowhere to be seen and the river stops running during the dry seasons. Areas where gold panning is taking place are rendered unfit for any use once the panners are through with it.

This gold panning has created all sorts of social ills in the make shift camps used as homes by the gold panners. Adolescent children sometimes bunk school to go and pan for gold to raise own money or parents ask them to do it to augment family income. There is a lot of prostitution going on in these camps, since there are more men than women in the business. Young girls are the main target as they are thought to be free

from AIDS but no one thinks about them giving the young girls the disease. Parents in villages around the gold panning areas have a hard time executing their responsibilities.

The greatest evil out of this scenario was the brewing of traditional beer for sale. In the past, beer was only brewed for special occasions. Now beer is available daily within reach from home. Many people get addicted to alcohol and lose their bearings. They now live for the cup of beer and remain with no time with their children, neither do they work for the betterment of their families. Children now take part in the brewing and selling of the beer and watch their parents and other elders drink themselves to senselessness and debauchery. Promiscuity and adultery is growing by the day, and now many children are sucked in to get their own pocket money or just for the fun of it. Youths, who were traditionally not allowed to drink, not only joined but started smoking cannabis. Now our children are dying of AIDS still in their teens.

The lone stores scattered along roads grew in number and rural business centres were born. Now people can choose whether to market their rural produce at home or in town. Although these provided much needed employment, they also brought urban vices much nearer home. They now became the main sources of entertainment for young and old, healthy traditional forms of entertainment has sunk into oblivion. Premarital sex has become the fashionable activity among the youth in our community that is fast becoming a sex craze society. Values of chastity before and faithfulness in marriage are severely under strain. This is encouraged by sexually provocative advertising that come up on TV screens all the time.

The AIDS pandemic has necessitated the distribution of condoms to young people which has been taken as license to promiscuousness. The fear of their children contracting AIDS has made parents less vocal about the introduction and promotion of condoms among the youth. Fortunately, the Ministry of Education now pushes for abstinence, because the promotion of condoms since 1989 has not neither reduced incidences of premarital pregnancies in schools, nor the rate of HIV infection among the youth. And

AIDS is reshaping the face of our families and creating surrogate families in squatter camps (Louw, 2005:60).

Many women in our community have now found cross border trading to be a lucrative business, so more and more women are getting involved. Our rural women now also join their urban counterparts in selling various commodities in neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa. Women do this more than men. Most of them spend more time in South Africa now than in Buhera district. They are getting money but their children have no one to parent them. Because they now get a lot of pocket money and no control they are becoming a difficult lot. One woman neighbour of my cousin in Kwekwe left a three month old baby in the care of a maid while she went to South Africa for one month “to work to get money there”.

3.1.3 Laws

Being a colonial administration our government passed many laws unfriendly to our cultural way of life before independence. First it was taxation laws that forced people to have work away from home or do other things to earn a living. Secondly the Land apportionment act forced many of our people to be moved away from their people to make way for commercial farms or other development projects like mines, roads and dams. Families were split and lost their support base.

The education system like many other colonial pieces of legislation were discriminatory against blacks. There were several bottle necks, only 12% of the primary school population ever made it to secondary school, leaving thousands angry for having made to taste sweetness of education, the door to prosperity, but being denied a chance to go further and make themselves more marketable on the job market. The bottlenecks were there because the government had less than 10 high schools leaving the church to carry the heavy load of secondary education, but only available at boarding schools. Many of these boarding schools where entered into from upper primary grades. So children left the care of their parents and became exposed to foreign culture at a tender age.

After independence more pieces of legislation which were not family friendly were passed. First it was the Age of Majority Act which said a child who turns 18 years now makes decisions for her/himself. Many of these laws were brought down to us from the United Nations in New York and our government does not seem to have adjusted them to local conditions. These laws gave young people tremendous power to make major decisions that often were to the detriment of the well being of the family. Many young people lost their moral compasses encouraged by these pieces of legislation when they still needed parental care, especially school fees and other necessities of life. Now parents of impregnated girls could not sue the man, it was the girl who had to do it, but had no resources and strength of will to do so on her own. Often she would have been taken advantage of by much older and employed people. These young people can now enter into marriage without parental approval, they actually go to the magistrate to be legally wedded on their own! This they can do with or without lobola having been paid. It is a cultural thorn in the flesh and corrupts Christian teaching for family life.

An array of legislations designed to uplift the status of women were introduced. Before independence women were discriminated against and could not own land. This, admittedly, needed redressing. However, our society being patriarchal, was not properly prepared for such ground shaking changes. This caused uneasy relationships which disturbed family life. A number of women handled their new found recognition in insensitive ways which created tension in their homes. Parenting is a task that needs a father and mother who speak the same language to their children and community.

Finally came the various human and child rights legislations engineered from the United Nations Assembly in New York. Many of these laws cut across cultural grains in an arrogant way. But our government, for whatever reasons, just accept them as they are without contextualizing them to suit local conditions. The result is “Authority and discipline become very uncertain and confusing. The focus on human rights enhances the processes of individualization” (Louw, 2005:60). Instead of families being “ regarded as the we-space for interconnectedness and co-existence, with the overall goal to guide children towards maturity through all the development stages of life” (Louw, 2005:61),

the family gets reduced into a battlefield whose originator stands as arbitrator to the dispute. Many parents are lowly educated, so they are at a loss as to what to do in the face of these laws that disturb their family peace, crafted from the distance of the capital city without canvassing for parental input into their formulations.

3.1.4 Technology

There is no disputing that advances in technology have been quite exciting and brought us a lot of good with them. But it has been fraught with problems as well. The following passage gives us a good summary about it:

“Changes in technology have accelerated the impact of changes in every other dimension. In addition to global communication and instant access to vast sources of valuable information, today’s technology also provides immediate, graphic, and often unfiltered access to a full spectrum of highly impactful visual images – including pornography and vivid scenes of bloodshed and violence. Supported by, and saturated in advertising, technology puts us into materialistic overload. It has caused *a revolution in expectation* (italics mine). Certainly it increases our ability to reach out to others, including family members, and establish connections to people round the globe. But it also diverts us and keeps us from interacting with and relating in meaningful ways to members of our family in our home” (Covey, 1997:124). The problem is the *revolution of expectation*, becomes a mirage that never become reality. These unmet expectations become sources of intense frustration especially to children from poor families who see their dreams come to fruition in some other families, but unfortunately not in theirs.

We are a very rural community, but now linked to every town in our country and the whole world technologically so that at the moment a good number of residents in this rural community have the thrill of talking to their loved ones abroad! It enhances someone’s social status to talk with people abroad, own a cell phone and put on clothes from London itself!. There are not many homes with TV sets, but radios are now many. Young (and old sometimes) people visit homes or shops with TVs to watch favourite programmes and talk to others who do not have the opportunity about what they see.

Programmes like wrestling and soccer cause people to walk long distances to watch them. This may not be on a daily basis but the influence is the same. In fact “Globalisation of technology and markets is threatening the very survival not only of businesses but governments, hospitals, health care, and educational systems as well. Every institution-including the family-is being impacted today as never before” (Covey, 1997:125). The destruction of the World Trade Centre and the suicide bombings and terrorist wars in the world are stark examples for us to appreciate how technological advancement can be harmful and retrogressive in our societies today.

Improved transport system while a very good thing that links us with relatives in different parts of the country and a vital part of the country’s economic infrastructure, makes transportation of undesirable literature and people who spread alien ideas and values to the district. Rural workers go to towns over weekends and come back on Monday for work, and towns people come to see their families over weekends. I remember one lady teacher had the shock and embarrassment of her life before her grade 6 class last year. After seeing a boy in the class being mobbed by other boys, she went to investigate only to be confronted by a triple x grade pornographic magazine. The magazine had found its way into the school through the boy’s brother. It was her first time to see pornographic material since it is outlawed in Zimbabwe.

3.1.5 Christianity

It may be a surprise to many that Christianity, being the carrier of the Good News of Jesus Christ, should here be cited as a negative force in parenting. But quite a number of abusive churches, though they preach Jesus, create problems for many families today. Some church leaders have failed to rid negative individualism from their preaching so much that it has compromised the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. Children are encouraged to leave their parents and live with families of their church leaders or other members of the same church who will then automatically assume responsibility as foster parents responsible for all the basic and educational needs of the child. It is important to note that often these church parents in most cases, have more economic muscle and a

higher social status than the parents of these children who then vent their anger at the Creator for having made them poor. Had they been rich they would have been spared the pain. Many young people marry away from and without the knowledge of their families. These are encouraged to come out of their families because their parents are non believers! (2 Cor.6:17). They are told they can disobey unsaved parents, and sometimes “unsaved” may include Christians from some selected denominations. They abuse scripture to meet their own ends which in most cases is love of money and power.

Many non Christian parents cannot see the difference between an abusive and a balanced church. One church marries off girls before puberty so that they have no chance of getting defiled when they mature physically and sexually. While this is done with the consent of parents since they will be members of the church, many of the girls do not like it, because they are literally raped at a very tender age. A case last year was reported of a 75 year old polygamist who “married” a 12 year old girl to become his 5th wife. This man lives 25km from our rural home. This is not an isolated case but widespread because this is a very large church in the country. Relatives of the girl’s father had tipped the police after failing to persuade their relative to keep the child in school but he refused.

3.2 A Survey in the Community

We carried out an investigation to assess the impact of globalization on parenting skills in the area and the results are what follows in the table below. More than half the people who completed the questionnaire were interviewed as well, in such a way as to gather information from follow up questions to clarify some of their answers in a non threatening way. The questions were deliberately simplified so that barely literate parents could understand them well and give meaningful answers. The respondents are scattered around the district and 15 of them work in Harare but have homes in the rural areas. Harare is not their home. The questions were both in English and Shona. Respondents were asked to choose the language they are most comfortable with and therefore would understand better. The sampling was at random except that we targeted parents who had 10 or more years of parenting and were residents of the district.

RESULTS ON QUESTIONNAIRE TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON PARENTING SKILLS IN BUHERA DISTRICT.

Please answer all questions as they apply to your family only. Please tick YES or NO except where lines are given you may write the appropriate answers.

	YES	NO.
1. Marital Status: married.....divorced.....widowed.....single.....		
2. How many children do you have ?.....		
3. How old is the oldest.....years; the youngest.....years		
4. Did/Do you have anyone look after your children away from your home at any point in your parenting?	34	46
5. Did/Do you find any differences between the way you were brought Up and the way you are bringing up your children?.....	67	13
6. If you answered “YES” in which areas do you find differences:		
> Resources to use.....	38	
> Changing Laws	13	
> Children behaviour.....	46	
> Other	11.	
7. Did/Do any of your children have difficult behaviour problems?.....	47	33
8. Did/Do you spend a lot of time with your children, at least about 1 hour a day?	36	44
9. If you said “NO” above, what made you fail to find time with Your children just for one hour a day?		
Work commitments	35.	
We were away.....	9.	
10. Did one of you parents work away from home leaving one spouse with the children on their own?	47	33
11. Did any of your children stay in town while you were in the rural area or in the rural area while you were in town?	31	47

12. Are you a Christian?.....	77	3
13. Are all of your children Christian?.....	72	8
14. Do you think the church can have a positive influence in the upbringing of children?	79	1

3.2.1 Notes on the Results

Questions 1 to 3 were designed to give a picture of what kind of parents were the respondents. The majority were married people (69), 8 were widowed and 3 were single mothers who had children out of wedlock. The oldest couple had been married for 40 years and have grand children. What was amazing was there was little difference in the way they answered the questionnaire except that they said their children never gave them problems. The number of children ranged from 1 to 13 per couple and from 10 to 39 years in their ages. Single mothers were the only ones with one because they never married after they were abandoned by their boyfriends when they fell pregnant.

Thirty four out of 80 had relatives helping them with bringing up their children. Some got that assistance because they are not employed so they could not afford to send all their children to school so brothers of the husbands and of the wives take some to give educational assistance. About four were helped because they needed to further their education so they left their children with relatives. The relatives stay with the child at their place attending the local school while they pay the school fees for the child. They actually take full parental responsibility until the economic situation of the parents take an upward swing or until the child reaches an agreed level of education. Some are helped right through to college or university.

Some answers to number 6, though asking for a comparison in the task of parenting today and in the past, actually confirm the result for number 4. Thirty eight out of 80 cited lack of resources as one of the differences between the way they were parented and the way they are doing that job today. For them, their parents had more resources at their disposal when they were growing up than there is today. I felt the issue of resources,

though true, is coming up for two reasons, firstly, the prevailing economic situation in the country today is completely untenable for the majority of the people. It is extremely difficult to look after large families today. Even those with four children cannot give their children a decent education if they do not have a highly paying job. Secondly, I learnt that a number of NGOs had recently carried out baseline surveys with a view to giving our people drought relief assistance. I may have been mistaken for someone who could also help troubled families since I was finding out how the task of parenting was being carried out in their families!

Most people these days prefer looking after their own children to avoid behavioural problems with their children later on in life. Although it has not been empirically ascertained many couples in our community are observed to face different behaviour patterns between children they raise and those raised by their relatives, particularly when the children are brought up in an urban setting when parents are in our rural society.

Over 50%, that is 47 out of 80 parents experienced behavioural problems with their children and so they gave it as the major difference between how they were parented and their own parenting of own children today. In the past you would be beaten thoroughly by any parent who saw you misbehaving wherever you were. Every adult was your parent, you could not misbehave away from home thinking no one was watching. Only 11 cited change in laws, which I think may have contributed significantly to the situation. Child rights laws have confused authority in the home. Laws forbid corporal punishment in schools, but somehow some parents understand these laws to include even in the home. Child labour laws do not make things any easier because young children are not supposed to work, it is taken as abuse. But children need to work in family concerns for the good of the family. They have to make their contribution to family survival. It is therefore not surprising that 47 out of 80 say they have had problems of children's behaviour in their families. Many parents simply do not know how to respond to the situation that is developing in their society.

Again over 50%, (44 out of 80) say they do not have time with their children and give work commitments as reason for that, including those that stay with their children. They say by the time they get home from fields, or other formal employment they would be too exhausted to think of playing with children. It is an issue that becomes possible occasionally during dry months when there is little work in the fields. Forty seven parents said they were split at one point in their life, for many the situation is still like that. Many husbands work in town while the wives remain in the rural area to look after the home and children, or some of the children. In a significant number of families whose homes are far from high schools, have all their secondary school going children staying with the father in town if they cannot afford to send their children to boarding school. Some girl children stay with the fathers in town so that they would cook and wash clothes and do housekeeping chores for the father in the absence of the mother.

Interviews that were carried out among the parents and the children of the couples in town show that most of the children who are in town have no one to parent them at all. Many parents leave home early while the children prepare to go to school. Children come home early from school but parents come late in the evening. They barely talk before going to bed. My wife is a primary school teacher and has to keep cotton wool in classroom cupboard to give girls who start their menstruation in school with no parent to tell her what to do. The school has had to give her the responsibility to teach the school girls how to handle themselves as they grow up. Most fathers view it as taboo to discuss sexual issues with their girl children.

3.2.2 Situational Analysis

These results reveal a sad situation in many homes today. We will look at the main problems that came out of the interviews, the questionnaire and those that were observed.

3.2.2.1 Time

These results and what came out of the interviews paint a painful picture of the current state of the task of parenting in our community. They indeed confirm the observable situation in many homes. Things have become undone at the centre. Parents no longer

have time for their children in order for them to guide their children through the stages of life (Louw, 2005). Traditional parenting activities depended mainly on time (Deut.6:6-9). Parenting takes place in all aspects of family and community life. Much about life is caught through observations as life is lived not just by formal instructions. Budgeting of time to include all parental responsibilities has become a critical need for the community. Parenting is a developmental process and each stage of development needs the necessary inputs from parents if the children have to be helped to grow into healthy adults. Covey, (1997:119) describes parental responsibility in a poignant way when he says:

“But there is no question that the role of parents is a unique one, a sacred stewardship in life. It has to do with nurturing the potential of a special human being entrusted to their care. Is there really anything on any list of values that would outweigh the importance of fulfilling that stewardship well – socially, mentally, and spiritually, as well as economically? There is no substitute for the special relationship between a parent and a child.”

Without time spend with the children this stewardship and the special relationship between the parent and the child becomes still borne and plunges the parent into lifelong pangs of pain and regret engendered by a sense of failure. When you talk to these parents and observe their daily lives you cannot help but ask the question “How else can they do it?” The impact on women is particularly serious, they work their hearts out for the sake of their children. They work in the fields to grow food for the family, do household chores for their children, look after the family domestic animals while husbands are away in towns or at beer parties if they are not employed. Time becomes scarce because they have so much they should do in any given day. Older children go to school and they are saddled with toddlers when they have all these responsibilities to fulfill. The majority of these families cannot afford a herd boy or a domestic hand. They have to do all by themselves. Is it any wonder that they come home each evening, exhausted to do anything else other than cook food and rest their worn out bodies? Few families truly share responsibilities well between the father and mother. Often these are families where the husbands are not employed and do not drink.

This lack of time plunges many families into a seemingly unbreakable cycle of poverty. When they don't have time for all these responsibilities they fail to do any of them well. Their situation drives them around at break neck speed so they cannot be in control of their situation. To make matters worse, there are recurrent droughts in the area, you have to get food hand outs from government and NGOs but it is usually not enough. You have to work in other people's fields for extra food. You have no time for your own field or vegetable garden let alone time to do the critical role of parenting. If the children are old enough to help they have to help their mother in working to irk out a living for their family. When you work so hard but getting little reward you find yourself under pressure physically and emotionally, rendering you unsuitable for your role as a parent. You cannot supervise what your children are doing effectively and you have no time to see how they are developing.

For those women with husbands that drink they suffer terrible abuses from their drunken husbands. These men contribute very little to the family food basket or wealth but because they are men, and therefore in charge, they dare abuse the bread winners in their family! It is a sad situation that you observe in this community. These men also need money to buy the beer, so they have to get what their poor wives sometimes would have worked for. Most of these men who drink spend more time at beer parties and working in other people's fields than they do in their own. Had all their energies been directed at their own fields they would be much more in control of their situation.

Abusive fathers hurt their children as well. It is great pain and embarrassment to have your mother beaten up regularly. It also sends negative messages to boy child that women are beaten and the girl child to accept that it is part of life. When this happened to my own sister, all the family elders could only say "These things happen". It took the courage and anger of my younger brother to give our brother –in –law a thorough beating with a stick to stop it. I am not saying that should be the way to solve the problem, but simply to show that society can be conditioned to accept the unacceptable. The home becomes a frightful place to live in for the wife and the children. And yet

“Many discussions regarding familial influences on early socioemotional development implicitly assume that the traditional family constellation is normative and thus the most adaptive for parents and children” (Lamb, 1982:1). Lamb goes on to give four reasons why traditional families have to be preferred:

- Children need two parents of the opposite sex to develop well.
- Family responsibilities need to be divided between mother and father.
- Mothers are better suited for child rearing than fathers particularly during the early months in a child’s development.
- Primary care taking should be the responsibility of both parents.

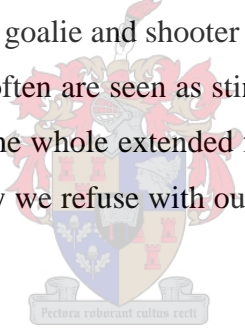
J and J Balswick agree with this description of the traditional family when they speak of complementarity in parenting. The wife may be strong in certain areas of parenting so she looks after that area and the husband also in the area where he is good. The wife may be very good with their child when he/she is still an infant while the father will be more effective when the child develops more cognitive skills. This they call longitudinal complementarity. Besides this the parents need to help each other on a daily basis as the situation demands. This they call situational complementarity (J & J Balswick , 1985:107). *Time is vital in the task of parenting.*



In abusive situations, the assumption that traditional homes (By traditional homes it is meant homes with father, mother and their children), offer the best environment for effective parenting would need to be qualified. Abusive traditional homes do not stand good simply because they are traditional homes. There is neither complementarity nor peace which are thus necessary for effective parenting. When you accept that, “ Family is regarded as the we-space for interconnectedness and coexistence, with the overall goal to guide children towards maturity through all the development stages of life” (Louw, 2005:61), you are forced to come to the conclusion that the home has to create a conducive environment to good parenting and happy family interaction between its members. I think Anderson and Guernsey agree with Louw when they say that “ A parent’s way of parenting either frustrates or facilitates the grace of God in their child” (1985:78).

3.2.2.2 Breakdown of social and cultural structures.

Secondly, results also show that the social support system and cultural norms and values in our community have suffered a structural damage. The struggle for life that most of the women in this community are going through would be somewhat eased in families where cultural values still operate. She would get some family members to look after their cattle, sheep and goats while she does other things. But in families where individualism has caught on she has to struggle alone. It is rare that the whole extended family would be poor. Usually family members would prop up each other in different ways designed to make each brother, sister and their family stand on their two feet. But many people are suffering like aliens among their own kith and kin. It confirms each family is playing their own game, and once you start at it, the whole community watches you as you struggle to be defender, goalie and shooter at the same time in the game of life. Those husbands working in town often are seen as stingy because what they get in many cases is not enough to go around the whole extended family. So the issue is a case of tit for tat, you refuse with your money we refuse with our help to your family while you are away.



The extended family is still helpful in some instances and proving quite beneficial to those that still have families still in tact. I will use my example to show what I refer to as extended family here. My father is Muchadenyika who is Mamvura's son. Mamvura is Mombeyarara's son and Mombeyarara is Gwemende's son. I am a fifth generation from Gwemende the great grandfather whose name we use as surname. All the descendents of Gwemende's children are family, (Gelfand, 1973:108). We work closely together with all the Gwemendes who live near us even when those who have started using their own grandfather's names. All my paternal uncles are fathers not uncles, cousins and nephews are brothers and sisters. Children of our sisters and paternal aunts are the nephews and nieces. Instead of saying my cousin if I want a visitor to really understand the relationship, I would say "This is my brother the son of this uncle". Indeed Zimbabweans have coined another English word to describe brother – cousins; they are

called “cousin brother!” All these networks work as one family with quite clear limitations that determine each age group’s boundaries in responsibilities and behaviour. Because of land shortage people move to areas where land is still available. The movement is usually like a father and all his household. There clear guidelines as to what issues require all the extended family and those that require just you and your father/mother’s children.

Help is extended to all as if they are your own mother’s children, father/mother/grand parent. So the support network is big and very helpful. However these networks are also full of problems hence the tendency to move away from them by many people. This does not need to be a plausible reason for calling for its demise because even nuclear families do have problems. People need to learn to work through their problems as a network however big it may be.

The separation of husbands from their spouses for the best part of the year is worrisome, even (Seymour, 1983:23) in his study of urban black families says: “ Even more troubling was the separation of the family as men often left wives and children in the new African Reserves to work in farms or ranches of the settlers to earn cash to pay taxes and rent”. Many men in our community come home one month a year when they are on leave only, though some manage month end visits to their home areas, if their jobs pay well or have no working weekends.

This has meant that husbands in most cases have sought alternative sexual and emotional support from women of the streets or sometimes have taken live-in partners. These liaisons sometimes result in children out of wedlock, further complicating the already complicated task of parenting. It also has the added risk of promoting AIDS. It has devastated our and the surrounding villages since the early nineties. The impact of AIDS on our extended family has been devastating. Some families have lost almost all their married children. We have three families, in our village only, who lost *all* their grown up and married children to date. All that remains are grand parents and orphans who must be absorbed in the families of closest relatives. One aunt is looking after grand children from 5 of her dead children. Our village has about 40 families. I do not

know of any family which has not experienced AIDS related death in the last ten years in our village.

This of course brings in the issue of resources for the grand parents and all parents still living and have added responsibility from families of their deceased relatives. Thank God for two NGOs that are specifically targeting these families with orphans. They are helping both the infected and the affected with AIDS. It is difficult to imagine the situation without those two NGOs. The present stand off between our government and NGOs is a great cause for concern. These Organisations have brought a lot of good to our community, they are a real refreshment to a people suffering under economic hardships and recurrent droughts. While some individuals in some NGOs may have had other agendas, the majority of these organisations are doing a commendable job for us.

The AIDS pandemic has increased the number of parental and parentified children (Winton, 19 :1,2) in our area:

“Parental children act as parents to their siblings. They may feed, dress, groom, and supervise or mentor their brothers and sisters. They may help their siblings with homework or academically tutor them. They may discipline their young ones much as a parent would. They protect these siblings, insuring their health, safety, and welfare. In families where there is domestic violence or substance abuse, for instance, children may be parental keeping siblings from harm’s way, protecting them as best as they can from physical, verbal, or emotional abuse of others”.

They say parentified children act as parents to their own parents when the children attend to their parent’s physical and emotional needs because they are chronically ill, disabled, mentally ill or chemically dependent, in such a way that they will be unable to help themselves. They become thus dependent on their children. There is widespread long illnesses in many homes for a long time now. Relatives come in from time to time but AIDS related illness go on for years so that relatives and neighbours end up being fatigued and come to help occasionally or not at all. The result is that many school

children have to help their sick parents. In some cases girls have been stopped from going to school to assume motherly responsibilities in their home because the mother is ill. These children are thus robbed of their youth and normal development. They are forced to be parents when they still need parenting themselves.

Winton says, (2003:89) that parental and parentified children “develop to fill a parenting vacuum created by some condition in a family that impairs the parent’s competence.” This includes fatigue from their work schedules so that when they come “home their energy may be so low that they have little time or energy left for their children. Their children get what is left over after their employer gets the best of what they have to offer.” With most parents particularly women it is not their employer which saps all their energy, it is their various daily chores on behalf of their children. Many boys have to do manly jobs like ploughing or cutting firewood and poles from a tender age, because the father has died or is working in town.

The church has not helped the situation either. Many believers have been fished, as it were, from their families to be isolated and left with minimal and sometimes irrelevant support. Even well meaning churches tend to do things here and there for their congregants and ignore the plight of the non believing members of these families. What is worse is that help is along denominational lines, thereby further weakening traditional ties through denominational rivalries. Each denomination has given its members theological ammunition to defend themselves or their doctrine or even to fire salvos at people belonging to other denominations more than it has given tips for harmonious family relationships. Yes the Word has been preached zealously but somehow it did not make many of its members cope with what life was bringing their way. Is it a far cry to suggest that the various denominations can make a positive contribution to the situation even though they may not agree doctrinally?

The Christian church needs to be united and work as one body (John 13:34 -35). Those who oppose the unity moves that are espoused by the Ecumenical community need to understand that Jesus did not send a divided church, he taught against it, “If a house is

divided against itself that house cannot stand,” (Mark 3:25). Thus, if Jesus taught against division of his body we should work at a Christian church that transcends denominational boundaries. Members of the World Council of Churches need to be commended for their efforts at church unity. They do not always agree but they find common ground and dwell on that for the common good. Ways can be worked out to handle areas of differences. People can agree to disagree and still remain workmates. Differences should not be excuses for the church not to work together (Mark 9:38 – 41).

The education system has introduced crèche in the rural communities as well. At about three to four years children are exposed to school life where values differ with those in their home. If children fail to go to crèche they may fail to get places for grade one. If there is too many children wanting grade one vacancies, preference is given to those that attended crèche. This robs parents, particularly mothers, of much needed help too early in life. As alluded to above, where the high school is too far or is considered of lower standards the child will leave home for high school at boarding school or in town if the father or other relatives can accommodate him/her.

There has long been a belief that urban schools offer better education than rural schools. Seymour, (1983:42), made this observation also over 20 years ago when he says, “One concern was that many times parents in rural areas seek to send their children to urban areas where it is assumed the educational standard is higher. Children are therefore unable to assist in the family farming and other duties. They also often become socialized to urban values and ideas. Upon returning home to the rural areas a new tension often exists between children and parents and with other children who have not had opportunities for urban schooling”.

3.2.2.3 Loss of Capacity for parenting.

Orville Brim, (Anderson and Guernsey, 1985:78), defines socialization as : “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skill, and dispositions to make them more or less able members of their society” and the products of this socialization are values, beliefs, attitudes, roles and norms of the social life of that society. Many parents in our

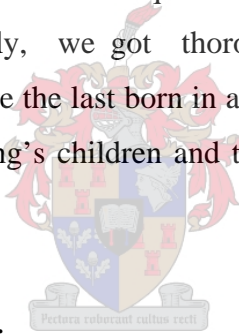
society see their efforts at carrying out their responsibilities not making an effect on their children's lives. Overwhelmed by a sense of failure and hopelessness, they are despairing. In my interviews, I was pained to note that some parents have almost given up and allow things just to move by inertia. Many feel threatened when their children are more educated than they so they do not know how to handle a child "who has read many books". These children have become more knowledgeable than their parents and become more sophisticated in their life style (Seymour, 1983:34). Traditional tools for parenting such as various kinds of ceremonies, rites of passage like being able to build a house to show you have grown up; and many others have lost their appeal to such a child. The child has become more autonomous and can object to some parental instructions, a thing unheard of in the past. Parental discipline has thus become erratic and inconsistent. Children are becoming more socialized into foreign ways of life faster than their parents. Because mother bears the main brunt of parenting in this community, they feel even more incapacitated when dealing with male children who traditionally have to be handled by their fathers in many aspects of their lives.

There is urgent need for relevant capacity building activities to be carried out among all parents in this society to have confidence to do what they must do as parents – guide their children to maturity. No one can give what they do not have. These parents need someone to show them where their children are and how to get to them and show the way. They need someone to show them what has changed from what they know and give them information about the current parenting environment so that they use it as a stepping stone to greater capacity to parent effectively. This is why the church needs to be challenged to come into the community as a friend and support to parents. The church has come from Europe where industrialization first exposed itself as unfriendly to family life. The church can pass on the valuable lessons it gleaned from those societies and help local people to find the way from their present confusion. But before we see what the church can do we need to look at what parenting is all about.

Chapter 4

Parenting: Guiding children to mature adulthood

Our culture has not been a writing culture, as such has no “ How to parent manuals”. Ours is written in our hearts and minds, a product of years of observing parents do it to ourselves and our siblings. The experts with the mental and hearts written “How to manuals” are our parents, our grand parents, aunts, uncles and all parents in the community where we grew up ourselves. We saw how they parented us, and our siblings, and we heard what the mothers told each other, and us when we helped them in this responsibility under their watching eyes. They sometimes sent us to pick up a crying baby, strap the child on our backs and rock and sing to them to lull them to sleep. Because our families were quite large by modern standards, averaging about eight children per family, we got thorough exposure to responsibility of parenting. Even when you were the last born in a family you still got involved in the bringing up of you older sibling’s children and the children of young uncles in the village.



4.1 Definition of Parenting.

The Shona word for parenting is *kurera* meaning to look after, to bring up, or to guide in the process of growing up. We here are interested in the last meaning of those given. Anderson and Guernsey, (1985) say parenting is done under command of God and is “a developmental process by which humanization occurs, not merely socialization.” By humanization they “mean the capacity to express the distinctives that reflect the divine image and likeness.” They conclude that the development of persons into some degree of maturity is directly related to the demonstration of love within family he/she grew up in. This makes the child develop into a person capable of giving and receiving love. He sees love being expressed among family members through different acts of love and hears them affirming their love for each other and for him/her as well.

J and J Balswick , in their book *The Family: A Christian perspective on the Contemporary Home, 1989*, strongly argue for parenting as empowering. They define empowering as “the attempt to establish power in another person.” But the empowerer does not lose his/her own power. They propose empowering as the “central element” in their biblical model of parenting. God gave us life and loved us so much that Jesus Christ had to die for us, but this did not entail God or Jesus losing some of their powers in order to empower us. They say worldly use of power is generally to increase one’s power at the expense others. This they say also happens in our parenting styles. We want to control our children to make them do what we want so that they remain in a more weakened state than we are. They propose that our parenting should give more power to our children so that they also become powerful and more competent to handle the situations of life. Thus they say:

“Empowering is the process of instilling confidence, of strengthening and building children up to become more powerful and competent. The most effective empowerers are those individuals who have themselves been empowered by the unconditional love of God and the Holy Spirit” (1985:103).

Thus parenting has to be a process that sees children grow more and more from strength to strength in their competence in life so that they are able to make it on their own when they live their parents or when their parents are not present with them. This is what Anderson and Guernsey mean when they say parenting is also “disposable” (1985:64). In other words parents need to work themselves out of employment as it were!

Louw (2005) sees parenting as guiding and supporting children to maturity, that is a position where the child has reached ability to see his/her identity clearly and be able to understand “self-responsibility and other-responsibility” as the process of differentiation develops. By differentiation it is meant “the process by which teenagers establish an identity that is separate from their family.” (J & J Balswick, 1985:69). It is a time when the individual child discovers that he/she is an individual with own potentials, weaknesses and endowments different from other family members. They have mapped

out their individualness in the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of his/her family. When we have successfully guided and supported a child from infancy to a point where they are able to stand on their own in life, we have fulfilled our responsibility as parents. Parenting is developmental by nature, and each stage needs appropriate input from the parent if the child has to pass through that stage in the way they should go.

Parenting continues until a child has left home to marry or live on his/her own. In our traditional set up it is very difficult to say the point at which parenting ends because in a village set up when you marry you also become a parent but your parents still need to show you what it is to be a parent. Indeed as Louw says “Maturity is never fully achieved. It is not a fixed goal to be attained at a specific stage or at the end of the road. Adulthood is a life long learning process in the realm of co-existence” (2005:62).

At this stage we can say: *Parenting, from a Christian theological perspective, is the process by which children are guided and supported, from pregnancy through all the developmental stages of their life to mature adulthood, and an integrated spirituality, by their parents under command of God and influenced by norms, values, taboos of their culture and society.* God has ordered that people should reproduce and multiply (Gen. 1:28). Whether we are Christians or not we reproduce because God said so, so we are under command to be parents, (Anderson and Guernsey, 1985:59). Because it is done under command from God it is best done as God directs in his Word, otherwise parents would risk transferring their weaknesses and inadequacies of life to their unsuspecting children.

Society is made up of believers and non believers. They develop cultural norms and values that guide themselves as a people, so that they make sense out of their living together. Cultural practices differ from culture to culture and Christians find themselves conditioned to live as their society expects of them. When you fail to behave as expected by society you are rejected or made to feel out of place. Thus parents not only get parenting tips from the Word of God but also from their cultural norms and values.

Those who are believers will of course bring these practices under the scrutiny of the Word of God as they try to see what the Bible says to their situation.

4.2 The Family/Home as the Wellspring of Parenting.

Many scholars have thus struggled to develop a theology of family which would offer guidelines for Christian parents to use as they try to understand what their God is saying in his Word about the responsibility of parenting. Anderson and Guernsey (1985), J & J Balswick (1989) and Louw (2005) agree that the best environment for bringing up a child would be in a home where covenantal relationships are encouraged. By covenantal relationships is meant loving one another unconditionally. People will make mistakes against one another and expect to be loved regardless. You are not loved because you are good and lovable, or follow family rules meticulously, but because you are a brother/sister. In such an environment you are free to love and be loved. You are free come to terms with your own identity and discover your interrelatedness and connectedness to the rest of the family and grapple with the purposefulness of this life without undue pressure from other members. Such a milieu is essential because “The development of identity does not take place in a vacuum. What is most needed is a space in which a child feels accepted and accommodated, despite personal limitations or experiences of failure when expectations are not met” (Louw, 2005:61).

Home is not just shelter and its surroundings but is also the people, mother, father and other siblings, and the atmosphere the parents have managed to create for their family. The tone of the home engenders spirit of love, warmth, openness, truthfulness and harmony. Or it could engender strife, quarrelsomeness, pain, anger and frustration. All these can, respectively, ensure successful parenting or failure with disastrous consequences to both parents and children. As the (Balswicks 1989:103) say parenting is only effective if those doing the parenting have themselves been parented by God and the Holy Spirit. The Theological Advisory Group Research Team on Marriage and Family agree when they say “But many times the children fail to grow up as faithful, mature Christians because their parents have not followed God’s instructions”

(1994:124). It takes a mature Christian parent to successfully guide a child to mature adulthood in a home where covenantal relationships is the normative value. This starts with parents having a deep conviction of their own personal relationships with God and deep love for one another that would form the model for their children to emulate. Not only does deep love between husband and wife stand as a model for the children to love one another and their parents likewise, but it also demonstrates the presence of God and truthfulness and workability of his Word in this family. It no longer is theory but they see it practically being lived and they are motivated to do likewise. Onyango-Ajus and Kiura (Ed) in their book, *Families, First School of Christian Life*, have said that: “Children have no experience and need instruction on what to do and how to do it. They should be instructed in matters of faith, values and virtue. The presence of both parents is very useful when any instruction is being given” (2003:106).

4.2.1 Parenting Styles Create the Parenting Environment in the Home

The parent’s style of parenting will either give support and encouragement or frustrate, confuse and anger his/her children and strain their relationships. This creates the atmosphere that will prevail in the home. Parenting becomes pleasant if the environment is right, but if not it becomes difficult and a painful experience for both parents, children and neighbours. Social scientists have grouped parenting styles into four main areas broadly determined by how much control or support a parent gives to his/her children, (Louw, 2005) and the (Balswicks, 1989). The Balswicks, quote Rollins and Thomas who define “Support as making the child feel comfortable in the presence of the parent and giving the child a sense of being accepted and approved as a person. Control is defined as directing the child to behave in a manner desirable to the parents. Examples of control include giving guidelines and setting limits” (1989:95). The Balswicks go on to discuss the two aspects of parenting which resulted from the studies in small groups leadership. They say that, in a study of small groups, there were two types of leadership. Firstly, instrumental leadership, which focuses on the things that need to be done. An instrumental type of leader would be someone who organizes things well, setting goals to

be reached, and making sure that all is laid down to achieve their goals. Secondly, is the socio-emotional leadership which focuses on healthy relationships between members in the group. These two types of leadership apply to family situations as well.

4.2.1.1 Instrumental Parenting.

In a family situation instrumental parenting would be a kind that focuses on what the children need to know, that is, the content to be given the children. In other words this stresses on the teaching of beliefs, values, attitudes that the children must learn and also how they need to do what they are taught. A parent using an instrumental style of parenting would therefore be described as someone who either teaches little detail, or a lot of detail, thus he/she is either high or low in content “Some parents verbally communicate through a rich elaboration of rules, norms, values, beliefs and ideology; others simply do not bother to teach their children” (Balswicks, 1989:96). When a parent works hard at teaching his/her children, he/she is said to be high in action; if he/she does very little teaching he/she is said to be low in action. Thus, an instrumental parenting style can be described as being high or low in content and high or low in action. Various combinations of these degrees of content and action will give us the four styles in instrumental parenting that are described below:

a. Neglecting

A parent in this style does not really care what goes on in the family about his children. He is low on the content he wants the children to know, and low on the action he demonstrates to his children. The children are thus left in the dark, they will have no direction to follow and no norms and values to guide them. “The family system becomes chaotic when independence is separated from norms and values without any respect for, and sensitivity to, constructive authority. Freedom is then confused with the permissiveness of irresponsible behaviour (*libertinism*); anything goes (*relativism*). Such a stance hampers the development of responsible decision making” (Louw, 2005:75). This view is supported by Dreikurs

and Soltz, who say “However, there is widespread confusion about the application of democratic principles. As a result we have frequently mistaken license for freedom and anarchy for democracy.....The popular practice of letting children have unrestricted freedom has made tyrants of children and slaves of the parents” (1964:9,10). Such children lack competence to find their way through the intricacies of life.

b. Teaching.

These parents teach their children quite a lot (high in content) but their lifestyles may not be demonstrating the very things they want their children to know. Such inconsistencies will cause confusion and frustration in the children. This may cause dysfunctional behaviour later on in life. In this style parents often become dominating, a style which easily slides into “discipline without freedom of choice and responsibility becomes prescriptive”. Thus discipline becomes punishment for failure and not guidance towards maturity and responsible adulthood which make children confuse authority “with aggression and anger” (Louw, 2005:75).

c. Modelling.

In this style parents are high in action but low in content. They demonstrate very well what they want their children to learn but give little or no information on what they want their children to learn and why they should learn that. Their children will catch a lot of the good behaviour they see from their parents though they may lack knowledge as to why they need to do those things in the first place.

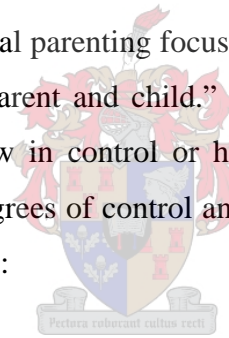
(d) Discipling.

Parents practising this style are well balanced, they teach by word deed. This is a style that needs to be desired by every parent if we are to make a lasting impression that is positive on our children. Children are well disciplined and know why they do what they have to do. Discipline in

this style is guidance towards responsible adulthood not punishment for failure.

4.2.1.2 Socio-emotional Parenting.

In the past parents were largely viewed either being restrictive or permissive. The permissive parent would argue that though a child needs to be disciplined its greatest need was a lot “of warmth and security” while the restrictive parent would say that although a child needs warmth and security its greatest need was discipline and self control so that they would become responsible citizens of their society and constructive members of their family, (Balswicks, 1989:95). In current terminology, the restrictive parent would be said to have high control while the permissive parent would be said to have high support. Socio-emotional parenting focuses on relationships within the family, “the affective bonding between parent and child.” Thus socio-emotional parenting will either be high in support and low in control or high in control and low in support. Various combinations of these degrees of control and support will give us the following types of socio-emotional parenting:



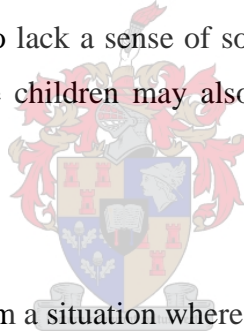
(a) Neglectful style.

There is little support for children in this style and few or no guidelines for them to follow. Children feel unwanted by their parents, so little bonding results with their parents and may result in lack of respect for them, when they are perceived as not interested in the children. Thus there develops “Distance without a sense of belonging, and individuality without attachment, easily develop into enmity and rejection” (Louw, 2005:75). Hostile feelings develop between parents and children and fault finding and blaming become the order of the day in such a family. The family atmosphere is thus poisoned and parenting becomes a difficult task to perform well. “This low-control, low-support style of parenting is characteristic of disengaged families in which each member’s life rarely touches the others in any meaningful way. It is also characteristic of

many urban families in which both parents work outside the home or in which there is only one parent” (Balswicks, 1989:98).

(b) Permissive Parenting.

This style is characterized by low control and high support. This is based on the assumption that all a child needs is love and support so that it will grow to its fullest potential. If you give too much control then the child will grow towards what you want not necessarily what it should develop into. It assumes children have the path to their development clearly mapped, all they need is support to walk that road. There is no consideration of the fact that scriptures direct parents to show children the way they should go (Prov. 22:6). The Bible clearly expects parents to show their children the road they need to walk and how they walk that road. Expecting children to discover things by trial and error will cause them to miss their way in life. It is no surprise that “children raised in permissive homes tend to lack a sense of social responsibility; they also fail to develop interdependence”. These children may also find themselves having problems with authority.



(c) Authoritarian Parenting.

Authoritarian parenting results from a situation where there is a lot of control in the home but less support, or the support may come from one parent, usually the mother while the father is there to give orders of what needs to be done in the home. Children from this environment are very respectful and have no problems with authority. The problem is that children may be freer and bond more with the mother than the father. I was brought up under such an environment, in fact this is still the most common style of parenting in our rural community. Intimacy with children is regarded as a weakness. All authority seems to reside with the father and mother may not make many decisions when father is away. However, there is consultation between parents and grown up children.

There is usually no ordinary conversation with the father. When you do talk it is business. But I have known cases where the father, though “cast in the role of instrumental leader,” there can be good bonding between father and children. In our case when you are young

both parents will hug you but it is the father on whose lap older children will sit because he is considered stronger than mother, but as you grow older and heavier to sit on the lap you seem to drift away from the father emotionally and will then find it easier to share your heart with your mother. Because you expect fathers to behave that way you grow up understanding they love you very much but have to act like father. Fathers do not easily express their emotions, it may be regarded as weakness.

(d) Authoritative Parenting.

This is when there is high support and high control. Everything is given in appropriate doses. Parents set appropriate limits and explain why they need to be followed by all in the home. They set a good example themselves so that children are left with no doubts about what they should and how they should do anything in the home. The children know and see that they are loved, so a strong bond develops between the parents. This becomes a home where “The role of parents is to become soul-mates to their children.....to guide the child towards maturity and to create an atmosphere of mutual acceptance in order to enhance the development of identity and individuality” (Louw, 2005:73). Parents in this style possess enough flexibility, correct attitude to the task of parenting, are readily available and approachable to their children in such a way that they grow through the developmental stages of life without feeling undue pressure.

It must be appreciated that these divisions are not that clear cut in real life situations, there is a lot of overlapping in the styles. Much depends on where the parents are operating from on the continuum of parenting styles. These should be regarded as theoretical divisions to help parents discover their inclinations and be encouraged to explore the most desirable model of parenting.

4.2.3 Other Factors that Prohibit Effective Parenting

While parenting styles are largely responsible for the development of the parenting atmosphere in any home, there are other situations, some of which beyond the control of many parents, that may contribute to unsuitable parenting environments. In Buhera

District, our study revealed a situation on the ground that is serious enough to merit discussion here. We will mention the following:

(a) **Poverty.**

Most parents in our community are naturally happy and welcoming people whose desire is to have enough food on their table and means to send their children to school and clothes their families. The question of resources has been indicated above but we need here to go back to it in some detail. To be a parent is more than ability to produce offspring, it is also to be able give support and guidance to the child as it grows. This support includes material things necessary for decent living. In a situation of poverty, material things are either scanty or unavailable altogether. In such a situation the parent becomes disabled as he/she fails to provide for the family. The children may wish their father was next door or even be reduced to stealing or beg. Begging is very humiliating, particularly for school going children who may be ridiculed by their peers.

When there is poverty there is no happiness and no peace in the home, (Balswicks, 1989:305). Father and mother are busy working here and there to irk out a living. In many situations in our community, children from those families go and work as herd boys in families that are well to do. But often the wages are minimal, it's a question of that family having one child less to look after. That means the child's education is cut short. Its future becomes bleak and the cycle of poverty is repeated. A child from such poor background has higher chances of starting a poor family as well. Father, mother and those children able to work spend time working for food, clothing, school fees and so on in other people's homes and are thus left with little energy to work in their own field to get enough produce for the family. Farming needs inputs, which they do not have because they are poor, so when they finally work in their own field or garden they produce little.

Poor people are usually rendered voiceless by their state. Both parents and children develop a poor self image and esteem and in the end become inward looking and shy away from social intercourse. "Psychological study indicates that mental health in

adult life is largely determined in its early stages, by the child's reactions to the people immediately around it" (Mackintosh, 1952:109). They have a voice few will listen to and energy that could get them out of poverty if only someone with the know how, who understands their predicament, could come their way, their situation would change and their parenting environment positively altered.

Surely the church should be able to help. Must the church worry only about the spiritual dimension of such people? Must the church not worry when its people are tormented by poverty? Must the church be incapacitated by the immensity of the problem and therefore shy away from taking a decision to intervene? I believe the church can come in and change the fortunes of our people. The church does not need to work for the people, rather they should come alongside our people and walk this tortuous road with them.

(b) Materialism.

We have heard the observation made by (Gelfand, 1981:30) about the Shona people, he said "They do not seek their pleasure from material comfort but from the company of living people. They enjoy their families, their children and their social gatherings. People can be the source of joy to one another". This was very true then but, sadly, today, it has to be qualified. Individualism is rearing its ugly head in a menacing way. The terrible economic environment obtaining in the country today has threatened almost 80% of the population with poverty, so each individual is fighting for their personal survival. The rich minority get richer while the majority become poorer by the day. This situation has made people less sensitive to the plight of their neighbour. People are in a silent competition to buy possessions, build houses, buy cars or send their children to a posh school. People are becoming ruthlessly materialistic and individualistic. While ours is a rural area where cultural norms are still holding to a certain degree, the commitment of people to their neighbour or relative has been seriously tempered with, so much that it is no longer obvious that if you are hungry and your brother has food you will share with him. Urban values and ideas are catching up with us at amazing speed. Onyango-Ajus and Kiura, (2003) cite materialism as one of the key problems responsible for the breakup of families.

For people like us who have been there before independence and have watched the kind of governance we have had in the past 10 years, things appear like a movie. People are simply amassing property in an amazing way. The explanation given by some is our economy is such that banking money is suicidal, it is best to keep it in property or in foreign currency. There is therefore no other money left to help my neighbour. While it is a fact that inflation is running wild, it is no justification for what is happening.

The change to our values brought about by materialism is creating a parenting environment difficult for both the poor and the rich. The rich parent is busy making more and more money and has no time for the children. The children are showered with money and gifts but are devoid of social competency. They are sent to schools with such a different culture that after a couple of years they become strangers in their own family, and friction results. Often neighbours order their children not to “hang out with those uncultured, proud and spoiled children”. Such children no longer enjoy school holidays at home. They lack company and electrical entertainment gadgets replace human relationships and social competency.

(c) Political Instability.

Our community has seen high levels of political intimidation that has caused some parents labeled opposition leaders to live a life of fear and some have opted to move to towns. A fearful parent is not in a good emotional situation to bring happiness to the family. While political targets are a minority, their extended family lives also in fear, because an attack on a family member will affect the whole family even if you may not like each other. There is absence of peace in such a situation. Known members of the opposition live with a threat of failing to get food handouts when the country has been suffering from recurrent droughts for many years now.

Many parents are forced by the situation to live a lie. Their children know that they support the opposition party but publicly pretend to be members of the ruling party. It confuses children who grow up in such a situation. Political instability has been one of the key contributors to economic hardships in the country that has made the majority of

the population poor. Thousands have been retrenched so that now the unemployment figure stands at 80%, (Zimdaily.com). Thousands have left the country to go abroad but have left children and one spouse behind, very few went as whole families. This internet newspaper estimates that 2 million Zimbabweans now live in South Africa and another million in UK, Australia and USA. Fortunately, in our rural community few had the opportunity to go overseas. Those that went are making money but when they come back they will probably have no family to belong to. Parenting problems are taking a serious toll on the lives of their family members left behind. One family I know, mother and three daughters in UK and father and one son in the country. The son is at boarding school. The father died late last year in the house alone. Of course he was buried in an expensive casket, but what he wanted was to die in love. Street people who die with their street friends are better off than a rich person who dies with no loved ones to share last thoughts and moments with. This is particularly telling with Shona people born before independence.

Because of the economic situation traveling has become very expensive. This means the husbands who have family in our community while working in towns are no longer able to visit their spouses and family that frequently, as they were used to in the past. “Most adult males circulate continually between town and country but hope to eventually retire to their rural homes when their working days are over. Not many village families can support themselves solely by farming, and because of this, they are largely dependent on the earnings of members working in towns or other employment centres,” (Chavhunduka, 1970:8). Bus fares have increased by over 500% from January. Most salaries, for instance, all civil servants, have remained the same since January. They are approximately Z\$3 000 000, when the poverty datum level is now at Z\$12.7ml a month! Life has become a bitter struggle and many parents must be commended for maintaining their sanity in such a situation.

(d) Divorce Between Parents.

When parents divorce it spells disaster on the children in most of the situations though divorce for abusive parents may be a good thing for a child in the end. In our community divorced children generally suffer, particularly those staying with a step parent.

Traditionally, when there is a divorce in our culture, the father has custody of the children. The mother gets custody only when the child is still an infant or preschooler. However, now the laws have changed, custody is decided by the courts. This only happens particularly if the mother is employed and feels she can look after her own child. The traditional way of seeing things is still very popular. It has been proven in many cases in the community that when children are brought up by their mothers or maternal grand parents or uncles, they usually want to go and settle in their paternal home when they grow up. This is because they may be unwelcome to settle as a married man amongst their maternal relatives because they do not belong there. Our society is still quite strongly patriarchal. When girls marry, still staying with maternal grand parents or uncles, the father is sought so that he collects the lobola. If he had not paid all the lobola for the mother, the in laws may then demand what was not paid then from the proceeds of their niece's lobola.

Children from divorced families frequently stay with grand parents if they are still alive and capable of giving the necessary support and guidance to their grand children. “We found however that grandmothers in particular were used as an alternative base for children, or to hold families on course by maintaining daily routines at the time a parent left” (Barnes et al, 1998:4). Sometimes they would stay with the maternal or paternal uncle if the father cannot keep them for one reason or the other.

What obtains in the community about children staying with step mothers is that they really are children in trouble in most cases. They are usually overworked, neglected and suffer from diminished parental attention, economic and material deprivation, (Barnes, et al, 1998). They suffer from harsh and severe discipline and have no intimate communication with the father either. We talk of step mothers here because step fathers in our society are not common sight. Because the father has custody of children the wife he marries after the divorce looks after the children. Divorced mothers rarely remarry and stay with their children. Only single mothers, those who have had a child out of wedlock, would stay with their child when they remarry. In such a situation these children are not subjected to bad treatment because it is the woman whose child would be “foreign” in the family she marries into. Ill treated children usually grow up to hate

their step mothers and prefer to go and stay with their maternal relatives until they grow up and can fend for themselves.

We encourage good and effective parenting styles and conducive parenting atmosphere so that children would get the basic needs necessary for healthy growth and development into responsible adulthood. Such needs are: physical care, affection, security, guidance and control, stimulation of innate potentials, (Smith, 1996). These may be adequately met in a family that sees itself or exist “as:

- > a space for intimacy;
- > a life support system during different developmental stages;
- > an instrument for guidance and education;
- > a milieu for the development to maturity” (Louw, 2005:69).

4.3 The Goal of Parenting

The desire of the majority of parents today is that their children grow up to be respectable, responsible adults who make meaningful contribution to their family, society and country. If they are believers they would like to see such children grow up to take their positions in serving the Lord through their local churches. The question may be asked: “How do I know my child will be or has reached that stage?” (Louw, 2005:62-65) answers this question very well when he says maturity means the development of :

a). Identity.

The child grows to have a clear self-understanding as an individual in its interrelatedness with a clear “understanding of self-responsibility and other- responsibility.” An individual who appreciates own limitations, present capacities and potential, spiritual disposition or social skills. An individual who knows what it is to be a person of good character and has a keen sense of justice and freedom.

b). An awareness of a healthy sexuality and gender.

The child grows to accept and appreciate his/her body as male or female, who is not driven by worldly or cultural perceptions of masculinity or femininity but rather espouses the values of human dignity, in such a way that if the child is male he would not

seek to physically or sexually abuse women because he is stronger but rather “views sexuality as an integral part of love and enjoyment”.

c). Capacity for interaction and communication.

The child grows to appreciate his/her interrelatedness and capacity for social intercourse in his/her family and community. He/she has to answer the questions: “How are relationships build? What is my responsibility in our family or society? What do I gain out of them?” These helps the child to understand “the bipolarity of independence (human autonomy) and dependence (interrelatedness).” They have to learn to be available and serve family and others, humane treatment of others, communicating ones feelings and desires, openly and honestly. They discover the meaning of love and friendship that is wholesome and constructive.

d). Vocation and Career.

The child needs to understand that he/she has a part to play in society, there is a contribution to be made for the good of his family and society. He/she has to understand that “Maturity is inter alia, connected to the question of work, job, entrepreneurship and career building.” They have to understand what it takes to become a professional in the area of one’s choice and how one’s career would be of societal benefit.

e). Commitment and Purposefulness.

The child has to grow up to be able to grapple with the question: “Why am I here for?” There is need to find the meaning and purpose of, and in one’s life. This will certainly lead to the taking of “responsibility for the religious question and to reflect on the notion “God.” In this life, human beings have to face the question of how to understand suffering, our being vulnerable and where we are going. This touches the area of *faith* which will make it possible for us to be committed to a belief system that will help us come to terms with these questions. The question of faith helps us to face the future in confidence. When we talk about the future we are looking at the dimension of *hope*. Hope encourages us to live a life of expectation of what the future holds for us. As we wait in anticipation of tomorrow it brings in the question of how we do the waiting, the relationships among those that are waiting. There is need for “intimacy in order to grow, to survive, to develop, i.e. to live.” This brings in the dimension of *unconditional love*.

There is need for the child to grow up to understand the existence of God as Creator, Sustainer and Guide in life who will walk along with them to help them cope as they encounter difficulties and uncertainties in life. He needs to be understood as “Soul-Mate and Partner for Life.” At this point we are faced with the question: “Who is going to help parents to bring up their children in that understanding?”

We have shown that the traditional family in our society has been dealt a disabling blow by the effects of globalisation leaving many people in our community confused as to what actually has hit them and asking themselves how they can protect themselves from further attacks that may turn out to be fatal to their families. Globalisation has proved too large a monster for our community to tackle on its own. One would have had hope in our young people who still have the energy and the life to fight this giant but, unfortunately, its attractions are too appealing to the youth so much that they actually have already been enlisted and have become proponents of globalisation by word and deed. Its relativising of our traditional norms and values have a tendency to encouraging indiscipline among the youth and other people of the community so that the majority of people get attracted to this libertinism.

The easy life ushered in by technological advancement that has shrunk the world into a village by the resulting efficient transport and communications networks has made our community fail to appreciate the good values, norms and attitudes that need to be preserved since they enhance our humanness, for instance, the love for my brother and neighbour, the orphan and the widow. The hope is that some good out of our family and parenting values may still be salvaged in communities such as Buhera district and others like ours that still enjoy a certain, (though fast diminishing) measure of traditional values which our society, and indeed the whole world, would do well to retain instead of throwing all away in the name of modernity. A well informed voice is needed to equip the community in ways of handling the effects of globalisation. We thus promote an ecclesiastical approach to dealing with this problem because we believe the church is strategically placed and commands enough respect for it to make a meaningful and effective intervention that will yield the desired results. The fact that many biblical

practices resonate well with many of our norms and values would not make a family systems approach foreign and therefore suspicious to members of our community. Thus, the church is encouraged to seize this opportunity, and make an appropriate and relevant intervention to save biblical and family values that would make our country and the world a better place to live in. Our culture is a religious community that still has deep reverence for God so that pastors and their pastoral education programmes and pastoral care responsibilities, still carry a lot of respect. The church would only need to have a healthy respect for local culture and language without making them subservient to western culture. Only biblical values, and not western culture should be allowed to judge local cultural values and norms. Cultural imperialism has done much damage to the message that the church has presented so far. All ecclesiastical activities need to be contextualized in the spirit the great apostle encouraged, (1 Corinthians 9:19 -22).

Few people challenge biblical values in our societies but politicians have done a great job of discrediting the church as an agent of imperialism and colonialism. The church would do well to listen to these political utterances and give appropriate responses by word and deed. Missionaries must be seen as brothers and sisters as opposed to benefactors without whose help the local community would be without hope. The church and its workers and adherents should be seen more as empowerers helping the community to handle issues of globalisation in such a way that the church and the community should become inseparable since the church is among the people and is the people in the community.

Chapter 5

A Challenge to the Church: A Strategy for Pastoral Intervention

The church is under command from the Lord Jesus Christ to teach and direct society the way it should go (Mt. 5:14 – 16; 28:19 – 20) and to preserve the good from the Lord in our communities, (Mt.5:13). God has given the church the Holy Spirit to empower it for service (Acts 1:8; 1Cor. 12:7). There is therefore hope in the church today, that it can intervene and help bring positive change to the situation in our community. It is amazing that out of the 80 parents who answered the questionnaire referred to in Chapter 3, 79 thought the church's involvement could bring about necessary support for parents in our district. Such involvement should not be seen only in familial support terms but also as an evangelistic thrust in the community. The church is called to demonstrate appropriate behaviour in all spheres of life, thereby challenging non believers to a life of sober and constructive habits. Rodney Stark sums it up well when he says: "I believe that it was the religious particular doctrines that permitted Christianity to be among the most sweeping and successful revitalization movements in history. And it was the way these doctrines took actual flesh, the way they directed organizational and individual behaviour that led to the rise of Christianity" (1997:211). There can be no doubt that God's Word, correctly taught and practiced, can be a powerful evangelistic campaign. Indeed, God's Word, lived God's way, will lead the communities affected to experience Jesus' love in a powerful and life changing way.

The question that can be asked at this moment is "What can the church do to make it more relevant and be better supportive to parents in our community today?" True, the church has been there for ages and has not been very effective in making Christian parents better parents than their non Christian counterparts. Its programmes have focused more on winning souls to Christ and showing them how to live, but amazingly helpless to parents and families. Most church programmes are foreign to the community, locals are not consulted about how to do church in their community. Church programmes have not

been contextualised in such a way that many people are excused in failing to see the difference between western culture and Christianity. The answer lies in refocusing or redirecting church programmes so that they become family centred. We suggest a model that organizes the church around the family that follows systems thinking. But first we turn to explaining what systems thinking is about.

5.1 A Systems Approach could be more Effective

As alluded to above, Shona people enjoy each other's company. All social gatherings such as weddings, chieftainships, funerals, rites of passages or death, are basically family gatherings where people usually attend and contribute as families towards the success of such events. Selective invitations are highly irregular and anti social. Problems are solved as groups and are usually seen "our problem". It is common to hear brothers, relatives or friends say; "Your problem is my problem". When appeasing avenging spirits, people do so as extended families even though the deed to be compensated for was committed by one member of the family. Thus, the systems understanding of issues is not foreign to our communities.

However, the church has not promoted this but has rather been individualistic and reductionistic, in its approaches. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that when families go to church they are separated, mothers go to mother's union, fathers, girls and boys likewise. While this interest group approach may be helpful in some cases the truth of the matter is that life is lived holistically, all age groups, interest groups etc rub shoulders everywhere every time. Life is not lived in such groups but mainly as families. This sounds more like the worldly drive to compensate for the loss of community through forming interest groups when we are called to live as family. J and J Balswick agree with this when they make this observation:

"Some social scientists have suggested that networks are the modern substitute for traditional communities. Friends, co-workers, social, educational, cultural, and religious groups- together these networks can satisfy all or almost all of the individual needs. However, networks tend to be unstable and specialized and thus lack the virtues

associated with community- unconditional commitment and a sense of belonging which embraces the whole of a person's life" (1989:282).

A family systems approach is preferable as a way of organizing and doing church. (Friedman, 1985:195) says: "...religious institutions not only function like families, they contain families. Indeed, they often derive their very structure from families." A congregation needs to appreciate the fact that it is indeed a family, as well as a family of families in order for it to have a realistic view of its existence, and then develop its organizational and work strategies with that understanding in mind. As a family each member of the congregation has a position and responsibility that goes with that position. When John fails to perform well it affects the whole system. But the system may have caused John not to perform well. In such a situation finger pointing will not solve the problem because in a network, "The components do not function according to their "nature" but according to their position in the network" (Friedman, 1985:15). A family systems approach is family, congregation and work place compatible, and is thus preferred here.

Family systems thinking focuses on the individual's own, in relation to other people's behaviour. Solutions to individual problems sometimes have to include those people who are part of the individual's network, and solutions to network problems, sometimes have to include individual member's problems. At this point it may be good "to look at some of the undergirding assumptions in a systems approach" (Louw, 2005:23). He [Louw, 2005: 23 – 26] unravels issues in systems thinking. He says family systems thinking:

- Theologically, has a covenantal understanding of human relationships which seeks unconditional love and acceptance for all in the family. The atmosphere is conducive to healthy familial relationships.
- Has its departure point seeing that all human problems are not necessarily the result of dysfunctional personalities but rather of dysfunctional positions from which a person may view the relationships in the network. It thus encourages objectivity in finding solutions to family problems.

- Sees relational problems as opportunities for learning and growth not just problems waiting for solutions. Problems are viewed as a condition of the whole network not just the person perceived as the cause, because the person's behaviour is dependent on what other members of the network do to him/her, or to one another.
- Focuses more on the experiential, perceptions, emotions, like love or hatred instead of the abstract (metaphysical thinking) which has possibilities of being speculative but not of any practical help.
- Because of its focus on meaning of things in the family network, we can say it is hermeneutical in its stance.
- Anthropologically, it assesses human beings holistically not to be analysed part by part, thus accepting that when the toe is hurt, movement of the whole body is affected. Analysing part by part may be misleading since “..each part will act differently outside the system” (Friedman, 1985:15).
- Because of its hermeneutical position, it is interested in description and interpretation of issues so it views metaphors and symbols in people's stories as helpful in explaining meaning of situations. When people tell their stories we see and hear where they are coming from and so we have a clearer understanding of their situation.
- It looks at the past in order to understand the present with a view to charting the way into the future using the understanding thus gained.

Thus, it becomes clear why we would prefer a systems approach to family life. It encourages objectivity when looking at problems rather than finding someone to blame. Members would ask such a question like; “Where has our networking gone wrong resulting in the situation that we find ourselves in?” The question “Who has done this?” is threatening and divisive in the network. When one person is singled out the rest may lose interest if they are not responsible, it ceases being a network but an individual problem. But, “A systems approach, as always, tends to redistribute the guilt and to take the sting out of the toxic issues”, (Friedman, 1985:196). In systems approach, everyone will want to see where things went wrong and learn from it so that such a situation would

be avoided by all in the future. So a systems approach is applicable to families, churches and church groups.

5.2 A Systems Approach to organizing Congregations/Churches

This approach has a big advantage in our rural area in that it works well into the threatened extended family understanding from our philosophy of life, *Unhu, or Ubuntu* which means, you are a person because of other people. We can also say “ You are a family because of other families.” We propose a congregational/church structure which has a family emphasis. In congregational terms, the nuclear family will be the starting point. We would then have sections/wards/districts that are formed comprising a certain agreed number of families to which each family would be answerable spiritually. A number of sections of families would then form the congregation. A question might be asked: “But how is this different from House or Cell groups currently operating in some areas?” The response is, they are different in two ways:

- 1) These House groups have no family emphasis, they worry about individual church members, and meet, usually in business like manner. When there are problems with a believer, they are solved usually, without consultation of family. The family may not even know that their child/brother/sister is suffering or has committed a sin or crime. A pastor may deal with a case of serious nature like abortion or theft and still “help” the individual without involvement of his/her family.

This approach is too individualistic and puts pastors and church leaders into unenviable positions. How can my pastor hide the fact that my child has aborted in the name of individual accountability to God? How does he then relate to me and the rest of the family when he keeps such a secret against us? When the family marries off their daughter they think we are marrying a virgin and thus makes themselves fools before the family of their in-laws to be.

- 2) They are mainly patronized by adults, rarely are they frequented by whole families. They are not family friendly. In many situations they meet in homes where even teenage

children are asked to occupy themselves with something else or do their homework when adults are busy with things of the Lord. Family centred worship has to be intergenerational. How we do church must be seen and heard as it happens.

A family friendly congregation will give duties and responsibilities to families rather than individuals. It would be the responsibility of the family to see who among them does the duty if it needs only one person. The father as head will speak on behalf of the family when need arises about responsibilities given. This means every family is accountable to a group of families around them. In church families should sit together instead of by sexes and age groups. When a wrong is committed the whole family is called in to explain before the section or congregational leaders. This would make pastors to give effective help to church members than the present individualistic and secretive approach where the pastor would know that a girl has aborted and the family does not know.

Yet again someone may ask: “What about single people in the congregation?” These will choose one family of their liking in the vicinity and be counted brother/sister in that setting. In our rural community this arrangement is not very strange though the issue of openness may take time to be established. There are no short cuts to relationship building. These suggestions are to be taken as such, and each congregation works at it at its own pace. In that kind of setting we can begin looking at family enrichment in the family systems of the congregation.

5.3 A Systems Approach to Family Enrichment

We have already seen that traditional family support systems have been tampered with in a serious way so that in many situations now, they are theoretically there but practically incapacitated. Young people are becoming parents without being prepared for that important responsibility. It is a question of trial and error for many young people. Unless they find help they will continue to grope in the dark. As Paul puts it rhetorically

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone

preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!” (Rom. 10:14 – 15, NIV, 1985).

We have said the church is under the command of Jesus Christ show society the way it should go. A focus on the family would be the most sensible thing to do for the church. It is strategically placed in that it is probably the only institution in our community that still enjoy a reasonable degree of respect among both the youth and parents. And a job well done is self advertising. The church needs to equip and thus empower parents to carry out their parental responsibility in confidence and conviction, that will lead the community to see their light so put on the light stand for all to see, (Mt. 5:14 - 16).

Family enrichment, according to Louw (2005:70) should focus on two things:

- 1). “To help family members to gain greater clarity regarding their positions within the patterns of family interaction.” The assumption is that when a family member sees that their thinking does not do good to the family system they are encouraged move positions to one more positive and constructive. The focus is on the understanding you are speaking from rather than the person with whom you may have had differences.
- 2). To utilize a Christian ethics of love (sacrifice, service, unconditional acceptance) in order to influence the atmosphere of the family system and to motivate family members to make choices and to accept responsibility for the shifting of their positions.”

Family enrichment does not aim at changing individual characters but rather to prod their faith and values systems to influence positional shifts in their family system. By position is meant, vantage point that gives oneself the perception, attitude, or understanding of who one is and who one sees the others to be.

These positions are influenced by a number of factors of which we enumerate a few as examples from those given by Louw, (Ibid):

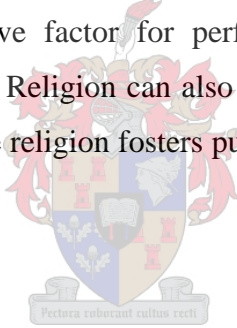
a) Family history

Everyone's parents were influenced either positively or negatively by their parent's attitudes or behaviour in life. This is impressed upon their children or grandchildren. These they will also pass on to their children.

b) Religious background.

Like grand parents religious beliefs shape a person's understanding of things or issues. A person's God images have a powerful influence on a person's outlook to life. If your image of God is as a Judge, a parent may become a strict disciplinarian, (Louw, 2005:70). In his MTH thesis Magezi says:

“Religion can be dysfunctional, eg. Artificial religion (religion as superstition); conventional religion (religion as tradition); legalistic religion (religion as duty); neurotic religion (religion as an obsessive factor for perfection); and pathological religion (religion as an alienating factor). Religion can also be constructive, i.e mature religion (religion as doxology). In this case religion fosters purposefulness and responsible action (2003:79).



c) Style of parenting.

If one was brought up by a domineering father/mother or a submissive one; or a loving and understanding parent. These will create negative or positive attitudes in the children.

d). Role expectations.

Expectations inculcated into children by parents or what may develop in the understanding of the person has great influence on one's position in the family system.

e) Perceptions.

Many families label one another according behaviour, perceptions one may have on the other, according abilities which can lead to low self esteem or pride.

Family enrichment in our case aims at making parents discover their positions and make the necessary positive adjustments that makes the atmosphere in their families more supportive and conducive to good family relations and effective parenting that leads children to responsible adulthood. It also aims at helping parents understand their own social, psychological, emotional and physical needs so that they develop self awareness, self acceptance and develop confidence in being parents, and doing the parenting task. Smith agrees with this when she says parenting programmes impart information, awareness and skills to parents (1996). As already posited, a families group approach is preferred. (Smith, 1996:12 – 14) gives illuminating reasons why group programmes should be preferred. Although she was looking at ordinary groups as such, what she says is helpful to drive the main thrust of this dissertation home.

5.3.1 Principles of Group based Parenting Programmes

In terms of designing families group based parenting programmes it is suggested that these programmes:

- a) Acknowledge cultural or interests diversity that is noticeable, explained or expressed. When you start with what people are familiar with there are better chances of winning their confidence and fostering better working relationships. Parents should not be made to feel threatened in any way otherwise we discourage them. These are parents who are already doing parenting, their experiences and knowledge needs to be recognised. A top down approach may even make some parents despair more when this makes them feel like they are doing a very bad job. Their contributions need to be encouraged and valued. Care needs to taken not to trivialize others' cultural parenting methods. No one culture should stand as judge of other cultures.
- b) Programmes need to be planned with the involvement of the families concerned. It is counter productive to take problems in one area and think they affect your present area in the same way. Our rural communities operate on certain norms, values and procedures, that are best handled by the locals themselves. Someone in Harare recently complained; “How can this young pastor teach me how to love

my wife when I proposed to her and married her before he was born?” If there is such thinking with urbanized parents we can expect our way in rural areas to be a real challenge.

- c) Style of presentation needs to be sensitive and appropriate to the culture and age of parents involved. In our community some words are taboo in public with older parents and yet there are polite equivalents to most of them. Pastors enjoy great respect, as such you may spend time doing something not very helpful but no one will warn you. It is important to feel the pulse of the audience through some trusted people so that you get a clearer picture.

- d) Although the whole community may be targeted and them knowing that this person is a pastor or Christian, it is important that all participants know the undergirding values of the programme. Our assumptions here are that these programmes would not discriminate any person except on the fact of whether they are parents. No one should be made to feel they have been tricked into enlisting as a Christian. Yes you can present the claims of Christ later when you have gained the confidence of the public and they are able to clearly express themselves before you. This is possible when they feel you value them as persons with an understanding.

- e) It is desirable that aims and objectives be made measurable and those outcomes be monitored by church leadership and evaluations carried out at regular intervals with a view to improving both programmes and their delivery. Parenting programmes need to be handled in such a way that they do not turn out to be a tread mill and just become like any other church programmes. Absenteeism by one couple or one parent may spoil progress in the family or group. There will be problems that keep people from some sessions but care needs to be taken to really get real commitment from parents. Delivery of the programme be effectively done so that it will motivate parents to attend regularly.

5.3.2 Strengths of Families Group Based Approach

- a) They are cost effective . Many families are helped at the same time as compared to one family at a time. There is building of empathy as people listen to one another's stories shared in these groups either as testimonies or cry for assistance.

- b) Socially isolated families or single parents make friends in a more friendly atmosphere. In case of families who no longer have extended family support this would be a welcome replacement. The church would be putting back a structure pulled down by industrialization. It is hoped the new extended family would be more helpful and more supportive because it would be based on Christian love. There will be build a sense of cohesiveness in the community which fosters a togetherness that gives security to many lonely people. The poor may be valued and helped to develop a better self image, a healthy self worth, and better confidence as a parent. There will be sharing of ideas and learning from one another in a more safeguarded way in that all advice or information given is subject to the scrutiny of the Word of God. They will get a voice in a community they are valued and accepted as equals.

- c) Children and younger parents will get appropriate role models who may mentor them to become mentors to other parents in the future. Biblical leadership has always been based on mentoring principles, which is discipling in Christian parlance. Young parents have a chance to see parenting in theory and in action.

5.4 Starting a Families Group Based Parenting Programme in the Congregation

The starting point in initiating a families group based parenting programme in the congregation is for the pastor and his/her church council meeting to map out how it should be started and who are going to spearhead the programme. It is advisable to

involve couples who sense a calling in that area. When a frame work of how it is to be done is carried out, the parents are then motivated to accept the programme by the pastor through careful teaching and appeals. It is strongly suggested to use the tools taken from (Louw 2005:84, 91,92), that are in the Appendix.

Form A helps parents to see who they are as a role model for their children. Modelling is unavoidable by parents since they have to live with their children until they leave home. Children learn how family life is lived by seeing and hearing from their parents and other significant others in their family. Parents need to be concerned by the kind of example they set for their children.

Form B is used to assess the parent – child relationship that exists between a parent and the child. In a family, people need to interact freely and be able to share their joys and sorrows with one another. Parents should be approachable by their children so that the children may feel free to seek help and advice from their parents.

Form C assesses what children feel about their parents. Their perceptions determine the degree of openness that exists and openness between the child and the parent. If the child is not pleased with the parent there would be no healthy interaction between them.

The use of these forms has two aims, firstly to show parents and children what kind of parents/children they are, and secondly, to show them that they need to do something about what the results show. They should be used to motivate parents to work at their parent-child relationships. Those parents who may have a good score may be motivated by showing them that there is room for improvement, and perhaps, scout for groups leaders from motivated couples who feel called into family ministry from this group. The congregation pastor should then make arrangements for the training of the trainers seminars for those chosen to do the task. After careful initial training the programme can then be started. Trainer couples can then be trained on a monthly basis until they are familiar with their tasks and the content of the parenting programme the congregation chooses to use. The pastor and the leaders can scout around from what is on the market then adapt the material to local needs and conditions.

In our community, children have to be helped on their own initially until the programme has been running for some time. Form C may be used to encourage children to look seriously at the relationships they have with their parents and be made to see the need for working on these relationships by attending family relationship seminars for children. When cultural fears have been allayed then the congregation may start having intergenerational family life seminars on parenting. We express sensitivity with the issue of intergenerational seminars because parental assessment by own children publicly may cause deep seated resentment between parent and child. When someone has been deeply hurt from assessment by a child they feel very humiliated and may be tempted to disown the child. Forgiveness is easier taught and discussed than practiced in the church. Much also depends on the spiritual maturity of the people involved. We have said parents should not be made to feel threatened, humiliated or judged but rather should be motivated to make positional shifts that makes their home create lasting positive memories for both parents and children and be a motivation and guide to their children as they go into the world to start their own families.

5.5 The Church and Poverty Alleviation in the Community

Jesus Christ came and addressed people's physical, (Luke 9:12 – 17); spiritual (John 3:1 -21), social (John 2:1 – 10), and emotional needs (John 11:17 – 44). The ministry of the church, thus, needs to address people holistically. Much emphasis is placed on the spiritual to the almost exclusion of the physical needs of parishioners. This is unfortunate, and a misrepresentation of the mission of Jesus Christ. He said: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). Hitherto the church's approach to this mission fails to represent Jesus who cares about the total needs of the individual, hence the need for a refocusing of our operations.

Our community needs great effort in poverty alleviation by the church. Many families are poor and, as has been discussed above, spend more in time in other people's homes working to earn money for the upkeep of their families, leaving them with no time for parenting responsibilities. We are convinced the church needs to address this issue as

part of its mission. The church can sometimes just give advice to such parents on how to improve their situation. The church can network with NGOs that specialize in poverty alleviation or start its own poverty alleviation programmes that are well integrated with the other facets of its work.

In the introduction and outline of his book, *A Pastoral Hermeneutics of Care and Encounter* Louw, (1998:1 – 19) argues for a holistic approach to pastoral care by the church. *Cura animarum*, which means, “the cure of human souls” or pastoral care, should not be seen in spiritual terms only, but has to be understood and seen to be addressing all existential issues faced by people in life. The church has to develop a model of pastoral care that helps Christians make sense of their salvation in their social, spiritual, and political contexts. When they lack food, clothing, housing and other basics of human life, it is not enough for the church to promise just prayer about it, but rather that the church has to help people find solutions to their problems. This clearly calls for the church’s involvement in community poverty alleviation programmes.

Our area is in a low rainfall area and is prone to serious droughts, the church can help drill boreholes and start market gardening for families groups or villages. Green house farming is very intensive and highly productive. Such projects can go a long way to help alleviate poverty as well as attract local people to the church where they will have a chance to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. The church should also advocate for fair pricing of agricultural produce, scout for markets for its members and campaign within the church to have believers buy from one another. Christian vegetable dealers and vendors in towns could easily be encouraged to source commodities from fellow Christian brothers and sisters and their communities from the rural areas. Working as a community has great rewards to both Christian and non Christian members of that community. The church stands to gain, in that the community will trust and value the church thereby winning many to Christ.

Believers could be helped with capital to start projects like piggery, chicken or rabbit keeping, village cottage industries like weaving, pottery, tuck shops, etc; that would be

sources of income for their families. Resources are a headache in Africa and more so in our community. The church needs to encourage sharing among its members in a more aggressive and persistent way because “ ..more people than ever before are wealthy beyond any reasonable need for a good life, and more are poor, vulnerable below any conceivable definition of decency” (Chambers, 1997:1) While few in our community can match the description Chambers gives, there are other members of the denomination and the Christian church at large that meet that criteria. They should be encouraged to give, and those families in our community with more cattle than they need be encouraged to give some to their fellow believers to use as draught power in ploughing. “The “we formula” empowers believers. It can be linked to the scriptural principle of for –one – another, Rom. 15:7; Gal. 5:13” (Louw, 1998:297).

Our people need to be enthused to seek help amongst themselves and only go outside the community for more substantial needs. The good thing about these projects is they are family friendly, in that whole families can work at them at the same time, in such a way that work times can be learning times as well. Poor families will be kept together with the not so poor ones and they all will be with their children and have time for effective parenting and effective relationship building.



The church has always been reluctant to undertake community developmental ministries. By saying it is not the main reason for the churches' existence and also taking the immensity of the task as beyond the capability of the church, is a misdirection, and a misrepresentation, of the mission of Jesus Christ, who though he was God, came to live with sinful man meeting both his/her spiritual, physical and emotional needs as already shown above. Some say poverty is part of human life, it cannot be eradicated. Chambers observed well when he complains that “So we accept the unacceptable, telling ourselves that we are bowing to the inevitable. But the coexistence of extremes of wealth and poverty, or of power and vulnerability, is not inevitable. It is the result of innumerable human choices, actions and non actions” (Ibid). Indeed much of it results from human choices and non actions! It took a young boy shepherd to destroy Goliath when his sheer size had paralysed the Isrealite army comprised of men of valour and

their king. It took them 40 days of looking at their problem and making a choice of non action, induced by fear, and probably lack of proper strategizing, (1 Sam. 17:1 – 50). The church should not erect mental barriers against its operations. The church has to do its part, one school in a 50 km radius is better than no school in the area.



Chapter 6

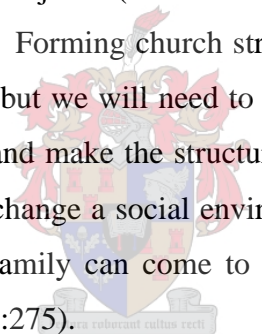
Outcome of the Research

Globalization has brought about many blessings for people world over. Life is now much easier and safer for many people today than 50 years ago. People are more educated, have longer life expectancy, travel more easily and have made great advances in fighting disease and in technology. But it has also brought social ills such as poverty, lack of housing, exploitation of man by man and many others, but probably the most devastating was the destruction of social structures like kinship system and the extended family. The nuclear family support base was thus removed and nothing was put in the place of the extended family, instead, ruthless individualism has taken root. Rambles of urbanization are beginning to be felt in our rural areas. Many people have now gone to settle in towns leaving other family members in the rural area. Advances in transport and communication systems have made our rural areas same village and community with towns people. The family as an institution is threatened, it needs support and guidance to survive this onslaught. “The traditional family is under threat, is changing, and will change much further” (Giddens, 2002:4). It is probably best to start focusing this help in rural areas. Though considered remote and backwards, rural communities stand as the better chance of championing the cause of the family.

This thesis is suggesting a systems model of doing and being church in such a way that the family is valued more and promoted to the fore front of church activities. Christians are understood as a family or a community of believers which have structures that offer support and guidance to one another. Our understanding of the extended family can be recreated in church structures. If globalization destroyed family structures, the church needs to recreate alternative supportive structures. “The powerlessness we experience is not a sign of personal failings, but reflects the capacities of our institutions. We need to reconstruct those we have, or create new ones” (Giddens, 2002:9).

Globalization is here to stay, and its effects will continue to affect the family, so the family needs to be helped to face globalization, rather than to retreat. The local Christian community should be to the nuclear family what extended family was/is to nuclear family in cultural structures. The current situation in the Christian community shows little evidence of supporting the family in any way other than the spiritual dimension. The support needs to be all inclusive, that is, both spiritual, social, economical and emotional dimensions of family life. In real life all these dimensions of life are continuously interacting so that what happens in the economic sphere will affect what happens in the spiritual. It is not easy to worship God on an empty stomach persistently.

The early church was a house church (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15) even their evangelistic methods sometimes targeted families, for instance the family of Cornelius (Acts 10:30 – 46), the family of the jailer (Acts 16:33). This expresses care, concern and support for the whole family. Forming church structures around the family is not a new thing as the scriptures show, but we will need to contextualise our approaches. It will take a lot of effort to set up and make the structures operational but it can be done, “We believe that through radical change a social environment which nurtures the family can be developed, and thus the family can come to terms with the adverse effects of modernity” (J & J Balswick, 1989:275).



We have said the church is strategically placed in that it was in Europe and came to Africa where it is both in towns and rural areas. The church should not continue to use the same structures it used during the European industrial revolution. The structure was not able to give the family enough support then, it cannot do so effectively now. The church can use its experience in Europe to strengthen the family in Africa today. Hence the promotion of the families group communities or house churches that have family issues at the centre. Having family at the centre implies having boundaries around the family so that it can operate more effectively without being constantly detracted by issues around it as some are discussed below.

Promoting a holistic approach to doing church also means the church needs to lobby with the government to introduce legislation that call for family friendly working hours and conditions. Women must not suffer for being mothers but rather be commended and supported in their child bearing and parenting efforts. It must work tirelessly at lobbying corporate business recognize the importance of family and lobby against over time, but rather to employ more people if there is extra work to be done. It may be asked “ How does this affect rural communities?” In many ways. Rural people are working in towns as has already been said. Many rural business centres have concerns that employ people, and there about 120 schools in our district employing teachers. There are also ministry of health, transport, agriculture, and other government workers in the district. Anything affecting them affects the whole community.

The belief that success is measured by the job you do or the wealth you have has to be addressed by the church so that people understand that human dignity derives from our being created in the image of God, not our possessions. “The phenomenon of careerism needs to be addressed, not as a feminist issue, but as an identity problem for all adults. Careerism, whether only one or both spouses are involved, promotes the false equation of individual worth and career success. Careers, like money, take on spiritual significance and detract from the establishment and maintenance of intimate relationships within the family and society as a whole” (Balswicks, 1989:291-2).

The government should be encouraged or even pressurized to revise some of its laws on child rights and female empowerment. “Businesses have economic power. Governments have political power. And civil society organisations have cultural power. None has a monopoly of power” (Perlas, 2000:4) The church as a civil organisation can mobilize people to make the government listen to its input in the making of laws. What is surprising as Perlas observes, is that the church does not use this power which is utilised by presidents and many people that shape society in a very effective way. Their insatiable hunger for media coverage is designed to achieve power. The church must learn to use its civil power in creative ways to persuade governments to listen to it.

Laws that empower the woman without also placing her in the context of a mother are as bad as authoritarian patriarchy. Children rights without putting the child in the context of family, makes children terrorists to their own parents and confuse the discipline system that is so vital in the upbringing of these children, “The popular practice of letting children have unrestricted freedom has made tyrants of children and slaves of the parents” (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964:10). I am not suggesting that there must be laws promoting corporal punishment, but rather that there are times in a family where love rather than anger motivated spanking is necessary. What is the use of incapacitating the parent and then later on in life you jail the ill disciplined adult when he commits crime? Should not the parent be supported in doing a good parenting job which is both good and preventative of future trouble?

Promoting a holistic approach also means working with local cultural leaders to strengthen good traditional practices and discouraging those that work against the family like marrying off little girls to old people who are naturally nearer death than the girl because this would mean many years as widow. Because she is left young she would not have acquired enough capital to buy the necessary tools for use to make ends meet. Because she will usually be a younger wife she runs the risk of losing any inheritance for her or her children to the first wife and her children who will be more established by the time the father dies. Children of younger wives may be very young to fight for their child rights in such a situation. Chastity before and after marriage should be supported not because we are Christians only, but also because it is an effective way of preventing AIDS. AIDS related diseases take along time to kill, by the time someone dies all family resources would be finished on medical bills. The solution is not the use of the condom, the so called safe sex, which encourages promiscuity, but abstinence, the only remedy.

Traditionally, parenting was an inclusive responsibility of the whole society, the Christian community needs to be supporting each other as parents in the responsibility of parenting. When a families group approach is used all parents are equally empowered so they would be helping each other with their children working from the same understanding. That way children will respect authority both at home, church and society

as a whole, as the Ashanti would say; “It takes a village to bring up a child,” equally so, it will take a Christian community to bring up the child in the way the child should go (Prov.22:6). Some may argue that this would disempower the parents. But it does not need to be so, it simply demonstrates cooperation between parents as brothers and sisters in the Lord. If we share property, hearts and emotions, we should be able to share responsibilities as well. Gradually the whole community, not just the Christian community will benefit because community will once more be strong and work as one group with clear guidance and expectation for individual responsibility and participation. But this is only possible when a “...strong church can empower the wider community of which it is a part, and it is in ministry to the wider community that the Christian community fulfils its mission” Balswicks, (1989:298).

Globalisation is here to stay, its effects are continuing. The challenge before the church is whether it can sufficiently empower its people to face the effects of globalisation in such a way that they can make sense out of their situation and continue to be adaptable and effective parents in a globalised environment. The task is huge and the church may need to lobby the government, business and other sections of civil society to put in necessary legislation that makes the national parenting environment conducive to doing a good job of it. The promotion of **sound family** values and norms should become a national task rather than a local issue for Buhera district. That way the positive atmosphere thus created will cascade down to our community as well as the rest of the country.

However, suggesting a national thrust does not incapacitate the church at local level. Congregations need to be encouraged to use biblical family and parenting principles to develop home grown family enrichment and parenting programmes that are relevant and culturally appropriate to their communities. The family committees formed to spearhead this work at local level should be encouraged to incorporate wholesome traditional marriage enrichment and parenting practices in their home grown pastoral education and care programmes, that should target all parents and young people regardless of their church affiliation or whether they are Christians or not. They need to find out from the

local community, for example, how marital conflict was dealt with, how spouses express love for one another, how in laws are treated and what is expected of them, meaning and method of disciplining children, etc. These would then be looked at from the biblical point of view and adopted into the congregation syllabi when they are judged to be useful. Care should be taken not to approach these family and parenting programmes from a “we know better” positions. God has and is working out something even among non believers. The church need to humbly accept that there is much good it can learn from local communities. The good must be wholeheartedly affirmed and promoted. That way, local people would be motivated to venture into areas they may not have known before. The church in Africa has to appreciate that the continent is still dealing with cultural imperialism and therefore must be careful not to adopt a pushy attitude as it works with locals. It will only reap resentment rather than converts. It must work hard to rid itself of the “colonial tool” image and show that though missionaries came from the West, the message they carried came from God and is universal. Where mistakes were made it was because they were only human beings who are fallible.

These programmes can actually turn out to be powerful evangelistic tools as all members of our community can immensely benefit from these pastoral education and care programmes. As their families benefit they will be willing to consider “this Jesus who has changed my spouse and my life so powerfully,” as one company chief executive said when he became a christian in Harare recently. He publicly said this in church and said the best form of thanks he could “give to God for changing my life was to give that life to Jesus who knows how best it should be lived”. He comes to church regularly and participates in church programmes wholeheartedly. He takes his catechumen lessons very seriously. He has become a great challenge to many in the congregation. This came about because he was invited to church programmes even though only his wife was the believer. Locally grown programmes have a powerful local appeal to local people who feel valued and affirmed by the church. They will resultantly own and promote the church and its programmes themselves.

APPENDIX

Form A: Evaluation of parent as role model for his/her children.

Key: 1= Almost never, 2=seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Almost always.

		Symbol in figures
1	I take an interest in my child eg, I speak to him/her encourage and do things together.	
2	My love for my child is not dependent on his/her reaction or obedience, thus I can accept my child as he/she is.	
3	I try not to force my ideas upon my child. I concentrate less on his/her weak and faults and try to encourage his/her strong points, potential, gifts and talents.	
4	It is important to me that I don't dominate my child but encourage him/her to become independent and to make his/her own choices.	
5	When I discipline my child I am careful in my use of language and concentrate more on the incorrect behaviour, I try not to attack the person or the destructive but rather to build confidence.	
6	It is important for me that the children in our house feel at home without being smothered by our love.	
7	I attempt to be honest and frank with my children, and avoid telling lies, so that they feel free to share what is on their hearts with me.	
8	I trust my child and entrust responsibilities to him/her.	
	TOTAL	

Comment: Count up your total and divide by 8. On a scale of 1 to 5 you can make an evaluation. The results of a score can be evaluated in the following way:

3 and half – 5 Good role model; the interaction process is good and positive.

2 – 3 Fluctuating role model; the interaction process is average to neutral.

Under 2: Weak role model; the influence of the parent is low and needs urgent attention.

FORM B: What kind of a parent am I?

On a scale of 5 – 1 evaluate yourself as a parent with regard to the following statements:

Key: 5=Nearly always, 4=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 2=Seldom, 1=Never.

		Symbol in figures
1	I am very just when I discipline my child and am reasonable in my demands because I take account of my child's particular stage of development and abilities.	
2	I believe that it is important to exercise self –control in my relationship with my child so that so that I don't lose my temper.	
3	I listen to my child's needs and am conscious of what is important to him/her.	
4	I manage to get my child to cooperate with me with me without unnecessary conflict or threats.	
5	I spend time with my child everyday and give him/her my complete attention	
6	I encourage my child through displaying emphasis on his/her positive abilities and talents	
7	My child is able to share important issues with me that concern him/her, in order to get my advice and my opinion.	
8	My child and I can speak spontaneously with each other.	
9	My child brings me much joy and I am truly proud and thankful for him/her.	
10	I know about my child's daily activities and programmes.	
11	I am aware of the things that my child finds difficult and which frequently lead to problems and frustration.	
12	Positive life values, such as sincerity, honesty and thoughtfulness, are important in order for me to provide a good example for him/her to follow	
13	I give my child the opportunity to be him/herself and to take independent decisions.	
14	My child and I do things together and play together.	
15	My child and I read the Bible and pray together.	
16	I am a successful and good parent to my child.	
	TOTAL	

Comment: Add up your points and divide by 16. This figure will indicate to you how effective you really are as a parent. Score 4 = Healthy parent- child relationships; 3 = Reasonable . Lower than 3 shows real need to work on your relationships.

Form C: How do I feel about my mother and father? (Child evaluation of parents)

On a scale 5 – 1 think about your relationships with your parents.

		Symbol in figures
1	When my parents discipline me I realise they are doing it to help me. I am therefore prepared to cooperate with them.	
2	My parents understand my needs and know what is important to me.	
3	They are good at motivating me through their encouragement of me.	
4	My parents always make time for me and listen to my feelings.	
5	I enjoy spending time with my parents.	
6	My parents take an interest in what I am doing.	
7	I feel free to discuss my problems with them.	
8	I trust them and respect their authority.	
9	My parents are proud of me and respect me.	
10	They give me space to be myself and to make independent decisions.	
11	They set a good example for me to follow.	
12	They make time to sit and talk with me.	
13	They take an interest in what I am doing and ask me about my affairs.	
14	They do things with me which I find pleasant and enjoyable.	
15	They are able to see my point of view when I feel I am being treated unfairly.	
16	They encourage my positive strengths and make me aware of my potential	
17	They are able to nurture my faith and make me aware of God's grace.	
18	I think that they are great parents.	
	TOTAL	

Comment: Add up your points and divide by 18. Score 4 = Healthy relationships with your parents. Below 3 means you seriously need to address your relationship with your parents

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SAMEVATTING

Ouerskapstyl binne die tradisie van die Shonakultuur in die Buhera-distrik was gebaseer op die uitgebreide familie. Die hele familiesisteem en netwerk van verbintenisse het bygedra tot die opvoeding van die kinders. Opvoeding was 'n gemeenskapaaangeleentheid wat ouers in staat gestel het om elders te gaan werk, byvoorbeeld in die goudmyne van Suid-Afrika. Wanneer die ouers sterf, was daar altyd 'n versorgingsisteem in plek.

Die kultuurverskynsel van globalisering en die tendens tot individualisering het egter 'n faktor geword wat bydra tot die verbrokkeling van die familiesisteem en selfs van die nukleêre gesin. Mense raak verskeur tussen hulle werkplek en blyplek. Dikwels is daar die tuisplek in die platteland, maar daar is ook die woning in die stad. Man en vrou word op hierdie manier van mekaar vervreemd. Dikwels sien hulle mekaar slegs oor naweke of tydens vakansies. Soms een keer per jaar. Die faktor van skeiding en afwesigheid beïnvloed direk die funksionering van die gesinsisteem.

Hierdie vervreemdingsproses impakteer op die intimiteit van die huwelik. Mans wend hul dan vir hul seksuele behoeftes tot prostitute. 'n Soort van konkubinaat ontstaan waaruit dan ook kinders gebore word. Hierdie kinders is dan nie welkom binne die tuisomgewing van die man se leefarea nie. Die ontwrigting van stabiele seksuele verhoudings dra verder by tot die MIV / vigs-pandemie.

Die ontwrigting van die gesinsisteem beïnvloed veral die kinders. Soms is daar nie voldoende skole nie of van die ouer kinders moet saam met die pa in die stad skoolgaan. Die ouer kinders word so geskei van die kleiner kinders. Plattelandse sisteme en stedelike sisteme met hul verskillende norme en waardestelsels bring 'n soort van gespletenheid of skizofronie midde-in die kern van die familiesisteem. Kinders verstedelik en ontwikkel 'n onafhanklikheid en individualistiese lewenstyl wat hul verder van hul gesinswaardes vervreem. Hierdie gespletenheid beïnvloed die hele proses van sosialisering. Die vervreemdingsproses veroorsaak dat kinders gedragpatrone ontwikkel wat negatiewe reaksies by ouers oproep. Konstruktiewe leiding ontbreek sodat die proses van verbrokkeling verder voortgaan.

Die situasie in die Buhera-distrik is dat die kerk dikwels nie raad weet hoe om die situasie pastoraal te hanteer nie. Dikwels fokus die kerk so op die bekering van siele dat die gemeente nie daarin slaag om mense die basiese lewensvaardighede aan te leer nie. Vanweë gebrekkige lewensvaardighede word kinders wat in so 'n gesplete situasie grootword, probleemkinders.

Die navorsingstelling is dat die kerk juis strategies geposisioneer is om ouers te help hoe om ouers in so 'n situasie te wees. Die kerk behoort voorkomend te werk te gaan en ouers te bemagtig om die basiese ouervaardighede en lewensvaardighede te ontwikkel. Om dit te kan doen moet die kerk se hele ekklesiologie self verander. Dit moet beweeg vanaf 'n klerikale paradigma na 'n familie-gestruktureerde en sisteembenadering. Die kerk moet 'n gesin vir gesinne word en 'n familie-vriendelike gemeenskap en samesyn ontwikkel.

Vir so 'n sisteembenadering bepleit die navorser 'n holistiese model geskool op die lees van Friedman se sisteembenadering. Spiritualiteit moet geïntegreer wees met sosiale, kulturele en politieke behoeftes en kontekste.

Bedieningsbehoefte moet gefokus wees op armoede, gemeenskapsontwikkeling en die ekonomiese bemagtiging van mense. Dit is die taak van die kerk om in belang van die ontwikkeling van hegte familieverbande met die owerheid te skakel. Soms behels dit 'n pleidooi vir nuwe wette wat sal help om gesinswaardes te ontwikkel wat identiteitsontwikkeling by kinders stimuleer. Indien die kerk nie die gemeenskap help ontwikkel nie, raak dit irrelevant. Kinder- en gesinsprobleme spoel dadelik oor na die gemeentesistiem. Vandaar die pleidooi vir 'n geïntegreerde sisteemmodel vir gesinspastoraat in gemeentes in die Buhera- distrik.

