

**Family 'Three-folding':  
A Conciliatory and Affirmative Paradigm for Human  
Development in Caring Consciousness in Society.**

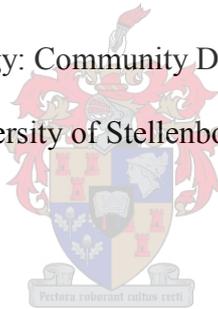
By

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**CERTIFICATION:**

I, the undersigned, do certify that the content of this dissertation is my own original work and has not been previously submitted to any other University for a degree either in part or in its entirety .

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a literary study with a qualitative component, provoked by family ‘crises’ and escalating single parenting, predominantly by mothers in default family structures beset by many childcare issues. It investigates- through tacit elimination of weak paradigms, a developmental mindset, empirical research and biblical consultation- a holistic family paradigm best suited for individual human development in care consciousness in society. The study assumes that, at grassroots levels of society, monogamy, faithfully practiced by morally responsible, natural, parental agencies, is ideal for holistic child care and is suitable for human development. It can also serve as a pre-emptive strategy against the following: delinquency, father absence, abuse, neglect, divorce, separation, indifference, family disintegration, relational poverty, pathological disorders, feminized poverty calling for government intervention, and general societal unrest. However, the monogamous family set up of the nuclear family variety requires relational adjustment.

Through studies in ethics and theology, ‘care’ emerged as a fundamental concept of what it means to be human and is a potential entry point to relational conflicts and lack of development sustainability. Care can spread through inclusion, affirmation, participation and empowerment of the formerly marginalized sectors. Perlas’ social three-folding strategy, engages the power of politics and economics to care for civil society’s needs in tripartite partnerships. Similarly, family three-folding units can be effective, at grass root levels, in bringing about holistic child care. Appropriate interpretation, contextual and responsible application of biblical principles for family life from both the OT and NT is part of the interdisciplinary research process. Ephesians 5:21- 6:4; Genesis 1:27-28, 2:24; Deuteronomy 6:6-9 and other appropriate texts will be analyzed in this regard. Holistic child care should contribute significantly to improvement in quality of family life leading to sustainable societies where human rights are respected and caring attitudes promoted globally.

The empirical research sought data triangulation, of outstanding family and child care issues, through a phenomenological design that engaged mothers as the units of analysis. Variables were, among others, mothers’ sentiments and perspectives of men, fathers and husbands. Samples of 10 single mothers, using a mixed sampling methodology and 10 married mothers (the focus group), were selected. In-depth interviews using standardized open-ended questions were utilized. The projective technique was effective in eliciting hidden, negative and bitter sentiments on gender issues requiring urgent attention. Work-overloaded mothers perceived men as self-centered pleasure seekers who are disinterested in child care. Abusive, controlling and economically non-contributing husbands are a burden to their spouses. Spousal rape, enforcement of government restraining orders and ‘ukhutwala’ issues also surfaced. On the other hand, seasoned, respectful affirmations of men were voiced by a few mothers who have experienced the godly power of forgiveness. Consequently, a frame of reference for family three-folding was outlined in chapter 5, based on biblical teachings, participant mothers’ conciliatory mindsets, Christian single mothers’ experiences, human rights considerations, good parenting strategies and relevant generic literature contributions.

Conclusions: By analogy, family three-folding indirectly reflects, the relational and functional aspects of the Triune God; reconciliation is a crucial part of the Christian calling; care consciousness is God consciousness and no family is ideal enough out of union/ fellowship [koinonia] with the Lord. Consequently, a believing single mother and her children also constitute a three-folding family, with God as Father to the fatherless. Single parent families deserve support and encouragement.

Family three-folding recommends, through dialogues in communities, that:

- Men learn to curb their domineering tendencies and practice service [diakonia] to others, guided by biblical principles of servanthood and the “One Man Can...” manual;
- women welcome responsible male headship in families for peaceful co-existence and holistic child care;
- decision-making be inclusive of family members on issues that concern them;
- awareness campaigns on sound family three-folding principles, values and models be initiated through the media, formal education and dialogues at all levels of the society.

Key Words/ phrases:

Family; family three-folding; human development; care consciousness; sustainable social development; conciliatory, affirmative, inclusive; holistic child care; relational poverty.

## OPSOMMING

Die studie is 'n verduidelikende argument met 'n kwalitatiewe komponent, aangespoor deur gesinskrisisse, stygende enkel ouerskap, hoofsaaklik van moeders in gebroke gesinstrukture en gekenmerk deur baie kindersorgprobleme. Deur eliminasië van nie-holistiese situasies word 'n ontwikkelende houding, empiriese navorsing en Bybelse verwysings gebruik om 'n holistiese gesinsparadigma daar te stel vir die optimale menslike ontwikkeling en gemeenskapsbewuste sorg. Die studie veronderstel dat holistiese kindersorg deur 'n moreel verantwoordelike en natuurlike ouerlike agentskap ideaal is vir menslike ontwikkeling en dien as 'n voorkomende strategie teen sosio-ekonomiese onrus, veroorsaak deur familie disintegrasie, verarmde verhoudings, misdaad, psigies-sosiale versteurings, mishandeling, verwaarloosing, egskeiding, skeiding, afwesige vaders, onverskilligheid, selfgesentreerde moeders, verarmde vroue, wat tussenkoms van die regering noodsaak.

Deur 'n studie van etiek en teologie het 'sorg' na vore gekom as 'n fundamentele konsep van wat dit beteken om menslik te wees en is 'n potensiale toegangspunt tot konflik in verhoudings en volgehoue ontwikkeling. Sorg kan deur insluiting, bevestiging, deelname en bemagtiging van die voorheen verstotenes bevorder word. Perlas se sosiale driepunt strategie kombineer die tussenkoms van politiese en ekonomiese invloed om in 'n driebeengenootskap na die burgerlike gemeenskap se behoeftes om te sien. Op dieselfde manier kan drievoudige gesinsverhoudings effektief wees op grondvlak om holistiese kindersorg te weeg te bring. Toepaslike interpretasie en kontekstuele en verantwoordelike toepassing van Bybelse beginsels vir gesinslewe uit beide die OT en NT is noodsaaklik. Efesiërs 5:21-6:4; Genesis 1:27-28 en 2:24 Deuteronomium 6:6-9 en ander toepaslike teksverwysings sal in hierdie verband geanaliseer word. Holistiese kindersorg behoort grootliks by te dra om die kwaliteit van gesinslewe te verbeter en te lei tot standhoudende gemeenskappe, waar menseregte gerespekteer word en omgee-verhoudings globaal bevorder word.

Die empiriese navorsing het driebeengenoote data van uitstaande gesins- en kindersorg situasies gesoek, deur 'n fenomenologiese ontwerp wat moeders betrek as analiseringsseenhede. Veranderlikes was, onder andere, moeders se houdings en perspektief van mans, vaders en eggenote. 'n Steekproef van 10 enkel moeders, deur 'n gemengde steekproef metodologie, en 10 getroude moeders (die fokus groep), is gekies. Die projektiwige tegniek was effektief in die verkryging van die verborge, negatiewe en bitter sentimente omtrent gesalgskwessies wat dringende aandag vereis. Werk-oorlaaide moeders het mans beskou as selfgesentreerde plesiernajaers sonder enige belang in kindersorg. Mishandelende, oorheersende en ekonomiese nie-bydraende mans is 'n las vir hul gades. Eggenootverkragting, die afdwing van beperkingsbevele deur die regering en 'ukhutwla-' sake het ook na vore gekom. Aan die ander kant is tydige, respekvolle ondersteuning van mans, wat die goddelike krag van vergifnis ondervind het, deur 'n paar moeders genoem. 'n Verwysingsraamwerk vir drievoudige gesinsverhoudings is gevolglik uiteengesit in hoofstuk 5, gebaseer op Bybelse lering, deelnemende moeders se versoenende ingesteldheid, Christelike enkel moeders se ondervindings, mense regtelike oorwegings, goeie strategieë vir kinderopvoeding en toepaslike generiese literatuur bydraes.

Die gevolgtrekkings is: driebeen-gesinsverhoudings is kontekssensitief, holisties en weerspieël indirek die beeld van ons relasionele, funksionele, liefdevolle Drie-enige God; versoening is 'n belangrike deel van die Christelike roeping; sorgbewustheid is God bewussyn en geen gesin is ideaal genoeg buite die vereniging / gemeenskap [Koinonia] met die Here nie. Gevolglik behels 'n gelowige enkelmoeder met haar kinders ook 'n driebeenverhouding, met God as Vader vir die Vaderlose. Enkel-ouer gesinne verdien ondersteuning en aanmoediging.

Gesin drie-vou beveel aan dat deur dialoog in gemeenskappe:

- mans hulle dominerende tendense leer bekamp en diens aan ander leer lewer [diakonia], met Bybelse beginsels van diens en die *–One Man Can...*” handleiding as riglyn;
- vroue verantwoordelik manlike hoofskap verwelkom in gesinne vir vredevolle saambestaan en holistiese kindersorg
- besluitneming ingesluit word by gesinslede omtrent sake wat op hulle van betrekking is
- bewusmakingveldtogte oor gesonde, versoendende driebeen gesinsverhoudings, waardes en modelle deur die media, formele onderrig en dialoog bekendgestel word aan alle vlakke van die samelewing.

frases:

Familie, gesin drie-vou, persoonlike menslike ontwikkeling, sorgbewustheid, volhoubare maatskaplike ontwikkeling, versoenende, regstellende, inklusiewe, holistiese kindersorg, relasionele armoede.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction: Motivation, Focus, and Outline

#### 1.1 Introduction: the family and social development

This discourse is a literary study with an empirical component seeking to explain<sup>1</sup> the importance of the family in human and social development. More significantly, it seeks to establish justification for a normative family paradigm best suited for promoting caring attitudes in marital relationships for holistic (integrated) individual human development of children as a decisive step towards sustainable social development. Sustainability concerns have tenaciously pursued both development and human relations for a very long time. The quest for explanations to the ‘problem’ or ‘intellectual puzzle’<sup>2</sup> (cf. Mason, 2002:7-8) of what family set up is ideal for holistic child care, is propelled by ‘the diversity of contemporary family-like structures’ (Viljoen 1996:23) that defy a common definition of ‘what constitutes a family’ (Genovese cited in Viljoen, 1996:23). A list of family structures and/or ‘households’ (Bender cited in Bernardes, 1997:45) includes: the nuclear family, single-parent households, extended-family households, communal living, roommates, cohabitation, nursing homes and living alone (Lorimer and Lorimer, 1994: 495 – 497). Other family set ups are: step-, reconstituted or blended families (Viljoen, 1996:28); those headed by gay and lesbian parents (Kinnear, 1999:50) and most vulnerable of all, child headed households due to HIV/AIDs related parental mortality (Coleman, 2009:39; Desmond, Richter, Makiwane & Amoatang, 2003 on: [http:// www.hsrc.ac.za/Publication-Keyword-1384](http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Publication-Keyword-1384)). A diagram, representing these family structures and more, is available (ch.5, fig. 4).

Viljoen (1996:29) explains that, ‘the composition of the family unit’ encompasses ‘sex role structure and power structures’ viewed by Murdock as a means of ‘sexual control, economic co-operation, reproduction and socialization’ performed for society, and this made him conclude that the (nuclear) family is a universal phenomenon (Viljoen, 1996:21; Murdock cited in Lee, 1977: 65). Jacobs (cited in Thomas, 1996:61) stated that the family was central to everything: ‘strong families, strong community. Good parents, good kids’. A family set-up and lifestyle impacts an individual’s life negatively or positively and communities tend to

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<sup>1</sup> Hendricks (2004:224) states that the purposes/aims of research can be categorized as: a) exploration> to provide basic knowledge on a new topic; b) description> of what one observed; and c) explanation> to clarify issues and indicate causality between variables and events

<sup>2</sup> As Mason (2002: 7-8) explains it, an ‘intellectual puzzle’ is ‘something the researcher wishes to explain’ and argue for, from a particular logical perspective

reap the whirlwind of negative consequences. Bernardes (1997:34-35) explains that, “family life is the key in constructing social structure and maintaining social order ... Family ideology structures human relationships along the lines of age ... gender ... power, authority, deference and respect ... that gender and family are inextricably linked” because the family constructs, obscures and modifies gender and vice versa. However, mounting evidence shows that, the nuclear family, comprising a married couple in a heterosexual relationship and their child/children, in a hierarchical relationship based on rigid roles and functions seems to have lost its appeal to populations in the contemporary world. It has given way to what Bernardes (1997:11) describes as “variation and diversity in family forms” termed “family pathways” (:48). Viljoen (1996:30) connected the “change in family structure” to “changes in women’s and men’s roles in the family” arguing that, “women’s and men’s roles will not really change unless family institutions are also transformed” but she failed to predict the sequence and direction of the changes. Nevertheless, she had rightly concluded that, “traditional gender-based divisions of labor ... are under strain in every major industrial nation”.

The direction of change in the family structure was documented by Bjornberg (cited in Bernardes 1997:15) who noticed an emerging pattern throughout Europe involving, among other things, “a growing rate of cohabitation, divorce and single parenthood” coupled with “rising numbers of births outside marriage and increasing rates of female paid work”. With increasing divorce rates that fragment families, Viljoen (1996:29) states that the single-parent family is “generally believed” to be “the most rapidly increasing type of family in most countries” and the issue is: “Do we accept the single parent as a family type and not a pathology? Do we enable it to cope with such problems as poverty?” On discrepancies between the rich and poor, men and women, Seager (2003:7) states that, “there are now more women than men living in dire poverty than a decade ago; women remain the poorest of the poor, everywhere”. Increasing single parenting by mothers in Britain receives regular public attention due to its being associated with poverty and delinquency (Bernardes, 1997:18). This automatically raises sustainability concerns. Single mothers are the focus of chapters 3 and 4, which constitute the empirical component of this study on the South African scene, for an understanding of their world at grass-root level, on gender and child care issues, to gauge the viability and sustainability of single parent family set ups. A qualification of the term ‘sustainable’ is in order. It involves the idea of continuity, dependability and harmlessness to people and nature. It implies an uninterrupted flow of benefits to the individuals concerned.

Reid (1995: xiii) labels sustainable development –one of the catch phrases of the 1990s” first coined by –Eva Balfour, founder of the Soil Association ... and Wes Jackson, the American geneticist and biodynamic farmer” (footnote 1). Based on Brundtland’s definition, Reid (: xiv) explains that the –concept of sustainable development – with its concern for both social and ecological health – offers hope and encouragement both to those who are appalled by the amount of extreme poverty in the world today and to those who do not accept” gross national product (GNP) as an effective gauge of economic success. Levant (cited in Reid, 1995: xiv – xv) argues that: –The central themes of sustainable development are rooted in perennial themes of responsibility to others, providing for the future and dependence of life on the natural environment”. Skolinowski (cited in Reid, 1995: xvii) explains that, though broad, ambiguous and difficult to define, the idea of ‘sustainable development’ –turned out to be palatable to everybody”.

However, Reid (1995: xviii) was concerned with whether the idea of sustainable development could –be translated into principles on which practicable and effective policies can be based and which will reverse current unsustainable trends of ecological degradation and human oppression?” He asserts that sustainable development has –to work within constraints it has so far failed to observe, to achieve goals it has so far failed to meet (:xix)”. This study seeks family relational sustainability within the original structural constraints with a huge relational ‘makeover’ as ideal in holistic upbringing of children in caring attitudes, as a means to curbing eco-human distress. This finds support in what Barry Commoner (cited in Reid, 1995: unnumbered initial page) so aptly stated: –When any environmental issue is probed to its origins, it reveals an inescapable truth – that the root cause of the crisis is not to be found in how men interact with nature, but in how they interact with each other ...”. In other words human relational issues have ecological consequences.

Research is important for translating the idea of sustainable development into principles and workable practices. In Olson (2004:10), it is stated that –research develops new knowledge, tools and insights. The role of research for conflict management and human security is more indirect but no less important”, –research applies methods which may reveal hidden connections and underlying causes” (:17) and is –mandated to help create conditions that will enable the poor to improve their lives” (:9). This study seeks to explain family relational

connections in terms of: gender equity, inclusion of all family members in participatory decision-making; caring capacity; long-term commitment; fair treatment and affirmation of other people; respect and conciliation at grassroots levels, as essential to family stability and consequently, the attainment of sustainable social development. Holistic conceptualization of the family should lead to holistic child care. Savory (cited in Reid, 1995: 154) states that “holistic thinking is based on the recognition of two principles” namely that:

- “one must seek to understand the greater whole in order to understand its parts, not vice versa” and
- “wholes have no defined limits”

Logically, both parents responsible for the genetic constitution of the child at conception ought to be actively involved in its holistic development.

On the issue of poverty which attends most single mothers and their children, one’s definition of poverty determines one’s choice of possible solutions to address it. Myers (2003; Myers in Winter & Harthorne 1999:578ff) introduces a holistic view of poverty which he defines as a deficit and whose dimensions are basically: spiritual (fear, powerlessness) and relational (broken relationships, exclusion, labeling, misuse of power). Poverty, he argues, is not just “absence of things and knowledge” but “at its heart poverty is a spiritual issue” of “relationships that don’t work, power that is misused and disabling fear” (:580). In Phoenix (1991:15), labeling and exclusion of the single parent families are expressed in the argument that they do not qualify as “real families”. Women who give birth in their teens, mothers employed outside the home, divorced women “bringing up children on their own”, are all “ensured because their children are considered likely to create problems for society or come to public attention because they are in need of public provision of benefits”. This illustrates the relational poverty that stems from labeling and exclusion of single parent families that demeans them instead of helping them out.

With the majority of households now headed by females globally, stigmatization and exclusion will not make the problem disappear. Meanwhile, children, our hope for a sustainable future, remain at risk as people multiply irresponsibly through unsafe sexual practices outside marriage. The government is then compelled to provide welfare support. Parental conflict and marital breakdown also leave children with confusion, inadequate love, care and attention they would otherwise receive if both their parents worked together

harmoniously, modeling care and responsibility to them. Viljoen (1996:29) read ‘somewhere’ that: ‘Perhaps children are lucky to have a ‘good’ parent – to have two may be a luxury’. But should we aim for one good parent as the ideal/holistic family paradigm for holistic human development in care consciousness?

## 1.2 Motivation

Viljoen (1996:17-18) rightly points out that inevitable social dynamics ‘have had a massive impact on the family ... a remarkably robust and adaptable institution but which is nevertheless in a state of crisis. Data on divorce, the rise of single-headed households, and the like are used to undergird this idea of crisis’. She cites Berger and Berger (:17-18) whose argument she sums up as: ‘the family is in bad shape’, ‘has very serious problems’ which ‘will get worse unless something is done about them’. In the discipline of Theology of Development, as far back as 1969 at the Cartigny Consultation, Sodepax<sup>3</sup> demanded theological reflection on critical social issues coupled with interdisciplinary dialogue, in order for the Church to embark on responsible action instead of merely mirroring current changes in society (Land in Dunne, 1969: 186ff). Elliot (in Dunn, 1969:12) also emphasized the need for an uncompromising, logical, theological framework acceptable to social sciences as well as the necessity to bridge the epistemological gap in developmental issues. The report goes on to say that, participation in novel and ambiguous development situations required interpretation, understanding and called for a dynamic personality to raise communal awareness to needs, aspirations and abilities, in a bid to release creative participation, maintain communal stimulation and loyalty, training people in good stewardship and responsibility which are the true marks of true Christian virtue (:14). The study hopes to contribute to family development issues through seeking to establish the best family set up for holistic human development and conciliatory relationships as part of God’s redemptive mission (missio-Dei) in the world (Bosch, 1991).

Plausibly, development alternatives strive, among other issues, to restore balance to global eco-human degradation by advocating the following:

- good eco-human care and stewardship (Hall, 1991; Boff 2008);

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<sup>3</sup> Sodepax = Society, Development and Peace: a committee established in 1968 to formulate a theology of development to address international problems of justice, development and peace

- candid debates on social welfare and individual responsibility that condemn undue dependency on state welfare (Schmidtz and Goodin, 1998);
- Respecting other people and their knowledge in participatory endeavors, which are also important keys to attaining the objectives mentioned below;
- responsible livelihood (Chambers, 1997);
- development sustainability (Burkey, 1999);
- “global responsibility”, “survival and comprehensive well-being of all life” (Nurnberger, 1999: 9);
- social transformation through Church involvement in the community (August, 1999; 2003; 2010) and
- challenging poverty holistically through the gospel (Myers, 2003).

### 1.2.1 The theme of care in development

Caring involvement in development issues cannot be over-emphasized. Boff's exposition of the ‘care ethos’ in his book: *Essential Care: an Ethos of Human Nature*, (2008) is a viable ethical theme for promotion of global consciousness to slow down the rate of eco-human degradation. The theme of care also encompasses, what I suppose is, Swartz's (2006: 127) quest for the “ultimate global vision for transformation” in society. He promotes ‘an idea-and-value centered approach’ (82) which he believes the Church is equipped to bring about by joining forces with other social movements. Boff (2008: back-cover) considered ‘care’ to be “an inspiring principle for a new paradigm of living together”, echoing Hall's (1991: 239-240) doctrine of stewardship as marking a paradigm shift to a new frame of reference where dominion implies stewardship and not ownership; implies conservation and nurturing, not exploitation. The researcher's reflections on all this, helped to establish links to how ‘care’ could transform the family domain in order to foil neglect, domination, relational conflicts and abuse. Bernardes (1997:72-76) outlines various types of family abuse cited from different authors (chapter 2). If children are cared for holistically, they most likely will be responsible adults.

I concur with Bernardes (1997:23) who strongly believes that, “family life’ is the key to understanding human society ... to improving society, creating a just and decent world, ensuring a more certain and peaceful future”. She proceeds to state that, with accurate knowledge about child care, the context of crime, the care of the sick, what families actually

do, etcetera, →we may be able to better support ‘families’ ... people may begin to realize that they do not have to be self-sufficient. We can all give and receive support with no loss of standing in the community”. From a health angle, care for the well-being of one’s family would deter individuals from indulging in unsafe sexual practices that invite HIV/ AIDS infection that has fatal consequences on the family, for example orphans in child-headed households.

### 1.2.2 Building development and family relational sustainability on firm foundations

If governments are →to create a people-centered society ... (*pursue*) goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear” (Mandela in Kagwanja and Kondlo, 2008: 110), they have to establish firm foundations for sustainability. Burkey’s model, modified below, rightly establishes (*sustainable*) social development on human development (*in care ethos*), as the foundation for sustainability, which is the underlying framework of this research. (Italicized words are my own additions).

A model of *sustainable* social development and *care ethos building at family level*

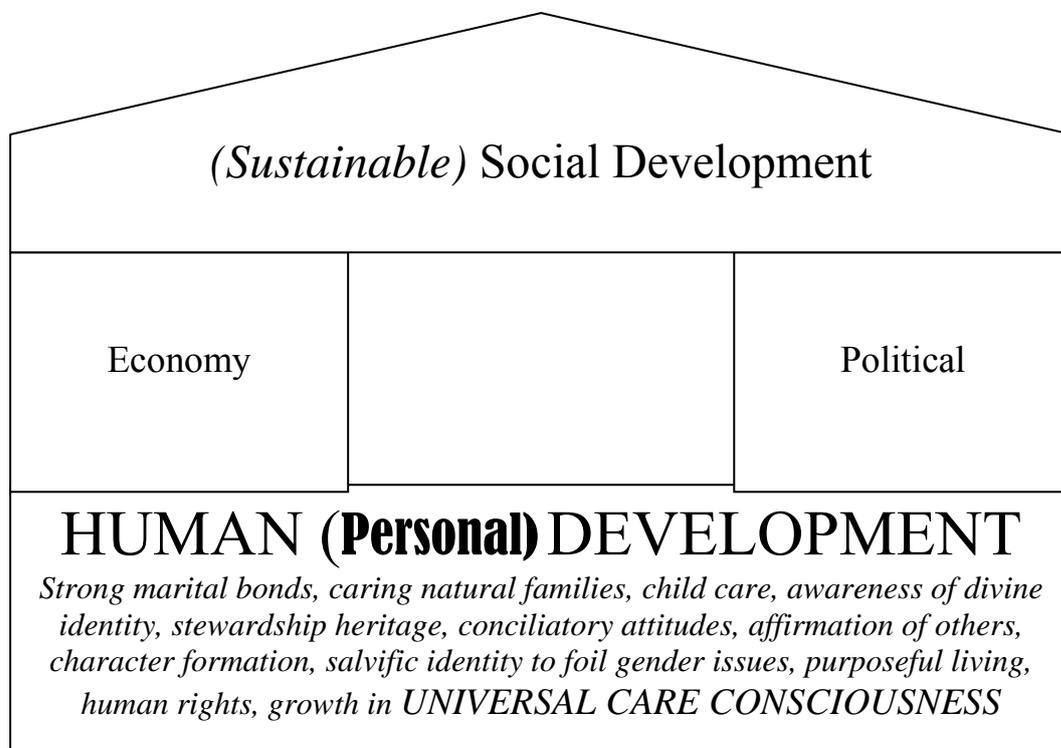


Figure 1 [adapted from Burkey (1999: 38)’s book entitled *People First*]

N.B. The italicized words and phrases are the researcher's additions to highlight the researcher's concept of strong caring families as integral to Burkey's theme that seeks to establish development on firm foundations of human (personal) development.

Burkey sought to promote sustainable development through the training of change agents, whilst this study, similar to Myers' approach, advocates biblical principles as the "source of truth and power" (Myers in Winter and Harthorne, 1999:580). I believe that these can help to redeem families and facilitate the spreading of a universal care consciousness that is truly sacrificial and selfless. Other intervention strategies are invaluable but development sustainability will be facilitated when each man, consistently acts responsibly towards nature and other people.

Developmentally, enforcement of human rights, dignity and worth should be foundational in defeating exploitative, destructive and uncaring relationships that manifest themselves in wars, conflicts, ethnic disputes, "the holocaust" (Moltmann, 1974:16), oppression of women, widows and children in patriarchal societies (Hughes & Bennet, 1998:237ff). Wink (1986: 46-47) describes God's reign as domination free, characterized by partnerships, sharing interdependence, responsibility, harmony, cooperation, non-violent confrontation and conflict resolution, equality of opportunity, mutual respect between men and women across all distinctions, and constitutes "God's new charter of reality (:107)". Powerlessness, defenselessness, ignorance and "god-complexes" (Myers, 2003:78-79) are manifest in superiority or inferiority feelings, and are to be replaced by affirmation and empowerment.

Perlas (2000)'s proposition is that: exploitative relationships can be neutralized by "three-folding" partnership formations that seek to engage everyone in dialogue and planning of projects. This participatory and inclusive mindset was influential in the adoption of "three-folding" as an appropriate name for the family paradigm emerging in this study as a viable strategy that could resolve the family relational dilemma, if implemented appropriately, based on a correct interpretation of biblical teaching on the family. Punt<sup>4</sup> (in support of others) rightly cautions us against "unqualified appeals to the New Testament in formulating positions on family or family values today" because of the "radical differences between ancient and

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Punt's final draft entitled: "Family in the New Testament: social location, households and traditional family values".

modern times and contexts in perception of what constituted family, the problems with it and how to address those problems". Chapter 5 will discuss fully what family three-folding entails.

### **1.2.3 A Theological foundation for family and human development**

Matthew 7: 24-25, where the Lord Jesus concluded –what is commonly called –the Sermon on the Mount” encompassing Matthew chapters 5-7 (Walvoord & Zuck 1983:28, 34), highlights the importance of strong foundations for spiritual development. These chapters herald the commencement of Jesus’ ministry when he outlined basic principles of conduct and attitude in the Kingdom of God. The parable Jesus told, about the –The Wise and Foolish Builders”, portrayed to his disciples and the crowds around him on the mountainside (Mt. 5:1), the wisdom of building a house upon a rock where it withstood the raging, vicious storms (Mt.7:25). In contrast, the foolish man built his house on sand which collapsed straightaway under the onslaught of forceful winds (Mt.7: 27). The significance of this parable is that Jesus compared his teachings and those of the Pharisees to two different types of foundations. His truths about –inner transformation” were –a big rock‘ which would provide stability in times of testing but the Pharisaic foundation was like –sand‘ because their piety was not genuine (Walvoord & Zuck 1983: 34) . The people were to choose who to base their faith on, Jesus’ authoritative teachings (Mt. 7:29) on inner transformation or the Pharisaic hypocritical show of righteousness which would crumble under relentless testing.

Firm foundations are equally important in human and social development. This is why family, marriage, child care, divine identity awareness, stewardship attitudes, conciliatory and affirmative mindsets etcetera are included by the researcher in the base (fig.1:7), as foundational prerequisites for sustainable social development. The Bible offers those who look to it, insights, principles and general guidelines for human conduct in life. Perhaps what Barnette (1961:4) says below best sums up the researcher’s approach.

–In contrast to philosophical ethics ... the Christian ethicist seeks to determine the nature and purpose of God’s will for human action. He must define those basic norms of revelation by which man may act in keeping with the will of God. To make these norms relevant to contemporary moral decisions, the insights of philosophy, history, and the social sciences may be utilized. Hence Christian ethics is bifocal, looking to the Bible for norms or principles of behavior and to other disciplines for factual data for intelligent action”.

When Christians look to Scripture as authoritative, this does not mean literal, blind and mindless application of what the Bible says at face value. Diligent study and analysis of the original contextual significance of a biblical passage, followed by determining the principle underlying it, can lead to a healthy application of that principle in a contemporary context. Doriani (1996) explains that correct interpretation and application of any scriptural passage is determined by the following:

- an understanding of the literary context
- an understanding of the historical context and
- the general sense of the whole Bible

This finds support in Wright's (2004: 323-324) discussion in "Ethical steps towards the contemporary context" where he explains that: "The authority of Scripture is that which authorizes us to develop our ethical stances, policy choices and decision-making in new contexts not directly addressed by the Bible". This should suffice in accounting for why the Bible is indispensable for insights into family issues raised in this study. Handled properly, the Bible remains authoritative and timeless in providing believers with guiding principles in grey areas in life as well.

The preoccupation of this research is how child care can be holistic in our contemporary world where more and more children are at risk due to neglect, abuse, poverty, bad media influences, sexual predators, etcetera. What insights can we glean from biblical principles to keep children safe physically, healthy mentally and free from psychopathic inclinations when they are grown ups? Chapter 5 will deal with the biblical framework for the family's relational and child care issues in detail.

Wright (2004: 353) explains that there is need for critical affirmation of the family because it can be idolized, and can be evil, unjust and oppressive. Families are smaller, and units of gender inclusive parents are no longer the norm (:354-355). "All kinds of societies, associations, charities, governments departments, and institutions, schools, and hospitals, banks and insurance companies ... have taken over many of the social functions previously invested in kinship networks" and hence the "urgency to rethink and refortify the role of the family in society" (:355) taking the whole biblical revelation and model into account (:353).

Mindset change is not easy to attain. Calling for Christian thinkers and activists to engage in the work of persuasion, Stott, (1984:48, 60) argues that, "you cannot force people to believe what they do not believe, or practice what they do not want to practice." The goal of persuasive argument (*prophetic dialogue*) based on factual truth from below (*qualitative*

*research findings*) will be the shaping of public opinion”, in ~~pro~~profound re-orientation” to enable people to think and act differently to what they are accustomed to (: 60). (The bracketed and italicized parts are my own additions). All this sums up, in general, the direction and strategy of this study

### 1.3 Research focus

#### 1.3.1 The importance of child care by the natural family

Parental child care in the home and family is fundamental for training children to be caring human beings, a characteristic that extends way beyond family boundaries. Noddings (cited in Patton and Childs, 1988:31) distinguishes between maternal natural caring (automatic) and ethical caring (intentional). Unfortunately, natural caring is no longer as automatic as Noddings presupposes, in view of cases of baby dumping, neglect and abuse. The concept intergenerational (: 32, 139) emphasizes the care of three generations at the same time (Patton & Childs, 1988:13; Viljoen 1994:27) as integral to natural caring and yet is not always viewed as such, given the increase in the number of lonely elderly people. Kornhaber (cited in Patton and Childs 1988: 13) says: —~~The~~ natural family... is comprised of people who are rooted in the past, live in the present, and consider and plan for the future” implying grandparents, parents and their children respectively, all actively involved with each other even though they may not all live under the same roof. Holness (2009: 67) advocates conducive child-care environments and good care-giving, as good stewardship, with parents as the natural stewards in the home environment protecting children in their needy, insecure, and vulnerable status, as well as encouraging their open, trusting, imaginative, lively energetic, appreciative natures etc. Children need tender loving care, nurture and patient teaching. She also points out how precious children are to God’s divine plans, as exemplified by the following individuals: Jesus, Samuel, Moses, David and many others. Young David, by faith in God, was able to challenge and defeat Goliath using a sling. Some children are wise beyond their ages. We need to value children too and consider their needs and well-being before our own. They need attentive care and their voices need to be heard too (Driskell, 2002: 32-36) for better urban planning.

Care is crucial to family relationships as a paradigm for human development and universal consciousness training. Minow (2002:136-137) argues that “in discussions about cultural clashes and accommodation... it is children, not women, who lie at the heart of questions...for children are the primary targets of socialization...any genuine effort to enable choice must focus on children”. Although Minow is addressing cultural conflict issues, the comments that she makes are pertinent to this study’s explanatory argument that prioritizes children’s need for holistic care and development. She emphasizes their need for relationships as more critical than their need for freedoms, arguing that “Children need environments where they can learn what is just, ...have their needs met, ... to have and to fulfill obligations to others.... democratic legal systems expect parents and immediate communities to be the frontline providers for children while offering backup and support, chiefly through educational opportunities and agencies ...against child abuse and neglect. This acknowledges that nurture is a face to face task, and that parents are the ones most likely...able and motivated to do what is best for their children” (Minow, 2002:139).

Unfortunately, many children are deprived of this primal need. Mothers are often too exhausted from, either working outside the home or the housework itself, and fathers are physically drained or emotionally if not physically, absent to meet the needs of their children. If adequate parenting is hard for a married couple, how much harder will it be for single parents? Deniece Ackermann was instrumental in transforming Patrick Godwana, a Lutheran pastor’s African traditional male mindset, that shuns direct care of young children as women’s work (belittling to fathers) to one that welcomes children and upholds them in prayer before God (Kathindi, 2009: 39). What an invaluable input when the transformed pastor was then able to inculcate in other men, the values of father-child care! Some traditional mindsets can only be transformed through dialogue and individual testimonies. The good aspects in any culture need preserving, but unhelpful or destructive aspects need to be discarded.

### 1.3.2 The biological and socio-economic bases for human care

In his comparative analysis of man and animal, Moltmann (1974: 6) describes the former as “an abandoned child of nature”, naked, exposed, shy, needy, weaponless, defenseless. This is an apt description in that, the human baby is the weakest, most disadvantaged of all created

species and it takes months and years of care-giving for it to develop some measure of independence; whereas most birds and animals are up and about within minutes, hours, days or weeks of birth. Traditionally, the “nuclear family, consisting of a husband, wife and 2 or 3 children” flourished “as a way of protecting and nurturing children ... based on a clearly articulated system of roles, with the husband as breadwinner and authority figure, and the wife as nurturer and homemaker” (Holloway, 1999: 154). However, due to “marital indissolubility” that cemented the “structure together” on religious and social grounds, marriage could become a “perfect arena for abuse and torment... a nightmare abuse of children” (:155). Much as we may value the presence of both parents in children’s upbringing, abuse is intolerable as it deprives them of their rights to adequate care, dignity and respect due to them as human beings created in God’s image.

Lee (1977: 57) explains that, whatever the structure the family took “in particular societies, (it) is virtually always an association between adults of both sexes and dependent children... (in) patterns of interdependence between the sexes”. (Bracketed and italicized words are my own insertions). Murdock (cited in Lee, 1977: 67) adds that “a man and a woman make an exceptionally efficient cooperating unit”, “in the division of economic tasks and responsibilities... (as) a crucial part of the definition of marriage and the family... (where) labour is divided between spouses” (own italicized additions). This description complements the “helper” motif when God created the woman as a complementary helper suitable for man (Genesis 2:18) in the procreation mandate (Genesis 1:28). Some may see the word “helper” as signifying inferiority of women but in the Bible, God is our help (Psalm 46:1) the Holy Spirit is the teacher, counselor, reminder (John 14: 26). Holistic child care requires the dedication of both men/fathers and women/mothers because of its heavy demands on individuals’ time, energy and patience.

### 1.3.3 Care paradigms and delimitations of the study

There are many care paradigms prevalent in the world today. Health care paradigms dominate our modern society in the form of intentional care, with remuneration. In medicine, this involves the Hippocratic Oath “taken by a physician binding him to observe medical ethics” (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 645). There is also the ever increasing challenging Care for those

living with HIV /AIDS, as well as the Care of children at risk; Mental Health Care and Frail Care for aging people. Pastoral Care and counseling, Family Care, Missionary Care, are preventive measures against nervous breakdown or relational disintegration. Ecological Care is man's divine mandate for eco-human survival. I see Child Welfare Services as maintenance programs for failed natural home care. The study focus is on pre-emptive child care by the child's natural parents, committed to each other in a lifelong, faithful marital relationship and intergenerational care as a way to defeat the neglect, loneliness and despair that most children and elderly people experience. A universal consciousness of natural care in families can drastically reduce suffering in the world. Below are brief references to elderly care issues and care of children outside the home, equally important but not the focus of this study.

Lorimer & Lorimer (1994: 497) identify three basic types of care for the elderly, provided by the approximately 20,000 nursing homes in the United States namely:

- a residential care program: offers room, board in a sheltered environment, has a house keeper, offers meals, laundry and recreation services
- a personal care program: offers all the above in addition to assistance in dressing, bathing and eating. It is supported by part time medical staff
- a nursing care residence: provides 24 hour supervision by nurses and physicians

The authors argue that more elderly people are increasingly "separated from their families" because of "changing lifestyles". Unfortunately, "Despite numerous federal and state regulations governing nursing homes, the industry has been plagued with fraud and mismanagement. Instances of cruelty and neglect have also been found in institutions across the country" (:497). It is indeed sad to see elderly people suffering because no one seems to want them, not even their children and relatives who might even consider them an inconvenience. Though there are problems here, the study will not discuss these in any more detail so as not to lose focus. Suffice to say intergenerational care and training in care consciousness is a strategic pre-emptive measure against the neglect of aging parents.

Crèche and Nursery Care cater for children with working mothers. After-school Care protects children from being home alone. Lorimer & Lorimer (1994: 463) explain that, children can be looked after by someone else other than the mother, in four ways namely:

- In the home under the care of paid substitute mother-housekeeper or reliable child-care surrogates. The problem lies in finding someone with compatible child-rearing views with one's own. Differing standards may confuse the child. Playmates for the child may also be hard to come by depending on where one lives.
- Homes of babysitters with their own children or those caring for other people's children as well are another option. There are risks involved in this, for example, if there are too many children, the child may receive inadequate adult attention although she may have plenty of companionship.
- Day care centers are increasing in popularity, ~~are~~ usually licensed and must meet minimum standards of safety, sanitation, and supervision" nevertheless, ~~in~~ the United States, the development of child care for working parents has been slow, and the number and quality of centers remains" inadequate. This applies to most day care centers globally.
- Nursery school ~~provide~~ a good alternative to child care in the home or day -care centers" and are run along specific/even different educational philosophies. The parents have to decide which school is best for their child's development.

Bronfenbrenner (cited in Dobson 1982: 48), a renowned ~~authority~~ on child development" then, stated that: ~~Modern~~ women are struggling to convince themselves that state-sponsored child-care centers offer a convenient substitute for the traditional family concept. It will not work!" He was, nevertheless, sympathetic to the isolation experienced by the young mothers due to absence of extended family support and loss of community typical in the modern world. The argument is that child care centers only serve to isolate children more from quality care that is essential which only the mother and the family can provide. There is controversy over what the best arrangements for the child are. ~~For~~ every point of view, there is a study to support it...so many studies contradict one another...the decisions regarding child care are personal. Nobody seems to know what is best" (Lorimer and Lorimer, 1994: 463). The study will not discuss this aspect of child care on merits and demerits of child care facilities in the community apart from acknowledging them as alternative child care opportunities available to most mothers, especially single ones, to help them cope with pressures at home and at the work place.

#### 1.3.4 Feminist and African concepts of family care as inclusive

Family care should be natural/automatic, intergenerational, matching the feminine concept that “takes care of the children, the infirm, and the elderly”, encompasses, “culturally feminine traits like ‘interdependence, community, connection, sharing, emotion, body, trust, absence of hierarchy, nature, immanence, process, joy, peace, and life’” and moral reasoning that emphasizes “relationships, responsibilities, particularity and partiality” [(Jagger, Feminist Ethics, 1992) in <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-ethics> 08/14/2010]. All these traits highlight what should characterize family-hood, togetherness, communality “ujanaa” (Onwubiko, 2001). Traditionally, in Africa, there were no homeless people since the extended family was always present to absorb stranded kin. Strong, supportive, inclusive nuclear family relationships form the backbone for each individual, upheld by caring extended family members and tend to minimize the use of other care paradigms that are somewhat impersonal and financially unsustainable.

Basically, pre-emptive child care, through active involvement of both parents, is inevitable and crucial for child survival and holistic development. It is, ultimately, a perfectly legitimate means towards cutting down child welfare payouts by the state. The study assumes that individuals brought up in attitudes of caring stewardship, would develop into responsible citizens who will, thus, drastically lead to a reduction in crime rates, and consequently, the correctional services expenditure. The ripple effect of good consequences will also encompass the saving of more tax-payer’s money, which can then be channeled towards income generating projects thereby reducing the unemployment rate by engaging able-bodied men prevalent in informal settlements in gainful employment. This will ultimately bring about the much coveted sustainable socio-economic development. The biblical and the developmental mindsets form the backbone of the research, as will be discussed under chapter 5.

#### 1.3.5 The ideal family as conceptualized by Schaeffer

Edith Schaeffer (1975) describes the family as:

- –A living and loving unit
- An educational system, where true learning begins and ends

- An economic unit, and the challenge of making ends meet in difficult times
- A religious institution, where members support each other in a ‘school of prayer’
- A recreation centre, where individuals can relax and enjoy each other’s company ... a rallying point for all who value humanity, care and love in family life” (back-cover).
- ‘A birthplace of creativity’
- ‘A formation center for human relationships’
- ‘A shelter in the time of storm’
- ‘A perpetual relay of truth’
- ‘A museum of memories’ (contents page).

How can the ideal family qualities listed above be an attainable reality in life, given the family structural metamorphosis and ‘irreconcilable’ individual differences that lead to marital breakups? Often, news of murdered or abandoned babies, by their own desperate, poverty-stricken single mothers, feature alarmingly in our contemporary world. Is there any hope for a better future for children? How can the two genders involved in the conception of and birth of a child be reconciled to create a home atmosphere conducive to holistic child development? Children need attentive care as exemplified in the interactive approach explained below.

#### 1.3.6 The Interactive Approach

Bayes, (1994: 449) explains that, in the interactive approach, the infant has –some innate ability to organize experience. This ability, however, must be stimulated by experience ... parents or caretakers play a vital role in the development of the child, for they provide the experiences that activate the child’s physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development. Within this framework, one would also recognize the potential damage that might be caused by neglect”. This is enhanced by Vygotsky (cited in de Vos, 2002: 32)‘s concept of the –zone of proximal development” which is the distance between the child’s individual capacity and the capacity to perform with assistance and reflects good teaching in school and informal settings. He explains that, –long before they enter school, children learn higher order cognitive and linguistic skills. Their teaching takes place in the everyday interactions of domestic life. Within these goal directed activities, opportunities are available for more

capable members of the household to assist and regulate the child's performance. Through these mundane interactions, children learn the accumulated wisdom and the cognitive and communicative tools of their culture ... The process begins early ... and takes place mainly without the conscious awareness of the participants. The process by which the social becomes the psychological is called internalization" (:32). Guidance, assistance, instruction, and child involvement are paramount. Thus, not just neglect, but also violence, abuse and distress experienced in infancy can have long term adverse effects on individuals' worldviews and relational issues later on in life.

Dorothy Nolte's poem (1972), available on the internet under the title: "Children Learn What they Live", is prophetic and endorses what was discussed in the paragraph above on how children internalize values that they are exposed to.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

What this simple but ingenious poem implies is that children are largely a product of their environments and upbringing. What grown ups say and do greatly impacts the children's world views and affects their behavioral patterns. This is not to say that they are "blank slates", far from it. Like grown ups, they have minds of their own which are impressionable. Consistent exposure to negative influences can do irreparable damage as many studies show. Other forces also come into play such as: peer pressure, media influences, personal choice etcetera as children grow older. This is why parental guidance, love and care are crucial to help shape children's characters through modeling and reinforcing sound values, at the same time discouraging anti-social behavior.

### 1.3.7 Strong foundations re-emphasized

Meier (1977: 4) reveals that, "about 85% of one's adult personality is formed by the time he/she is 6 years old ...after 6...it becomes increasingly more difficult", "to correct emotional defects". The author is a Christian psychiatrist engaged in preventive psychiatry by helping people to live according to God's Word (:46). He also attributes the increase in homosexuality to the Women's Liberation Movement that make weak men, threatened by women, escape into homosexuality by choice (:52). Families need gender and emotional balance to instill sound values in children throughout their lives.

Kirkburton online: ([http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_6784/is](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6784/is)) accessed 2009 Nov 9/ in "Peace begins at home; Mailbag" argues that to attain: "... world peace .... Individual peace must come first, then, family peace would follow and only on that foundation would come peace of the society. This is because individuals are the basic units of families and families are the basic units of societies and nations...There is need for absolute love and absolute values. On this foundation the values of truth, beauty and goodness emerge". The researcher's perspective is that children depend on their families to create the right environment conducive to peaceful co-existence. The home atmosphere has to be tranquil and free from abuse and neglect.

## 1.4 Problem formulation

### 1.4.1 The family in crisis

The family has been described as “a burning issue”, “a big revolution” and “family diversification” called “a new revolution” that called for engagement in dialogue on what is happening in the family arena globally (SABC1 Sunday 10.30-11a.m. discussion in May 2010). Disputable family structures, divorce, family disintegration and reconstitution, single parenting, child neglect, homosexual family paradigms, teen pregnancies, unwanted babies, aborted babies, abandoned babies, babies given away for adoption, abused babies etc. are the order of our societies. Abusive parents were most likely, abuse victims themselves as children (Lynn, 1974: 240). This fact is endorsed by Miller (cited in Chambers, 1997: 233) who states that, “Those who are violent and intolerant as adults are often those against whom violence was done when they were young and defenseless: Hitler, Stalin and Ceausescu all endured gross violent abuses as children”. Bayes (1994: 464) argues also that “Children who are beaten, burned, and otherwise mistreated develop severe emotional problems. Moreover, battered children are most likely to become abusive parents, perpetuating a chain of abuse and mistreatment for generations”. This is why Chambers (1997:223) argues for transformation of society through changing the way we treat children, as a powerful long-term strategy. He wonders why “treatment of children by their parents” is not taken up as a global subject of study by UNICEF and PLAN International.

In the last couple of decades, family problems were exacerbated by HIV/AIDS related illnesses and deaths of parents leaving countless vulnerable children in child-headed households. Inevitable inflation rates hinder the extended family from carrying out its dutiful intervention of taking in needy relatives. All this increases human socio-economic stresses, mental health problems, unrest, identity complexes leading to escalating substance abuse and crime rates.

For those in favour of marriage, family structural and relational problems have also been profoundly influenced by global shifts in development thinking. Human rights promoted the Women’s Liberation Movement that, unwittingly and unfortunately, perpetuated family

breakups as some women divorced uncompromising husbands and sought work outside the home (Hafner, 1993:5-6). Gender issues have raged long and hard with heavy casualties all round. Dobson (1982:42) argues that ~~the~~ revolution in feminine sex-role identity...has produced a decade of depression and self-doubt among women...devastating to the self-concept...especially those who perceive themselves to be ‘standed’ in a homemaking responsibility”. The married women seem to be the ones with the raw deal. Hafner (1993:6) is convinced that bad marriages are responsible for psychiatric disorder, and ~~twice~~ as many women as men suffer from anxiety and depressive disorders”, especially women with no employment outside the home (:7). According to James Levin, (cited in Dobson, 1978: 154) men have not fared any better and states that: ~~The~~ male is in a crisis. Buffeted by the women’s movement, constrained by a traditional and internalized definition of ‘masculinity’, men literally don’t know who they are, what women want from them or even what they want from themselves”. Meanwhile, children suffer neglect, rejection and many other negatives.

#### 1.4.2 Consequences of absence of care in early childhood

Dobson (1982: 49) argues that, ‘there is no substitute for loving parental leadership in the early development of children’. An investigation into the early childhoods of inmates at an Arizona state prison, carried out to establish what fundamental characteristics the men shared, revealed that all the prisoners had had no adult contact in their early years and spent time alone or with peers and became ‘perpetrators of violent crimes later in life’ (:48-49). Hardenbrook (1991:381) states that there is evidence of a new kind of disordered personality among child criminals ~~a~~ desensitized, almost passionless youth who has...no compassion...no remorse...in violent sexual crimes perpetrated by children against other children”. The author attributes this to father absence. The input of both parents is invaluable to attaining a holistic, conciliatory, balanced relational family paradigm capable of instilling ~~collective~~ ‘collective consciousness’ of care in the individual at grass root level as a catalyst for domestic and socio-political stability.

Relationship problems, hurt, rejection, marital failure, varied forms of abuse, identity issues, sibling rivalry, anger, bitterness, substance abuse, loneliness, severed relationships, psychosomatic disorders etcetera characterize our societies. A young pastor exclaimed, ~~Never~~ thought there could be so many hurting people! ...mate beating, father-daughter incest, fear,

confusion, threats of suicide, homosexuality, alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, anxiety, guilt, family problems, eating disorders, chronic stress, and a host of other problems” (Collins, 1988:15). –Men and women share a deadly problem that kills good relating...we are committed, first of all, to ourselves. Each of us ... holds fast to an overriding concern for our own well-being” argues Crabb (1991: inner front cover flap) who recommends that we become –other-centered”.

### 1.4.3 Family breakdown in South Africa

The back-cover summary of *Marriage and family life in South Africa: Theme 1* (1996) states that: –The increase in family breakdown in South Africa with its negative consequences for society in general and for personality development in particular, eventually led to calls for multidisciplinary research into the family life of the different groups”. In a different context elsewhere, Eyre, in his article: True or false: Family is the basic unit of society accessed online: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4188/is\\_20031214/ai\\_](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4188/is_20031214/ai_) on 5/6/2010 cites Zinmeister’s observations that: –There is a mountain of scientific evidence showing that when families disintegrate, children often end up with intellectual, physical, and emotional scars that persist for life...drug crisis, the educational crisis and the problem of teen pregnancy and juvenile crime. But all these ills trace back predominantly to one source: broken families. Problems that are not solved in the home spill out into society and become crises that are impossibly expensive and expensively impossible for the larger institutions of society to solve”. All this goes to show how critical and far-reaching family problems are.

Also, online: <http://www.childwelfare.org.za/index.php/our-programmes/child-protection>, accessed on (11/09/2010), Child Welfare South Africa (CWSA) reports alarming statistics that would upset many. Estimates of between 8000 and 10 000 children need care and protection annually. It promotes –Isolabantwana: Eye on the Child” as an international community mobilization model for child care. Statistical trends shown below, from 2005-2009, yield an unsettling and gloomy picture of where humanity is heading.

- In 2005-2006, 8 524 were identified as orphaned and vulnerable children
- 2006-2007, 10 141 children were added as needy
- 2007-2008, 15 949 orphans and others were added
- 2008-2009, 80 new child care sites were added (as more parents died of AIDS)

Turner (2000: 866) states that, “R50m. was allocated to 1 133 poverty alleviation projects in 1997-1998. Child-support grants to care-givers of more than 23 823 children are paid out every month...” Probably the bulk of these grants are ear-marked for single mothers who are struggling to bring up children alone. Whilst it is noble to provide disadvantaged single mothers with financial assistance, how sustainable will this be in long-term economic planning, given the escalating rates of marital failure and the unprecedented increases in children born out of wedlock, not mentioning HIV/AIDS orphans?

#### 1.4.4 A crisis of morals

Many women are ‘lone’ mothers or ‘single’ mothers today, for different reasons, and are to be congratulated for their bravery in opting to keep their children, provide care for them instead of resorting to abortion. It is this particular group of mothers that the empirical research seeks to interview in a bid to establish its sentiments and perspectives concerning men, husbands, fathers and their involvement in child care. Van der Vliet (cited in Jones 1996: 6-8) discovered eye-opening truths in Grahamstown on the ‘phenomenon of non-marriage’ for women: that it was by choice. Men were considered a drain on the economic resources of the family and women preferred rearing children alone as “a strategy against poverty”. In the Eastern Cape, similar attitudes were expressed where “increasing numbers of women are making a conscious decision to remain single because they wish to avoid economic domination by men” but children and motherhood are valued in such contexts even when there are no marriage prospects (:7). This may be fine for strategizing mothers, but, what about the child’s needs for a father and holistic upbringing?

A ‘crisis of morals’ results from a “loss of shared understanding of what is right,” (Smedes 1983: 2). Uncertainty of what a family is and should be and ignorance of its role in human development may be responsible for the mindsets expressed above as well as the ones expressed in this section. Perold (1985:12) cites Ross Modise (interviewed in 1983) who admitted that: “I don’t want my daughters to get married ... Marriage, I don’t care for it... They can have children and support them ... In Soweto marriage is no more ... men drink too much after they get married ... they don’t want to work. Some men are already crippled by liquor. So he’s just an extra baby for the wife. He wants money for smokes and beer. She

has to buy him clothes and feed him like a baby... Soon there will be no more marriage. Just boyfriends and girlfriends!”

- A single mother of a 3 year old boy cheerfully stated that she will never marry because ‘men are full of nonsense’. Due to lack of male models in the home, her son dislikes being a boy preferring to be like the smartly dressed girl neighbor.
- In 2009, an unmarried, 66 year old British lady’s strong maternal instincts led her to conceiving a baby through artificial insemination and giving birth to a son in 2010 (told by a friend and confirmed by a newspaper article).
- Some gay and lesbian couples are raising children by adoption. With the couples being of the same gender, what family model should these children emulate?

Kinnear (1999: 50) points out that “Many people believed that children living in gay and lesbian families, would exhibit many adjustment and behavioral problems” but now, “public recognition of the ability of gays and lesbians to be good parents to children is growing”. She also mentions that “several studies have shown that gay fathers tend to be more nurturing and less traditional in paternal attitudes than heterosexual fathers” (:51). Thus, public opinion tends to be morally flexible but not necessarily right.

On belated motherhood, Ludke (cited in Kinnear 1999:9) explains that very little research has been done on well-educated, financially secure, older, never-married mothers with promising or well-established careers, who own their homes, and are confident that they can raise a child on their own because “they blend into middle-class communities and tend to guard their privacy”. The reasons for their non-marriage were that they were either ‘undesirable’ marriage material or that “the number of available men was inadequate”. Motherhood without marriage was found to be a viable option for the following single ladies: those who ‘wanted to have a child but had not been able to find a man with whom they wanted to spend their lives’; those satisfied with being single; those who ‘believed marriage to be too demanding’; those who ‘feared marriage’ due to bad parental models; those who ‘wanted to do things their own way without a lot of conflict’; those who ‘viewed romantic relationships as restricting their independence and autonomy’ and those ‘who needed a child in order to have someone to control’ etcetera (Steiner; Siegel; Englestein and colleagues; Miller all cited in Kinnear, 1999:9-10). In such cases, the reason was “personal and generally well thought out” (:10). However, to bring about stable societies composed of well-integrated individuals,

society needs to reformulate normative standards for being family in a way that promotes care consciousness and puts children's needs and interests above personal ones.

Work overload for women remains a thorny issue. Family structures involve roles and functions that in turn affect its support systems and survival strategies. African women generally do most of the domestic work. The wife is, metaphorically speaking, the 'beast of burden' and the Swazi women, for example, are not to complain when abused. The seSwati name for wife or woman means "one who dies without speaking of what she has endured" (Meroff 2004: 52). In America, "Many black wives feel they owe their husband nothing once he fails to provide for the family" (Lynn 1974: 88). A similar intolerant mindset is exercised in Africa when a woman could be divorced for failing to produce sons. Alternatively, the husband may be compelled by his family to marry other women who can bear sons in order to keep the family name alive. Could some of these experiences and ideas be influential in the anti-marriage sentiments of women in Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape? Are there ways of resolving the gender conflicts between men and women amicably? Is there a link between parental relational issues, father absence and the general unrest in society? Research at grass-root level should be revealing.

The single mother phenomenon that the researcher casually observed among black South Africans also needs examining to gauge whether it is the norm or the anomaly, whether it is the solution or catalyst of some of society's problems. Many research findings seem to stress high levels of poverty among single parent families of the mother variety, especially female-headed households (Burkey, 1999; Hughes & Bennet, 1999; Meroff 2004: 152).

#### 1. 4.5 Research Question(s) and Hypothesis

The central question, problem (intellectual puzzle) is: Given the complex reality of family structural and relational dynamics, in the ever changing world, with escalating single parenting by mothers globally, what family paradigm can be outlined as conducive to inculcating sound universal values and caring attitudes in individual development of children? In order to tackle this puzzle adequately, we need explanatory answers, to the following:

- What are the causes and effects of single motherhood?
- What challenges do single mothers face in child care issues?
- How do single mothers view government empowerment policies for women?
- What are their perspectives of ‘men’, ‘husbands’ and ‘fathers’?
- What are some of the effects of father absence on children?
- What family paradigm do mothers believe is best for holistic child care and care consciousness training so that children grow up to be caring, responsible people?

Laws (2003:455), defines a hypothesis as: —hunch or educated guess as to why something occurs. Statement of a predicted outcome ...” My predictions are listed below.

- Single mother family structures are default survival mechanisms aiming at coping with the crisis of family disintegration, erosion of traditional marital and family values, poverty, absent fathers, economically non contributing fathers, divorce, widowhood etcetera.
- The ideal family is one which is: caring, domination-free, a “three-folding” one, gender inclusive under biological parents living together harmoniously with each other caring for their children holistically.

#### 1.4.6 Research purpose and anticipated benefits

To seek an entry point for dialogue and mission around the integrative theme of family relationships and universal promotion of caring attitudes as crucial to individual character development and as a means towards alleviating the socio-economic and eco-human crisis that beleaguer our families and societies today.

The study also seeks to contribute plausible explanations for hindrances to social development sustainability and propose an alternative paradigm for being family as a means to defeating the general lack of care in society. Pending further engagement with participants, participatory action research is called for to help empower mothers to take charge of their lives and resolve child care issues effectively through networking with one another.

#### 1.4.7 Assumptions of the study

- “Only one institution comes close to affecting every human being, and that institution is the family. Each of us has been influenced ... by the quality and texture of our upbringing and by the care, example, and advice of our parents” (Bocian, 1994: 447).
- From a secular and feminist stance, the conventional nuclear family and biblical family set ups are viewed negatively, as paternalistic and oppressive to women and need revamping.
- Development alternatives recommend that inequities caused by domination be resolved through non-violent confrontations and conciliatory dialogues in order to ease the suffering of the marginalized people.
- Biblical principles, when correctly utilized, have timeless insights into family-related issues to keep family members in harmony with each other and united in child care. As stated under 1.4.6, one of the research purposes is to seek an entry point for dialogue and mission on the importance of the family in the universal promotion of caring attitudes. The empirical research unearthed a lot of emotional hurt and uncertainty in many of the mothers that call for attention. Their pain is real and should not be overlooked. Of course, solutions cannot be attained overnight.
- Tolerance and peaceful co-existence between the genders in families lead to sustainable societies. Status in Christ is ultimately more important than gender stereotyping (Louw, 2009: 95ff). This assumption is based on Louw’s (2009) article entitled: “From Phenomenology to Ontology in the Gender Debate- “Feminine” without “Femininity” beyond “Feminism”?”

Male and female media stereotypes tend to portray exaggerated images of what it is to be ‘real’ men or ‘real’ women. In most cases women are demeaned and presented as petty, pretty, desirable toys for men to play with. On the other hand men are portrayed as tough, muscular and strong. Apparently, Louw argues that to foil gender disputes, both men and women ought to enjoy their spiritual identity of being equal in Christ and so relate with one another in a manner that reflects the dignity and worth befitting heirs of the Kingdom.

## 1.5 Research Methodology

### 1.5.1 The importance of methodology

Leedy (1997: 9) explains that methodology is “the core concept underlying all ... research procedures ... organizing, planning and directing the whole project ... (it) controls the study, dictates the acquisition of the data”, formulates approaches that cause hidden meanings and implications to surface and “issues a conclusion or series of conclusions leading to an expansion of knowledge”.

Development problems are multi-faceted, interdisciplinary and tackling them should reflect this complexity, for comprehensive treatment. For this reason, the researcher has opted for an eclectic methodology combining empirical and non-empirical aspects, in an attempt to justify a family paradigm that is holistic and has ‘care’ as its chief quality. The lengthy preliminaries on child care, given under Chapter 1, serve to ground the area of research in a broad-based, foundational, interdisciplinary context that takes cognizance of the social, psychological, theological, ethical, developmental spheres etcetera, for maximum emphasis.

### 1.5.2 The Non-empirical design:

Literature reviews fall under this category (Mouton 2001: 143) and were drawn from:

- Theology and Theory of development, Ethics and Missiology, all of which helped in selecting and formulating the integrative theme of family care consciousness as an entry point to human development to foil neglect, physical and moral degeneration.
- Selected biblical texts affirmed the gender inclusive, relationally modified conventional family paradigm as normative for the maintenance of family stability (chapter 5) supported throughout the study, by Christian literature by Christian psychologists in touch with hurting humanity.

- Interdisciplinary references from the social sciences supplied information on marriage and family matters that enhanced the focus of this study and narrowed the epistemological gaps.
- Biblical analogies (e.g. the body of Christ; family of God; Trinity, fellowship [koinonia], service [diakonia], love [agape] etc) are used to highlight the importance of unity, love, harmony, commitment and sacrificial self-giving necessary to keep families healthy.

### 1.5.3 Empirical Research

Empirically, the qualitative research sought to understand the phenomenon of single mother/non-marriage statuses in the informal settlement under study, where African values and worldviews may have been overtaken by modernity and feminist ideologies. Qualitative data gathering, analysis and evaluation helped the researcher to decipher the attitudes and perspectives of women especially single mothers, to men, marriage, family and child care issues. A sample of 10 single mothers and 10 married mothers (the control group), were used. Snowballing sampling was used to some extent where one single mother would recommend one, who in turn, would recommend another, and so on. Since the researcher is not resident in that community and knows a few of the ladies, such a strategy helped to introduce her to new acquaintances for more effective participatory research. A few single mothers shied away from participation pleading lack of time due to work overload both at home and the work places. As Punch (1998:105) states, representative sampling is crucial in empirical research, since no study is inclusive of everyone, everywhere and everything. Printed questionnaires were issued to community leaders to gather general information. Guided interviews brought out the more subtle forms of data calling for hidden sentiments, hurts, bitterness and aspirations from the mothers. One-on-one interviews produced the best results.

Research at grass-roots level provided the coveted insider's views, usable as entry points to addressing marriage and family relational and structural issues. Engaging people in prophetic dialogue (Bosch 1991:23), on a "collective consciousness" of the importance of dual parental child care by natural parents as God's design, intended for human good, may very well be the best option open for restoring family balance. The "critical hermeneutics" approach is biased

“toward a view from the inside ... the self-definition of ...” the single mothers under study, “with whom we wish to enter into dialogue” (Bosch 1991:23). This self-definition “may be wrong, inadequate and may need to be extended, criticized or challenged” (Nel cited in Bosch 1991:24) through dialogues.

Anticipated limitations of this strategy, which lay in the researcher’s incompetence in the vernacular, were minimized by the participants’ adequate mastery of English. Nevertheless, Xhosa translated copies were readily available for clarification of difficult terminology.

#### 1.5.4 A comprehensive description of the empirical context

The community under study is of special interest to the researcher because of her former involvement in it and its accessibility to her place of residence. She first became aware of the prevalence of single mothers through casual interactions with the women and children from the community. It is an informal settlement that has witnessed many fire tragedies, due to overcrowding and the construction of shelters (commonly referred to as shacks) using combustible material like wood, cardboard and plastic. There is hardly room for children to play in a safe open space except the library and school enclosures. Various forms of violence occur which expose children to wrong models of what communal life should be. I have given some examples<sup>5</sup> below of violence that occurs in the area. Obviously, much more occurs

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<sup>5</sup>A Baptist Church pastor was shot dead during a prayer meeting about 3 years ago and 2 others critically injured by a jilted lover of one of his converts

- A False Bay male student (my daughter’s classmate then), was knifed to death in 2010.
- A security guard was split open and hung on a fence in August 2010.
- Some children are raped and some go missing (only to have their corpses recovered sooner or later).
- Fights are frequent with deadly consequences. My husband received a call at 3 a.m. about 6 months ago, from an acquaintance asking him to lift a badly beaten young man to hospital. Fortunately, the police intervened.
- On 22 October, 2010 on a Saturday afternoon, on my way back after an interview with one of the participants, I witnessed first-hand the brutality of knife inflicted wounds. A man was lying on the road bleeding profusely, allegedly having been stabbed by a girlfriend. Fortunately, the police arrived soon afterwards and took the critically injured man to hospital.
- Reports of xenophobic violence rear their heads from time to time and have to be curbed by watchful and determined community leaders
- Shebeens sell alcohol at all hours provoking quarrelsome behavior culminating in violence.

which does not get to our ears. <sup>6</sup>The media environment, unfortunately, exposes children to cruel situations as this sad case portrays. How can they learn to be responsible and caring individuals when all they see is violence? Culprits often go unreported and unpunished due to residents' fear of gang retribution on loved ones (cf. Hanover Park resident on T.V.)

Positive changes are obvious. A few years ago, education in the settlement under study, was hampered by many local needs like: poor housing, overcrowded classrooms, hunger, indiscipline, low achievement aims etcetera. Due to the work of committed NGOs, there is better housing, roomier classrooms and meal provision for pupils at break times. Active and progressive community leaders work well with external helpers to improve the children's chances of succeeding in school. Hopefully, there will be further dialogue and engagement in participatory action research on child-care, child development issues and promotion of family three-folding, which, ultimately, is the intention of this study. The people seem open to dialogue and mission. I was impressed to discover that married women engage single ladies in dialogues in order to curb marital infidelity of their husbands. I believe strongly that people develop themselves. Change agents are catalysts of issues already in the pipeline.

The teaching of sound values like the work ethics, respect for other people's property and hygienic living appear to be neglected though. Able-bodied young men roam the streets drinking, smoking and sometimes intimidating foreigners, demanding their hard-earned cash, cell phones and instigate occasional eruptions in xenophobic violence. Peaceful co-existence needs to be modeled from early childhood in the home, the community and in schools.

Without sustainable marital and family relationships, crucial for healthy child development in eco-human care, there can be no sustainable socio-economic development. In her article: *'An Urgent Call for Action: 9-12'*, Kibuka (1997) beautifully expresses this idea by stating that: *'Unless children were made a priority, the development nations have so far achieved, will be lost'*. De Vries (2003: 66) describes the nuclear family as *'self-perpetuating breeding ground for root-less-ness and alienation'* in the absence of attachment to extended family, the church

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<sup>6</sup> On 15 November, 2010, a British couple, on a honeymoon in South Africa, was abducted in Gugulethu and the young bride's body was recovered in the back seat of the abandoned car in Khayelitsha. Very shocking indeed! The investigation is on-going, and the husband of the diseased bride is implicated in a pending trial.

or neighborhood. Now, if the nuclear family, in vogue for so long, is inadequate to stand as a holistic paradigm for child care, how much less would single parenting be?

## **1.6 Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1: Introduction: motivation, focus, problem formulation and chapter outlines

The chapter introduces care as essential to survival and child care as foundational to holistic human development in caring consciousness as key to sustainable family relationships and social development. The neglect of children's development has drastic and negative consequences, for both the state and society. South African statistical evidence paints a bleak picture of the future with regards to child welfare intervention sustainability, since increasing numbers of children are becoming destitute and lack adequate care. Prisons are overcrowded as many juveniles grow up undisciplined, abused or neglected. What family set up can adequately cater for children's needs holistically, given the escalating rates of single parenting by mothers especially?

Chapter 2: The nuclear family and child care: Its major challenges, is divided into 2.

Part 1 defines and outlines the relational, functional dynamics of a nuclear family paradigm, where a mature man and a mature woman are in a socially acceptable marital bond, as traditionally ideal for legitimate production and holistic care and socialization of children. However, generic literature and local news sourced for the reality on the ground, showed such a family paradigm to be in a huge crisis. Current issues and debates on child care are also referred to. The nuclear family has, quite rightly, been under attack from many quarters, one of which is feminist ideology that, sadly, saw 'motherhood' as oppressive for women.

Part 2 examines the merits and demerits of major challenges to the nuclear family paradigm, on child care issues. Escalating single parenting, by mothers globally and the attendant poverty for the majority of those women is cause for concern. As governments respond to 'feminization of poverty', (rooted in the history of exclusion and devaluation of women's labor contribution in patriarchal societies) some mothers take advantage of this and divorce husbands as a means to accessing child welfare payouts. In some genuine cases, abuse in the

home by the husband automatically calls for intervention to rescue a mother and her children. Father absence is defined in all its forms as well as the negative impact it has on children in general, at particular stages of development and genders of children. Cultural violence and gender violence are also discussed as unhelpful in modeling care consciousness in children. In view of all the negatives attached to the nuclear family paradigm, hints by at least three authors, call for a workable family set up to benefit all concerned, namely: fathers, mothers and children. Parsons' theory is criticized and marginalized as out-dated and paternalistic. Developmental trends call for interdependence and good team players

Chapter 3: Methodology: Detailing the qualitative research process used in the exploration of maternal experiences in child care in an informal settlement

The empirical research procedure for a phenomenological investigation at the grass-root level, to account for non-marriage and the increase of single parenting by mothers mostly is outlined. In depth interviews were conducted using standardized forms to generate systematized data from 10 single mothers and 10 married mothers for comparison purposes. The rationale for the questions asked was given in table format. Some tabularized data was extracted from the participants' interview forms and tabulated to facilitate analysis and discussion. The analysis took place throughout the research. The analysis methods are also discussed to show how rigorous and systematic this procedure had to be for maximum results that reflect true experiences as women lived them. In addition to reasons for single mother status, mothers had to state whether or not they received help from the fathers of their children or government's child welfare grants, what child care challenges they faced as well as what views they had of men, husbands and fathers. This was facilitated by using the projective, word association test technique, normally used by clinical psychologists as a means to eliciting hidden sentiments. This worked well as evidenced by the mothers eloquently voicing, often bitterly, their perspectives of the opposite sex and their child care experiences. The findings were analyzed under chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Analyzing, interpreting, evaluating and reporting the empirical research findings

The chapter gives reasons for single mother statuses, largely outcomes of indulgence in unprotected sexual activity with no marital prospects. Only two cases were consequences of

broken promises which left one mother with a child out of wedlock. The other is a cohabitation set up. Hopefully the marriage will occur. There were two other cohabitations struggling with uncertainties. Two single mothers divorced husbands in order to gain access to the welfare grants, but one of them is already regretting her move as a rushed and youth induced one due to lack of guidance and counseling.

Father absence is already manifesting itself in some cases. A table sums up the challenges and fears mothers have. Finances, child safety, fear of abductions, rape of children, HIV/AIDS, peer influence, etcetera, were some of the concerns voiced. The ideal family paradigm for holistic child care as well as mothers' preferred statuses were also discussed with mixed results. On mothers' perspectives of men, husbands and fathers, it was like opening the floodgates of bitter emotion for young mothers especially. Men were called *'dogs'*, *'irresponsible'*, *'selfish'*, *'ungrateful'* etcetera. Some of the answers were seasoned and balanced, and these were mostly from believing mothers. Married mothers, by comparison did not fare better at all, as the researcher had anticipated, but had their own brand of problems, typical of the nuclear family discussed under chapter two generically as well as the additional extended family challenges which are part and parcel of traditional African culture. It emerged that, cultural gender violence against women still rears its head and the call for an alternative family paradigm is more urgent than ever before if the heterosexual family is to survive and remain intact at its basic level. The preliminary conclusion was that the marital bond has to be strengthened before children feature so that both parents train their children properly. Reconciliation of the two genders has to be effected on a large scale for the sake of holistic child care.

Chapter 5: Proposing family three-folding virtues as biblically sound and developmentally agreeable

The chapter affirms principles of God's word as authoritative and contextually applicable to family issues today following adequate exegesis. God's love for children and hence all people is highlighted and hence the need to give them maximum care required for holistic development. Marriage and family are God instituted and he hates divorce (Malachi 2: 16). Selfishness, lack of love and commitment, an unforgiving spirit, rebellion etcetera, lead to marital failure. A three-folding family can be defined as an attitudinally, and relationally

modified nuclear family, with innumerable folds of caring dependence and interdependence that are life-long and mutable, as life's seasons change for all family members. It carries on a legacy of intergenerational care that is gender inclusive, conciliatory and affirmative of the divine order as well as inclusive of eco-human spheres. By analogy, it is relationally and functionally comparable to the Trinitarian model where there is absence of hierarchy, unity and "economic subordination" explained in chapter 5. Male authoritarianism becomes loving service [diakonia] and cooperation becomes a pleasure for women. Children are valued, cared for and encouraged to realize their full potential.

Care is the key to defeating domination and neglect. Christ is the key to care/ and the Cross is the key to Christ. Thus, through faith in Christ, the rich consider it a privilege as they sacrificially supply what the poor lack. The disadvantaged in turn, are obliged to gratefully and ungrudgingly accept the 'hand ups' from those who have, as from the Lord. Similarly, the father dispenses his responsibilities with a servant's attitude, taking into consideration his wife's interests and their children's needs and preferences so that none feels uncared for or unloved. As their mother joyfully cooperates with a caring husband, the children learn to copy the right way to respond to relevant authorities in life.

Care consciousness was equated to God consciousness because, as fallible human beings, we cannot care enough or holistically as we ought to. Spiritually speaking, believing single mothers and their children also form acceptable three-folding relational structures with God as the Father to the fatherless. No brand new paradigm of family can work better than the initial one that God stipulated in Genesis before the Fall which human beings deviate from.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Family three-folding is much more than just conciliatory and affirmative. It is also holistic, inclusive, developmentally conscious, biblically correct and contextually sensitive. Christo-centric dialoguing with willing people of all ages, from all races and all walks of life call for congregational involvement concerning the divine plan for individuals, family relationships and the cultivation of conciliatory mindsets, is the core of this chapter. Through participatory action research and strategizing, the single and married mothers may be empowered to initiate communal gatherings where motivation speakers may be appointed from among the

local people to address common concerns like parenting strategies, hygienic living and advocate inclusion of care themes on the Life Orientation school curriculum. Each community has to establish its own agenda and ensure implementation of ideas suggested.

### **1.7 Explanatory definition of terms and theme integration**

#### Family

This basically refers to a gender and age inclusive group of individuals namely: the father, mother and children, living together as a unit of inter-dependent, inter-generational beings under one roof committed to caring for one another, unequally and ungrudgingly, sharing costs, responsibilities, affection, joys and sorrows of life. Edith Schaeffer's definition sums up comprehensively, that the family should be an educational system, an economic unit, a religious institution, a recreation centre etc.

#### Family three-folding

This is the researcher's proposed name for the relationally modified family according to correct biblical interpretation of key verses in the Bible on family relationships. The term "three folding" is derived from Perlas' innovative 'social three-folding' development strategy in the Philippines, well known for its inclusive conceptual significance that seeks to neutralize elite globalization through formation of tripartite partnerships between the government, business and civil society sectors in order to benefit all parties, especially the civil sector.

In the study, family three-folding describes the intricate, multi-faceted and complex nature of the heterosexual (gender inclusive) family members and their apparently endless relational folds, roles, functions; reversible dependence, independence and interdependence, as children develop to become adults capable of raising their own children as well as looking after their aging and frail parents.

#### The Individual

This term is considered by some schools of thought as a Western concept that is increasingly becoming unsustainable when dissociated from relationships of interdependence with others. No man is an island. Parsons' sociological paradigm AGIL (adaptation, goal attainment,

integration and latency) ([http://wwwworldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/AGIL\\_Paradigm/1](http://wwwworldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/AGIL_Paradigm/1)  
[http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Talcott\\_Parsons](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Talcott_Parsons)) accessed on 2010/08/16, explains the interconnection between the individual and society, in his ‘grand theory’. The theory is under criticism but for our conceptualization of family relationships, it will suffice.

#### (Personal) Human Development

Up till recently, developmental efforts in this dimension have largely been restricted to modern economic advancement, skills acquisition, gender issues, human rights etc. at the expense of care values, norms, cultural traditions that emphasize personhood, family-hood, a sense of community and togetherness, –*ujamaa*” as Onwubiko (2001) puts it. Development alternatives have been a paradigmatic shift, noticeable in the 1960s from modernization theory’s economic focus, which had impacted the Third World negatively, to inclusion of social and human intellectual development (Hughes and Bennet, 1998). In Missiology, unprecedented –*cultural revitalization*” through gospel translatability was widespread, especially in Africa (cf. Sanneh, 1989). This renewed confidence, a sense of personal worth and dignity to indigenous people globally. Unless individuals and people groups recover self-respect they cannot pass on sound values to their children, let alone values of caring for others and not just selfish care for themselves. This applies to everybody, rich and poor, black and white.

Myers’ (2003) book, *Walking With the Poor*, focuses on spiritual transformation of people, through telling the biblical story, listening to their stories and fitting them into the divine story and scheme of things. This strategy highlights individuals’ divine identity, worth and purpose which rids people of their ‘*god complexes*’.<sup>7</sup> Hughes and Bennet (1998), enhance this by demonstrating how religious worldviews can perpetuate poverty mindsets, for example, the African animist tradition and the Indian caste system and law of karma. The authors argue that there is need for universal conversion because: –*there can be no significant social transformation without spiritual transformation...and there can be no real spiritual transformation that does not make itself visible in social transformation*” (Hughes & Bennet, 1998: 154). Ultimately, this is the goal of all missionary endeavour so that people get to know their God and not only worship him but serve him in every sphere of their lives.

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<sup>7</sup> The incapacitating, misguided mindset that keep people trapped in poverty, believing that some are born to rule and some to serve them, in some defeatist attitude to life (Myers, 2003; Wink, 1986).

Chambers' (1997: 231-233) observations are also worth reporting here, that: "The personal dimension is a bizarre blind spot in development. Behavior and attitudes have simply not been on the development map... If whole systems are to shift and transform, it will be because of the sum and interaction of innumerable personal actions and changes in what sort of people we are... and become: closed or open, fearful or secure, callous or caring, hating or tolerant, violent or peace-making". He also considers family relationships as formative for adults and children alike (: 233). This refers to character formation (cf. Dallas Willard below)

### Care Consciousness

Keeble (in Atkinson and Field, 1995:215), presents 'care' and 'caring' as derivatives from the Latin word [cura] with a range of meanings encompassing "grief, lament, concern, interest, attention, solicitude, cure, management, administration and guardianship". Jesus is given as our model of care, compassion and sacrificial self-giving. Keeble explains further that: "Caring belongs within loving, persisting relationships ... It is mutually involving and supportive, encompassing life's normality as well as life's difficulties" (:216).

'Consciousness' means awareness. Raising consciousness means building awareness in people or making people aware of what is happening or what is good for them. Training children in care consciousness would involve character formation through habitual doing of what is right until the child unconsciously does the right thing expected of him/her to do (insight gleaned from Dallas Willard's public lecture at Stellenbosch on 16/08/2010). This is moral training of children. Proverbs 22: 6 instructs thus: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it". Meier (1977: 4) reveals that, "about 85% of one's adult personality is formed by the time he/she is 6 years old ...after 6...it becomes increasingly more difficult", 'to correct emotional defects'. Families need gender relational balance to instill sound values in children. The renowned poem: 'Children learn what they live', (already cited, Nolte, 1972) sums it up the importance of good role modeling in families by adults.

I am indebted to Leonardo Boff (2008) for the care ethos expounded in his book *Essential Care: An Ethics of Human Nature*. Hall (1990) shares similar ideas in his book entitled: *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, highlighting man's responsibility for creation and his ultimate accountability to God. Nurnberger (1999) outlines socio-economic power

structures and patterns of collective consciousness that inspired me to tackle the family paradigm as a potential development tool for the spreading of care awareness. If care is inculcated in every individual within the family set up from conception, and nurtured throughout one's physical, social, cognitive, educational, psychological development etcetera, what a harvest of responsible, caring humanity that will yield! Selfishness would be history.

#### Conciliatory, affirmative, and inclusive paradigm

By this I mean, a family set up whose members have learnt to tolerate and accommodate one another and live fairly peacefully across the following potential divides: age, gender, socio-economic status, educational qualifications or lack of them, infirmity etcetera. Such a family set up, will obviously include at the basic, nuclear levels, father/husband; mother/wife; children/offspring with extended family members, for example grandparents and other needy relatives from time to time. How family members resolve their differences is also a crucial aspect of togetherness in the true sense of the word. The Slippery Slope (chapter 5) is a handy analogy to help individuals guard against peace-breaking moves.

#### Sustainable social development.

This refers to the endless flow of benefits leading to improved life-styles that enhance humane qualities and maintenance of sound values that make life worth living, respect life and acknowledge other people and their unassailable rights.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE NUCLEAR FAMILY AND ITS MAJOR CHALLENGES

#### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the concept of holistic child care by one's natural parents as foundational to integrated human development as a means towards achieving some measure of social stability. It was also established that the family relational crisis we are facing is of such gigantic proportions that all disciplines were/are invited to join the intellectual quests (Marriage and Family life in South Africa, 1996) for workable solutions. Relational poverty (Myers, 1999; 2003) cripples sustainable development efforts. The chapter is divided into 2.

Part 1 examines the efficacy of the nuclear family as the conventional basis of natural child care, by defining marriage/the nuclear family functions; describing parenthood/parenting; outlining the stages of human development; explaining the importance of habit/character formation in children; alluding to debates on family/childcare issues.

Part 2 outlines the major challenges to the nuclear family set up which are: the increasing single parenting by mothers, listing its causes and challenges; multidimensional forms of father absence; abuse/domestic violence in families; surrogacy/adoption options; as well as mention appeals made by some authors, for workable alternative family paradigms. Online: <http://family.jrunk.org/pages/1581/Single-Parent-Families.html> Ohiorhenuan (2003:98) states that: "The eradication of human poverty implies sustainable access to quality social services for all". Similarly, quality family life should constitute a significant part of social services delivery through the provision of holistic child care.

#### **PART 1:**

#### **2.1 The Nuclear Family: Functions, child care issues and debates**

##### 2.1.1 Definition of nuclear family/marriage: sanctioned sex/legitimate child bearing

According to Spiro (in Gordon, 1986:81) "the universality of the family has always been accepted as a sound hypothesis in anthropology." However, Petzol (1998 cited online: [http://family.jrunk.org/pages/491/Family\\_Definition\\_Conclusion](http://family.jrunk.org/pages/491/Family_Definition_Conclusion) accessed on: 12/17/2010)

pointed out that no “universal definition of the family exists but rather many appropriate definitions do” which are “racially, inter-generationally” and “situationally diverse”. He argues that functionally, family definitions are subjective and advocates that variations in family form and process must also acknowledge the predominant cultural definitions. Crystal (1990: 433) describes family as “an ambiguous term referring to both the group formed by co-resident husband, wife and children (the nuclear family) or to a wider category of relatives including non-resident grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etcetera (extended family)”. This is the commonly understood definition of family in most non-Western cultures. “The nuclear family was once regarded as the key domestic institution of modern societies, but marriage has become somewhat less common” since most people no longer live within a nuclear family group” (Crystal, 1990). Crystal and Illson (1987:553) describe the family as the most instinctive, fundamental social or mating group in man and animal.

Malinowski (cited in Skolnick, 1995 online: <http://family.jrunk.org/pages/1222/Nuclear-Families.html> accessed 12/17/2010) argued that “the nuclear family had to be universal because it filled a basic biological need - caring for and protecting infants and young children. No culture could survive ... unless the birth of children was linked to both mother and father in legally based parenthood”. Murdock (cited online above) also upheld the nuclear family as “both universal and essential”, “whether as the sole prevailing form of the family... or as the basic unit from which more complex families form, (*it*) exists as a distinct and strongly functional group in every known society”. Spiro (in Gordon, 1986:81), quotes Murdock and explains that: the nuclear family has “immense social utility”; its functions are “universal pre-requisites for the survival of any society”; that without the sexual and reproductive aspects, “society would become extinct”; without the economic component, “life itself would cease”; and without the educational, “culture would come to an end”. These pro-nuclear family statements are profound and seem to endorse a biblical framework that highlights “male and female” for propagation of humanity, stewardship of creation for the economic mandate and skills teaching of children for educational purposes. More details will be given on the biblical framework in chapter 5.

Parsons (cited in Skolnick 1995: <http://family.jrunk.org/pages/1222/Nuclear-Families.html>) perceived the extended family as superseded by the nuclear family which fitted “the needs of industrial society. Independent of the kin network ...” the nuclear family was more mobile

and the intimacy it required, met the emotional needs of adults and children. Gordon (1986:2) argues that “Increasingly sound historical evidence is becoming available to support the position that the nuclear family was the prevailing residential unit long before the industrial Revolution”. Skolnick (online: <http://family.jrunk.org/pages/1222/Nuclear-Families.html> accessed 12/17/2010) challenges the universality of the nuclear family arguing that: “The traditional Western concept of the nuclear family as the only normal, natural family has had a profound influence on research, therapy, and public policy. It has encouraged the tendency to define any departure from that arrangement as unhealthy or immoral ... (*has*) blinded students of behavior to historical precedents for multiple legitimate family arrangements”. He proceeds to say that, anthropologists, historians, feminist scholars and others disagree with Malinowski, Murdock, and Parsons’ narrow and restrictive view of family as: the “parent-child domestic units ...” they labeled the “new family ideal”, “the closed domesticated nuclear family” with its “prescribed domestic privacy and strong emotional attachments between spouses and between parents and children”. That pattern was prevalent in the United States and other industrialized countries. Below are some traditional family paradigms that challenge the universality of the nuclear set up.

- In other societies, the nuclear family “was embedded within a network of other related individuals” though it remained distinct and functional (Lee, 1977:66).
- the Nayar of South India’s “adults of both sexes continued to reside in their mother’s household for their entire lives...and the children of the sisters” (:66);
- the Israeli Kibbutzim has no family or household structure. Children are brought up communally (Lee, 1977:70-71; Gordon, 1986:81ff)
- the high rates of female-headed households feature as “incomplete” nuclear families, in some Latin American countries and ethnic groups;
- illegitimate children abound among low class Jamaicans; co-habitation is prevalent among Caribbean lower classes (Lee, 1977: 72);
- the North American Indian tribes where descent was recognized along matrilineal lines and matrilocal residence proved that there were/are exceptions to the nuclear family (:72) and
- the polygamous and extended family set-ups in colonial African and Asian contexts also defied the nuclear family set ups as universal and predominant.

Reiss (cited in Steyn, 1987:146) defines marriage as ~~an~~ institution comprising a socially acceptable union of individuals in husband and wife roles with the key function of legitimizing parenthood". Steyn (:147) explains that, biologically, ~~the~~ mother-child relationship is the most natural and basic relationship in the man-woman-child reproduction group". The nine months of fetal nurture in the womb, followed by breast feeding and prolonged infant care attest to that. However, though not conspicuous, the connection and ~~the~~ responsibility of the man towards the child is acknowledged and provision for a father role is made by normatively fixing the obligations of the man towards the child" (Steyn, 1987:148). With no recognized paternity, the manly obligations to the child, ~~may~~ remain unfulfilled and the socialization of the child will probably be inadequate" (:148).

Rabie (1996:104) defines a nuclear family as ~~a~~ conjugal union between a mature male (biological or sociological father) and a (*mature*) female (biological or sociological mother) together with their dependent offspring. Step-, adopted (*children*) or children of relatives often stay with parents... as integral members of the nuclear family". ~~Consensual~~, stable, conjugal, monogamous marital unions, together with their dependent offspring can be categorized as ... nuclear families", which Rabie believes to be ~~one~~ of the strongest social mechanisms that keeps the social fabric together" through transmission of societal norms and values from one generation to the next. Nye & Berardo and Steyne (both cited in Rabie, 1996:104) mention the nuclear family functions summed up below (an echo of Murdock's):

- It accepts the basic responsibility for socializing its children, a difficult and very demanding task calling for constant vigilance from parents, siblings and other elderly relatives
- It promotes economic co-operation
- and stimulates human reproduction

However, urbanization and migrant labor among black people have resulted in ~~in~~creased poverty and social disintegration because extended families which enlarged or broadened the earning potential of the spouses and provided more child care facilities often fell away or disappeared in the new impersonal urban neighborhoods" (Rabie, 1996:105<sup>8</sup>). This is a significant point, given the high levels of child rape, abuse, neglect, abduction and murder of children prevalent in our modern contemporary societies. The wild behavior, disrespect, ill-temper, bad attitudes, foul language of young people which they pick up from some uncouth

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<sup>8</sup> Rabie's own research was done among mixed race families but what he says is applicable to black families too

grown ups, bad T.V. models coupled with widespread substance abuse etcetera, reveal a sad picture of neglected or rather wrong socialization of children. Divorced from the extended family influence, the nuclear family is deprived of holistic child care, often resulting in inadequate monitoring of children, who are babysat by the T.V. when both parents are at work. On the other hand, due to limited economic resources, parents in a nuclear family are better able to meet the material needs of their biological children than if the households had many other dependant relatives.

The “stereotypical nuclear family” is seen by Berrett & McIntosh (cited in Viljoen, 1996: 32) as a fantasy and they argue that such an “ideology or family model – the married heterosexual couple with children, with a sexual division of labor, where the husband as breadwinner provides economic support for his dependent wife and children – no longer corresponds to the typical household unit and provides no link between actual experience of family life and the image of the family”. Nevertheless, there are families still operating that way, and quite successfully too, although they are now in the minority. Viljoen (1996:33) mentions that: “The family is seen as natural, timeless and immutable within the context of biological events such as birth, sickness and death”. Cicirelli (cited in Gerdes, 1987: 305) adds that “filial obligation and commitment; dependence, attachment and conflict; continuity and change in parent-filial relationships over the life-span ...” are worth considering as possible research topics. Indeed, relational issues between aging parents and their maturing children merit investigation as possible intergenerational points of friction in family care.

Modeling stable family life grounded in sacrificial interdependence and caring attitudes, should inculcate values that would defeat selfishness, violence, hatred and vengeful mindsets in society. Pretorius (1987: 432) cites an old traditional English rhyme on “ganny-bashing” where a granny used to beat up a grandson living with her, who, with time, grew up to return the favor. Had the grandmother disciplined this child interactively, with love, care and encouragement, he would have internalized the same values instead of retaining the vengeful attitude bent on punishing his aging granny. A sad case of “children learn what they live”.

### 2.1.2 Dual parenthood in child care

A *mother* is defined in Ilson, Crystal & Wells (1987:1008) as *a female that has born offspring; one's own female parent; a female who has adopted a child or otherwise established a maternal relationship with another person*. She is described as having the capacity to love selflessly and *mothering* is associated with: watching over, nourishing, protecting, creating, and caring for another person. However the term, *over-mothered* has negative connotations of disempowering over-protection and obsessive care. Boff (2008:116) labels that —*pathologies of care*” which cripple development and ought to be discouraged.

The word *father* is defined (Ilson, et al., 1987:557) as a male parent, a male functioning in paternal capacity with regards to another especially one who adopts a child. His qualities are: *stable*, *dependable* while fathering is: to beget, create, originate, to acknowledge one's own work; accept responsibility for something. These definitive qualities will be contrasted with the mothers' views of men, fathers and husbands in the qualitative research (chapters 3 and 4). The results should grant us insight into the idealism versus reality discrepancies that may be contributing to family disintegration. Lederer (cited in Lynn 1974: 105) points out that fathers and mothers represent —. two different modes of loving. Mother loves her child simply because he exists. Mother's love is unconditional... Father's love is demanding; it is conditional on performance... loves his child for what he can do”. Parsons (cited in Lynn 1974: 104) argues that: —Through the discipline and control he supplies, he (*the father*) pries the children loose from mother-dependency so that they can grow up and accept their responsibilities as adults in the society”. The mother is said to carry out expressive functions, maintaining the emotional balance so that family members cope with the stresses and strains of the internal affairs. Given that base, absence of either mother or father is bound to affect children significantly.

Motherhood is significant in that —it confirms women's female identity” (Woollet in Phoenix et al., 1991: 53). Childlessness can be a socially and emotionally devastating experience for most women when they fail to bear children of their own (: 54). This truth is universally acknowledged. Some childless women adopt and emotionally survive that way. A few desperate ones opt to steal other women's babies, and end up facing criminal charges.

Woollet (in Phoenix et al., 1991:47- 48) highlights the significance of motherhood/ fatherhood/ parenthood stating that it serves the following functions:

- Promotes and strengthens primary group ties
- Adds variety, enjoyment and fun to parents' lives
- Ensures continuity and expansion of self to parents, giving meaning to life
- Validates parents' adult status and identity
- Achievement and creativity are realized as parents help their children to grow
- Accelerates personal development as the new parents become less selfish and contribute more meaningfully to society.

According to Schaeffer (1975: 40-41): "Motherliness and fatherliness, separate but blended in a marvelous oneness called parents" are enhanced by natural child-birth which blends parents at the moment of birth as the father welcomes the infant into his own hands. She argues that parents are "an ecologically balanced environment for the growth of a new human being" both equally responsible and equally interested in bringing forth the child in oneness of flesh, security, love, care and gentleness (:38). Parents are the first ingredient for a balanced human environment for an infant and consequently, they have a responsibility to stay together, for its welfare. She advocates continuity in relationships and family life as "something absolutely priceless" and impossible to achieve in a life of promiscuity or "a series of divorces and remarriages" (: 42). Obviously, Schaeffer's frame of reference is that of "natural/automatic" care in family relationships, a Christian perspective that welcomes self sacrifice in: time, energy, safety, comfort, work, etcetera so that others may thrive. She argues that, many "swinging couples" (exchanging sexual partners?), fail as energy and interest wear out, leaving many disillusioned, insecure and having nervous breakdowns due to lack of commitment. Gustafson (2007: 111f), in a public lecture entitled, "Nature, Sin, and Covenant: Three bases for Sexual Ethics" affirms traditional prescriptive sexual ethics as valid, biological, and personal safeguards for human beings and their need for security and commitment. When these boundaries are ignored and crossed, harm will result and yet, ironically, adherence does not guarantee happiness. It is better to err on the side of caution. "A single parent often cannot raise children as well as a compatible couple... children need parents, or parent substitutes of both sexes" (Lynn, 1994: 286).

### 2.1.3 Merits and demerits of parental agency in socializing children

Good dual parenting involves training children and modeling sound values. “Habits need shaping to what is good”.<sup>9</sup> Hardyment (cited in Phoenix, 1991:14) states that it is the mothers’ responsibility to bring up children in the “right circumstances”, that is, in “real” families (heterosexual couple) not “pretended” families (gay and lesbian) and “lone” parent families are not considered “real families”. The reason mothers get blamed for how children turn out may be based on the traditional assumption that, “women are the managers, organizers, producers, providers, food guarantors, and educators of the family and... family life revolves around women...” (First international Conference on The Role of Woman... online: [http://www.salamiran.org/Women/News/The\\_Role\\_of\\_Women\\_and\\_Family](http://www.salamiran.org/Women/News/The_Role_of_Women_and_Family) accessed 06/01/2010). I have heard it stated that, if you educate a man, you educate one person but if you educate a woman, you educate the whole world (author unknown). Many other authors support this including Hughes and Bennet (1998), who argue that empowering women educationally has dramatic consequences in the improvement of sanitation, health, water supply, nutrition, child care and food production. Women are considered the heartbeat of the family and are endowed with the selfless ability to share/ transfer their acquired knowledge more easily to their families than most men can. In a sense, one would be right to argue that discrimination against women is, ultimately, discrimination against societal progress, development and holistic child care.

Whilst most men/fathers can escape the energy consuming, sleep depriving, resource depleting and innumerable ordeals of child care, very few women/mothers can. However, mothers cannot go it alone: disciplining, teaching, loving, entertaining, providing everything children need on their own, without burning themselves out. With more women working full time outside the home, the father/male input is crucial at different stages of a child’s development starting with the pre-natal stage, where a cherished expectant mother is less stressed than a rejected/unloved one. The cases for single mother, father absence and its negative effects on child development will be analyzed later in this chapter. Bringing up children is exhausting work even for two-parent families but it is doubly so for the single mum. Schulman and Mekler (1985:158) have a 3-part analysis of their book showing:

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<sup>9</sup> Gleaned from Dallas Willard’s Public Lecture at Stellenbosch University in August 2010

- how children actually develop a conscience and how to teach them moral values,
- the major forces against leading a moral life, for example, jealous, anger, and greed which require parents to understand what drives these behaviors in children, in order to train children in correct responses to such urges (: 158),
- and to discuss common moral issues and dilemmas that children encounter at different stages of their development (: vi).

What is advocated here is not Victorian Middle Class type of morality, which was largely, a show of external manners, although that too is essential to good relating, but more of the internalized/inherent code of behavior that genuinely cares for other people's well-being. This calls for constant vigilance, impossible for one parent to maintain and strictly enforce at critical moments in a child's life. Modeling sound values by both parents is imperative.

Unfortunately, most parents are not models of civility. In his book entitled: *The Divine Conspiracy*, Willards (1998: 219-220) argues that: ~~Most~~ families would be healthier and happier if their members treated one another with the respect they would give to a perfect stranger... Parents are seen to treat their children with an incivility which, offered to any other young people, would simply have terminated the acquaintance'. They are dogmatic on matters the children understand and the elders don't, they impose ruthless interruptions, flat contradictions, ridicule things the young take seriously, and make insulting references to their friends." Nolte (1972)'s poem: ~~Children~~ Learn what They Live" (cf. 1.3.6) pointed out how children are good imitators of what they experience in live and so most of them end up manifesting wrong attitudes and behaviors they internalized when young. Both parents ought to cultivate appropriate ways of interacting with one another and other people as examples to children.

Holloway (1999: 152) explains that ~~obedience~~ consciousness still remnant in traditional institutions' ... (is) no longer a part of the consciousness of most people under the age of forty today". The ~~previous~~ command systems" are under scrutiny as young people and feminism question their authority. Young people's stubborn resistance to authority is highlighted by Hutchcraft (1966) who describes the youth of his day as lost, lonely, morally misled, easily drawn to evil, a law to themselves, with no respect for authority, and most of the youth originate from families with broken relationships, have low self esteem, and idolize the media distorted physical and violent qualities of manhood. That was forty-five years ago

and yet the same applies to the youth of today as well. Rebellion and destructiveness seem to be a part of social consciousness. Young people need guidance and training in obedience from infancy without crushing their individuality or applying indoctrination strategies.

In a public lecture entitled: “Spirituality and Transformation of Society”, held at the University of Stellenbosch in 2010, Willard (cited above) also emphasized the importance of employing a strategy of character formation as the means to transforming society. He stated that ‘character is what you do regularly without thinking about it’. With so much wrong in society, ‘there is need to redirect human desire under what is good and worthy’, Willard stressed in his public lecture. Unless both parents are vigilant in modeling and reinforcing sound values in their children consistently, there can be no hope of social transformation. Change comes one person at a time until there is a general awareness of most people doing the right thing that will induce even more people to seek to do the same. One family at a time and one child at a time is the way to do it as ‘each one reaches one’ (evangelistic motto). Care concept may be inculcated in individuals starting from infancy under the watchful, caring and guiding force of parents and other family members. The community, school, church, peer groups and other influences should enhance the same values.

A novel by Hyde (1999:7) describes how an assignment on: “A plan to change the world for the better”, formulated by a 12 year old fatherless boy, Trevor McKinney, encouraged by his teacher, resulted in an experiment where he sowed tiny seeds of kindness and caring sown in 3 people’s lives slowly but surely led to a rich harvest of a world “where generosity had become commonplace”. To begin with, only one of the three people Trevor helped had responded, without his knowledge, by extending help to three other needy people who also helped others without expecting rewards. Thus the harvest of generosity began to spread in earnest. Trevor’s teacher had acted as a self-imposed yet competent surrogate father for the fatherless boy. I was impressed by this story which demonstrated that one should never tire of caring and serving other people, no matter how hopeless the situation may seem at the time. If something so secular could spark people’s care consciousness nationwide like this did, what would be the global consequences of all responsible people reaching out to help and care for other people at their unique points of need on a daily basis, at home and at work?

#### 2.1.4 Human development stages: possible origin of psychosocial problems

Online: ([file:///F:/Erikson's/\\_stages\\_of\\_psychosocial\\_development.1.html](file:///F:/Erikson's/_stages_of_psychosocial_development.1.html) accessed 19/11/10)

it is explained that: “The first stage of Erik Erikson centres around the infant's basic needs being met by the parents. The infant depends on the parents, especially the mother, for food, sustenance, and comfort. The child's relative understanding of world and society come from the parents and their interaction with the child. If the parents expose the child to warmth, regularity, and dependable affection, the infant's view of the world will be one of trust. Should the parents fail to provide a secure environment and meet the child's basic needs a sense of mistrust will result. According to Erikson, the major developmental task in infancy is to learn whether or not other people, especially primary caregivers, regularly satisfy basic needs. If caregivers are consistent sources of food, comfort, and affection, an infant learns trust- that others are dependable and reliable. If they are neglectful, or perhaps even abusive, the infant instead learns mistrust- that the world is an undependable, unpredictable, and possibly dangerous place”, and thus set off pathological tendencies.

Under 2.1.2, Schaeffer (1975:42) pointed out that parents are a child's primary ingredients for an ecologically balanced environment for it to grow well. When did fathers become dispensable in holistic care, guidance and appropriate discipline of children, given the tight work schedules outside the home for working mothers?

The stages outlined by Erikson include the following:

- Hope: Trust versus Mistrust (infants, 0-1 yr)
- Will : Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (Toddlers, 2 to 3 years)
- Purpose and Initiative versus /Guilt (Preschool, 4 to 6 years)
- Competence: Industry versus Inferiority (childhood, 7 to 12 years)
- Fidelity: Identity versus Role Confusion (adolescence, 13-19 years)
- Love: Intimacy versus Isolation (Young Adults, 20 to 34 years)
- Care: Generativity versus Stagnation (Middle Adulthood, 35 to 65 years)
- Wisdom: Ego Integrity versus Despair (Seniors, 65years onwards)

Erickson's stages are said to “occur throughout life in one form or another” but that the “phases” outlined above, indicate the times when the conflicts are most prominent. Parental care, guidance and support are crucial to enable individuals to make appropriate adjustments.

### 2.1.5 Child abuse and shifts in feminist debates on child care and family issues

Disturbing local news, via mass media, report missing, neglected and abused children. One desperate mother in Philippi, Cape Town, poisoned her own children when her boyfriend apparently refused to give her money to buy food for the children. This was released on the Radio CCFM (8 a.m. news broadcast on 22 October 2010). In the previous week, a teenage girl had been arrested for allegedly killing her infant in Khayelitsa. But ‘why?’ when maternal instincts generally seek to preserve life. Ruddick [cited in Tong and Williams 2009 accessed on 8/14/2010 online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-ethics>] urges society to value the “maternal practice”, its aims, goals and its peculiar logic that preserves the life of an infant, fosters the growth, socialization and training of children. It is a time-consuming yet fulfilling endeavor that looks on war and violence as risking the precious life of a child whom one has spent years preserving, nurturing, and training. For a maternal thinker, war is about death- about canceling out the “product(s) of maternal practice”; it is about losing that which is most precious to one”. Kruger (in Shefer et al 2006: 191) affirms Ruddick’s differentiation of men from women. In “maternal thinking” (a Ruddick coined phrase), women have “capacity for empathic relationship” shown in how they think, attitudes they have and values they hold. The three principles governing maternal thinking are: preservation, nurture and training of a child.

When a mother turns violent against her own infants something has to be drastically wrong. Economic hardship a mother faces in the urban environment, without a caring mate, a supportive family or network of friends, may lead one to thoughtless action out of desperation or as a way of punishing an uncooperative husband/ boyfriend. Sadly, infant abuse is common, despite the presence of Social Welfare Services, Adoptive Agencies and childless couples waiting to take over the care of unwanted babies. There is need to raise awareness in the townships and informal settlements so that mothers overwhelmed by child care issues, may know where to go for help. My belief is that, no matter how poor, a mother would not abandon her child if there was a supportive network of people near to help share child care responsibilities, and account for a child’s whereabouts.

However, Ruddick (cited in Tong and Williams 2009 accessible online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-ethics>) also tells the story of an overworked young mother, Julie, who was horrified by her own murderous thoughts towards her demanding infant. She had to force herself to remain on a bus, in the public eye afraid of what she might do if left alone with the baby. This example certainly alerts us to the fact ~~that~~ mothering is not easy” and ~~most~~ mothers have days when they wish, however secretly, that they were not mothers”. This fact is endorsed by Hafner (1993: 149), who states that: ~~The~~ image that they<sup>10</sup> have of motherhood does not include the messy, exhausting and frustrating aspects of looking after a baby. The reality sometimes overwhelms them, and they become depressed or incapacitated by fears and anxieties. Most worrying of all to them are their feelings of anger and hostility toward their babies”. Echoing Hafner, Ussher (cited in Phoenix and Woollett, 1991:11) states that ~~Motherhood~~ is romanticized and idealized as the supreme physical and emotional achievement in women’s lives”, but ~~when~~ women become mothers... they find that the everyday tasks of mothering are socially devalued and relegated to individual households” (Antonis cited in Phoenix and Woollett). This may leave the mothers deeply disappointed because childcare calls for patience and selfless love. Impatience, anger, lack of love and support, probably lead some women to hate or dump their babies. These revelations serve to emphasize the importance of teamwork and supportive networks to help mothers care for infants and young children especially among poverty stricken populations with few resources to pay for hired assistance. Fathers/husbands and extended family members living nearby, should relieve the young mother of child care stress and burnout.

Gender equality issues are also inextricably intertwined in family and child care issues. Some branches of feminism see the family as ~~a~~ socially organized (rather than a naturally or biologically organized) unit... Motherhood is thus, recognized, as one of the major institutions which oppress women, and prevent them from taking more active control over their own lives” (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991:222-223). Kruger (2006:189-190) citing various authors, presents varying views of mothering listed below, explaining that:

- In the romantic tradition, differences between men and women are affirmed and motherhood is celebrated.

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<sup>10</sup> they refers to young women obsessed with a stereotyped world view of motherhood and having a baby

- Rationalists ‘women- are- equal’ deny differences between men and women, refuse to be limited by biological sex, desire to assert themselves fully and so mothering assumes many different forms calling for strategies that require:
  - more ‘successful management’ and ‘problem-solving’ (Epstein cited in Kruger)
  - using multiple care givers or shared child care between husband and wife.
- Others believe ‘women should not be involved in mothering at all, that they should be evacuated from mothering’ (Allen cited in Kruger) to devote themselves to their own creative development.
- Theorists regarded mothering ‘a source of women’s devaluation and lack of transcendence.
- ‘*The Feminist Mystique*’ (Friedan cited in Kruger 2006:190) viewed the home as ‘a prison’ and child- rearing was seen as an ‘instrument of oppression’ (Mitchell cited in Kruger).
- ‘Down with childhood’, is a book title calling for a break between women and mothering (Firestone cited in Kruger)

Feminist rationalists who sought self-fulfillment to the exclusion of all else were criticized by Condor (cited in Kruger, 2006) for presenting a ‘pathologized picture of women as passive victims of social forces’. Their assumption is that there is no joy in birthing and nursing a helpless baby and seeing him/her develop to maturity. One wonders what could have provoked such animosity against mothering children! Could it be negative experiences of abuse against women witnessed that led to psychological dissociation from what they perceive as oppressive and disempowering? Normally women do not shy away from sharing personal experiences whether good or bad and so dialogue is crucial for one to understand worldviews behind such mindsets as well as one expressed in 1.4.4 of this dissertation, where a 66 year old lady risked her health in order to experience childbirth even though she could easily have adopted a child. No one deserves to be judged without being heard! The rationalist feminists should be compelled to share their stories too. Joyce Myers freely shares on Radio CCFM how she was set free following fifteen years of crippling abuse by her own father. Dual parenting by committed, loving, non-abusive parents could bring about well balanced individuals without hang-ups from relational poverty.

It is encouraging that romantic feminists celebrate motherhood. As caring mothers, working outside the home, they seek ways to ease the relentless burden of child care from resting solely on their shoulders, through calling for the following: child care centers, shared parenting and men's increased involvement in child care (Gordon, Grabruker, Stacy, cited in Phoenix & Woollett, 1991).

The "maternal revivalism" (Segal cited in Phoenix & Woollett), the "conservative pro-family feminism" (Stacy cited in Phoenix & Woollett), were considered new approaches which promoted "traditional nurturant qualities associated with motherhood" which acknowledge "women's needs for intimacy, and seeing family and children as the most appropriate means to satisfy these needs" (Ruddick cited in Phoenix & Woollett, 1991: 223). One woman relented: "I became convinced that equality was not what we should seek: we should aim for a society where the experience of having children could be a pleasure to all parents, male and female" (Gordon cited in Phoenix & Woollett : 223). This mindset reflects Schaefer (1975)'s which promotes active dual parental involvement. The argument in Phoenix and Woollett (1991: 226) is that the dichotomized literature: one emphasizing the negative aspects of motherhood, leaving out the pleasures that many women experience, and the other, romanticizing the mother-child relationship leaving out the negatives, are both unrealistic and present one half of the picture. Also, only the mothers are often blamed for how children turn out and yet, both parents should be accountable. Another criticism is that of generalizing findings with no distinctions according to social class, race, marital status or sexuality. The theory that describes the family as a domestic haven "of peace and security and harmony" and speaks of "family bliss" (Viljoen, 1987:372) denying the presence of conflict, violence, and inequitably distributed work was criticized by radical feminists. Change in family relational set ups is therefore inevitable. Chapter 5 will outline the contours of a family paradigm capable of strengthening families relationally thereby making them viable development tools for social development sustainability.

Tong and Williams (2009 online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-ethics>) present many contributions to Feminists Care Ethics from different branches of feminism namely: liberal feminists, radical feminists, libertarian radical feminism, cultural feminists, cultural radical feminists, Marxist/Social feminists, multicultural feminists, global feminists, post-colonial feminists, eco-feminists, existentialist feminists, psychoanalytic feminists,

postmodern feminists, third-wave feminists, evangelical feminists, maternal revivalists, conservative pro-family feminists etcetera. However, feminists' major complaint centers on the lack of appreciation of the way women think, write, work and love. Most uphold the feminine values such as caring, kindness, cooperation, community, care-giving, interdependence, connection, sharing, emotion, trust, absence of hierarchy, nature, life, peace, joy etc, while others covet the culturally masculine traits like independence, autonomy, hierarchy, domination, war, death, competition and many others. This study supports traits that invite discussion, reconciliation and compromise between the genders and sacrificial self-giving by both parents for the sake of the child's holistic development'.

Noddings (cited in Tong & Williams, 2009 online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-ethics> accessed 8/14/10) advocates the preservation of relationships. She sees natural care as being basic and spontaneous, that is, inherent in people especially mothers, such that in the midst of busy schedules, women are nostalgic for the good old days when caring for loved ones and needy people was easier. When her care ethics is criticized as "fine domestic theory", ineffective for tackling complex, moral, social, and policy issues, she argues that "having a robust sense of social justice is predicated on the lessons learned in the private sphere" because "origins of care have their roots" "starting at home" (based on the book: *Starting at Home: Caring and social Policy* 2002). Another point she mentions is that ethical caring supplements the spontaneity of natural caring which motivates us to help others simply because we want to. To Noddings, sociopaths cannot care ethically because they cannot care naturally hence their capacity for committing violent crimes because they are largely desensitized individuals due to family upbringing which deprived them of adult contact and father presence (Dobson, 1982:49; Piper and Grudem, 1991: 381). Children need adequate care, love and the attention of parents in order for them to develop holistically.

On-going debates and compromises between the genders have given rise to different family paradigms described below as: the traditional, the compassionate and the egalitarian.

- Traditionally, "child rearing is seen as the wife's responsibility and the husband is the figure of authority and the disciplinarian...expected to be strong, rational, independent and dominant, whereas wives are expected to be emotional, nurturant,

loving and dependent” (Gerdes, 1997:20-21). However, new forms of family living have developed to include the compassionate system and the egalitarian system.

- In the compassionate system, though “child rearing is mainly the wife’s responsibility, the husband participates as a socializing agent”, and that makes him more involved than the traditional father. Similarly, the roles are more flexible in that, though the husband is the major breadwinner he consults his wife who may also have employment outside the home (:21) in joint decision making.
- Finally, in the egalitarian (dual-career) system, there is more equality in power sharing, the husband is more involved in house work, “Child rearing is seen as a joint responsibility and parenting tasks are dealt with in terms of needs and by mutual agreement... Self-actualization, independence, equality and reciprocity feature prominently. Husbands may be emotionally expressive and wives rational” (Gerdes, 1997:22).

For the sake of peaceful co-existence, both husband and wife have to share the same ideological framework otherwise there will be endless stress and strife in the home. “A concern with children’s lives tends to be associated with an interest in relational simplicity and interactional stability in families which is believed to provide the emotional security needed for the psycho-social development of children” (Cheal, 1991:21).

#### 2.1.6 The issue of illegitimacy

Conventionally, ‘motherhood’ and ‘fatherhood’ symbolize parenthood as a joint venture with socially stipulated roles and functions within the nuclear family set up. A child born out of wedlock was considered illegitimate. Teichman (cited in Steyn, 1987:149) explains that, “... an illegitimate child is one whose existence is the result of an unsanctioned (*sexual*) act”. Both the literature search and the empirical aspects sought explanations on why most mothers now find themselves raising ‘fatherless’ children. A fictional novel entitled: *Ed’s Bastard*, expresses a parent’s disgust at his grandson’s illegitimacy that precluded his being called by his given name. Davies (cited in Steyn, 1987: 150) explains that illegitimacy is dependent on cultural stipulations and identifies fourteen forms.

However, times have changed and children born out of wedlock are commonplace. Steyne (1987:159) argues that rapid urbanization and changing values account for ~~the~~ loss of norms and general anomic conditions that, together with the loss of the most important control measures of the traditional society, initiated an enormous increase in the rate of illegitimacy". The children use their mothers' surnames on birth certificates. As Leonhardt-Lupa (1995:119) rightly states, most of the children born in this world face ~~the~~ disturbingly low odds that they will be loved and cared for by their father ... (*due to*) the absent father...concept...prevalent in our culture". Steyne (1987:172-173) also mentions value stretching, social disorganization, home background, individualism, cultural relativism, religion, education, sex education, existing norms concerning premarital and extramarital sex, and social control as variables that serve to explain illegitimacy. Mass media influence is also a potent variable.

Hartley (cited in Steyne, 1987:174) mentions marriage and abortion as two alternatives that may prevent illegitimate births. The single-parent family therefore comes into being through a mother's decision to keep her child and raise him/her herself. In African cultures, the illegitimate child is automatically assimilated into the mother's family of origin, often leading ~~to~~ the creation of a matrifocal multigenerational family type as is found among the blacks in the city... it provides (*the single mother*) and her children with a measure of emotional, social and economic security", and no discrimination, regardless of the reduced standard of living (Steyne 1987:180). However, effects of father absence are bound to manifest themselves sooner or later as children grow into adolescence. This issue of motherhood in non-marital situations leads us into the next phase of our discussion on challenges to the nuclear family.

## **PART 2**

### **2.2 Major Challenges to Nuclear Family set ups and Child Care issues**

#### **2.2.1 Single mother family: its impact on child care and development**

Marriage has predominantly been the conventional set up for family genesis and propagation of children from as far back as memory can go. However, recently, there has been a noticeable increase of single mothers struggling, often single-handedly, to raise children on their own. It is partly that and the family structural ‘revolution’ globally, that prompted the researcher to embark on this study in order to explain the causes of single motherhood and the general socio-economic unrest and violence prevalent in communities which tends to threaten holistic child care. Is single mothering a solution or a problem? Snyman (1987:134) recommended that research be done among groups other than white, where single parenthood has increased –as a result of too rapid urbanization ... high illegitimacy rate, or a rise in divorce figures”. He recommended further that, if researchers on single parenthood are unable to undertake empirical work, they could make use of meta-analysis of other studies –to discover trends and themes with a view to accumulating a body of knowledge and interventive skills useful for assisting and supporting the single-parent family or the reconstituted one”. This is what this researcher sought to do in chapters 3 and 4 where she opted to do an empirical study of single mothers to understand their world views concerning marriage/family issues and find out the challenges they face in child care.

##### **2.2.1.1 Reasons for single mother status**

The reasons for singleness of mothers will be listed below for comparison with those of the single mother participants’ in the qualitative research findings in chapter 4. Baker (2009 online: [F:/How to succeed as a single Parent-Associated Content-associatedcontent\\_com.mht](http://F:/How to succeed as a single Parent-Associated Content-associatedcontent_com.mht) accessed 14/8/2010) reports single families to be the fastest growing family style in the USA due to diverse reasons like:

- escalating divorce rates

- desertions
- separations
- illegitimate births

Additional reasons (drawn also from African contexts) are:

- widowhood
- personal decisions by mothers not to marry in favor of financial independence
- poverty leading to male partner's failure to pay the required lobola
- commitment to care for ailing parents (restricted if one is married)
- prospective husband's lengthy jail term for crime(s) committed preclude marriage
- fear of divorce
- cohabitation > living together and having children unmarried

Hafner's (1993: 5-6) discussion in *The End of Marriage* contributes the following reasons for the increase in single mother statuses:

- increase in employment opportunities that allow women economic independence,
- women initiated divorces to escape unhappy marriages,
- and the Women's Liberation movement, which is an offshoot of human rights. "In the 1990s, women no longer have to marry in order to achieve social status and esteem. They are free to pursue careers and other ways of defining themselves socially and personally".
- Marriage is no longer necessary for basic economic and social reasons.
- Although "nearly all women believe that having children is best done in wedlock", they consider marriage "an option, not a necessity" (:192).
- The single mother status is considered a "postponement of marriage rather than a rejection of the married state" (Hafner 1993: 5).

Edin and Kefalas (2005:5) in their studies of poor women in America, mention the following causes for the growing number of single mothers namely:

- The rise in employment that enables women to live independent of men
- The decline of marriageable men in disadvantaged groups
- Expansion of the welfare estate
- Teen pregnancies and childbearing (:3)
- Prison sentences that keep poor men in jail for crimes they commit (:2).

- Unwed couples living together (:3)

Hughes & Bennet (1998) add to the causes accounting for female-headed households:

- family disintegration,
- urban migration,
- international migration,
- war,
- and internal displacements, all of which are typical among the African populations.

Radebe's (cited in Gerdes, 1997:38) research on marital breakdown among urban blacks, revealed the following:

- marital disruption due to sexual incompatibility,
- lack of preparation for marriage (pre-marital counseling),
- persistence of polygamous attitudes
- and acute housing shortage

As can be observed from the long listings, there are diverse reasons to account for the global phenomenon of single motherhood. In the interview, each single mother will be asked to explain briefly what circumstances led to her being single and the answers will be checked against the lists above to see if there are any new surprise explanations to account for single-mother status.

#### 2.2.1.2 Widowhood

The ordeal of widows merits attention. Traditionally, widowhood is the logical, acceptable and valid cause for single parenting by a mother. However, as Meroff (2004: 180) states: ~~→~~when a woman is widowed, she becomes a member of one of the largest and most marginalized of the world's people groups... Millions of widows in Sub-Saharan Africa are robbed, beaten, raped and evicted from their homes – often by their own in-laws... considered unworthy of equal property rights. Unlawful treatment is even more common when a husband dies of AIDs". In some countries, like Zimbabwe, widows are stigmatized and accused of having murdered their husbands. Developmentally, widows and the case of marginalization of women have been on the agenda for some time. Old age pensions and

grants for single mothers are a most welcome relief. The struggle may continue in other avenues and children suffer whatever social penalties are imposed on the mother. Any heartache, any deprivation, any ostracism, is sure to impact the widows' children often resulting in low self esteem and low achievement in school. However, where the extended family has been supportive, the picture can be bright. The father orphaned children work hard in school and prove that they are worthy of all the sacrifices others make on their behalf. However, not all cases are the same. Some orphans resist caretakers' loving attention and effort to integrate them in their own families. This happens often where children were subjected to abuse and neglect by their own parents for a long time, and tend to be suspicious of any kindness shown to them by others.

Culturally a widow's identity is derived from her husband and once he is dead, she is automatically disempowered socially, economically and becomes open to abuse especially if she had no prior social status of her own, apart from her husband's. A widowed friend explained that, in their needy, dependent and powerless state, some widows subconsciously, seek to replace the man they lost, and may somewhat be 'jealous' of married women whom they view as 'secure'. With their unmet sexual needs, they may be pray to lustful men who find them attractive and 'available' especially since some widows tend to view men with fresh appreciation, adoration and praise for small services and acts of kindness rendered in daily life. I also gathered that certain cultures tend to shun widows. For example, former friends who are couples may even stop visiting once one is widowed. If they see the widow approaching from one end of a street, they quickly walk over to the other side in order to avoid direct encounter with her. The general explanation given is that, people fear emotional outbursts from the widow which may cause them embarrassment and they choose rather to remain aloof and uninvolved. But the Bible teaches us to care for widows, orphans and strangers (1 Timothy 5: 3-16). The biblical emphasis is on care of the marginalized and outcasts in society. Inter-generational family care is taken for granted as inclusive of needy members of the family. The church should be the last resort when no family members are available to do so. Children need to see care of widows and orphans actively practiced in their lives if they are to grow up as caring and responsible people. Walking the talk is the best teacher, all things considered.

### 2.2.1.3 Poverty: suggested practical solutions

The term “feminization of poverty” was coined by Pearse, a sociologist, who discovered that more single women and their children were increasingly becoming poor (cited in Hollinger & Modica in Greenway, 1988: 15). The usual social factors like: family disintegration, out of wedlock births, teenage pregnancies, lack of maintenance, dropping out of school, welfare dependency etcetera, were applicable. Statistics provided (:15) validated the feminization of poverty of women on the American scene as being determined by “the interweaving of historical, sociological, economical and political factors” (:20).

The authors advocate that people discard negative mindsets that see welfare mothers as promiscuous, immoral, deliberately having large families in order to obtain more money from welfare and blame them for their plight. Often the root causes of poverty are ignored as condemners focus on its effects. Kinnear (1999:40) makes a similar appeal from recent debates where allegations are made that, “too many women are having children just to receive additional welfare benefits” but she argues that “no evidence exists to show a relationship between unmarried pregnancies and participation in welfare”. However, two reliable sources have confirmed that some women they know actually use child bearing as a means to securing more welfare support. Kinnear (:42) reports how Afro-American women on welfare are especially burdened by negative societal attitudes that perceive them as: unable to find men to marry, willing to bear illegitimate children and as straining the welfare system. She argues that the truth is that most black women live in poverty anyway before becoming single mothers and she invites critics to take a hard look at political and economic changes in urban inner cities, marginalization of black people from the labor market (Brewer cited in Kinnear : 42).

The benefits of welfare are that young single mothers have freedom to choose whether to continue living with their parents or “set up their own households”; helps women in bad marriages to opt out rather than endure abuse; empowers single mothers to wisely consider the wisdom of marrying the fathers of their children or stay single and finally, it prevents young women from placing their babies for adoption or aborting the fetus (Kinnear: 40). Expressed that way, makes one truly appreciate the wisdom of welfare payouts as a means of

preserving women's dignity and enabling them to take care of their young ones, which is the right thing to do anyhow without forcing themselves on men who may not be interested in their welfare. Without welfare, mothers would suffer intolerably. Kinnear (:21-23) argues that single mothers have difficulty finding: employment; affordable, adequate child care that is easily accessible; a healthy diet; access to free health care; good housing in neighborhoods that are safe. They are powerless against stigmatization labels such as: 'unwed mother', 'welfare recipient' or 'charity case' and against abuse from a live-in partner. Abuse may compel the mother and her children to move out and seek shelter for the homeless or find alternative accommodation. Transport problems often prevent single mothers from getting more lucrative jobs that may be available farther than their residencies (:24). Without welfare benefits, the quality of life for single mother families would be further reduced.

Hollinger & Modica (in Greenway, 1988:22) urge the Church to be aware of poor people, be able to locate them in order to give them practical help. The writers suggest several practical ways in which feminized poverty may be met effectively namely:

- food and clothing pantries to meet basic needs
- daycare and after-school programs to cater for children in school and those under school age
- development of parenting and family life skills classes to empower young single mothers to enable them to cope with their situations
- services of teaching English as a second language
- job training programs to encourage women to search for jobs to help them break out of the vicious circle of poverty
- all programs can be under-girded by evangelistic proclamation

Hughes & Bennet (1998), seem to endorse Hollinger & Modica (in Greenway, 1988)'s 'feminization of poverty' theme, when they mention that women and poverty are inextricably intertwined, and states that 70% of the world's poor are women and two thirds of the world's illiterates, are also women. They argue that women are ill-treated, and devalued through traditions and customs of African and Asian patrilineal societies. Lobola/'bride price' payment, domestic violence, treatment of women as sex objects, sexual domination etcetera, add to the devaluing of women. Though much of the world's work is done by them, they had no voices in development schemes because their role in society was considered private,

domestic and reproductive. Fortunately, barriers to women disempowerment are being removed for women to achieve equal rights and responsibility with men, argues Hughes. Much has happened to improve the status of women such that many men feel threatened and yet much more still needs to be done to eradicate gender inequities at all levels of society.

Edin & Kefalas (2005:3) argue that “if more of these mothers married their children’s fathers, fewer would be poor”. They then proceed to state the chain of circumstances that keep poor mothers and their offspring trapped in a circle of poverty:

- Children raised outside of marriage typically learn less in school
- They are more likely to have children while they are teens
- They are less likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college
- They have more trouble finding jobs as adults
- Their families have less money which leads to their being disadvantaged in other ways too.

#### 2.2.1.4 Challenges single mothers face and their impact on child care

On: [F:/How to succeed as a Single Parent-Associated Contentassociatedcontent.com.mht](http://www.contentassociatedcontent.com/mht) accessed 14/08/2010, Baker outlines the following as some of the trials that single mothers have to content with namely:

- depression is a major threat to coping with the pressure of raising children alone,
- difficulty in meeting financial needs and obligations,
- the trauma of re-entering the job market following years of home-making
- they are often forced by financial hardship, to accept low-paying jobs
- may have to rely on public welfare assistance to supplement income
- sometimes they may need to enroll in job training programs or short-term school courses to improve their chances for a better paying job
- children may negatively be impacted by mum’s return to work

Online <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages> accessed 6/28/2010), the Care Giver Support Org. mentions that women become single because: “They choose this lifestyle, they may have been in a relationship which they left, or perhaps their partner has died or left them. The challenges faced by the single parent vary according to their

circumstances, but there are also common experiences that are shared by most single families”. Examples of these are: decision-making has to be done with children instead of one’s spouse, children assume more responsibility/duties around the home and work overload is unavoidable. The negatives for the children are pointed out as: reduction in play time with friends, children tend to clash with teachers and other authority figures who expect total obedience, children may not see the need for the mother to have adult friendships and company and there is pressure to ‘pick sides’ in the parental conflict. The single parent may be grieved when children envy friends with both parents at home, and being the only disciplinarian makes the parent seem ‘bad’ to the children. Children may be jealous or suspicious of new friends and relationships as this will draw the parent’s attention away from them. They may even sabotage the relationship.

Online: <http://family.jrank.org/pages/1576/Single-Parent-Families-Challenges> accessed 8/18/2010 Net Industries state that “Parenthood is challenging under the best conditions. With one parent, the challenges are multiplied. Responsibility overload, housework, work demands, emotional needs, loneliness, anxiety, depression etcetera can be overwhelming for one person. Support from friends and relatives are suggested as a defense strategy against loneliness and as a source of practical help.

The encouraging fact is that in most developed countries, chances are many for a determined single mother to advance herself provided she still has enough energy to attend to her children’s emotional and practical needs. Day-care centers largely take care of the children during the day to enable the mother to work and earn money. The scheduling that ensues, affects everybody, tempers flare when things are not done on time, with repercussions for the mother at work and children at school. In chapter 1, Bronfenbrenner (cited in Dobson, 1982: 48) argued against the use of daycare centers to help in bringing up children as opposed to parental and extended family involvement. The criticism of daycare centers seems valid to some extent, given that they tend to be understaffed, are usually staffed by women only and are inadequate as a solution to parenting (Lynn, 1974: 285). I may also add that in the case of disease outbreak, most of the children end up sick too. The work overloaded single mother may have to plead for time off work to attend to the child and take her to a clinic, which can also be costly without medical cover.

Other challenges are safety issues for a single mother and her children. Hafner (1993: 230) argues that a single woman “has to cope with the fear of being sexually assaulted by men” (*her children are also at risk*) “She is at risk of being followed home by a man and observed to be living alone”. Male intruders are a nightmare for single women and the media always highlight cases involving them. Another reason Hafner gives is that it is more difficult for women in low-paying jobs to live alone than men in similar circumstances. They are unlikely to afford buying their own homes and are forced to rent privately. Thus they are deprived of long term security. However, necessity is the mother of invention, and most women develop ‘social support networks’ of female friends for ‘practical and emotional support’ that need not involve substance abuse as is often the case with men (:231).

#### 2.2.1.5 Negative effects of single mother status on children

In addition to the negatives already mentioned above, Net Industries argue online: (<http://family.jrank.org/pages/1577/Single-Parent-Families-Effects> accessed on 6/26/2010), that divorce children have difficulty adjusting to their new status. Antisocial behavior, aggression, anxiety, school issues are some of the common problems which surface and usually disappear once “adequate supervision, income, and continuity in social networks” become stable. In mother-only families, research findings are: there are higher absentee rates at school, lower levels of education, higher school dropout rates with boys more negatively affected than girls, more delinquent activity including alcohol and drug addiction. Children are more likely to experience health-related problems due to the decline in lifestyle and a lack of medical insurance. They tend to “marry early, have children early, and divorce”.

It has commonly been found (ibid), that absence of a male adult, when fathers become disinterested, detached from their children, did not visit, had no contact for long periods, had negative consequences that extended beyond childhood and yet the lack of male presence in the child’s life was not as critical as the loss of male income which causes socio-economic strain and stress. More will be discussed under the heading father absence (2.3). Society disapproves of single parent families and looks down unfavorably on them, considering them deviant, broken and a threat to the social order and promotion of the dependency syndrome (available online: (<http://family.jrank.org/pages/1581/Single-Parent-Families.b> 5/8/2010).

Lynn (1974: 256) states that losing a husband is a double loss to a single lady, who not only loses a father for her children, adding to her responsibilities, but also “loses the love, companionship, and sexual satisfaction her man provides...” she is unhappy, vulnerable, lonely, and loses confidence. Guilt, fear, frustration may characterize her emotions. Many married women distrust widows, separated or deserted women and divorcees whom they see as threats to their own marriages and so the single mother may be a misfit or social outcast in society (:252). Indeed there are jilted wives in society on account of attractive single ladies and mothers, to justify such mindsets but not all single mothers are opportunists. One suggestion offered (:286) is that, single mothers need dependable counselors to give them emotional support, and act as reference points for their ideas on how to raise children. Such provision will help in preventing mothers from overburdening their children with paternal concerns for lack of an adult companion to discuss issues with.

#### 2.2.1.6 Positive aspects of the single parent and childcare

Care Giver Support Org. mention some positive points for single parent families online: (<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages> accessed 06/28/2010) like:

- discipline, family routine and quality time between parent and child are seen as determining better child development rather than dual parenting
- children tend to be mature and more responsible
- the parent is typically self-reliant and confident
- parent-child relationships are close
- positive parenting techniques are more in use than in dual parent situations
- there is less reliance on traditional gender specific roles, and are more liberal
- the single parent tends to apply positive problem-solving tactics than punitive discipline in the face of deviant child behavior

Ambekar online: <http://www.articleswave.com/facts-about-single-parenting.html> accessed on (10/09/2010), adds the following positives:

- one learns something everyday
- it is a joy to watch one's children grow everyday as they contribute to homecare
- quality time allows one to form a unique and strong bond with one's children

- more people from the extended family step in to provide support and help in raising children, thus helping them to adjust to communal involvement
- children grow up with a sense of responsibility
- decision-making is easier
- children are better able to handle conflicts and deal with disappointments
- they are more empathetic, sensitive and caring as they become adults
- they are better equipped to face life and be independent

All this makes single parenting seem very attractive, yet the challenges are severe. Wolf (online: [file:///F:/S\\_P\\_Pride\\_2.html](file:///F:/S_P_Pride_2.html) down loaded 7/11/10) mentions the work overload of a single mother who is on call 24 hours, 7 days a week, readying children for school, planning birthdays, preparing meals, helping children with their home work, home making, nursing them when sick, teaching them important values like friendship, how to be responsible and self-reliant, supervising their recreation activities, budgeting, good decision making, reading to them, censoring programs they watch on T.V. meeting their needs, giving them love and modeling the right way of living. Altogether she mentions 25 points. Only superwoman can do all that well without burning herself out.

–Unfortunately, there's no magical way to escape the high levels of stress you face each day in raising your children alone. That's why you need to find effective methods of coping and taking care of yourself each and every day” argues a down to earth single mother (online: [file:///F:/cope\\_stress.html](file:///F:/cope_stress.html) accessed 5/11/ 2010) which mentions 10 methods of coping with ongoing stress namely: deep breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, imagination, clearing clutter, getting organized, music, positive thinking, a mini spa etcetera. I suppose that different people have different ways of surviving stress. For others, attending Church meetings, worshipping God and fellowship with believers and regular physical exercise may be the best stress reliever. Studying God’s Word, meditating on it and teaching one’s children to do the same can be a source of revival at a localized level. The stresses tend to be more for the mothers from disadvantaged societies who have limited resources and worry more. The qualitative research becomes vital in providing the coveted insiders’ view at grass-root levels (cf. chapters 3 and 4). For now we turn to the definition and implication of father absence and explore what impacts it has on child care and development.

## 2.2.2 Father Absence: its impact on holistic child development

### 2.2.2.1 Descriptive definition of father absence: physically and emotionally

Blankenhorn (cited in Kinnear, 1999:37) states that: “fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation” and it contributes to multi-faceted problems in society. Kinnear states that death used to be the major cause of prolonged father absence in the past.

According to Leonhardt-Lupa (1995: 120) the father is noted as absent if he:

- does not live with the children,
- does not visit his children
- or is a workaholic
- has no time for family
- is physically present but is emotionally absent/ fails to interact with his children

The absence is said to leave “a pit of loss and longing in his children” and “paternally deprived children are among the majority of people with psychological problems, with more than 70% of all juveniles in state reform institutions coming from fatherless homes” (Leonhardt-Lupa, 1995: 120). This is indeed disturbing, given the ever-growing numbers of homes headed by single mothers and child-headed households. Lynn (1974: 43) endorses Lupa’s observation when he states that, “progressive loss of the paternal image leaves cultures vulnerable to many ills - alienation, irresponsibility, anxiety and aggression”. He believes that issues and questions on parent-child relationships “are central to successful resolution of many current social issues”.

Whited (1998) online: <http://www.aap-psychoanalysis.org/resources/articles2/whited.1>

explains that, “every father is absent in some way, and absence casts shadows that wound. Around these wounds are losses, little ones and big ones”. He enumerates the following forms of father absence:

- death
- divorce
- alcoholism
- workaholism
- physical and sexual abuse

- fundamentalism
- emotional unavailability
- spiritual rigidity
- overprotection
- depression
- anxiety
- worry

He advocates grieving as crucial for healing to occur arguing that, “if wounds are not healed they are generally passed on ... what is not passed back is passed down”. Father absence has multi-faceted dimensions that defy generalization and needs explaining according to each circumstance. Some well-meaning, goal-oriented fathers, working long hours, “feel too drained and exhausted by the demands of work, to do the things that interest children” (Hafner, 1993:200). He adds that they “have difficulty relating closely to their children, or even wives. They may feel excluded and misunderstood...adds to their sense of being exploited...become angry, bitter and resentful” (:201). Also, fathers are normally associated with power, protection, so if they are unduly anxious, show obvious signs of worry, then the children also become more vulnerable and fearful. It appears they are on their own. The same applies to an alcoholic or sexually abusive father, there is no guaranteed protection and so the children suffer emotionally. On the other hand, overprotection keeps children from developing independence.

The irony inherent in the father absence shadow referred to above is that, sons hurt by the father’s indifference, neglect or abuse, vow never to be like their fathers and yet, they find themselves repeating similar negative habits. This reminds one of Nolte’s poem (cited in 1.3.6): “Children Learn what they live” in other words, the men could not help behaving as their fathers did even though they were deprived, when young, by those same faults. Whited (1998 online: <http://www.aap-psychoanalysis.org/resources/articles2/whited.1>) encourages the wounded fathers to acknowledge the hurts caused by father absence in their own lives, even though its humiliating and contra-culture for men to show signs of weakness by “grieving” that is, expressing their hurts one to the other. As Whited states: “There is not enough father and there is not enough grieving” and argues that, “many negative habits and beliefs about ourselves are rooted there” that is, in the shadow of father absence. In a different context of frustrated ambitions, Hafner (1993: 200) adds: “Not all men are able to

grieve... Unresolved grief accumulates, and the more it does so, the more difficult it is to start letting go”.

#### 2.2.2.2 The role of the Father

This seeks to establish what fathers do, that highlights their absence as a deficit. McConn (2000: 37), who advocates dual parenting, argues that protection and provision are the bare minimum of what the father can do and be for the child. The child needs the fathers’ guidance, instruction, encouragement and love expressed in a way that only fathers can. A boy’s masculinity needs reinforcement and dad’s daily presence in the home –provides the best opportunity for this to happen”. He quite rightly argues that, a mother can only teach from an outsider’s view point –about having a trustworthy and confident sense of masculine strength”. The girl also needs her father as the first man –she can relate to in a safe, confident and empowered way... she learns trust and intimacy with men, how to set boundaries, and appreciate difference... she learns that she is love-worthy and may avoid dependency and vulnerability in relationships with men”. The girl child also learns assertiveness, independence and achievement from a supportive father, expounds McConn (2000: 37).

Research evidence proves that –The father is extremely important for the child’s intellectual, emotional and social development” and \_warm, caring fathers were more likely to be happily married and have good friendships making their children stable and satisfied with life. Those socially supported by their fathers, tended to excel (:38). The father’s presence reassures the child giving him confidence and the first few years are crucial in that they are formative and the male children who miss out tend to have problems that stretch into the future (:39). Whilst the mother’s focus is on caretaking, the father emphasizes play that is stimulating and exciting.

Male negation of women is said to stem from a \_vacuum of male contact’ because, –an emotionally engaged father allows the son to separate from the mother and to bring his feelings and emotions along with him. It prevents him becoming overly dependent on women for approval, identity and support”. Fathers can control the behavior of teenage boys prone to peer pressure and antisocial behavior. Under his fathers’ guidance, a boy develops self-defense mechanisms, affirms himself and develops a confident sexuality (:42).

### 2.2.2.3 Absent fathers' negative influence

Poulter (2006: 13) states that: "Men who abandon their children physically and financially do more than psychological damage- they deny their children educational, cultural and other opportunities essential to their development and future career success" and adds the following points on father absence:

- father absence has as much force in a child's life as his active presence, (Curtis cited in Poulter) though in an acutely negative sense
- abandonment breeds resentment, which leads to anger and rage
- the common denominator for violent gangs is fatherlessness
- these teenagers will act out their rage on society and on each other
- It automatically creates a deep sense of loss, which if not resolved, healed, and understood, will only fester.
- Fatherless adults will likely have the challenge of anger-management issues or violent personality tendencies if they ignore the significance of this primary relationship
- absent fathering—from indifference to physical abandonment, will lead to coping with profound sadness (best-case scenario) or to anger issues (worst-case scenario: violence, criminal behaviour, white-collar crime).
- Children grieve father loss and the emotional wound is often covered up under the guise of anger leading later to an anger management problem and a sense of hopelessness" (Poulter 2006: 145).
- Natural father loss from death produces a different reaction in children to abandonment by a father (:140-141).

Poulter explains that anger manifests itself in various forms such as: insubordination, rule breaking, chronic arguing, aggressiveness towards others, and hatred of competition. He emphasizes that an angry personality due to unresolved father absent issues, has long term adverse effects on: other people, colleagues, friends, family, individuals themselves, and their careers (:147). Under section II of his book, Poulter analyses 5 common types of fathering that influence how children turn out namely:

- The passive father with no nurturing paternal behaviour (financial provider/ distant) leaves the mother to deal with the emotional side (:124).
- Children of passive fathers tend to have an emotional block, lack intimate and emotional connection to others (:126).
- Under the superachiever children are compelled to always look good, be image conscious, aim to win and have a sense of accomplishment (: 85ff).
- The time bomb father is generally bad-tempered, unpredictable and is prone to outbursts of anger that he uses to control his children (:103 ff).
- The compassionate mentor values children, nurtures and attends to them, thus enables them to “develop feelings of self-love, self-worth, and competence” (:158, 160).
- And the absent father (under discussion).

All these factors reveal the crucial importance of the part fathers play in their children's lives. Awareness of these issues, as Poulter (2006) seeks to emphasize, should enable everybody to turn negatives into strengths.

The title of an article –“Where's Dad...?” by Hardenbrook (in Piper and Grudem 1991: 378), seems to be a call for information a mother might not have, a demand for explanations that she would rather not give on why the relationship did not work out. This is because children will already be experiencing the hollowness and consequences of father absence, no matter how efficiently the mother may run her household. Hardenbrook (:382) explains that: –“The plague of missing fathers is creating an American male who is confused about his identity and under a great deal of psychological stress, and who ends up lashing in frustration. Our land is increasingly filled with angry, frustrated, isolated young men who no longer know who they are. In desperation, they are tearing everything to pieces”. The author then goes on to list some of the atrocities they committed, for example: six million wives were abused in 1988, with four thousand ending up dead, victims of substance abuse and murder, also, of the 27, 000 Americans who commit suicide, 75 percent are men (:382).

We can identify with the unnecessary destruction of life here in South Africa, where some stressed members, especially from the police force, tend to eliminate their wives and children before shooting themselves. The escalating crime rates and the correctional services' facilities failure to cope with the numbers, overcrowded by 30 000 inmates (end of 2010

news), attest to deep seated problems that certainly need addressing at grass-root levels. There was a request announced on e-TV news then, for families and communities to welcome back released inmates who were deemed safe to rejoin society. However, the argument Hardenbrook (1991:383) advances in the States is that: “There is no hope for the children of America unless their fathers return from the exile of self-serving behaviour ...” This makes me recall Erickson’s assumptions (cited under 2.1.4) about infants that, when their needs are not met, they envisage the world as undependable, unpredictable and dangerous. Could such experiences also account for the source of the problems of violence we have in South African society?

#### 2.2.2.4 Impact of father absence on child development

##### Divorce victims

Fatherlessness is said to be ‘the most harmful trend of this generation’, and Blankenhorn (cited in McConn, 2000: 6), sees it as ‘the leading cause of declining child wellbeing in our society. It is also the engine driving our most urgent social problems, from crime to adolescent pregnancy to child sexual abuse to domestic violence against women. Yet...a problem that is frequently ignored or denied. It remains largely a problem with no name’. In the case of divorce, Mark Tittle in *Children and Divorce*, explains how children of divorced parents experience emotional upheaval in their lives. They are grief-stricken, sad, insecure, withdrawn, angry, and are riddled with anxiety about relationships. Even an infant instinctively picks up and reflects the mother’s distress and grief. Pre-schoolers may revert to infantile behaviour. There is noticeable decrease in school performance. Hafner (1993:197) adds also how men’s emotional well-being is affected by divorce and since they lack effective social support systems, they fail to work through their grief and so they end up suppressing or denying it relying on alcohol and drugs to cover up. It seems as if no one wins when the family disintegrates. There is need to work at alternatives that help to keep the family united.

##### Boys

Herzog & Sudia (cited in Lynn, 1974: 210) provide 4 explanations for change in behaviour for boys namely:

- Delinquency in boys results from masculine protest against feminine domination (*At home and at school where there is a prevalence of females*) (italicised > own addition)
- signifies that the child has inadequate supervision
- the child suffers from the absence of a masculine model
- the child suffers from the loss of family cohesion

Lynn (1974: 210) proceeds to add that the ‘over-mothered’ boy fails to develop “adequate and secure masculine identification” assuming that, “toughness, brutality, and crudeness”, cruelty too, are manly virtues.

- The parent of the same sex is better equipped to deal with delinquency among boys and girls.
- Juvenile delinquency resulted from father loss in early boyhood.
- 5 year old boys with absent fathers desperately sought male attention (Lynn, 1974: 270).
- Father absent boys had lower masculine orientation, were effeminate and anxiety ridden about sex (: 271).
- They had increased dependency on peers and diminished aggression, competition and physical activity (: 279).
- They failed to identify with the father and model him if he went away when the boy was still very young.
- They had lower scholastic performance especially in mathematical skills.
- Immaturity and poor peer adjustment / and mother dependency in young boys (:279).
- If born out of wedlock, they will also produce out of wedlock children.
- The supervision of an adolescent boy can be a tough challenge for a single mother, whose own childhood did not train her on how to master the aggressive masculine impulses (: 211).
- Puberty can be frustrating to a young man, unwilling to open up to his mother, and yet lacks paternal guidance.
- Also, homophobia stems from father silence on sexuality matters (McConn, 2000:57).

## Girls

Hetherington’s (cited in Lynn 1974: 261) study revealed the following findings:

- The girls without fathers are less confident and show dependency syndrome.
- They are unable to interact appropriately with men.

- Girls from divorce families sought more attention and physical contact with men.
- Daughters of widows avoided male company / loss of father when girls were as young as 5, was more detrimental.
- They are anxiety ridden and have less personal control over their lives (:262).
- Conduct disorders like night terrors, depression, withdrawal, etc, were experienced by children from divorced parents.
- Mother absence promotes delinquency in girls more than in boys (:215).
- Father absence is related to alcoholism and suicide attempts in women (Lynn, 1974: 279).

### **2.2.3 Abuse in the Family, care deficits and child care alternatives**

#### 2.2.3.1 Descriptive definition of Abuse

De Francis' (cited in Lynn, 1974: 236) graphic description of abuse spared no details as she wrote: "Literature on child abuse reads like a grisly horror film. Children have been beaten with ironing cords, sticks, wires, and lead pipes...tortured with lighted cigarettes, scalding water, and hot stoves. Pets have been tormented and killed before their eyes and children threatened with the same fate. Parents have twisted their children's arms and legs until they broke and slammed them against the wall until their skulls were fractured. Parents have even bitten and gassed, shocked their children, buried them alive, drowned them in bathtubs, and suffocated them with plastic bags and pillows". Had I not seen for myself a hospital full of severely injured children here in Cape Town and the veil of silence by the staff concerning the source of those injuries, I would not have thought the descriptions above credible.

This serves as a cue to indicate that we need not idolize the father's role in children's lives, it is important that we also examine the negative impact of a father's presence in children's lives. Although mothers punish their children, abusive fathers inflict the more severe injuries, thankfully most of them are often absent from home, argues Gil (cited in Lynn). Alienated adolescents reject, and have a negative view of the parent whom they see as hostile and condemning and gives a low self esteem. Abusive fathers are normally those who were also abused when they were young (Lynn, 1974: 240; Chambers, 1997: 233).

Family cohesion believe that “when a family falls apart psychologically...the continued presence of the father might actually increase the likelihood of delinquency- cases in which the father is pathological, extremely rejecting, or brutal” (Lynn, 1974:211). The reason I brought out the issue of the abusive father is to enable us to judge for ourselves whether or not there is justification insisting on active father presence in one’s life, regardless of his negative influence. An abusive father is a sore point because, the presence of an “abusive, hostile, critical or pathologically withdrawn” father, can easily lead to children’s “failure to identify with a father or father figure, which arrests the process of internalization of ‘masculine’ attributes” (Hafner 1993: 147-148) . There are some fathers who insist on teaching their sons to be men through using drugs, cigarettes and alcohol. But again, one cannot get rid of one’s father even if he is abusive and is not a good model. This is where the state intervenes and places restraining orders on fathers whose abuse is truly detrimental to the family’s physical, emotional and psychological welfare.

Boonzaier (2006:133) defines gender based violence against women as including the following: “sexual harassment, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation, forced prostitution, rape and women abuse...includes emotional, verbal, physical, sexual and economic forms of abuse”. Abused women can leave abusive partners, maintain restraining orders, and cooperate with the police under “a new cultural script” but, many women, according to Baker (cited in Boonzaier 2006: 144) “choose to stay in the relationship, ignored or lifted restraining orders and refused to call or co-operate with the police” because of “fear of harassment”..., emotional connections to partners, children, economic dependence and a lack of institutional support or viable alternatives”. Research into how men account for their violent behaviour revealed the following:

- men justify and excuse their use of violence in order to minimize or deny it
- some describe it as a loss of control,
- others plead temporary insanity,
- accumulated frustration and
- the rest use violence as a means of exercising authority and control over women
- other external factors such as: wives’ disrespect, alcohol or jealous were also listed

In another research by Wood (cited in Boonzaier 2006:148), which studied 22 self-acknowledged wife batterers, the excuses were that it was their right to discipline provocative wives who accepted their punishment for disrespecting their authority. Drugs, alcohol or medical problems also came up. Violence is considered a normal part of manhood which they were not measuring up to, according to patriarchal standards. They also expressed the need to protect womenfolk. In yet another study, wives were blamed for the violence because they reported the men who saw themselves as emasculated victims of a biased legal system and controlling or domineering partners (Anderson & Umberson cited in Boonzaier 2006:149)

Buchbinder & Eisikovits (cited in Boonzaier: 149) revealed men's awareness of "perceived shifts in the power dynamics of their relationships" and saw themselves as "oppressed by their partners and the legal system". All forms of violence are traumatic to children worst of all the violence that may lead to mothers and children seeking refuge in shelters.

On the South African scene:

- "successful masculinity involved having multiple sexual partners ...
- 70% of abusive men had been unfaithful to their marital partners ...
- marital infidelity was constructed as a unique manifestation of abuse and a sign of men's power in heterosexual relationships (Boonzaier, 2006:149)
- also the ability to become or remain socio-economic providers for their families, unfortunately, the dynamics of the times are not facilitating this and gender identities are being thwarted (Moore cited in Boonzaier 2006: 149).

All this goes to show how gender issues, especially, among the African people remain a thorny issue that needs addressing if husbands and wives are to model living together harmoniously in our dynamic modern world. The desire to dominate, to subdue, punish and enforce one's masculinity is mostly influential in some women's choices not to marry. The faithful wives suffer tremendous emotional pain when they discover their husbands' infidelity manifest in their having out of wedlock children with other women. The fear of contracting AIDs from a husband with multiple partners makes them unhappy and fearful of further unprotected sexual contact with their husbands, who then become vicious and "rape" their wives. This is how the virus ends up spreading even to those who remain faithful to

their partners. Surprising as it may seem, it is not only women and children who are always at the receiving end of abuse, some men are now victims in the real sense, as 2.4.4 will show.

### 2.2.3.2 An abusive and unpalatable traditional family

Milazi (in Richman & Hawthorne, 2006: 150) describes a sad family context cited below:

–My father was old-fashioned and believed children should be seen and not heard. As a result, I never knew him, even though we lived in the same house for 13 years. The only time we interacted was when he beat me for whatever transgressions I happened to commit in my childish innocence. I grew up believing that fathers had to be tough because they were merely there to keep children in line... My mother ...was taught that a man was the head of the house and was never to be challenged ...mother took most of the emotional abuse for our transgressions. I often found her crying in her bedroom but she would never tell me what my father had done to her. She kept the family together and always told us that my father was a good man. I never understood why she defended him when I hated him so much”

Milazi also explains how his father –was always getting fired for beating up a foreman or he would just leave because he couldn't stand his boss's nonsense. There was no job good enough for him” (:150). Extensive literature has been documented on male instigated domestic violence of all types available globally. Meroff (2004: 51) states that –domestic violence is the most widespread form of violence against women in the world today” and yet some countries do not consider it a crime within their court's jurisdiction but a private family matter. Other examples of work overload beast of burden, ill-treatment of women, relentless childbirth etc. have been mentioned in chapter 1. Escaping marriage may seem to be a logical and workable solution to some mothers, but in the long run it impacts negatively on children who may still be attached to the other parent regardless of the negative influence, as Milazi's case attests. He secretly sought and yearned for his father's approval and when his dad passed away, wished he had told him that now at 27 years old, he understood his father and the reason he had been so strict. Despite the hatred and resentment he had harbored for his father as a child, he still brought flowers to his father's grave and made peace with him in the traditional way (Milazi in Richman & Hawthorne, 2006: 154). Having said that there is need for examination of generic literature to know what is happening globally.

### 2.2.3.3 The maternal care deficit

When the researcher was still engaged in recruiting mothers for the empirical study, one lady expressed dissatisfaction at the exclusion of single fathers from the study. She argued that more and more men were becoming afraid of involvement with women because of fear of abuse. On every street in her community, there was at least one man struggling to look after children, having been abandoned by his wife. It was no longer easy to get another woman to replace the one gone, for fear of further humiliation. Another point she raised was that some women were now beating up their husbands who dared not retaliate for basically 2 reasons:

- fear of imprisonment and restraining orders
- they also dared not report the abuse for fear of shameful exposure in the community

To imagine that all this confusion is taking place before the very watchful eyes of children who learn best through what they live (Nolte, 1972) that is, –children learn to relate to other people by what they experience in their own family. Your relationship with your partner will affect how your child will relate to his or her partner in the future” Stanway (cited in Marshall, 1991:80). A father’s abuse is intolerable but a mother’s is shocking in that it is contrary to all expectations of what womanhood represents. Such behavior is likely to set off an unstoppable chain of abuse down the generations as the emotionally stronger partner takes advantage of the gentler one. There is urgent need for restoring balance so that all parties benefit through working together harmoniously caring for their children.

A discussion with Mr. Frimpong, visiting South Africa from the USA, on women abusing men, new to me, revealed that in the States it was a common practice for some Afro-American women to divorced their husbands, marry and divorce again, as many times as they pleased because of the maintenance money available that way. There was no need to go to work since the father of each child was expected to pay USD 800 for child maintenance. If a mother has 3 children, she receives USD 2 400 monthly from the father or fathers of her children in addition to what the States is entitled to pay her as a single mother. Mr. Frimpong added that the prisons were teeming with men imprisoned for failure to pay maintenance fees. This is an outrageous manifestation of irresponsible multiplication as never seen before, with the blame fully the woman’s. This is a new form of gender exploitation among formerly disadvantaged groups which needs addressing urgently for the sake of peaceful co-existence.

This exploitative strategy reminds me of a neo-colonial mindset described as ‘eat or be eaten’, exposed in Ngugi wa Thiong’s book *Petals of Blood*, where the characters, Wanja the prostitute, Munira the teacher, Abdulla the shop owner, and Karega the traveler, are bent on subtly exploiting one another. Bank,<sup>11</sup> (in Kagwanja and Kondlo 2009: 221-222), also speaks of ‘exploitative landlordism’ in the yards of townships where ‘single mothers have come to rely on ... as relatively safe places to raise their children’. Bank argues that, the State’s commitment to upgrade the yard is noble, steps must be taken also to protect the interests of tenants, especially single mothers so that they are not unduly evicted or exploited (:223). My point here is that unless there is a genuine spirit of caring for others prevalent in our societies globally, children will not learn anything except selfish exploitation of others.

- Mother’s choice

Recent relational dynamics seem to be set against male inclusion in family decision-making mechanisms to some increasing extent. Through single women’s ability to access artificial insemination in many developed countries, fathers are being marginalized in conception and birth processes. McCann (2000: 19) explains that: ‘It is even legal for a woman to take the sperm of her dead husband to father his child. We are the first generation to have considered writing fathers out of the script to such an extent. The ones who pay for this choice are the children, consigned to a life without a father. Women need to grasp the nagging hunger that their children, especially sons, will live with if they never know their father. And men need to grasp that they are needed as fathers, and put themselves on the map in discussions about pregnancy’. I am reminded of the 66 year old British lady who decided to have a baby and went ahead with the plan with ‘no father’ in sight. If only there was no evidence of disgruntled sons out there languishing about their lack of identity and worth, maybe, but the penalties on societal peace are too severe to turn a blind eye to all this. There is need for all parties involved in a relationship that includes children, to voice their deepest convictions so as to reach an understanding on what is best for children, in the long run.

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<sup>11</sup> Leslie Bank’s article in *State of the Nation*, is entitled: *Beyond yard socialism: Landlords, tenants and social power in the backyards of a South African city*, where she describes the dynamics of yard life, yard socialism as well as yard capitalism characterized by exploitative landlordism (ibid:205).

#### 2.2.3.4 Adoption and surrogacy options: for orphaned, neglected, abused, and unwanted children

Weinstein (1995: back-cover) provides a possible solution to the issues of child abuse, violence and family breakdown of the American family through advocating surrogate parenting for children at risk. –Surrogate parents provide support, protection, and supervision. The surrogate siblings of the peer group provide assistance, feedback, and dialogue. And, the culture and traditions of the surrogate family provide a stable set of values and norms to guide individual exploratory activity” (:112). Now, all this is very practical and helpful to the children at risk. Again, surrogacy is a corrective measure for the family’s failure to take care of its own members, similar to the other care paradigms that cater for the old, the young children at risk due to HIV and AIDS pandemic. Hafner (1993: 147) states that a father figure who is –a caring, warm, flesh-and-blood person rather than an image from the media or pop culture...” will do. The question still remains, what family paradigm would ensure maximum child development in caring attitudes? Is it the one with father presence though he may be abusive, the single mother/father family, child-headed households, gay/lesbian set ups, the surrogate family?

On the question of surrogacy, Thomas (1996:66) explains that: –I could be a surrogate parent for a few of the kids in the group, but what they needed most was not a stand in Dad. They, like my kids, needed their own dad to affirm and love and lead them. I came to realize that making Youth Ministry all it could be was somehow connected to helping parents be all they could be”. Other Youth Workers and Ministers felt the same way and –are ready to lead in a new approach to God’s family, from within the family. They are ready to learn how to specialize in a ministry to families”.

- Adoption’s side effects

Adoption has its blessings and limitations. McCann (2000:20) explains that it leads to dualistic living at both the surface level and the subconscious level of fantasizing about one’s roots. An elderly man of 45, who had been adopted at 3 years of age reported that, he –always felt alone in that family...had unlimited personal freedom...still felt a hollowness about not knowing who my real father was. I would often cry in private with the frustration

of not knowing...” and after he located his late father and step family, the relief is obvious as he states: “I have roots I can identify with on both my mother and my father’s side” (McCann, 2000:21). In a local context, another expressed the following sentiments about adoptive parents and the search for biological/ natural parents: “They were open about my adoption status... they loved and cared for me as their own...When I became a father, I felt it necessary to start the search for my natural mom, thinking that it would be nice to know who my natural mother and ... father are and good for mother to know that I am ‘ok’ ... three years later, I found my... biological parents ... most wonderful experience... Unfortunately, you cannot turn back the clock and so the relationships will always be more like a good friendship as the bonds between parents and a young child can never be formed... meeting with my biological dad has been really good, to have an older male figure again who I can refer to as father. Being a child of God however, means that there are many older men I look up to who have fulfilled the role of father over the years”.

All this goes to show the importance of our human biological identity. We are not animals that do not bother about their origins. Caring about one’s natural parents does not necessarily dishonour the adoptive parents, who will always hold a special place in the adoptive child’s heart for having cared enough to bring him/her up as their own, at a time when it really mattered for someone to care. Mother Teresa (cited in Thomas, 1996: 55) stated that: “The biggest disease today is not leprosy or cancer. It is the feeling of being uncared for, unwanted - of being deserted and alone”. However, for those who trust him, God still remains a Father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5).

The question still remains whether adoption is the ideal family structure to aim for, given the mountain of evidence showing how children do hunger so much for their biological fathers more than they do for their social/surrogate fathers. The hollowness, emptiness, sense of rootlessness young boys experience from lack of touch with their absent fathers and the young girls’ endless search for love in sexual indulgence mistaking this erotic love for the genuine thing, just because there was no father to “touch them in affirming and non-sexual ways” (McCann, 2000: 40-41). Cheal (1991:21) reasons that, “a concern with children’s lives tends to be associated with an interest in relational simplicity and interactional stability in families, which is believed to provide the emotional security needed for the psycho-social development of children”

#### 2.2.3.5 Systemic and cultural violence in South Africa as care deficits

South Africa shares a similar history of systemic violence and exploitation as does America during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Slave Trade that dehumanized people. Research into violence in South Africa done under: “The Study for Violence and Reconciliation” and heard through the media (e-news broadcast on 9/11/2010 at 8pm) revealed that, following an investigation in which 20 prison inmates were interviewed, 5 main causes of violence were identified as:

- easy access to firearms
- poverty and unemployment
- substance abuse
- delays in prosecuting criminals
- the apartheid legacy

The response was that these findings were old news which politicized violent crime. I do not wish to add salt to the wound but this has to be said. Margaret Nash, of the Black Sash Women’s Movement (cited in Spink, 1991:196), spoke prophetically against ‘head hunting’ violence, comparing ‘an epidemic of violence to one of disease which will recur until the primary cause of the infection has been eliminated’. This ‘disease’ I interpreted to be black people’s anger at police brutality in the arrests and punishments, that included children as young as 7 years old, for participating in crimes like stone-throwing, arson, necklacing people, boycotting etcetera (:223). The ‘tortured and maltreated... were likely to nurse bitterness, hatred and contempt for authorities, the law and the due legal process which gave them no protection...a generation of brutalized children ...in a society in which the government and its agents could no longer govern normally’ (Spink, 1991:224). Most white people, including doctors, pastors, lawyers, educators and social workers were reported as having opposed detention of children because of its negative impact on families and communities at large (:225).

By the researcher’s calculation, if the youngest child detained was 7 years old in 1994, the time of independence, today he/she would be a young adult of 26 years. Thus the disease of anger and violence could still be running its course in these young people, as Margaret Nash had predicted. Among these individuals who may have been personally affected during the

Apartheid unrest, could be some unemployable individuals, with hardened insubordination due to the tortures they saw or experienced. The assumption is open to correction. Since South Africa is in some kind of transition period, the law of entropy<sup>12</sup> that Nurnberger referred to in his book entitled *Prosperity, Poverty, and Pollution* (1999) may be applicable here too, where the anger in people is still dissipating until it fizzles out eventually just as Apartheid's grip loosened its hold on Black people's lives in South Africa. The complex nature of the problem of violence defies simplistic solutions though its impact on children's development in care consciousness is significant due to on-going cultural practices and T.V. shows that promote it.

Unless steps are taken to curb a culture of violence bombarding young children everywhere on T.V., this entropic hope may remain unattainable. Cultural practices that promote violence for example, the Venda Combat called "Musangwe" Part I and II (featured on e-T.V. at 6.30 – 7.00 p.m. in mid-November 2010) are detrimental to care consciousness. The combat is described by its fans as representing honour and respect when young men from different villages take turns to engage in aggressive fist fights surrounded by cheering and jeering crowds of spectators. I was relieved to see that the referees did not let the challenges deteriorate to bloody messes. Nevertheless, the consequences for those who refuse to fight or those who lose fights can be socially and psychologically severe. One comment I read on the screen was that a man could even be divorced by his wife "because he does not know how to handle pain". The mothers expressed concern for their sons: the pain and shame of defeat. The men seemed proud of their cultural practice and wanted it passed on from generation to generation. Imagine children being subjected to this model as the norm for boys!

The repercussions of combatant mindsets are far-reaching. We have had many sad stories of pupils carrying knives and stabbing one another in schools. Public shows of Zulu young men brutally fighting one another with clubbed sticks (knobkerries?) that left some of them with bloody, possibly concussed heads, used to feature on T.V. also. These do not portray values of caring for others, instead, they perpetuate violence. These violent male mindsets extend to abuse of women (to use a modern/ human rights/ legal/ developmental term) that also include the traditional custom called "Ukuthwala" (to fetch, to carry) involving the abduction, (and rape) of child brides as young as 14 years by men more than twice their age (e-news: 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ilson (1987:515) defines 'entropy' as "the tendency of the energy of a closed system, to diminish in its disseminating capacity with the passage of time".

degree investigative journalism broadcast on 9/11/2010 at 9 p.m.). Cultures are awesome, but every one of them has good and bad aspects. I believe that it is crucial for people of a culture to put their heads together through educational campaigns, communal gatherings and decide what customs to keep on practicing, what to modify and what to discard, following consultation with the most negatively affected individuals, in this particular case, the women. This would be the greatest step forward in any culture. Instead of brutal fights, people can suggest alternative kinds of competitive interactions that would engage the community at large in gainful pass times, for example: football matches, gardening competitions, building solid housing competitions etcetera. I would consider that more sustainable and advantageous to child development and communal welfare.

Girls who escaped ~~ukutwala~~” situations, explained that they did not love their abductors, regretted that their education had been interrupted and they reasoned that marriage made one poor. The parents, for example one mother (veiled identity and heard on TV), supported the custom, most probably due to fear of being forced to return gifts she might have subsequently received from her self-imposed son-in-law. All this is part of the problem web that accounts for the proliferation of violence and single motherhood needing urgent attention. I feel about these issues because my own mother was pledged, as a very young girl, to an old man with 3 wives and grown up children, all for a bag of maize during a year of drought and hunger in 1937 because her parents were poor and needed food. Fortunately, a well wisher gave her some money and told her about the Gutu Dutch Reformed Mission Station where she could be protected and educated. That’s how she managed to escape before the marriage was consummated and was then brought up and educated by missionaries. My father was in his final year of teacher training when he fell in love with her at first sight and later married her. I wouldn’t be here today had someone not cared enough to offer my Mom (a child then) bus fare and invaluable information on where she could go for help, at that critical point in time. This is the height of care, ethically speaking, when responsible strangers can intervene and transform a child’s life.

Hafner (1993:186)’s explanation that, ~~the~~ basis of marriage was economic rather than emotional or romantic, partners were selected mainly with a view to improving their family’s financial status...intimately related to the prospect of physical survival” neatly accounts for my Mom’s dilemma as a young girl. Recommendations will be made concerning the violence

against, and abuse of, women in South Africa under chapter 5 and the need for conciliatory measures to be considered in every sphere of life. Presence of caring people is crucial in children's lives. One abductor said on T.V. that he needed someone to cook for him, wash his clothes etcetera. All the reasons were self-centred. He did not seek a companion or someone to love and cherish but a slave in his home. Ilson (1987:18) defines 'abuse' as "to hurt or injure by maltreatment", "to use wrongly or improperly" as opposed to 'care' for someone signifying: looking after well, supervising, giving attention and protection (:248).

The mystery surrounding the murder of the British bride on her honeymoon, by a man from Khayelithsa towards the end of 2010 led to speculation on whether her husband had a hand in her death or not. If he had, it only shows how women are vulnerable anywhere regardless of cultural background.

## **2.3 Alternatives to patriarchal and nuclear family paradigms**

### 2.3.1 Statements construable as requests for models of caring family

- 1) Woollett & Phoenix (1991: 226) complain about the fact that: "No new models for how society could or should be changed to give mothers, children (and hence fathers and others) a better deal are provided". This sounds like a call for suggestions on a workable family paradigm that would benefit all members: mothers, fathers and children. This is what this study hopes to achieve.
- 2) Similar sentiments were expressed in Edin & Kefalas (2005: 5) that: "Social Sciences currently tells us ...next to nothing about what will make marriage more likely among single mothers". The research question was: "why low-income, poorly educated young women have children they can't afford and why they don't marry".
- 3) Shefer & Portgieter (in Shefer et al., 2006: 119), in their evaluation of current South African work on sexualities, point out that, apart from the predominant cultural and media stereotypes of being "powerful and controlling in relation to women in heterosexual relationships... Clearly there is a silence around alternative ways of being men".

The demand for a workable, balanced, relational, family paradigm requires careful thought because having tasted the positive effects of human rights and global developmental trends that have enhanced their dignity, identity and worth, women would not voluntarily return to the oppressive disempowerment that characterized traditional lifestyles for centuries in the past. Chapter 5 will answer the plea for a workable alternative after the qualitative search has yielded additional information from the local scene. Dobson (1978: 168) declares it “A mistake to temper with the time-honored relationship of husband as loving protector and wife as recipient of that protection” however, like the captain of a ship, ~~he~~ must not incite his crew to mutiny by heavy-handed disregard for their feelings and needs ... (*he must*) put the best interests of his family above his own, even to the point of death, if necessary. Nowhere in Scripture is he authorized to become a dictator or a slave owner”. This is a preliminary attempt at seeking a workable family paradigm that will be explored fully in chapter 5.

### 2.3.2 Interdependence and family stability

Different authors explain what they consider essential qualities that go to make up a family. Bozalek (2006: 151ff) analyses a text by Dixon, for a Family and Child Care course at the University of the Western Cape, that sees the nuclear family as:

- the norm
- creation of what is proper to do and think about the family
- comparable to students’ own experiences of family

The single parent family is not seen as holistic but is ~~described~~ as suffering from a “deficit in structure” reinforcing the idea that something or someone is missing which should ordinarily and properly be there”. This sentiment echoes the one already expressed (ch.1: 4) that single parent families “do not qualify as real families” (cf. Phoenix et al., 1991:15). The core of the family’s efficient function is the marriage and so single parent families are considered “pathological” and yet they “represent a deviation from the norm” that is baffling in its prevalence in today’s world and its problems are seen merely in its structural composition (Bozalek, 2006:153). Indeed Bozalek (:154) is right to mention that problems of abuse, neglect and violence attending two parent families have not been taken into account in idealizing or normalizing the nuclear family about which Morgan (cited in Bozalek 2006:154) argues that it originated and ~~became~~ prevalent in the Western world only during

the time of industrialization". Systems theory and functionalism were the dominant theories then and Parsons a notable figure therein.

Workable interdependence of family members is what would strengthen individual families and society in general. Covey (1989 online: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/interdependence>) explains that an interdependent relationship is one where ~~all~~ participants are emotionally, economically, ecologically and/or morally interdependent, two states that cooperate with each other ...interconnectedness and reliance on one another socially, economically, environmentally and politically". He argues further that: ~~Independent~~ people who do not have the maturity to think and act interdependently may be good individual producers, but they won't be good leaders or team players. They're not coming from the paradigm of interdependence necessary to succeed in marriage, family, or organizational reality". The family calls for good team players one wonders which members of the team contribute more to family disintegration? Since the majority of mothers are single, are they necessarily the bad team players? Most mothers tend to be very good team players because of the demands on their time. The problem may lie more with their male counterparts as explained below from a male perspective.

Biddulph (2000: 6) offers a convincing explanation arguing that the ~~core~~ of the problem" is:

~~Men~~ so often live their lives privately, isolated from each other by a tradition of silence, trapped by the culture and demands of the economy like beasts of labour in separate pens. Even when men find answers, they are often not shared around. And when men suffer, they suffer alone. Suicide is the ultimate loneliness; following closely are alcoholism, divorce, poor health, crime and violence. The antidote to this poison is obvious. When we uncover our hearts, even just a little, we rejoin the human race".

This encourages men to be more expressive in order to be less isolated. In some cultures, men were not supposed to cry or show signs of weakness and hence the general tendency to seem detached from their wives and children. This did not mean that they were bad men who did not care. Biddulph (2000:1) explains that: ~~What~~ makes a good man has not really changed ... trustworthiness, a fierce capacity for love, unselfish action for the common good, and the ability to laugh in the face of hardship, were always what mattered most to man's friends and family" and these are timeless qualities. These are the qualities that children need to see and experience in dual parenting homes where men express their emotions without

going overboard into violent actions. The capacity to express, for example: –anger at a botched vasectomy, pain at the loss of a loving partner, relief at surviving a peace-keeping mission, rage at sexual abuse, joy in the teamwork of man and woman and pleasure in the trust of a little child” (Biddulph, 2000:6) makes them humane and approachable to their children. One sad story (:2) explains how a father held back from showing any physical affection to his daughter and so left her yearning for his fatherly touch in affirmation. She remembered with nostalgia, him carrying her to bed only once when she was a little girl and sleepy. The father’s concern was fear that any touch may be construed as sexual. This is the price good men have to pay because of predators who sexually abuse children.

### 2.3.3 A critique of Parsons’ functional imperatives

A brief look at Parsons’ theory may help us to understand why the nuclear family, a specific product of his times, is now failing. –Parsons produced a general theoretical system for the analysis of society based on a structural-functional approach, in which every group or society tends to fulfill four functional imperatives:

- adaptation—to the physical and social environment
- goal attainment— define primary goals and enlist individuals to strive to attain them
- integration—the coordination of the society or group as a cohesive whole
- latency—maintaining the motivation of individuals to perform their roles according to social expectations”( Parsons, Talcott from New World Encyclopedia, accessed on 2010/08/16, online: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Talcott\\_Parsons](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Talcott_Parsons) )

Parsons’ AGIL sociological Paradigm (modified and represented below) is also available on line: [http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/AGIL\\_Paradigm/1](http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/AGIL_Paradigm/1) accessed: 2010/08/16.

Adaptation (economy)	Goal attainment (political systems)
Latency (societal values)	Integration (societal norms/ solidarity/ legal or religious systems)

Latency function ensures –maintenance of minimal social structure and order: socialization, family, schools, cultural institutions”. –Integration ...guarantees cohesion in society or a social group: legal or religious systems and inclusion”. For Parsons, the two dimensions of society were clearly defined as ‘instrumental’ and ‘expressive’ where the latter was

represented by families, churches, clubs, crowds, smaller social settings” and the former by bureaucracies, markets. The grand theory is complex, but the tabular representation of the AGIL paradigm above reminds me of how Perlas (2000) envisioned his ‘social three-folding’ strategy for ‘shaping globalization’. By harnessing the power of the instrumental dyad of society namely: adaptation (economy/business/markets) and the goal attainment (political systems/ governments) to include the expressive aspects of society namely: latency (societal values represented by families, clubs, churches, communities) and integration (social cohesion through legal and religious systems) in relationship building and partnership formation in joint developmental ventures, the formerly marginalized and weaker aspects of society will thus be empowered to voice their needs and have them met. Similarly, in families, the parental dyad consisting of caring father and mother could be harnessed to include children and their care needs in decision-making and thus do away with neglect and abuse of children.

Lynn (1974: 103-104) upholds the functionalist theory within the family set up and supports Parsons’ theme which ‘differentiates the father’s ‘instrumental’ role from the mother’s ‘expressive’ one. The father is society’s representative within the family and the family’s representative within society. Parsons (cited in Lynn, 1974:104) saw the family as ‘both a part of a large system –society - and a subsystem in itself’ with the mother predominant in the subsystem (:104). His argument is that without child-care issues bogging him down, the father is free to be involved in communal concerns and ‘through the discipline and control he supplies, he pries the children loose from mother dependency so that they can grow up and accept their responsibilities as adults in the society’. Gender stereotyping characterized the traditional family but is now unpopular within most feminist circles. Parson defines the father as the authority figure representing discipline, is neutral, objective and has sound judgment. The mother’s role is expressive, integrative and supportive for maintaining family solidarity and function in a well coordinated manner that sees children develop effectively into independent adults. However, ‘Parsons’ influence waned rapidly in the U.S. after 1970’ as American sociologist retreated ‘from the grand pretensions of the 1960s to a more empirical, grounded approach’, acknowledging social and cultural changes as the general direction of development rather than a movement towards equilibrium as his critic Mills thought (cf. [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Talcott\\_Parsons](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Talcott_Parsons)). Social dynamics are clearly blurring the sharply defined roles allowing both men and women to adjust in order to

accommodate one another the economic demands of modern lifestyles. Failing to do that may, unfortunately, lead to divorce and separation. If one fails to bend under the onslaught of social changes, one breaks.

Functionalist critics view ‘the family’ as “frozen in the language of structure and roles, unchanging, universal and inevitable” that relegates servitude to women (Viljoen, 1996:31). Bernardes (1997:107) is also critical of functionalist approach to family when she states that “Children are largely absent from grand theorizing, when they are present they tend to be located as passive receivers of adult rearing practices”. Alanen (cited in Bernardes) advocates the need to view children as “participants and constructors” in their world, instead of viewing them as victims. Holland (cited in Bernardes) affirms this and argues “for us to readjust our concept of childhood and give more voice to children themselves”. Bernardes (:109) states that “children as a social grouping are powerless and subject to all kinds of control and oppression” and that favouring the nurture side of the debate, “children are largely products of the type and quality of nurturing or childrearing” they receive (:110).

With the development of human rights, inclusion of women in development, economic productivity at the workplace outside the home, and other changes in society, there should be some decrease in the abuse of women and children. Substance abuse due to job losses and mounting frustrations, domestic violence etcetera, will always be a constant threat to the peaceful co-existence of family members, especially women and children of its perpetrators. Shifts in the balance of power between men and women in families, has both good and bad consequences for children. As already stated (2.2.3.3), when mothers abuse their rights and privileges in the home, life becomes bleak for the children.

Patton and Childs (1988:154) state that, feminists who are critical of the family, which they view as a subsystem of society as a whole, see idealization of one particular family structure, as influenced by sex and gender domination. Goldner and other authors (cited in Patton & Childs: 154) concur, arguing that “the family is essentially a conservative institution that protects the patriarchal social status quo ... family therapy theory and techniques” enhance this. These comments signify a rejection of the traditional nuclear family and all it stands for. The question of authority and status quo in the context of equal rights is definitely a sore point for the modern woman, because of centuries of abuse of women previously sanctioned

by governments and paternalistic societies. However, the two authors highlight the fact that God called people to live family life under authority and to freely be committed to others and to God by covenant and communion with them in very intimate relationships (Patton & Childs 1988:155).

We cannot overlook the issue of authority in human institutions but the nature and style of that authority needs qualification on how best it should serve the interests of all family members, as will be established in chapter 5. This study also aims to resolve the impasse by suggesting an alternative definition and use of male authority, as well as explain a family paradigm which, if practiced by interested parties, might restore marital relationships and stop them from: turning cold, indifferent or worse still, being terminated by disgruntled members. Moge (cited in Lynn 1974: 284) explained that in France, when a law was passed licensing divorce and another withdrew paternal disciplining of children, it is reported that, “Paris became a city of license...fathers abandoned their wives and children; and divorce, illegitimacy, and juvenile crime became commonplace...the absence of the father from the family and the loss of his authority were associated with a loss of societal cohesion”. Is this French scenario a reflection of what is happening in the family arena globally? What is chasing the men away from families and homes? What is keeping working single mothers from getting married? What is it that keeps men and women from committing themselves to one another in lifelong marriages for the best child care? ‘Selfinterest ... kills good relating’, is the gist of Crabb’s (1991) argument (details in 5.4.4).

Myers (1999, 2003 discussed under 1.1) introduced us to alternative definitions of poverty such as: spiritual and relational. When relationships fail and power is abused in the family set up, life becomes very difficult for the marginalized especially women and children. In *Discipling Nations*, Miller (1998) is praised for having built “a powerful and convincing thesis that God’s truth not only breaks the spiritual bonds of sin and death but can free whole societies from deception and poverty”. Globally, there is need to fight relational poverty and thus restore failing relationships that deprive people of the joy that ensues from healthy relating in the home and at work places.

### 2.5.5 Conclusion

Chapter 2 aimed to reveal all possible aspects of parental agency including the positives and negatives so that we get a full picture of the challenges that are up against the nuclear kind of family paradigm. Other cultural and political issues like cultural violence, abuse of women and societal unrest have also been brought up because they constitute the environment or context in which the children, whose holistic development we seek to advocate, grow up in. If there is to be transformation of societies, nothing should remain covered but must be laid out in the open in dialogue and constructive criticism so that emotional hurts in both men and women, husbands and wives, children and parents, mothers and sons, daughters and fathers, can be healed through dialogue, confession and apology where necessary, thereby leading to physical and emotional healing.

The massive literary evidence seems to argue in favor of father involvement in children's lives for their holistic development. It is time now to move to the next phase of the research that will provide the critical hermeneutic aspect to help us understand the single mothers' experiences and views of their realities at grass-root level. In chapter 3, the research process highlights what has to be tested, where, how and why. I believe that the way forward will be determined to a large extent by the mothers themselves, the quality of their responses, not necessarily in numeric terms, in order for us to gauge whether raising children by mothers only is the best family set up for training them in caring attitudes or not. Answers will be provided through in-depth interviews and adequate analysis of the participants' responses. The Word of God is brought to bear on this issue in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.2 Introduction

Chapter 2 discussed the importance of dual parental agency in child care as well as challenges that threaten the survival and effectiveness of the nuclear family. Findings provided insights that revealed the extent of the problem web. There are no simplistic solutions. Single mothering, though increasing globally, is fraught with difficulties. Fathers also, have a crucial role to play in families but father absence can be a curse or a blessing depending on the extent of abuse in the home etcetera. Ideas gleaned from chapter 2 helped in formulating some of the questions used in the qualitative study undertaken at an informal-settlement in Cape Town, where traditional African values are assumed to have been overtaken by rapid urbanization, modern lifestyles and feminist ideologies. Thus, Chapter 3 explains the scientific procedure undertaken to investigate and check out at grass-root level, issues raised by the research questions stated in chapter 1, through interviewing single mothers and using married mothers as the control group. The researcher attained data triangulation<sup>13</sup> through using various entry points –or angles towards a ‘measured position’ ...” (Henning, 2004: 103), which in this case is: the best family paradigm for holistic child care and development in care consciousness as a means to attaining sustainability in social development. Details of the empirical context have already been supplied (1.5.4).

In this chapter, as in other chapters too, the first person singular pronoun (I) will be used interchangeably with the third person singular pronoun (she) when referring to myself (the researcher) as recommended by Mouton (2001:59) who argues in favor of making “good use of variants and pronouns to ensure that your writing is more interesting” to avoid being monotonous by “using the same nouns over and over throughout the text.

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<sup>13</sup> Mason (2002:190) argues that “the concept of triangulation... encourages the researcher to approach their research questions from different angles, and to explore their intellectual puzzles in a rounded and multi-faceted way”

### 3.1.1 The research questions

- What are the causes of the single mother or non-marital phenomena?
- What challenges do the single mothers face in child care issues?
- How do single mothers view themselves in terms of government empowerment policies?
- What are their perspectives of ‘men’, ‘husbands’ and ‘fathers’?
- What family structure is ideal for developing care awareness in children?

The findings will be analyzed in chapter 4, under their respective research questions alongside literature control. However, emerging themes issues that women brought up, will also be mentioned, nothing essential will go to waste.

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 Research design and preliminaries

#### 3.2.1.1 Overview of the eclectic methodology

The research design was determined by the multi-faceted nature of the inquiry which called for an ideal family model capable of inculcating caring attitudes in children in view of the complex family set ups prevalent in the world today. The design therefore, encompasses 4 methodological components namely:

- Skillful use of interdisciplinary literature, employed both local and generic literature for a better understanding of global views on family structural and relational issues. Examples of this are: the dramatic increase in single mothers globally; the effect of father absence on child development; and the importance of dual parental care for children (ch.1 & ch.2).
- The phenomenological approach (de Vos, 2002: 267; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 139), employed in chapter 3, sought epistemological insights through primary<sup>14</sup> data

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<sup>14</sup> Dawson (2009:46) explains that, “Primary research involves the study of a subject through firsthand observation and investigation”.

gathering, that explored the maternal perspectives on child-care issues and perceptions on paternal contribution in a dynamic modern world full of conflicting values (ch.4).

- Biblical hermeneutics (ch.5), helped to establish what family set up is the ideal paradigm for holistic care of children. Here, the Bible provides the underlying theoretical framework of this study, highlighting family three-folding as reasonable, logical and effective for holistic child development.
- The report is therefore, an argumentative discourse. According to Mouton (2001: 120), ~~an~~ outline of the thesis should contain the ‘story line’ or core reasoning that will be followed”. Mason (2002: 173) also proposes that, ~~qualitative~~ researchers should direct their efforts towards *the making of arguments*. The concept of argument here is not... necessarily... an adversarial one”. Furthermore, ~~making~~ an argument therefore involves working out how to construct, communicate, support and substantiate it ...” (:173). Thus, various aspects of the family are explored and analyzed in this study, for an integrative view of what the current family situation is, globally, with the hope of suggesting a workable alternative cognizant of development trends that seek poverty reduction, empowerment of the weak, human rights recognition, and attend to children’s needs etc. as a step in the right direction, that is, towards sustainable social development.

One realizes how critical it is to have a clear outline of one’s argument in the face of conflicting views on similar issues. On child care, Bernardes (1997:67) advocates a recognition of ~~the~~ needs of all categories of persons within families” arguing that ~~in~~ terms ... of Family Citizenship, families have rights and duties concerning all members with no priorities” as opposed to ~~a~~ special appeal for the care or nurturance of children” put forward by many family agendas. To him, ~~such~~ an emphasis can generate inequalities between generations where one generation commands more resources than another”. Donati’s (cited in Bernardes 1997:67) view is that ~~more~~ resources are commanded by the elderly meaning that fewer resources are available for children” because ~~the~~ rapidly rising number of elderly people in Europe is diverting scarce resources from caring for our children”. On the other hand, Bjornberg (cited in Bernardes 1997:67) is concerned about ~~the~~ potential individualism arising out of excessive child-centeredness”. These arguments serve to demonstrate diverse opinions on family issues.

3.2.1.2 Qualitative Research: (Mark, Woodsong et al. 2005 modules accessible online: <http://familyhealthinternational>: *Qualitative Research methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*)

The qualitative research component was chosen (ch.3 & 4) for its advantages namely:

- It is a type of scientific research that seeks to explore phenomena
- instruments used are more flexible
- it has an iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions
- it uses semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation to do the following:
  - describe variation
  - describe and explain relationships
  - to describe individual experiences
  - to describe group norms
- qualitative methods are more flexible and so allow greater spontaneity and adaptation between the researcher and participant
- the interview can be conversational with subsequent questions tailored to the information the participant will have provided

For eliciting the desired information, qualitative methods of enquiry were considered by the researcher as integral to this study on family issues. As Bott (cited in le Roux, 1987:325) explains, “family life goes on inside homes, not in streets or in universities, schools, clinics, churches, factories (*and*)... contacting families by knocking on doors is inappropriate” for private gathering of personal details. The single mothers are, according to Mason (2002: 51) “the data sources in the sense that they are repositories of knowledge, experiences, feelings or whatever, which are relevant to” the research “process involving activities that are intellectual, analytical and interpretive” (:52). Quantitative studies are inadequate for obtaining a comprehensive view of the dynamics of marriage and family life and hence the need for in-depth methods to elicit in-depth information (le Roux, 1997:51). Through people, a qualitative researcher hopes to access or explore the following: “language, expression, appearance, experiences, accounts, interpretations, memories, thoughts, ideas, opinions, understandings, emotions, feelings, perceptions, morals, behavior, practices, actions,

activities, conversations, interactions, humor, faith, creations, secrets, relationships, inner self, sub/ unconscious, psyche, and so on” (Mason, 2002: 53). Below the researcher will explain how she sought reliable in-depth information.

3.2.1.3 Sampling (Mark, Woodsong et al. 2005 online: <http://familyhealthinternational> modules titled: *Qualitative Research methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide.*)

A sample is a subset of a population used in qualitative research as representative, for it is impossible, and unnecessary, to collect data from everybody in the community. Punch (1998:105) also speaks of representative sampling. The most commonly used methods are:

- 1) purposive sampling > determined on the basis of theoretical saturation and so, calls for simultaneous data collection, analysis and review
- 2) quota sampling > criteria chosen facilitates recruitment of relevant people from the community who will yield the desired results
- 3) snowballing > is used to find and recruit “hidden populations” that is groups that are not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling methods.

All 3 sampling methods were minimally used, in the study to obtain data. Some single mothers, who had indicated their willingness to participate, had to be left out because enough ladies in a particular job-category, for example, library assistant, had provided data saturation in the purposive sampling. Quota sampling was applicable when the researcher had to approach an institution and elicit the consent and help of the head and social worker in identifying potential participants that met the research criteria, in this particular case, student single mothers, provided of course, that they were 21 years or more, were willing to participate and had personally signed the consent forms. This move was particularly productive because it yielded 3 of the youngest single mothers 21 to 25 years old, in the whole study who yielded amazingly fresh information on the painful theme of what they perceived as ‘betrayal’ by men. This will become clearer later in chapter 4.

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007 journal article accessed on 16/3/2010 and available online: <http://www.nova.ed./ssss/QR/QR12-2/onwuegbuzie>) in their focus on a typology of mixed

methods, define sampling as the process of selecting “a portion, piece or segment that is representative of a whole”. Sample size refers to the number of participants used and the sample scheme includes selection strategies (e.g. groups, people, events); number, types and sample size. They go on to explain the significance of sampling as helping to “inform the quality of inferences made by the researcher” as well as helping “to determine the extent to which researchers can generalize their findings”. Thus, sample size is important for analytical generalizations in exploratory research where 10 to 12 participants can be interviewed for phenomenological purposes and a focus group of between 6-10 individuals are recommended by some authors (:287). This study opted to use 10 single mothers as central to the study and 10 married mothers as the focus group to be used for comparison purposes.

McRoy (cited in de Vos 2002: 79) also describes a qualitative study as stemming from an interpretive, idiographic, and holistic nature and produces descriptive data in words that reveal the participant’s beliefs, values and “is concerned with non -statistical methods (*using*) small samples often purposively selected”. This is why a selection of only 10 single mothers was handpicked for in-depth interviewing using purposive sampling, also known as non-random or non-probability sampling (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007: 287 online: <http://www.nova.ed/ssss/QR/QR12-2/onwuegbuzie>).

10 married mothers were selected using mostly convenience sampling that sought mothers known to the researcher in 5 cases. Snowballing for the last five mothers, helped to uncover “hidden populations” meaning it led to the “identification of hard-to-reach individuals” (Babbie cited in de Vos 2002: 336). Looking for married mothers was like treasure hunting. The mothers from the designated study area, encountered casually at supermarket stores, but did not know me personally, were extremely reluctant to commit themselves to discussing private family matters with a stranger. Understandably, mothers tend to be wary of strangers prying into their family affairs. However, once the ice is broken, one is afforded a comprehensive insider’s view. This is why confidentiality is crucial.

#### 3.2.1.4 Fact finding preliminaries and pilot testing

Extensive reading on available, relevant, generic as well as local literature broadened my horizon on family relationships, child care issues and the growing scourge of single parenting, especially by mothers, which is now an escalating global phenomenon. Another fact-finding strategy used, was to consult single ladies from my Church, in order to gain a fair understanding of first hand experiences of lone parenting from a cross-cultural perspective. All those I approached were very open and willingly expressed their ordeals in writing (see Appendices E<sub>1</sub> – E<sub>6</sub>). Not one of them gloried in the state of being a single mother. In all cases, the motive was for others to avoid repeating the mistakes some of them made when young before they became Christians. This supplied me with the coveted insights that, along with ideas gleaned from generic literature in chapter 2, also enabled me to formulate preliminary interview guide questions for single mothers and married mothers which were then submitted to the Research Ethics Committee, together with the following documents: the application for permission to do the empirical study, the research proposal, consent forms and consent letters from heads of institutions with the targeted population groups.

An expedited review required some changes to be made, for example the inclusion of Xhosa translated copies and mobilization of willing pastors to assist in counseling emotionally hurting single mothers, all of which the researcher promptly attended to, before resubmitting the documents with a covering letter hoping for another prompt consent. Meanwhile, the researcher restructured the interview guide and fine-tuned it into a standardized open-ended interview form for gathering the best data systematically, to facilitate data analysis. (See the present format of Appendices B and C). These were also submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for further scrutiny.

### 3.2.1.5 Rationale for selecting Mothers for the qualitative research

In this study, mothers were selected for a hermeneutic critique of their worlds (cf. Bosch, 1991) or a phenomenological study (de Vos, 2002: 267)<sup>15</sup>, because of the following assumptions:

- Mothers normally have first hand experience of child care issues and are more expressive than men on such issues
- –They are the managers, organizers, producers, providers, food guarantors and educators of the family. They are the heart ..., the core of family life” (quoted from: [http://www.salamiran.org/women/News/The\\_Role\\_of\\_Women](http://www.salamiran.org/women/News/The_Role_of_Women). accessed on 2/1/10).
- –Everyone has a story. Find the soul in each one. Look deeper” (Sunday Times, October 24 2010, page 20/ Financial Mail advertisement). This was especially relevant and applicable to women given the long history of gender oppression, restriction, abuse and neglect. Each mother was a case study of great interest.
- Single mothers are associated with –feminization of poverty”, (Pease cited in Greenway 1988: 15), which describes the phenomenon of increasing poverty as being intertwined with single mothers and their children. Single parent households are a step away from child-headed households, a situation of extreme vulnerability that merits state intervention for survival, because the extended family has insufficient resources and can no longer cope.
- Doctor Dobson once described women, on Radio CCFM, as the –keepers of the spring” referring to how they (traditionally) preserved the moral values of society, and all that was good, and contributed to humane living.
- Lawson, 2008 (Golden Sachs Group) G.S. Global Economic Paper No. **164**: –Women hold up half the sky” (online: <https://portal.gs.com> accessed on 8/11/2009) highlights the importance of educating women for the good of society. Hughes and Bennet (1998, ch.10), also support this prioritization of women’s education and participatory inclusion in development issues.

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<sup>15</sup> —Aphenomenological study... attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation ... findings need to be related to an existing body of theory and research”. However there is dissension on where the literature review should feature. Leedy (2001) favours after the findings whilst Crosswell (1998) and Moustakas (in *ibid*) opt for before the findings (de Vos, 2002: 267-268). Because of the nature of my argument that advocates change from the before paradigm to a modification of that paradigm in order to give birth to a new paradigm, I have reviewed the literature before (chs 1 and 2) and will do the literature control and more review after the findings.

### 3.2.1.6 Recruitment Procedure: Relationships Building with Prospective Participants

For a long time, the researcher befriended and connected socially with ladies from the selected informal settlement, at the local library, the school, college and the shops. She made the effort to learn individual's names in order to address them personally in casual encounters. What an amazing revelation! Serene faces would light up with responsive smiles at being recognized and acknowledged. This contributed significantly in breaking down reservations. Thus, chance encounters with nodding acquaintances of long standing became warm, personal and chatty ones. By the time she shared the need for voluntary participants for this study on challenges of motherhood and child care, months later, many of the ladies readily consented. When eventually she carried out the interviews, she was pleasantly surprised to note how easily the mothers confided in her personal issues that bothered them on family matters pertinent to what she was seeking through the empirical study. Examples of these will be given under data presentation and analysis with no disclosure of names in order to preserve confidentiality. There were people eagerly waiting to be interviewed long after the full compliment of interviewees had been attained. Single mothers were highly visible and easily accessible due to their numerical strength than their married counterparts, who had to be hunted for, more decisively and cautiously, due to spousal presence and many demands on their time.

### 3.2.1.7 The focus group: Married mothers

Being pressed for time as we neared the festive season at the end of last year, it was hard to build up relationships with the somewhat invisible, hard to get married mothers. One mother in the settlement offered to be my moderator" (Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 146) and voluntarily mobilized the remaining four mothers and helped me by collecting data from them, even though she knew there was no payment. I discussed with her what to say and do based on the consent form details explaining who was doing the research and why. Since I had interviewed her, she had a good idea on how to do the research. She was strongly advised to be wary of ethical issues like: the importance of confidentiality and the importance of getting the mothers' consent in writing without pressurizing them, before asking them the personal questions. She did an excellent job, the married mothers, were more comfortable with her and the interaction with them was more informative because they knew her. Using

the structured/ standardized format brought out information under structured headings that made it easy for data processing. It was as if I had done the interviews myself except for the difference in handwriting used to take down the notes. Confidentiality and reliability were not compromised, because these mothers comprised part of the focus group which really is like an open discussion. I chose not to do the focus interviews –simultaneously” preferring the one on one (individual) basis so as not to miss out the nuances of individual experiences as well as ensuring that none dominated the discussion, as is so often the case where focus group discussions are concerned. One on one interviews were the best way to keep the mothers focused on the topics and questions selected. The outcome proved the researcher to be right. She obtained authentic data to effectively compare with that of single mothers except on a couple of questions as will be explained in chapter 4 as the data is analyzed.

When the moderator brought to me the four completed forms, she remarked on how much the experience had transformed her, seeing the hurt people are harboring in their hearts and discouragement they experienced at the thought that they were the only ones with problematic family issues. She expressed the importance of reaching out to these ladies through visiting and encouraging them regularly. She is a believer and has promised to support these mothers whenever she can. This was an unanticipated though welcome turn of events. Although three pastors had been recruited to provide counseling for mothers who needed it, most ladies do not care to confide private hurts caused by their husbands, to other men, who are husbands themselves, as this may lead to trouble in the homes from jealous spouses. The community is like living in a glass bowl due to overcrowding. This is why a visit by a friendly neighbor of the same gender would arouse no suspicions at all. From the data scrutiny, I discovered that I knew one of the mothers my ‘moderator’ had interviewed, from when I attended her church some years previously, just before she got married. She had actually invited me to attend her wedding, unfortunately I couldn’t make it. I grieve that already she is grappling with typically African extended family issues where the man is still emotionally attached to his mother who, unfortunately, is resentful of her daughter-in-law. Mother-in-law versus daughter-in-law conflicts are common especially among Africans. Negative family experiences of married mothers will be weighed against those of the single mothers in order to establish the way forward.

### 3.2.1.8 Ethical Requirements: Research Ethics Consent forms

Punch (2005:276) states that, “all social research intrudes to some extent into people’s lives, qualitative research often intrudes more (since it) deals with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people’s and ethical issues inevitably accompany the collection of such information”. Miles & Huberman (cited in Punch: 277) identify 11 ethical issues needing “attention before, during and after qualitative studies”. They explain that at the beginning of the research, one has to assess the significance of the project, one’s competence in carrying it out, including supplying full information on the scope of the study specifying benefits, costs and reciprocity for informed consent purposes. Potential harm and risk need to be explained to participants, who also need reassurance on privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and security of the information they will yield. No promises should be made unless they are to be kept. Honesty, trustworthiness and transparency are vital between researcher and participant. After the research Miles & Huberman (cited in Punch 2005: 278) highlight the importance of integrity and quality of the report, ownership of the data and conclusions as well as exercising care in the use of results in order to prevent possibilities of their being misused.

The consent to participate in the research form (Appendix A) and its Xhosa translated version (Appendix A<sub>1</sub>) were crucial in giving participants details of the research namely: identity of the researcher, university affiliation, what the research was about and what harmful impacts, if any, it might have on them socially or personally. The prospective participants were also entitled to know what benefits if any would come their way. This constituted research transparency and met the requirements of the Ethics Committee as a means of ensuring that no harm came to the participants as a result of the research processes and procedures. Mouton (2001:244) “step by step guidelines provide a more detailed description of how informed consent is ensured” encompassing issues like: obtaining permission to do the research, stating institutional affiliation, explaining details of what one is studying, the benefits of the research and who benefits. Potential participants are given assurance that they will be “protected from physical and psychological harm”. If for some reason, a participant wishes to withdraw from the research, he/she is free to do so. Mouton (:244) adds other aspects that could not be implemented in this study, for example: offering rewards for people’s participation/ asking participants for suggestions on how to improve the research procedures as well as “offer them a summary of research results”. This researcher made it

clear that there were to be no monetary rewards. The research was purely a fact-finding one for the study's purposes that sought conceptual clarity on the ideal family, through evidence based on mothers' experiences of child care. The study would ascertain the need for dialogue that could lead to interventions and inevitable missionary engagement with the community.

Following a brief introduction to each participant, on what the research was seeking, the participant was given a copy of the 'consent to participate in the research' form to take home and read it at leisure. If a mother was happy to participate, only then did we mark an appropriate time for answering any questions she might have, followed by the signing of the consent form. Some mothers took the forms and never returned them so more had to be printed. Once the consent form was signed, we decided on the venue and time for the interview which usually lasted from 40 minutes to an hour long, depending on an individual mother's needs. The longest time I spent interviewing a participant was over 3 hours on a Saturday afternoon in the participant's home in the informal settlement. This was not by the researcher's design but the mother needed time to explain issues which went beyond the scope of the interview forms. Even that extra information was incorporated into the responses and served to give an indication on whether married women felt empowered by the government. This was especially helpful, because the researcher had omitted to include a question on government empowerment on married mum's forms, for comparison with single mothers' views on the issue.

By giving mothers all the time they needed, relevant answers clearly surfaced, unsolicited yet crucial. That's when issues like government restraining orders featured as enabling mothers to escape abusive partners/husbands, if they (mothers) were brave enough to report such cases to the police. Mothers were told that examples of their experiences would be used in the thesis report without disclosing their identity or compromising their confidentiality beyond what was strictly necessary to propel the argument towards a convincing conclusion on family matters and child care issues.

### 3.2.2 Tools/ Techniques for data collection: their efficacy

#### 3.2.2.1 In-depth, face to face interviews: merits and demerits

Silverman (cited in Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:146), mentions that: “Interviews can yield a great deal of information related to” biographical facts, people’s beliefs and perspectives, feelings, motives, present and past behaviors, standards for behavior (norms), conscious reason for actions or feelings. Interviews were the predominant data gathering method. Their advantages are that:

- They provide first hand information that can also be taped for accurate data capture (de Vos, 2002: 252). However, I did not use a tape recorder for fear of its ‘obtusiveness’ (Erlandson cited in de Vos, 2002: 252) that might make the participant more self-conscious than necessary.
- Face to face interviewing encouraged confidentiality
- I was able to double-check information and seek clarification immediately
- If I failed to get the answer I sought, I always rephrased or repeated my questions
- The structured/ standardized interview form did not detract from getting any additional and relevant detail that the participants wanted to share, because of the open-ended nature of the individual questions.

As Richards (2009: 42) says: “An interview is the most ordinary and most extraordinary of ways you can explore someone’s experience. It is as ordinary as conversation and as intrusive as a spy camera. It may offer insights you never expected would come your way and sometimes information the other person would not have considered giving to a stranger. The ordinariness of the method can trap novice researchers unaware of the extraordinary challenges ... (of) making good interview records” that are ethically sound. I totally agree with this observation. The reason people divulge so much so unexpectedly, could be that, they are overburdened and any slight excuse to let some of the pressure out is like a golden opportunity which ought not to be missed.

Making notes was my major recording method. As Dawson (2009: 67) explains, it is “the cheapest method if on a very limited budget. Interviewees may think they have something

important to say if they see you taking notes- while you write they may add more information”. That is exactly what happened and often I found myself having to write more than I had space for. Some of the deeply confidential staff, I stored in my memory and sorted it out as soon as I got home and made more notes.

#### The disadvantages of in-depth interviews

They were time consuming in terms of:

- Establishing and maintaining rapport (over a lengthy period of time even before embarking on the research itself, for building trust) during the interview. I also had to be careful not to disclose my ~~thoughts~~ thoughts, beliefs, and feelings“, but be a good listener, showing compassion and interest (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 147)
- making time to formerly introduce the research and seek consent to participate, allowing time for questions and giving adequate time for decision-making, without making participants feel pressurized, called for patience.
- Marking an appropriate time for the interview in the midst of people’s busy schedules often led to cancellations and postponement of the appointment
- sitting with 16 individuals, separately for not less than one hour, helped me get to know people better but it also took a lot of time.
- Organizing meetings with people was costly to set up in terms of phone calls to make appointments and taxi rides to the settlement to get consent forms, as well as interview some people there.

All this called for patience and flexibility because of cancellations and rescheduling of appointment times. Fortunately, this increased contact opportunities that enabled me to communicate directly with participants either face to face or by phone thereby enhancing relationship building. This happened when explanations were offered, unsolicited, on why the participant had failed to turn up. Invariably, the excuses were plausible. Emergencies at home called some mothers away from work to attend to sick children and relatives. Unexpected shifts in work schedules also affected interview appointments and needed rescheduling, but its history now. The advantages listed, far outweigh the disadvantages of this tool.

The making of notes made me break eye contact with the participants, but this did not affect the flow of information at all. In fact, in African culture too much eye contact is not appreciated, it can be interpreted as lack of respect, rudeness, or an incredulous show of suspicion that someone is lying. One has to be very careful to show interest but at the same time avoid too much eye-contact. The important thing is to make the individual feel comfortable and unthreatened.

### 3.2.2.2 The Projective Technique: surfacing hidden sentiments

Awareness of the projective technique, normally employed by psychologists, enabled me to standardize my interview using predominantly open ended questions to avoid ‘putting words in people’s mouth’ and so allow participants room to express themselves freely. Projective techniques are defined (cf. Cabtree & Miller online: <http://www.qualitativestudies> A5.pdf and [http://www.managementstudyguide.com/projective\\_techniques.htm](http://www.managementstudyguide.com/projective_techniques.htm), accessed 2/7/2010) as: —indirect and unstructured methods of investigation which have been developed by psychologists and use projection of respondents for inferring underlying motives, urges or intentions which cannot be secured through direct questioning as the respondents either resist to reveal them or is unable to figure out himself. These techniques are useful in giving respondents opportunities to express their own attitudes without personal embarrassment ... unconsciously ... These techniques play an important role in motivational researches or in attitude surveys”.

Word association test, completion test, construction techniques and expression techniques are components of the projective technique. For the purposes of this study, I made use of 3 word association questions (see Appendix B question 17), to find out the women’s perspectives and sentiments about men, husbands and fathers. I still marvel at the intensity of feeling a simple word can evoke in an individual, as will be discussed under data findings chapter 4. This demonstrated to me the effectiveness of word association as a means to finding out hidden sentiments.

Disadvantages of projective techniques are listed (online cited above) as follows: they call for highly trained interviewers, they are not free from interpreters’ bias, it is a costly method

and respondents selected may not be representative of the entire population. Fortunately for me, only a few questions called for word association. However, open ended questions, by their very nature, also demanded projection of the participant's inner thoughts and feelings. The technique worked beautifully for me and I trust that the results are also valid, given the high degree of subjectivity inherent in qualitative studies.

### 3.2.2.3 Standardized open-ended interview forms

Patton (1986: 197-198), outlines three methods of interviewing namely:

- the informal conversational interview
- the general interview guide approach and
- the standardized open-ended interview

I opted for the last method because I needed specific information on a number of questions from each mother and would not have managed to get systematically arranged information which made it easier for me to analyze the data. I found interviewing people "invigorating and stimulating" getting "inside another person's world", exposing "thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experiences, not only to the interviewer, but also to the interviewee" which left them "knowing things about themselves that they didn't know- or at least were not aware of -before the interview" (Patton, 1986: 252). I had no problems with uncooperative, paranoid, easily embarrassed, hostile or overly sensitive people (:253). Those had already weeded themselves out by not signing themselves onto the research.

My only regret is that one obviously hurting divorcee mother, opted not to participate pleading that she did not have time to hear about the research as well as answer my questions. Of course, she has every "right to refuse to be interviewed" (Mouton, 2001:243). She seems so sad and hardly smiles. The only time I saw her smile was when I first greeted her by name. Apart from the usual greetings, I do not have common ground to chat with her the way I do with other mothers who participated and so she remains a somewhat impenetrable mystery to me. I hope that she has some "support network" in the form of friends or trusted extended family members, common among black families (Viljoen, 1996: 27), to whom she can unburden as well as be relieved from relentless child care from time to time. Africans, especially ladies are normally good at relationship building, establishing viable networks and support systems with one another as a strategy against loneliness, stress

and work overload. Opening up about challenges one faces, leads to numerous possibilities contributed by others. A burden shared is half solved, as the saying goes. I have since made attempts to establish some kind of connection with this lady which is slowly paying off. She is the only one who respectfully calls me ‘\_sis’ whereas the rest of the ladies refer to me by name.

I used a standardized, open-ended question interview (Patton, 1986: 198) form, for single mothers and another for married mothers. Both were similar on the first page on questions 1 – 6 (see Appendix B entitled: Single Mothers and Appendix C entitled: Married Mothers) but the rest of the questions addressed their different states. These served to elicit the required information from participants for analysis and generation of findings as well as for comparative analysis with the focus group. I made one grave error (as explained earlier) in that I did not include the question on women empowerment on the married mothers’ standardized interview form. I discovered this too late but with the impending Christmas season, it seemed insensitive to intrude again in people’s lives. However, I was still able to pick out some valid clues from their responses, that indicated whether individual married mothers felt empowered or not.

I also had a questionnaire form for community leaders to fill in based on their daily experience and knowledge of their community (Appendix D). The assumption was that this would help in comparing findings from the mothers’ perspectives and those of community leaders, for data triangulation purposes. Erlandson et al. (cited in de Vos, 2002: 341) reasons that “by this method... the researcher seeks out several types of sources that can provide insights about the same events or relationships”. Unfortunately, timing was inappropriate. The forms were handed out late when leaders were already pre-occupied with end of year issues and Christmas preparations to bother with them. I do not hold this against them at all. Timing is vital in good research in order to obtain maximum results. If participants are half-hearted or pre-occupied in some way, they will not yield reliable data. I managed to retrieve 2 completed forms both of which were filled in by single mother teachers. For obvious reasons, I will not treat their responses as watertight because they too are part of the topic under study. The questionnaire to community leaders could be useful in the future, in another study in order to bring out if there is stigmatization attached to single mothers.

The Xhosa translated copies (see Appendices A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>1</sub>), were not popular because only 1 single lady preferred them to the English versions. Both the English and Xhosa versions were available for those who sought clarity on one issue or another. There was a decided preference for English copies which indicated that most of the black ladies in that area have a fairly good grasp of English and opt to use it whenever possible. That does not imply that everyone in the settlement is comfortable with using English. It could be that the sample chosen happened to have a better grasp of English than expected. After all, all the mothers chosen, work outside their homes except one, and speak English intelligibly and competently. This fact is quite significant because most questions were phrased in a way that required personal expression, and specific choice of words, as the projective technique already described requires. Apart from a few hesitations and false starts by some mothers, which are characteristics of normal discourse anyhow, I found the participants eloquent, knowledgeable and very frank when I eventually carried out the interviews.

#### 3.2.2.4 Pilot testing interview forms

I did an informal pilot study of the initial interview guide questions with a mature, elderly, Christian Xhosa lady to gauge their suitability, validity and capacity to draw the relevant data from participants, as well as ascertain the time length required to interview one person (de Vos, 2002: 337). I made alterations to some of the questions to accommodate welfare payouts and old age pension payouts issues that she suggested could be the key to the increase of single mothers. Her argument was that in trying to correct one wrong, the government unwittingly contributed to family disintegration since most single mothers, teamed with their pensioner mothers for economic survival (rationale for question 2, Appendix B) and so men were redundant in their lives. This echoed Van der Vliet (cited in Jones, 1996: 6-8)'s findings in Grahamstown, that non-marriage and single parenting by mothers, was largely by choice, as earlier stated in chapter 1. Thus, a question on what ideal family paradigm the mothers preferred, from a selection of four different combinations (question 18, Appendix B) had to be included too as one of the items in the qualitative search. This was a valuable contribution from the pilot phase of the research.

Another suggestion had been for me to include a question on whether or not the participants believed in God. I was hesitant to include an outright question like that at this stage in case people became defensive one way or another culminating in sidetracking the interview prematurely or supplying answers they think I would like to hear and not their actual thought patterns. I preferred to hear them, unconsciously, projecting their personal beliefs, values and spirituality. I was not disappointed when this happened in a number of cases.

Following the Research Ethics committee's expedited review I had another pilot test with an expert that enabled me to get rid of ambiguity, repetition, leading and vague questions (de Vos 2002: 177). I then rigorously standardized my interview forms by rearranging my questions under subheadings, beginning with the more general ice breakers to the more specific and personal issues, finishing off with broad communal issues needing addressing, to help ease off the intensity of personal issues. This strategy worked well when I finally did the interviews. Talking about family background unlocked memories hidden at the back of minds such that by the time we came to the more sensitive current and personal issues, information was just flowing out of the participants and I had to battle to keep up with taking notes.

#### 3.2.2.5 Sequencing of standardized open-ended questions

The questions were grouped under categories, headings, and were based on key-words, themes, statements and ideas as shown on the table on the next page. Although the research questions presented in chapter 1 call for answers to specific questions, the researcher felt it was best to obtain a holistic picture of each single mother's profile because of the nature of the study whose intellectual puzzle calls for explanatory evidence to establish the best family paradigm or medium for maximum development of human beings in caring ability. If the mothers were carrying unresolved relational issues from previous family relationships, this would, most likely, be reflected in their present family connections as well. As the analysis will show, a couple of single mothers had no experience of fathers except father figures because their biological fathers had abandoned their wives/families before the participants were born. Though hurt for a while, once individuals acknowledge the shortfall in their lives and come to terms with it, they are normally prepared to move on. Unfortunately, some of

the mothers are still bitter against their fathers who had rejected their mothers, which some children envisaged as their rejection too. Chapter 4 will provide the details.

Patton (1986: 208) distinguishes between feeling questions, knowledge questions and sensory questions. He explains that, opinions and feelings are often confused when people answer questions calling for either one or the other. He correctly points out that analytic, interpretive and opinion statements are not answers to questions calling for feelings. I noticed this during the interviews and tried to elicit appropriate responses to the questions whenever possible without stemming the flow of information which could have happened if participants suspected that they might be saying something wrongly.

I started off by asking identity details like name, age, educational qualifications, home area, occupation etc. which are easy to answer and demand minimal recall. This was followed by information on family of origin which encouraged descriptive and recall capacities. Participants verbally re-lived their experiences as they expressed feelings and opinions on family matters. This was followed by personal details on their present lives. Below I have listed an abbreviated format of the questions I asked alongside an explanation of the rationale behind it. The structured open-ended interview forms are available at the back (Appendix B and C).

### 3.2.2.6 Rationale for standardized open-ended questions (near holistic profiling)

Question number and Research aspect	Reason for question
<b><u>Personal Background:</u></b> Questions 1-6 called for background details for both sets of mothers	Served as an informative ice-breaker to ease into the current family set ups
1. Province and chief - level of schooling/current+preferred job	- to see patterns from cultural background - establish if there are thwarted dreams or aspirations contributing to present status
2. - maternal details	- strength of maternal support with children to date
3. - parental marriage and family life	- to gauge influence of male role model

	back then
4. - childhood experiences	- strength of sibling interaction/ bonding Family size then
5. - influential family member	- establish role model from family of origin that contributed to purpose in life
<b>6. <u>Your Life Now:</u></b> - A key question calling for 4 crucial pieces of information on child's name, age, care giver/school, father details	- elicits details on child care issues - details of child's father's whereabouts - his employment status - presence or absence from child's life - his contribution/ care and support
7. Age when one had first baby	- to see if pregnancy was unwanted or was by deliberate choice
8. recalls details of boyfriend	- explains reasons for being single
9. calls for emotional status then	- to check what impact the experience had on participant's life then
10. emotional status now	- to see if one has come to terms with life as a single mom
<b><u>Challenges:</u></b>	
11. admitting existence of child care problems experienced by most people	- invites participant to share her own - to show she is not alone, with problems
12. financial assistance	- to find out if participant is aware of the grant and getting the help
13. Fears for oneself and one's children	- ascertain ability to cope in single status - take necessary steps to alleviate fears
14. Empowerment issue	- establish how alert mothers are to development issues affecting their lives
15. preferred lifestyle	- a decisive crossroads issue reveals true feelings
16. message to married mums	- may reveal nostalgia for marriage / envy/ hostility or sympathy

17. this is a crucial 3 pronged inquiry on mothers' perspectives of men, husbands and fathers	- true feelings, normally masked by outward submission to male domination shockingly erupted here (details in ch.4).
18. the ideal family	- systematizing the family for children's sake
19 and 20 awareness of community issues, weaknesses, struggles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• importance of personal impact</li> <li>• ability to plan solutions</li> </ul>

Table 1: Rationale for the standardized, open-ended question format

### 3.2.2.7 A critique of standardized interviewing

Groves (et al., 2004: 290) mentions the controversy about standardized interviewing, where critics brought up some issues on standardization of interview behavior. Some described it as ~~an~~ "unnatural interaction; it is not normal conversation. At its worst, it creates cumbersome and redundant interactions". One defense is that, ~~exposing~~ "exposing people to the same words does not necessarily mean they are being exposed to the same meanings. Indeed, having a question that means exactly the same thing to everyone is an unachievable ideal". Another defense is that ~~the~~ "the data would be more accurate and more valid if interviewers could improvise interventions to correct misunderstandings that they receive". I daresay, the standardized interview form does not preclude interventions by the interviewer, when it is necessary. If a participant chose to unburden herself, I listened and made additional notes on the sides of the interview form for scrutiny and categorization later on. I would then redirect the questioning, calmly and respectfully, to elicit what is more relevant to the questions I asked.

Patton (1986: 205) highlights that, ~~The~~ "The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms". He goes on to qualify this by listing the following:

- participant's own words, own perspective
- response format to be open-ended
- interviewer never supplies or predetermines phrases and categories that respondent uses to express himself

- elicits participant's views, terminology, judgment and capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences

I must admit that I did not comply with all of Patton's stipulations listed above because of the nature of my enquiry that called for answers to specific child care issues. Neither the researcher nor the busy single mothers had the time, outside this target, to indulge in interminable unstructured conversation. The strategy employed in the study worked out very well for me. Ironically, I still captured the complexities of the mothers' perceptions and experiences which manifested themselves even through the use of standardized open-ended interview forms as will be demonstrated in chapter 4 under 4.7 titled "Emerging themes, concepts, issues" and its accompanying diagram titled "Cultural Gender violence".

### **3.3 Building up the participant profile**

#### **3.3.1 Interview Procedure: listening to participants and note taking**

Following the signing of the consent to participate in the research forms, time permitting we would then delve into the interview proper, in a private and secluded place, for confidentiality. If there was not enough time, we marked a different time. Only once did I terminate an interview half-way through because of the restlessness I sensed in one participant mother who appeared pressed for time, despite her prior agreement to the appointment. I had to make another appointment with her a week later to finish the interview. This time there was no hitch. It was better for the study to suffer a temporary set back rather than inconvenience a participant. The researcher wrote extensively in long hand the information given and analyzed it in between interviews. It should be noted that the answers given were reported as close to the original as possible unless a participant struggled to find an appropriate word and the researcher provided several words that matched the participant's frame of mind, from which the mother could select what word best represented her thinking. I would always read back to the participant, what I wrote to double check whether that truly represented her feelings. Actual quotes were also made especially on word association interview items, and will be shown in this report.

It took longer to complete the interviews using this process but both participant and researcher were happy about the outcome. There was genuine rapport which led to yielding of invaluable confidential information. It was indeed an honor for me to do these interviews and already relationships with individual mothers are strengthened. We no longer relate superficially but talk about real concerns. I now get to know when someone's relative is sick, has passed away, who is down with flu' or when someone's cell phone has gone missing etc. The most recent devastating news I heard was the theft of a car belonging to my focus group moderator's husband. This was stolen from outside their house, in the informal settlement, where he used to park it. This is the Christian mother who promised to visit and encourage discouraged married mothers. I wrote about her role in coordinating the last four married mothers, earlier.

### 3.3.2 Data Records

Richards (2009: 55) advises that the adequacy of one's analysis will be largely determined by the quality of the data records, one's access to them and their context. He proceeds to say: "Good qualitative data surprise". I was invariably surprised and at times overwhelmed by the amount of confidential information I received. Richards (:55) outlines the following guidelines for data recording:

- Keep accurate records and verify whatever is vague or missing.
- Notes should include all context possible e.g. setting, social context, body language of the participant including the researcher's own role and experiences in that context.
- "Thick description" contains detail of recall and imagery, interpretive comment and contextual knowledge, wherever this is appropriate"
- All knowledge gained, impressions, reflections and interpretations should be included if pertinent to the research questions
- Reflexive ability demands paying special attention to the "collaborative constructs", between the researcher and the participants, whether she/he influenced ideas or behavior in some way.

Although this study did not include protracted observation but a once off overview of the single mothers' attitudes to men, some factual information about their background, their families, I do not need to make descriptions that are necessarily thick. My own summaries

based on participant responses punctuated by actual words the participants used in the word association tests, are adequate.

### 3.3.3 Tabulated Participant Profile (see next page in landscape set up)

On table 2, I compiled a profile of all 10 single mother participants, numbers 1-10, and married mothers, numbers 11-20, under various relevant descriptive codes, to gain a general impression about the mothers' personal histories. I also indicated where the interview occurred. A key is available at the bottom of the second page of the table with the full meaning of the abbreviated words which could not fit in under the narrow columns.

I started off by introducing myself, just in case they had forgotten my name and briefly remind them about the research topic, its aims and objectives and also what kind of help I needed from them. The consent form would also have given them details of what I hoped to find out from them. The initial questions called for their personal details and were asked at the beginning of the interview as a means of breaking the ice. Since very few had any questions they wanted to ask me about the consent form, I assumed that my explanations were clear and satisfactory enough for me to proceed with the interview. The information summarized on the table below, was extracted from each mother's interview form containing all the individual's details, which I keep safe in my house so that no one has access to them except me. I will make more extractions of different sorts of information as the need arises, to facilitate discussion on the various issues posed by the research questions presented in chapter one and also at the beginning of chapter 3 as a reminder to keep us focused on important issues of child care. The mothers' childhood experiences are also crucial because the tendency is for people to repeat patterns of child care that they themselves experienced.

<b>Pn</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Chn.</b>	<b>Interview Location</b>	<b>Job Description</b>	<b>Thwarted Aspiration</b>	<b>Reason for single Mother Status</b>	<b>Family of Origin Parental Marriage</b>	<b>Relationship with Siblings</b>
1	E. Cape	38	1	library	librarian	Social work	an affair	Married parents	seem jealous of her
2	E. Cape	26	2	library	librarian	Med. Doctor	4 yrs cohabitation	Married parents	good
3	E. Cape	40	1	My home	teacher	Social Work	Teen pregnancy	Married>extended family	Good but demanding
4	E.Cape	39	4	shack	unemployed	nursing	20yrs/cohabitation	Father abandoned family	good
5	E.Cape	46	2	F/ Bay/C	cleaner	Pub.relations	Divorced husband	Married wth. problems	good but too far
6	W. Cape	23	2	F/Bay/C	stdnt Fin.M	cosmotology	Divorced husband	Divorced parents	difficult 10yr step bro
7	W. Cape	25	2	F/Bay/C	stdnt I.T.	I.T.	Wanted a baby	Does not know father	Very good
8	E. Cape	21	1	F/Bay/C	stdntAdmin	psychologist	Unprotected sex	Divorced parents	Very bad
9	E. Cape	40	1	Shoprite	shop assist.	Nursing	Broken promise	Were married/both late	Her dependents
10	Limpopo	32	2	library	shop assist.	accountancy	8yrs cohabitation	married>family problems	very bad wth brothers
11	E. Cape	35	2	library	librarian	nursing	Illegitimate child	Stable home	No fights
12	E. Cape	54	4	Pre-school	cleaner	Nurse /teach	Smoke in house	Peaceful home	Close relationships
13	E. Cape	31	2	F/Bay/C	cleaner	Social worker	Extended family	Verbal disputes only	Helpful / close
14	E. Cape	35	3	parking lot	park attent.	accountant	Both believers	Dad honorable man	Meet regularly
15	E. Cape	36	3	L/B Mall	clerk	nursing	overburdened	Never knew father	No siblings
16	E. Cape	46	3	home	domestic	Social worker	Marital problems	Father like a stranger	Mother abusive

<b>17</b>	W. Cape	31	1	home	clerk	Social worker	mother-in-law	Parents happily married	missing detail
<b>18</b>	W. Cape	27	2	home	mechantizer	teacher	overburdened	divorced	Only child/cousins
<b>19</b>	E. Cape	35	4	home	teller	nurse	Extended family	Single mum/ now late	good
<b>20</b>	E. Cape	32	2	home	packer	teacher	overburdened	Father died when young	Granny care giver

**Table 2: Participant Profile**

- Key:** > Numbers 1-10 = single mothers                      > Pn = participant number                      > W.Cape= Western Cape  
                  > Numbers 11-20 = married mothers                      > Chn= number of children                      > stdnt = student  
 > For married mothers numbers 11-20, the 8<sup>th</sup> column relates cause for marital stability                      > F/Bay/C= False Bay College  
                  or marital problem that could culminate in divorce or separation if unaddressed                      > E.Cape = Eastern Cape

### 3.3.4 Analysis of participant profile and use of illustrations

In this study, I made use of several graphic presentations in the form of tables and figures/ diagrams. This not only serves to break the monotony of the written page, but also helps in summarizing information that would otherwise take too much time and space to explain. Diagrammatic organization of data, as Mason (2002: 169) puts it, makes it “easier or quicker to read them in that way”, helps in spotting “connections or relationships in your data which are difficult to see ... in text-based format”, and may be used as “presentation or display tools... because they are simply more eye-catching, or because they make complex material easier to understand, or more multi-dimensional”.

As an example table 2, above, makes it easy to pick out important clues about the participant mothers’ provincial background by a quick assessment of the second column headed “Province”. There is no doubt that the majority of the mothers are from the Eastern Cape (E. Cape). If this were a quantitative research, I could easily assign percentages, for example, 5% of the participant mothers are from Limpopo Province; 20% from the Western Cape and 75% from the Eastern Cape. One can even conclude that the majority of the mothers interviewed are Xhosa speakers, and hence the need and wisdom (c/f Research Ethics Committee’s recommendation), to have Xhosa translated copies available for the consent forms as well as the standardized interview forms.

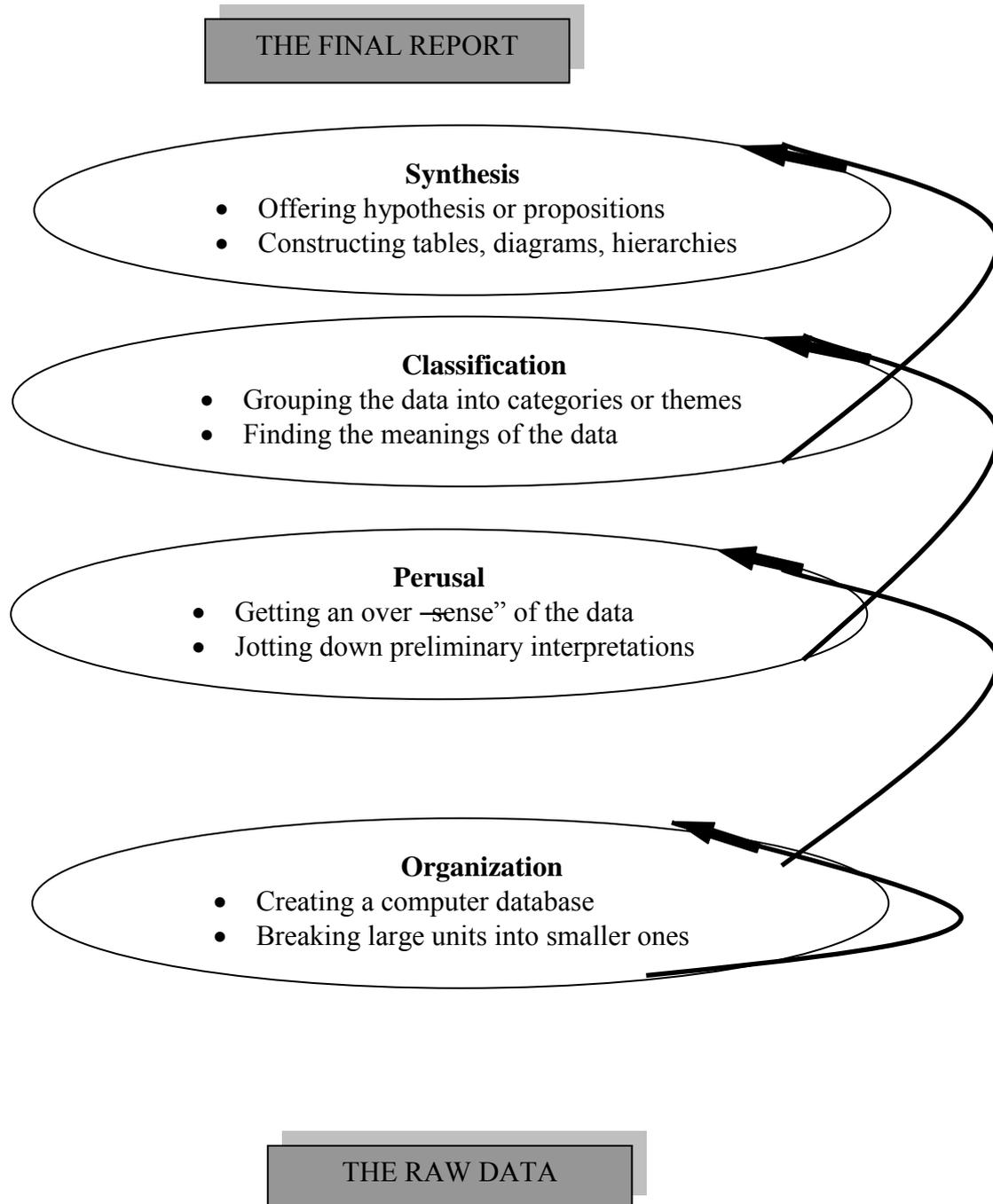
Another aspect easy to note from the third column of the table is the age range of the mothers which varies from 21 years to 54 years old. This may be a good or bad thing depending on how one looks at it. For my purposes, the range and the various experiences of the mothers, afforded me a comprehensive view of family issues, child care, what goes on in the homes as well as what women, regardless of age, think about men, husbands and fathers. The majority of the mothers were in their 30s (10 of them); 5 mothers were in their 20s; 4 mothers were in the 40s and only 1 in the 50s, at the time of the interview. I had not specified the age range, except stipulate that participants had to be 21 years and above, as required by research ethics.

On thwarted ambitions, it was interesting to note that only one individual, a single mother, has had her ambitions fulfilled and is content with her life. This is participant 7. More details will be given in chapter 4. Another interesting mother is participant 12, a general cleaner at a local pre-school. Whilst other mothers could not attain their aspirations due to financial constraints, her parents could afford to pay for her schooling but, as she sadly confessed, she just did not have the intellectual capacity to pass. This is why she is determined that her daughter, a single mother who left school to give birth to her child, should go back to school and complete her studies. This goes to demonstrate how much one can decipher from tabulated information. For the researcher, the summarized version served to bring back to memory, the important details gathered on each individual, which could not easily be fitted on the table. More tables with specific information to facilitate the explanations will feature in the following chapters as well.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Patton (1986:298) affirms the value of data as ~~priceless~~, unique, people's words, thoughts ...” which need storing in a safe place for they can never be recaptured in exactly the same way. He goes on to emphasize the fact that, analysis of data is a creative process of intellectual rigour and hard work with no prescriptive format on how it should be done (:299). He urges that data should be analyzed immediately while it is fresh otherwise valuable insights might be lost if one delays (:251). Hennings (2004:103) concurs by arguing that, ~~the~~ analysis process is the heartbeat of the research. Here the analyst's quality of thinking will be evident”. Basically, the researcher used a modified and simplified version of the Cresswell spiral model of data analysis represented on the next page (normally used in social sciences). Even though I had the standardized open ended structured forms to help me get to the appropriate data quickly, I kept revisiting that data to get fresh insights.

3.5.1 The Cresswell Model: Adapted from Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 151).



### 3.5.2 Tesch's Principles of data analysis

I would like to emphasize the fact that various authors contributed invaluable insights into how data can be analyzed. Henning (2004:6-7) cited quite a number for example: Tesch, Dey, Miles & Huberman, and Silverman. However, she quotes Tesch as having contributed the following principles for qualitative research analysis:

- that analysis occurs throughout the data collection process, as the researcher reflects on impressions, relationships and connections as she searches for similarities, differences, categories, themes, concepts and ideas
- an analysis commences with reading all the data ('perusing' cf. Cresswell) and then dividing them into smaller and more meaningful units
- data segments or units are then organized into a system that is predominantly derived from the data (inductive analysis)
- use of comparisons to build and refine categories, define conceptual similarities and to discover patterns ('classification' cf. Cresswell)
- categories are flexible and may be modified during the analysis
- the analysis should reflect the respondents' perceptions
- the result of an analysis is a synthesis in the form of a descriptive picture, patterns or themes, or emerging or substantive theory ('synthesis' cf. Cresswell).

#### 3.5.2.1 Merging Tesch and Cresswell

It is interesting to note that, Tesch's principles roughly coincide with the Cresswell model presented above. One starts with the raw data, organizes it accordingly into smaller units, peruses it (digests it) then divides it into appropriate categories, themes, concepts then interprets it, before synthesizing it in a research report. I found the spiral mode of Cresswell's data analysis to be most appropriate and representative of how I went about my own data analysis. The analysis of data is far from a linear and straightforward process. I had to constantly move back and forth to get the most out of the data. I would modify the Cresswell model by adding arrows spiraling down onto lower spirals on the left hand side of the diagram as well, just to demonstrate the back

and forth, up and down, cyclical data scrutiny strategy. At least that is how I practically went about the data analysis process.

My notes written on the standardized forms during the interview constituted the raw data I had to sift and interpret. It took time but not as much as it would have done had I not used this particular tool and format for data gathering. I did not create a computer data base then, preferring to have all my details straight before me on hard copies of the standardized interview forms, to avoid scrolling back and forth, up and down. For the small sample sizes that I was dealing with, this strategy seemed appropriate and served me well. Nevertheless, I value the virtues of computerizing the data, for compact storage and easy retrieval as opposed to storing information on handwritten notes on paper which quickly builds up and can easily be misplaced, wrongly discarded and hard to locate when needed. I reached data saturation through several perusals, jotting down on paper preliminary interpretations. The perusal helped me locate missing details especially on the last four focus group married mothers' standardized interview forms that a moderator had done for me. I straight away got in touch with my moderator to recover the missing bits of information to ensure "rigor and validity" of the qualitative measurements" (Patton 1986: 251).

### 3.5.3 Types of qualitative coding

Richards (2009: 94) argues that "qualitative coding is about data retention ... The goal is to learn from the data, to keep revisiting data extracts until you see and understand patterns and explanations". Coding, therefore, allows one easy access to labeled information to facilitate review and thought development on particular issues. Thus, "coding should always be for a purpose. It is never an end in itself" (:95). Richards (:96) distinguishes three types of coding in qualitative research namely: descriptive coding, topic coding and analytical coding, two of which are interpretive processes in qualitative research. Descriptive coding stores information on cases under study, especially, in quantitative research. Topic coding involves "labeling text according to its subject", is easy to do and usually involves little interpretation, but "analytical coding ... is central to qualitative inquiry. This is the coding that leads to theory emergence" and theory affirmation" and should never be automated with

software” (Richards, 2009: 96) Analytical coding –comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning” (:102). All these insights were most helpful to me in handling the data. I used the following Coding styles:

**Descriptive Coding:**

Single mothers

Married mothers

**Codes:**

Numbered 1-10

Numbered 11-20

**Reason for being single:**

Affairs (teen pregnancy included)

Cohabitation

Divorced husbands

Broken marriage promises

#

+

^

\*

**Participant affected:**

1, 3, 7, 8

2, 4, 10

5, 6

9

Student/youngest mothers, 25 - yrs [ ]

**For both married and single mothers:**

Preference for continued single status / /

Preference for married status ( )

**Ideal family choice:** (marked by one of the letters below placed next to participant)

Maternal child care A

Paternal child care B

Dual parenting C

Other forms D

**An example:**

- if a participant is a single mother who divorced = e.g. 6
- if she is a divorced, student, single mother = [ 6 ], ^
- if she prefers being married = ([ 6 ]), ^,
- if she prefers dual parenting = ([ 6 ]), ^, C

This system is what I am going to use to describe mothers as I quote verbatim some of their responses and perspectives of men, husbands and fathers under data analysis and

interpretation in chapter 4. The code should be consulted to understand a more holistic mindset of the individual mothers.

#### 3.5.4 Topic coding

Topic coding is what I used in constructing the standardized open-ended interview forms. Each question on the single mother form (see appendix B), represented a topic, theme or concept as illustrated below.

- 1. a) province: to know language and cultural background of the participants
- b) educational qualifications: to gauge level of formal employability
- c) job expectations: were these fulfilled or thwarted
- d) hindrances to ambitions: to gauge strength of determination to succeed
- 2. maternal details
- 3. family of origin
- 4. filial relationships
- 5. role model: influential person in their lives
- 6. children's details and father involvement: interest, visit, financial
- 7. pregnancy issue: circumstances leading birth of child and to single status
- 8. lover's details: accomplice to present status
- 9 and 10 emotional state then and now (could be anger, frustration, etc)
- 11. a) child care problems and b) disciplinary issues
- 12. welfare grants
- 13. fears, concerns, anxieties
- 14. empowerment issues
- 15. evaluation of single mother lifestyle
- 16. view of married counterparts
- 17. perceptions of husbands, men, fathers
- 18. ideal family
- 19. message to families
- 20. message to the community as a whole

### 3.5.5 Conclusion:

Obviously it was not possible to do justice to all the data yielded by the mothers on the various topics, themes and issues. I had to be selective in my analysis. The researcher had twenty copies of the standardized open-ended interview forms to peruse. Each copy consisted of two pages making a total of 40 pages of hand-written data. That was rather daunting. To facilitate the analysis, the researcher needed to have the pertinent information from all the mothers readily available on one sheet in order to facilitate the sorting and re-categorization of the data. This she was able to do by using the back blank page of a Desk Calendar Refill on which she drew rows and columns with relevant headings at the top. She then went through each one of the forms and copied the information required. This made it much easier to compare and contrast different mothers' experiences as well as check to see if there were any contradictions in a mother's responses. An example of a contradiction would be when a mother preferred the single life and yet firmly believes that dual parenting is best for children (cf. participant 1) or a single mother accepts an engagement ring from a man and yet she has no intention of marrying him (participant 9). All this proves how much mothers are caught up in complex situations that leave them confused about the options that are open to them.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Data Presentation, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation:**

#### 4.1 Introduction

This part is crucial in the qualitative research process in that one has to order the data into patterns and categories for descriptive and interpretive purposes. I will present categorized data, describe, analyze and interpret them as I go along. Some of the data was presented under chapter 3 as an integral part of the participant profile (Table 2:119), and hence the need to refer back to them. Patton (1986:268) states that, “interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions. Evaluation involves: making judgments about and assigning value to what has been analyzed and interpreted: is it “good” or “bad?” should something be done and if so, what?” That also guided the process of analysis.

Cresswell’s model referred to in chapter 3 employs the spiral approach to the data analysis, starting with the raw data, which, in my case, is already organized topically on the standardized open ended interview forms, in order to record key concepts which are foundational to interpretation and explanation. The explanations and interpretations will be based on both social sciences research literature and biblical literature. The Bible contains God’s normative commands on how human family life should be lived. Juxtaposing the two sets of literature aims to strike a balanced perspective on complex human problems in the family arena which the researcher believes are resolvable, if individuals are sufficiently open-minded to entertain workable alternatives.

Perusing the notes led to data saturation and the making of preliminary interpretations, followed by classification under appropriate codes and categories for further interpretations. This process culminated in the synthesis of the findings and this report writing. Reviewing and reflecting on the data cyclically, helped me to determine if data complement or contradict some of the existing generic knowledge

on marital, family and child care issues, reiterated in chapter 2. As is typical in qualitative research methodology, my data was analyzed throughout the research process even as the interviews progressed. Pelto and Pelto (cited in Patton, 1986: 271-272) view research methodology as aiming to uncover “true and useful information ... derivable both from theoretic domains of science and from people’s practical experience and problems”. I consider the data truthful information given to me by careworn mothers, with no reason to lie. The usefulness of the information obtained is dependent upon the short-term and long-term outcomes of the research. The researcher had made no promises to the participants to avoid unnecessary disappointment. But that does not mean that their dilemmas at personal levels should be ignored as inconsequential.

Chapter 3 reminded us of the research questions at its beginning while at the end of it, examples of some coded responses to these questions, were presented. In this chapter, the data is analyzed as chronologically as possible, following the order of the issues raised by the research questions as follows:

- Reasons for the single mother status (presented on table 2, chapter 3)
- Challenges the single mothers face in child care and the fears they harbor (presented on table 3, in this Chapter 4)
- Preferred status and the family structure they consider ideal for child care (coded description derived from the standardized interview responses, which are safely under the researcher’s care).
- Their perspectives of men, husbands and fathers (table 4)
- Their view of women empowerment by the government (table 4, in chapter 4)

Explanations for the single mother status will be described first. This will be followed by the tabularized information (table 3), containing the following sets of information:

- Coded description of the mothers’ categorized single status #, +, ^, \*
- Challenges and fears faced by single mothers on child care issues
- Coded description of mothers’ preferred marital status //, ( ).
- The mothers’ choice of ideal family paradigm: A, B, C or D.

## 4.2 Reasons for single mother status (see Participant Profile/ table 2/ chapter 3)

More than ten reasons for single mother status were listed from the generic literature and other sources in chapter 2. Reasons such as teen pregnancy, cohabitation, need for financial independence, divorce, desertion, separation, widowhood, the decline in the number of marriageable men in disadvantaged groups, prison sentences, urban migration, unprotected sex affairs that culminate in pregnancies, the modern view that marriage is optional rather than a necessity for women's socio- economic survival, postponement of marriage etcetera. Surprisingly, in this study only 4 categories were discernible as illustrated below.

<u>Participant numbers:</u>	<u>Category for single mother status:</u>
1, 3, 7, 8	# had affairs that culminated in pregnancies
2, 4, 10	+ are in cohabitation relationships of long-standing
5, 6	^ divorced their husbands for neglect
9	* had a broken marriage promise

### 4.2.1 Affairs that culminated in pregnancy

Of the four participants affected by this, numbers 1, 3, 7 and 8, two of these were deliberate decisions by the mothers 1 and 7 themselves, to have babies, apparently with no strings attached. In the case of participant 1, there had been no marriage plans, no proposal had been made to that effect nor was it expected. The participant is the only one of 7 children in her family of origin who is educated enough and able to financially support aging parents with as much as R2000 a month to supplement their old age pensions and contribute to their funeral cover. Nevertheless, I sensed some disappointment in her when her lover withdrew from her following the conception and birth of her child. When he had suggested that they both be HIV tested before any intimacies, and they both proved negative, she had assumed that they would continue relating but that changed. She is resolved never to marry because “men are full of nonsense”, in her case, justifiably so. We can attribute this misunderstanding to a lack of miscommunication between dating males and females. Maybe the two lovers

should really have spelt out the terms and conditions of the relationship in order to avoid undue hurt and disappointment. The participant was 34 at the time of her child's birth. She had worked very hard to raise money as a domestic worker to educate herself, had fulfilled her ambition to study and be professionally equipped for white-collar employment. Finally she was ready for children. Unfortunately, she consented to sexual intimacy with a man who had no commitment to her or to marriage. She would like another child if she finds a responsible man. The Bible stipulates responsible multiplication of human beings in the context of marriage, on a one man one woman basis and lifelong commitment to one another. We are not like animals that can multiply anyhow. The sad thing is that this participant is such a likeable, loving, caring and hard-working individual with so much to offer as a motivational speaker who can inspire and encourage other women to persevere and attain their goals in life as she did. She definitely would have been a wife and mother to be proud of. She is not of the promiscuous type and says that after work, she keeps to her rented shack with her son and does not go out on dates with other men at night.

Participant number 1 is far from being an isolate and seems to have successfully appropriated the value and benefits of what Bank (in Kagwanja and Kondlo, 2009: 210) describes as 'yard socialism' through relations of co-operation and support'. She has a 4 year old son, but has such good relationships with her Landlady that she considers her household her second family. Her son calls the landlady 'grandmother' and he remains under her care, after crèche, when his mother is still at work. The participant also utilizes the services of a young man from the community, to fetch her son and take him home after crèche. This eases the burden of child care from weighing too heavily on her own shoulders and for this she is very thankful.

Participant 7 is one lady who is very sure of herself. She seems to know what she wants and gets it. She grew up in a matrifocal situation and never knew her father. Steyn (1987:180) explains that, "... an extremely high illegitimate birthrate ... in due course has led to the creation of a matrifocal multigenerational family type such as is found among Blacks in the city". By choice the participant had affairs that produced babies when she wanted them. Currently she is studying and majoring in a subject she has always wanted to pursue. This is an amazing young lady. She has two children

aged two-and-a-half and 7 months by different fathers. She lives with her mother and her children are cared for by her grandmother who also lives with them. She receives a R500 child welfare grant but has made up her mind not to have any more children. She is content with her life and has no desire for marriage.

Participants 3 and 8 have sad stories to tell. Both were caught unawares by consequences of affairs that culminated in pregnancies. Number 3 was a teen pregnancy experienced when living away from parental care and watchfulness. Her parents lived and worked on a citrus farm, away from any High School. They had found accommodation for her with another family whose home was closer to a High school to save her from walking impossibly long distances to and from school. The boy who made her pregnant at 18 was in a lower grade than herself – a child himself, in no position to marry her. She broke off her studies to give birth to her child whom she left in the care of her parents and immediately returned to finish up her studies. The boy had promised to help her care for the child, once he was able to do so after finishing school but he broke his promise as he became more and more involved with other women. She worked hard at school, became a teacher, she gave her child a college education, thus enabling her to fend for herself. Here is another potential motivational speaker. She is advancing in her profession even now. She is a very determined lady.

Number 8, still a student, was greatly disappointed to discover that her boyfriend had indulged himself in unprotected sex with her, exposing her to possible HIV and AIDS infection, culminating in an unwanted pregnancy. She blames the presidential model for this. In the Today magazine entitled *The Power of the Cross*, the April 2009 issue, gives details on page 26 of the president as a “self-proclaimed polygamist” with 18 children from various wives and women. There was a ‘rape’ trial that made the news just before his election into power. It is the emphasis on unprotected sexual practices that came out at the trial, that participant 8 holds up as the bad role model that her boyfriend copied. When she discovered her pregnancy, she was a bundle of confused feelings: hurt, disappointment, suicidal and had contemplated abortion or quitting school. These sentiments are endorsed by Pauw (cited in Motshologane, 1987:195) who argues that, “premarital pregnancy and illegitimacy have become very common

in the urban Black community... most girls are nevertheless upset when they discover that they are pregnant. Some have intense feelings of guilt and shame, and may even consider suicide. Others are only worried because their parents are upset, or because they have to face a period of loneliness, staying at home, deprived of entertainment and the company of friends. Some also grieve over an educational career that has been cut short”.

The participant was 21 at the time of the interview as well as the birth of her son who was then 4 months old. Thankfully she did not do any of the things she had contemplated doing in the period of despair, although she still hurts emotionally. According to her own words, “I have learnt to be a good mother” despite the material disadvantages, an uncommitted sister caregiver and an irresponsible lover who had abandoned her and her unborn baby with these words: “I am not yet ready to be a father”. The researcher prayed with her to calm her down and has since put measures in place, through donations from her Church passed through the participant’s college, to assist with some basic material needs, which gesture, I heard later, was sincerely appreciated. An unexpected encounter with the participant on a train showed a happy, relaxed and carefree young lady jovially conversing with her friend. I had recognized her, but was not sure she was the one because of the now happy countenance, until I confirmed, through a phone call the following morning, that indeed she was the one I had seen on the train. This is why I said earlier, no guarantees were made, but the individual mothers’ plights were not forgotten or ignored. There needs to be further dialogue with community leaders to gauge what needs to be done on a regular basis to relieve struggling mothers of the heavy burden of child care.

#### 4.2.2 Cohabitation: 3 women fall into this category

Steyn (1987: 159) argues, that in the city, marriage is marginalized since it can no longer achieve its former manifest objectives ... it cannot maintain a respected lineage ... integrate a tribe by joining two lineages ... give a fully respected adult status to the young male ...”. Tradition no longer influences people who have made homes for themselves in the city and free to live their lives as they choose. This is why

“Illegitimacy is high because of casual liaisons, promiscuity, and delayed marriage” (Steyn, 1987: 160). Macklin (cited in Bernardes, 1997:136) identified five types of cohabitation namely: “temporary casual convenience, affectionate dating/going together, trial marriage, temporary alternative to marriage and permanent alternative to marriage”. In the cases of the three mothers in cohabitation situations, delayed marriage and temporary alternative to marriage seem to account for the phenomenon of non-marriage in their cases. Kiernan & Estaugh (cited in Bernardes, 1997:136) also discovered that while “the socio-economic conditions of childless marriages and childless cohabitants were similar”, “cohabitants with children tended to be worse off than married couples with children”. I suppose this stems from lack of commitment on the part of the men to help fend for a family set up that could go either way: termination or permanence.

Participant 2, in a cohabitation relationship for 10 years, is a quiet and respectful individual. She explained how disappointed she was to realize that she had fallen pregnant the second time even though it was with the same man and she desperately wanted to abort the foetus but her partner/boyfriend wouldn't let her. He promised to take care of her and the children they were making together and so she accepted the pregnancy. This is important. I mentioned in chapter 2 that, if there was a concerned and supportive man around, no woman would be so overwhelmed by the burden of child care as to dump her baby, as is happening in society today. A mother in Khayelitsha poisoned her two children and one died while another took long to recover in hospital. When I asked the participant what would happen if this man stopped caring and providing for her and the children since she is not legally or customarily committed to him, she replied that she would be hurt indeed. I hope the man remains committed because she trusts him. The reason he is not formalizing the relationship is because he does not have enough money for payment of lobola (the bride prize), and also, the lame excuse that both of them are still too young to be married. She is 26 years old and had her first unplanned child at 19 years of age. (Participant Profile, table 2 in chapter 3, has details on age, employment, number of children, parental background etc.).

Participant 4 has four children by one man whom she has been living with, on and off, for 20 years. The lady is now 39 years old but had her first child, by choice, at 20 by the same man who fathered the rest of her children. I don't suppose the man can plead that they are too young to marry as in the cases of 2 and 8 discussed above. A former pre-school teacher, the participant is currently unemployed. Her desire is for the father of her children to marry her in church. The major hitch to this noble wish has been lack of formal employment. Her husband is in another city looking for work. She herself came to Cape Town to stay with her cousin while looking for work, unsuccessfully. Helping to educate the children becomes a challenge when one has no permanent job. The child welfare grant of R500, she receives monthly, is a great help but can't go very far with four children to care for. She is grateful for the assistance she gets from her extended family connections. I know this family and salute it for caring for needy extended family members, a legacy from the cousin (participant 3)'s father who showed, by example, the practice of caring for needy extended family members, even when he had his own financial constraints.

I was also pleasantly surprised that a mother in a cohabitation situation tends to remain faithful to one man and have all her children with that one man. I had imagined the durations of cohabitations to be brief, "less than five years" according to Kiernan & Estaugh (cited in Bernardes, 1997:136). I also had assumed that the mother would be promiscuous, producing children with different partners. I was proved wrong. The cohabitation arrangements among the mothers of the informal settlement under study seem to be very steady relationships, similar to marriages. In his analysis of marriage and the lower classes in Trinidad, Rodman (cited in Steyn, 1987:172-173) explained "value stretching" by the poor person as, developing "an alternative set of values" and how "without abandoning the values of marriage and legitimate childbirth he stretches these values so that a non-legal union and legally illegitimate children are also desirable" and this helps poor people "to adjust to their deprived circumstances". This seems supported by Goode (cited in Steyn:159) who states that, "The African couple (in the city) need not bother with marriage ... both kin and elders have lost the authority upon which social control once rested, both the young man and woman can and must make whatever individual role bargain with one another their circumstances permit...". This is very sad and hence the anarchy that we witness in the man, woman

and child relationship issues. There are no controls, check points to restrain couples especially when the relationship begins to fail under the pressure of modern lifestyles.

Participant 10 believed herself to be a married mother, having cohabited with her one partner for 8 years. Unfortunately I had to gently ‘shift’ her to the single mother category because of a lack of legally or customarily binding evidence of marriage. No notification had been given about the relationship to both families, no negotiations had been entered into by the in-laws and no lobola had been paid. On surfing the net, I soon discovered that, “There is no assumption of marriage in South African law in consequence of cohabitation regardless of the duration of the relationship” (Friis, available online: (<http://www.meumennwhite.co.za/family-law>) accessed 10/7/2010). Consequently, cohabitants have “no reciprocal obligation of maintenance” neither is a ‘cohabitee’ a recognized claimant in the event that the partner dies interstate. There has to be proof “that a universal partnership exists between them” (ibid). But this participant has none of these requirements. The boyfriend can walk out on her at any time he chooses and there would be nothing to stop him. Even the children do not bear his name on their birth certificates so he is not obliged to support them. She loves this man, the father of her children and has tried to introduce herself to his family members, but, without the sealing of the socially and legally stipulated marital bonds, she firmly remains a single mum. He cares for her enough to send her parents some money around Christmas time whenever he can, though he never visits them. He still falls short of formalizing the relationship. I can still sense her agitation and despair as she told me all this. The police had told her that being with one partner for 5 years and more is as good as being married. One wonders if this is true legally. I know for a fact, that the South African Home Affairs Department does not take a marriage seriously unless the couple has been together for 5 years and more, in order to discourage and minimize opportunistic foreigners who marry locals for convenience: to obtain work permits. The major concern is: what can be done to resolve this impasse between men who will not commit themselves in matrimony and anxiety ridden ‘single’ mothers’ in grey marital areas, where they languish about their status.

In view of all these relational uncertainties, one begins to appreciate the “customary marriage system” whose traditional “cornerstone” is the “lobolo transaction”, as

Chambers (2000: 104) aptly expressed it. He argued that, the customary marriage system “retains positive and complex meanings to most black Africans...a symbol that the wife is valued, as a mark of the bond between families, as compensation to the bride’s parents for the cost and effort to raise her, and, today, as a symbol of continuity with African traditions. For married women, it remains an important source of status in both rural and urban areas ...” (:104). There is wisdom in Nhlapo (cited in Chambers, 2000:117)‘s concern that “total abandonment of these [traditional] values may pose an even greater threat to social cohesion by creating a cultural vacuum in circumstances in which there are no ready substitutes”. Mothers are insecure and children, especially boys will not be confident about their identity since they do not share their father’s surname: a disturbing case of father absent though present (cf. 2.3). What can be done to resolve this grey area of family life?

#### 4.2.3 Only two broken marriage promises: Participant 9 and 10

Remarkably, only participant 9 was promised marriage which, customarily speaking, “marks not the joining of two individuals but the joining of two families or two kinship groups and a vehicle for ensuring the continuation of the male’s family line” (Chambers, 2000:103). She was lured by false promises and realized too late, when pregnant, that nothing was going to come out of this. The man was too unfaithful as she soon discovered. Participant 9 has a daughter who was sexually abused at ages 3 and 5 by two different men aged 20 and 50, on separate occasions, who served jail sentences for it. She does not trust men, and her preferred lifestyle is to remain a single mother. At the same time she also showed me an engagement ring she had accepted from a man interested in her. However, because of past experiences, she now has a morbid fear of bringing him home lest he sexually molests her daughter. To make matters worse, her sister, also a single mother, passed away recently, leaving two daughters, one of whom betrayed signs of having been raped too. She feels obliged to take care of these children even though her means are limited. All this came out under challenges she faces as a mother.

One can only pray and hope that she makes decisions that are best for her and the children amidst the pressures, conflict of interests and circumstances surrounding her.

My concern is, isn't she, again, falling prey to the same snare (premarital sex and pregnancy) that is luring her now through an engagement ring she was given, so that once again, she will be dumped once she finds herself expecting another child? Once beaten twice shy. I hope she has learnt her lesson not to be too trusting of men and be intimate with them before marriage. Participant 10 had also been promised marriage, and 8 years later, she is still in a co-habitation relationship where she feels overburdened by having to meet all the family's financial needs as if she were a lone parent. She is very protective of her children and desires the best for them. This is a bone of contention between her and the children's father who sees nothing wrong with the local schools and local crèche.

I am in regular touch with participant 9. When she lost her phone during the period a bereavement I was privileged to give her my daughter's spare one that a friend had given her, but didn't need. On another occasion when a neighbor, going on holiday gave us more vegetables than we could use while still fresh, the participant was happy to get them for her family. This research is opening doors of dialogue and sharing in many unique ways. Among black Africans, give and take relationships open doors to ministry.

To generalize the findings: admitting that only 20% of the single mothers had been promised marriage and let down, is to admit that 80% of the ladies, including those in cohabitation situations had affairs with no prospect of marriage. This will imply an irreversible erosion of conventional values that sought to legitimize child-bearing in marriage unions for ordered social life where children knew their paternal identity as well as legally use their fathers' surnames. One can rightly conclude that more and more men are no longer keen to burden themselves with fulfilling the traditional requirements since women willingly yield to casual sexual liaisons. Children end up growing in contexts of absentee fathers, with far-reaching repercussions that extend themselves from generation to generation, as we discovered in chapter 2.

#### 4.2.4 Women divorcing husbands

20% of the single mothers initiated divorce proceedings against their husbands. This is a relatively new concept. It used to be men who could initiate divorce. Women empowerment now enables individuals to get rid of ‘naughty, unfaithful’ or negligent husbands as in the cases of participants 5 and 6. The 46 year old number 5 says “I am free to get on with life”, following her hurt and disappointment over her husband’s unfaithfulness that culminated in her decision to break up her marriage to him. Also she would not have been receiving the R500 child welfare grant, had she remained married to him, and he not providing for her and the children.

Number 6 is not so sure about whether or not she made the right decision in divorcing her husband. Married at 17, to a foreign man, whom she thought was negligent, but now regrets her rush decision and wishes she had had premarital care, counseling etc, to help her understand what married life entailed. When she had a second child with a local man who, she discovered late, was involved with another woman, her disillusionment knew no bounds. The divorced foreigner still cares enough to phone her and, if he insists, she might even persuade herself to get back in a relationship with him. This is a rather tricky situation. Is the man really keen to remarry her? Given the Zimbabweans’ desperation to escape the economic hardships in that country, wouldn’t he use her as a stepping stone? Will he forgive her for divorcing him and for having another man’s child meanwhile, or will he hold that against her for life and be indifferent to her once he attains his goal?

#### 4.2.5 Marital hope for single mothers

Society has become very permissive. Two of the three youngest single mothers namely participants 6 and 7 already have two children each, each child by a different father. Two married mothers, numbers 14 and 19 also had their first children by different men to the ones they are married to. This shows that there is hope for the young single mothers who still have chances of getting married despite having children from other relationships. Number 14, had a child out of wed-lock with one

man before she became a Christian. The son lives with his father. She is now happily married to another man in Church and has two more children. This married mother is convinced that faithfulness to one partner is the only way to defeat HIV. She is concerned that thirteen primary school children are already HIV positive. She has learnt from her mistake and advises parents to teach their children the truth about the facts of life especially sexual behavior. She is a staunch Christian, a potential motivation speaker in her community. Her testimony is impressive. Where Bell (cited in Motshologane, 1987:210) discovered that “a premarital pregnancy results not only is a traumatic experience for the woman, but also increases the probability of eventual marital discord in a subsequent marriage”, participant 14 has discovered the power of forgiveness through turning to Christ in repentance. Isaiah 1: 16-18 reads, “... stop doing wrong, learn to do right... Come let us reason together ... Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like scarlet, they shall be like wool”. Participant 14 is a happily married mother contrary to Bell’s observation because of redemption. This is why, in the interviews, I never asked the mothers whether or not they believed in God as had been suggested by someone in the pilot testing. I wanted the witness to unconsciously present itself, which is exactly what happened in this case.

Participant 19 has four children the first of whom, unfortunately, is now late. He was an out of wedlock child by another man. Her husband is a foreigner who is not liked by her relatives. There is double pain here, death of her first child and xenophobia in her family that threatens her relationship with her husband. Such situations call for counseling intervention to address ethnic hatred and the need for healing of hurts. This can be done through the Church’s community ministry and mission, manifest in general acts of caring and dialogue (Morisy, 1997) on difficult and painful issues. Trusted friends can also help to diffuse tensions in the home provided they do not harbour similar sentiments which can only serve to exacerbate the problem. Children may also unintentionally internalize negative responses to foreign people.

#### 4.2.6 Concluding remarks on reasons for single mother status

Having explained the causes and experiences of individual single motherhood, one can conclude that the causes of lone mother states coupled with the phenomenon of non-marriage are multifaceted. From a general angle, socio-economic causes such as rapid urbanization, poverty and erosion of traditional values would be the umbrella explanation. A quest for hedonistic pleasures, broken promises, a lack of trust between men and women, postponement of marriage and the irresponsible sexual behaviour of some men who deliberately seek sexual gratification from multiple partners with no strings attached, also account for the failure of the marriage institution. However, one cannot wholly blame one gender or the other for the failed and failing relationships. Both men and women are to blame to varying extents depending on the merits and demerits of individual cases. The women are now “liberated” and altogether too modern and both men and women seem to exploit one another’s without thought or plan for stabilizing their relationships or consideration for the offspring they generate together. This leads to risking HIV/AIDS infection and subsequent fatal illnesses especially in the context of poor people without the means to keep themselves nutritionally healthy. Sound traditional marital values need revival whilst discarding the negative aspects, for example, polygamous relationships which really demean women as cheap to get.

### 4.3 Challenges single mothers face in child care: their worst nightmares

#### 4.3.1 Introductory remarks

The tabulated information derived from answers to question 6 of the standardized forms (B and C), yielded essential information on each child, which also brought out the pathos of father absence and the attendant deprivations in children’s lives. Most names of the children if not all have special significance which the mothers could explain easily. Caregivers emerged as either, the school, nursery school, a paid nanny, a grandmother or another extended family member. Except for three mothers one of whom is in a cohabitation situation, the rest of the mothers are virtually bringing up

children on their own with no paternal financial contribution or emotional support by way of visits or shared parenting. Childhood illnesses require periods of direct care by the mother which calls them from work. Mothers often experience “considerable physical and emotional stress in their caring roles” (Graham cited in Bernardes 1997:101). Despite the difficulties, not one mother, married or single opted for a single lifestyle without children. This shows the true African mindset that appreciates children and welcomes them with open arms. However, as the local news tells us, some mothers abuse their own children out of desperation. Every now and again, an individual mother gets overwhelmed by the child care responsibility and tries to get rid of the child especially when there is no support network in the form of a concerned boyfriend or supportive maternal care.

On table 3 below, I have attempted to incorporate several issues such as, a coded description of the single mothers on the basis of styles shown at the end of chapter 3, where 1-10 = single mothers/ 11- 20 = married mothers/ [ ] = student single mothers/ / = preference for single status/ ( ) = preference for married status/ # = affair / + = cohabitation / ^ = mothers who divorced husbands / \* = broken marriage promises / A = maternal parenting preference / B = paternal preference / C = dual parenting / D = any other preferences

Table 3: Coded description of single mothers + their challenges and fears:

Participants‘ coded descriptn.	Challenges faced in child care	Fears about her children
/1/, #, C 34/38	Son asks for father/ didn’t want to be a boy preferring to be dressed like a girl/ Lacks father figure at home	How to afford good school for son fees too high for her on her own
(2), +, C 19/26	No challenges at the moment 4 yr cohabitation	No worries as yet/ will be heart-broken if partner walks away
(3), #, C 18/40	21 yr old girl/ good Sunday school influence on her /school fees were heavy	Peer pressure might sway child from good lifestyle
(4), +, C 20/39	20 yr cohabitation/ extended family helps/ R500 welfare = insufficient	Unemployed now/ desperate for a job for chn. to continue schooling

/ 5/, ^, A 23/46	difficult caring for children alone. Sister helps out/government grant now stopped	teaches chn. independence and self-reliance = no stated fears
[ (6) ], ^, C 17/23	Tight finances/ pay nanny/ R500 grant a great help	Peer pressure bad/ hopes to change to diff. + better environment
[ / 7/ ], #, A /C 23/25	No money for luxuries like birthdays, outings etc.	Fears child abduction for muti/ witnessed a missing child's copse.
[ / 8/ ], #, A 21/21	No nappies/ inadequate care of child by sister. child welfare grant pending	Fears AIDS / to die before child is old enough to be independent
/ 9/, *, C 31/40	Child raped twice when mum at work. Took child for HIV test > clear for now Child's father contributes financially.	Child's safety when at work/ keeps fiancée away from daughter fearing potential sexual abuse
(10), +, C 26/32	Foreign partner/ withholds economic contribution / receives R500 gvnt grant/ dispute over school choice for chn.	Children use mum's surname/ worries @ future of relationship/ partner not committed enough

N.B. The 2 numbers on the bottom right hand corner of the participant description column, refers to the mother's ages, namely:

- the first = age at birth of first child
- the second = her current age

Some of the issues raised will be discussed in more detail below also using holistic information derived from the individual interview forms (Appendices A & B).

#### 4.3.2 Children's education and cohabitation struggles:

All three cohabitation mothers, numbers 2, 4, and 10 agree on the following:

- that the married status is the better option
- dual parenting is best
- cohabitation is the next best thing to marriage (and they are stuck in it)

Whilst participant 2 admits to having no worries at the moment on child care, the two other mothers in her category are worried about good education for their children. Participant 10 sends her children to an elite preschool, but one of participant 2's

children attends the local one, while her first born attends a primary school in Kalk Bay. Whereas 10 has serious issues with the children's father concerning quality education for the children, number 2 seems in agreement with and enjoys peaceful co-existence with her partner. Number 10 confided that the partner wants the children to attend the local schools which are cheaper and near. This is because participant 10's own education was hampered by brothers with patriarchal and traditional mindsets who refused to see the value of educating girls. Even though both her brothers were teachers, they did not help her with fees. She is determined that her two children, a boy and a girl, get the best education, even beyond what she can afford. When there are fees increases, she negotiates with the concerned authorities to allow her to pay what she can afford so that the children remain in a good school. Her argument is that the local schools do not help the scholars to master the English language or Afrikaans which are foundational to understanding key concepts in other subjects on the school curriculum. Fair enough, most of the children in the informal settlement do indeed come from the rural areas where a little English is spoken. For their sakes, teachers tend to explain concepts in Xhosa to aid comprehension.

This kind of situation is prevalent in most communities and unavoidable in a country in transition from one political extreme to the other. So now, number 10's partner is angry and leaves her the responsibility of paying school fees and taking children to and from school using emergency taxis though he has a pick up truck that could help transport the children back and forth. This also would not be possible all the time due to fuel costs and the father's informal employment. The mother receives R500 child welfare grant, which would be terminated immediately should the cohabitation couple get married. These are some of the contradictions in the legal and governmental systems! On one hand expecting individuals to do the right and be responsible by legalizing marital relationships and yet punishes couples immediately by withholding the much needed assistance as if marriage transforms their economic situations. This is why people end up finding ways to beat the system and exploit it for whatever gains they can get. I have already given an example of a married mother who can divorce a husband so as to gain the bit of money the government hands out for child welfare. But frankly, how far can one go with R250 per child per month? Most people do not think that far and marriages may suffer for very little gain. However, for most women

emerging from oppressive situations where they had no money at all to one where there is some money and ‘freedom’ from abusive relationships means a lot. The single mothers discover soon enough how totally inadequate welfare support is in the face of economic challenges, as table 3 illustrates. Tight budgets feature on the ‘challenges’.

Disagreements between married spouses or cohabitation partners concerning children’s present and future welfare are common. However, if the conflict remains unresolved for too long, this may lead to emotional withdrawal by one partner that may also lead to withholding of financial resources, just to make the other one feel the pinch of not complying with the partner’s desires. This is a common and cheap way of dealing with disagreements. The aim should be to care enough for the other’s feelings, to reach a compromise. The Bible teaches submission to a husband’s decision, but then is participant 10 married? Chapter 5 will explain living in peace-making zones.

As for participant number 4, her children are all scattered around their maternal extended family relatives whose surname they bear. This may also account for the father’s indifference and failure to rise up to his responsibilities. No wonder even the help he used to send has fizzled out. To imagine that at 40, a woman is still waiting for the father of her children to marry her in church is really very sad especially if the man may not share the same mindset. He may even be contemplating marrying a younger woman, which is highly possible, given the statistical evidence of men who divorce their wives in order to marry much younger ones ‘tophies’ for personal gratification. This mother needs to prepare herself mentally and emotionally for any eventuality and not entertain false hopes.

#### 4.3.3 Father Absence and its negative effects on young boys:

Of the four mothers engaged in affairs, numbers 1, 3, 7, and 8, only participant 3 prefers the married mother status and dual parenting as best for child care. As usual, there is contradiction also evident in participant 1’s choices. She prefers the single mother lifestyle and yet she selects dual parenting as ideal. On second thought, this may not be contradictory, but a manifestation of a new way of raising family which is

becoming more and more prevalent. This entails one's unmarried parents, living their independent lives separately, but both involved more or less equally, in the child's life through shared custody. I suppose this is the better evil to totally cutting out one parent or the other from involvement in the child's life. As Mr. Frimpong, an acquaintance from the States, pointed out, the 'Red Flag'<sup>16</sup> in America involves children caught up between warring parents over custodial issues. Emotionally the children are negatively affected from a lack of stable living conditions. They become disoriented and experience rootlessness from finding themselves in different places all the time, some days with the father and others with the mother, and at times not even knowing where they will end up. There was an example of a court case in the States, where one parent sued the other for taking children on a day when they were supposed to be with one. A very disturbing state of affairs indeed! Despite their love for adventure, children still prefer relational calm and stability in their home environments not emotional upheaval from relational hang ups.

However, the situation seems very different here in our study. The fathers are not at all keen to be saddled with the child care responsibilities and try by all means to avoid them. Kellerman (1987: 549) explains why this is so by pointing out that "apartheid affects families and marriages in the most basic aspects of their functioning, and these effects will not disappear when apartheid is eventually officially abolished". Family life was severely disrupted by "the system of migrant labour" which removed men and fathers "from the context of family life". Also "through the enforcement of influx control, through the proclamation of group areas, through 'resettlement programmes' (:550) and through the prohibition of land ownership by Blacks and restrictions on the availability of land for the development of residential areas, a huge backlog has built in the housing provision (:550). Another issue the author raises is that of erosion of parental authority over the young people in urban areas (:551). It's as if, in the absence of family influence, each man does as he pleases.

Participant 10's son is always asking for his father, who lives alone in a different informal settlement nearby. From time to time he speaks to him on the phone but when he asks for something, the father stops answering the phone. He never visits or

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<sup>16</sup> A critical situation calling for immediate attention

helps out financially. I mentioned this boy in chapter 1, as saying that he wished he was a girl. This sentiment can be attributed to the absence of male role model. Since his biological father lacks interest in his welfare, the mother told him that he should consider his grandfather in the Eastern Cape, as his father. So each Christmas time or whenever possible, the mother takes her son home to her parents. This is one way of coping with the dilemma of father absence as the participant explained to me.

Another sad situation is one explained by participant 6, whose 10 year old step brother became, according to the participant's own words, "stubborn, naughty and self-centered" when his biological father left the family to live elsewhere. Apparently the young boy is now uncontrollable. The situation deteriorated further when the step father phoned to tell the boy that he would take him to see the 2010 World Cup, but never came. This left the boy bitter, angry and severely disillusioned about grown ups and their promises. This is how delinquency originates. The step sister is worried that they have a delinquent in the making and unless some measures are taken immediately to help this boy out, maybe through provision of a surrogate father or a male figure to emulate, he may fall in with bad company and never recover. One wonders how the women will cope as this boy reaches adolescence. These are challenges that single mothers face and are not always competent to deal with alone.

#### 4.3.4 Child safety: fear of abduction, rape and murder

Participant 7 brought out any mother's worst nightmare, which is abduction of innocent young children through offering sweets or toys, which may culminate in the child's murder for *umuti*, child trafficking or whatever the psychopaths may devise (e- T.V. 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree program). This fear was increased when she witnessed a decomposing body of a young child. Since she is compelled to go to college to study, leaving the children in the care of an aging grandmother, these fears become very real. One may be tempted to argue that, the presence of a concerned husband or male figure in the home, may serve as a deterrent to potential abductors. At least there would be some measure of security and peace in the mother's mind. Most perpetrators of crime are men and they tend to respect homesteads where other men live. However,

this may not always be true, for, as the Bible says, “Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain” (Psalm.127: 1). In the face of evil, only the Lord can protect us. As David prayed, “even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me” (Psalm 23: 4). Participant 7 wishes the government would help single mothers or all working mothers, for that matter, by extending crèche hours from 9 o’clock to 6 p.m. to enable mothers to have sufficient time to travel from their work places. She argued that the Church helped look after children from 9a.m. to 2 p.m. after which the children will be left on their own, which becomes dangerous for children who automatically become targets of predators. Child safety should never be compromised.

#### 4.3.5 Fear of HIV and AIDS

“Despite huge efforts, HIV is still spreading fast with 15 million AIDS orphans, 27 million deaths, over 35 million living with HIV and 2.5 million more infected a year. AIDS causes tragedy, misery, distress and grief, destroying families, wrecking communities and damaging economies...” (Dixon, 2010: back-cover). With all these shocking statistics and AIDS awareness campaigns going on, it is quite surprising that only 2 single mothers, numbers 8 and 9, expressed concern about it for themselves or for their children.

- Participant 8 is a bitter mum - afraid to die leaving a dependent child - a product of an affair where the couple indulged in unprotected sex. The presidential model is blamed by this mother for the boyfriend’s irresponsible behavior. She is still hurting over the jilting by the boyfriend whose argument for the break was that he was not yet ready for fatherhood as already discussed earlier. The bitterness extends back to a father who had abducted her mother in the traditional ceremony “*ukutwala*” at the age of 17. The mother later ran away to a different province but already had children with the father.

SABC1 *Asikulume* discussion (28 November at 7 p.m.) referred to “*ukutwala*” as a sexual offense against young abducted girls and is punishable by law. The unfortunate thing is that the parents of the abused girls are uncooperative and uncommunicative

about their views on the matter. This maybe because of gifts they might have received and used from the abductors and could not return them any more. It is a form of slavery really. One abductor explained on 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree that he was tired of cooking for himself, washing his own clothes, fetching water, and so he abducted some young girl to do things for him. Such degrading cultural practices need to be discarded as violations of human dignity and worth.

- Participant 9<sup>c</sup> dilemma was discussed already under 4.2.3. The rape of her child, the death of a sister leaving 2 children, a fiancée in the pipeline she dares not bring to her home because of morbid fears that he might rape her daughter also, are complex contradictions in the life of someone who prefers the single mother status and yet cannot resist accepting an engagement ring which is understood as a step towards marriage. Should she marry, decisions need to be made about her daughter and her sister's children. The fiancée has to be prepared to take her with these three children for her peace of mind. Another issue is that, although the HIV tests done on her child may prove negative now, it does not necessarily mean that all is well. The child should be tested regularly and counseled. This is why the community leaders' questionnaire, seeks to know if there are any known counselors in the community who can deal with complexities such as these in people's lives. One of the responses was that the counselors are there but they are not sufficiently trained to handle delicate cases.
- Number 14, a Christian mother, said that AIDS has to be defeated through faithfulness to one's marriage partner. She also argues that parents should have frank talk with their children about the facts of life. Other mothers, including those whose husbands had been unfaithful, at one time or another, did not seem unduly worried, about the possibility of being infected with the HIV virus. It made me wonder if AIDS awareness campaigns are really hitting targets. Another reason could be the prevalence of sexual indulgence and promiscuity propagated by T.V. which blinds people to the devastating impact of AIDS around them in a relentless search for hedonism

#### 4.3.6 Fear of peer pressure

Participant mother 3 is right in fearing peer influence in her daughter's life. As a qualified teacher, she understands the implications of bad influence in anyone's life. With the breakdown in discipline in schools, colleges and most sadly, the home environment, many young people find themselves in dire and stressful situations, among them, teen pregnancies. Thank God, the participant's daughter is 21 and no longer a teen. Nevertheless she is still subject to peer influence and temptations in terms of: sexual indulgence, substance abuse, pursuit of pleasurable pass-times etcetera. Fortunately for this mother, her daughter is now involved in Church activities and is a Sunday school teacher. If she is strong in faith and diligent in her role, all this may serve to deter negative peer influence. In fact if she observes carefully those who indulge themselves immorally, she will soon see the pitfalls of their kinds of lifestyles. She may find herself counseling former college mates who, most likely, may have made a mess of their lives. There is wisdom in choosing to serve the Lord.

#### 4.3.7 Summary of challenges that mothers face in the empirical study

From the analysis, it seems the single mothers end up shouldering more responsibilities alone than they bargained for. Father absence, possible delinquency, insecurity financially and physically, rape possibilities for them and their children, work overload, affording good education for their children, child safety when at work, possible death from HIV and AIDS infection leaving children with no parental care and guidance etcetera. Most married mothers' lives are not easy at all, gauging from the participant profile in chapter 3, column 8. Only two mothers, numbers 12 and 14, both Christians, seem to cope better in their marital situations. The rest of the married mothers do not seem to fare well at all emotionally. They are physically and emotionally haunted by problems such as: unfaithfulness of husbands; extended family issues, economically noncontributing husbands, work overload at work and at home, child care responsibilities are heavy on them, including discipline of children etcetera. On the other hand, participant 14 has a flourishing marriage where husband

and wife budget together, pray together and seem really devoted to one another despite the wife's past where she had a child out of wedlock. That shows the power of forgiveness and the importance of sharing the same faith. All struggling mothers, whether married or single, need support and encouragement from whatever sources for the sake of holistic childcare.

#### **4.4 The Quest for the Ideal Family Paradigm**

Although this study is strictly not a quantitative one, it can, however assign quantities for the sake of enhancing explanations. It is interesting to note, for example, that 80% of the single mothers chose C, which is dual parenting, as the ideal for holistic child care. 20% opted for maternal care and 10% rationalized their decision. Participant 7 is the one who rationalized by choosing both A and B arguing that if conditions are favorable on a particular side, then the child should benefit from that. She herself, does not know her father, has full maternal support with granny looking after her 2 children. She receives a child welfare grant of R500 per month. She is a student, born and bred in the Western Cape and prefers remaining single. I singled her out here because of her rational answer to this question and yet personally, she has no experience of ever having had a father.

##### **4.3.1 The maternal option**

Participants 5 and 8 have had raw deals from men. Number 5 divorced her unfaithful and negligent husband who lived with another woman in town despite promises to get rid of that woman. She practically raised her children alone, even during the period she was married to him. By divorcing him, she was eligible for the R500 grant for her 2 children, which would have remained out of her reach had she chosen to remain nominally married to him. This reminds me of the issue raised in chapter 2 under a discussion with Mr. Frimpong, from the States who talked of self-serving mothers in America who divorced husbands in order to get \$800 per child, monthly, from the former husband, for child maintenance, in addition to what a single mum was entitled to from government grants. The question to remember is: Could it be that, the

government's act of kindness, in response to the child well-being crisis, is being abused by some mothers, even within the context of this study? The issue of 'social welfare and individual responsibility' is always a controversial one (cf. Schmidt & Goodin, 1998), riddled with valid positives and valid negatives. Kinnear (1999:42) pointed out how Afro-American women on welfare felt demeaned and 'burdened' by negative societal attitudes to their plight. May these sentiments enable us to guard our attitudes against unwarranted prejudice against deserving single moms.

Participant 8 also opted for maternal care. Her mother was abducted in 'ukuthwala' 'bride snatching' practice as a young girl but later managed to run away to live in a different province but not before she had given birth to a couple of children. The participant lived with her father for some time but felt neglected, rejected and unloved. Further rejection by a lover after she fell pregnant left her bitterly disillusioned about men in general, fathers and lovers. A lack of a support network of caring women around her increased her difficulties. In contrast, number 7, a fellow student and young mother too has adequate maternal support and seemed much more confident. Number 8's own mother lives and works in a different town, and the sister she lives with, is uncooperative and negligent in the care of her child when she is at college. She was very emotional and weepy during the interview. I had to stop and give her time to recover while I prayed for her. When asked if she would need assistance, she agreed. The other details on her have already been given above.

#### 4.4.2 Dual parenting

80% single mothers who opted for dual parenting as the ideal family paradigm for holistic child care, coincides with 80% mothers who brought up finances as a major challenge in raising children alone. The discrepancy remains with the 50% preferences for the single lifestyle identifiable by the code // around the participant's number. In other words, despite the financial difficulties, 30% of the women still prefer to go it alone, in child care, inclusive of the 10% compromising/rationalizing response. The 30% are the 3 mothers discussed above.

Participants 1 and 9 constitute the 20% of the mothers who reason that dual parenting is good and healthy for the children and yet prefer to remain single. Number 9 is getting child support from the child's father, and that justifies her opting for dual parenting. However, the rape of her child makes her wary of "men" whom she argues "can even rape their own daughters". In other words, why bring trouble into the home? Number 1 has responsibility of her parents monthly, in addition to caring for her son alone with no contribution from the son's father. When she asked him once to buy some clothes for the child, he blatantly refused and asked to find out who was influencing her to demand things from him. From then on she stopped asking him. Though he also lives here in Cape Town, he never visits or asks about the child. Participant 1 is a potential motivation speaker judging from her awareness of child neglect, abuse of welfare grants to children and pensioners. She had hoped to be a social worker in order to help children to fight for their future. Given the chance to work with these people, I assume that she would be a pleasure to work with.

#### 4.4.3 Options B and D overlooked

Interestingly, not one mother married or single opted for option B >paternal child care neither did any of them choose D >any other combination. The option "any other" could have brought up options like, adoption, gay/lesbian/ children alone etcetera, but none were offered. Fathers too could not be trusted to bring up children because of their alleged lack of care, speaking in general terms. I believe this is because the maternal care instinct is very possessive and would not easily relinquish the object of caring instincts especially to men they regard mostly as untrustworthy, uncaring, selfish etc. In chapter 2, the researcher described a bit about motherhood and how it is valued for strengthening relationships, adds variety, enjoyment and fun to life, makes life worth living, validates one's adult status, leads to achievement of dreams through one's children, and contributes to personality development through sacrificial giving to one's children etcetera (cf. Phoenix et al., 1991: 48). Children are priceless.

In Zimbabwe we have a Shona saying that goes:

[Nzou hairemerwi nenyanga dzayo] meaning that,

"An elephant does not find it difficult to carry its own tasks".

For the caring mothers, even though child care is difficult it is not impossible and most certainly should not be entrusted to men. What makes it difficult are the demands of modern living which necessitate the use of more money than a mother can generally raise on her own, and hence the importance of male financial contribution. The mothers also have to meet additional extended family needs. I can safely state this because a number of the participant mothers both married and single have had to take time off work to go bury one relative or attend to a sick one, going even as far away as the Eastern Cape. Very few are living alone with their children. So the sentiments of these participant mothers may not be truly representative of the wider society since baby dumping is becoming increasingly common.

#### **4.5 Participant mothers' perspectives of men and child care**

Throughout, views varied, depending on individual mothers' subjective encounters with various men especially those of their own households. It was not always clear whether the descriptive adjectives used described what the women felt about a particular word, were based on a conceptualized ideal, a general impression from daily observation of other relationships or based on subjective experience. I did not want to interfere with the spontaneous flow of descriptive phrases that spewed out of the mothers' mouth, preferring rather, to capture as many of them as possible in their raw form. I assumed that any attempt to ask them to qualify whether they were generalizing or had particular individuals in mind, would have immediately stopped the overflow of information as confusion would probably have set in, in their minds about what really they meant to say or were implying. Having already collected information about their family of origin backgrounds and information on the involvement in child care issues, of their children's fathers, I was able to decipher whether or not they were generalizing their descriptions or they had a particular individual in mind.

#### 4.5.1 Participant mothers' tabulated responses (see Table 4 below)

The table below helps in summing up the rest of the findings in a format that facilitates perusal by the reader. It lists emerging concepts, themes, issues from the interviews, alongside how women view themselves in the light of government's women empowerment strategies. Women's perspectives of men, husbands and fathers, showed that unless steps are taken to reconcile the genders in one way or another, marriage will remain a historical institution. Relevant comments and explanations will follow in the subsequent pages.

Participant Number	Concepts, themes, issues emerging	Do you feel empowered by the government?	View of 'men'	View of 'husband'	View of 'father'
1	Self-advancement	Opportunities are there but there are no salary increases	Young modern men not good, irresponsible	Selfish/ uncaring	Reminds me of my father, a model father, cared for family
2	Child care workshops	Not so sure	Many are selfish + uncaring. Young men copy older men's wrong	Some are helpful, some violent, neglect wives	Caring, loving
3	Peer influence, child care campaigns	life now better for women but I don't feel empowered	False promises, uncaring irresponsible, selfish	Security, advisor, togetherness	Protective, caring loving
4	Unemployment/ have one heart one way/ Fight crime	Yes. Market-gardening but vandalized by dissidents	Drunkards, rude, smoke impolite, poor models	Uncaring, unloving, violent	Should be good, kind, loving, <b>not like</b> my father who left family
5	Wife initiated divorce / belief in God leads to peaceful living	Not anymore	Kill each other, drug abuse, affairs with girls	Confusers, liars, ever-changing, untrustworthy	Head of the house, good, helpful, caring
6	Wife initiated divorce/ Father absence by death,	Job opportunities 4 women	_Dogs' /they cheat/ are unappreciative/ they	House, children, some security	Love, safety, care, appreciation

	environmental change children are a blessing from God/ Do not abuse them/ take care of abandoned children	No discrimination Study bursary Child care support	expect you to accept their wrong doing/take advantage of your love for them		
7	Father absence due to matrifocal family set up/ Child abduction for muti/ child care to 6p.m jobs for all families/	Government to facilitate care of children /child education for all	Relationship with them helps in friendships. Sometimes make you feel good	No! untrustworthy, abusive, controlling	No experience. Man of the house/ provides for family
<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>Concepts, themes, issues emerging</b>	<b>Do you feel empowered by the government</b>	<b>View of 'men'</b>	<b>View of 'husband'</b>	<b>View of 'father'</b>
8	'ukutwala' gender violence/ father absence use condom, president's example misleading	No. the president is not a good model, many wives, unprotected sex	'Dogs', let down mum, and me	Good future for the child to grow up supported by parents	Makes me feel like vomiting/ The father I know is my mother
9	Child rape/ incest abuse of women/ sex	Not really, never got specific assistance	Abusive, should be concerned about HIV	Should be caring, trustworthy, planning	Should be faithful, care for family i.e.

	with multiple partners		and AIDs spread	together- big family	wife and children
10	Education of girls Violence/ protection order/ families stick together/ live in peace	Yes, if the relationship is abusive, the man can be locked up, got protection order,	Liars, do not keep promises, unfaithful, cheat, fight	Trustworthy, lifelong commitment, good for the kids	Head of the house, should be dependable honest, open. respect chn also. Be example
(11)	Out of wedlock child/ Space needed for sports		Not good, untrustworthy	Not good/ neglects wife/ cheating	Not good/ uncaring/ Except husband
(12)	Smoking in the house/ Need for communal disciplining of children		Some drink too much/ do not care/ selfish/ are ruthless and violent	Some abusive, one killed wife years back/ Looks after family	Head of the house, decision maker/ cares and loves
(13)	No paternal discipline		Abusive, playboys, take chances	Caring, supportive, loving	Caring, supportive, with family
(14)	Loyalty defeats HIV talk to chn @ facts of life		Some are good, others commit crimes, rape children	fine, financial support/ companionship, some not good/ abusive unappreciative/	Takes care of chn/ stands for family/ respected/ leader
(15)	Father absence though present		Leaders, teachers but others are violent and	Life partner, provider, friend	Provider, protector/ father figures crucial

			abusive		e.g. grandfather, uncle
/16/	Rape affected marriage/ Awareness campaigns on how to cope with town life for newcomers		Different, some are good, others bad. I was raped when young	Supposed to be head, provider, leader, responsible, security	Love unconditionally, never fails one, cares, supplies needs
17	In-law marital problem		Abusers, alcoholics	provider	Parent, protector
/18/	Abusive/unemployed husband		abusive, violent, immature	Irresponsible, violent, lazy	Lack of care, irresponsible, cruel
/19/	Foreign husband who is disliked by relatives		Violent, strong	Loving, helpful, partner	No experience of father
/20/	Unfaithful husband		Controlling/ abusive	Partner / father	Father died when I was very young

Table 4 : Summary of > participants views of men, husbands and fathers/

> other emerging issues, themes, concepts from the standardized open-open ended interviews

Key: / / = prefers single mum lifestyle/ ( ) = Preference for remaining a married mother

Comments: N.B. A blank row implies that no data was gathered and could not be gathered since it was already nearing the festive season

The researcher regrets having failed to insert a question on government empowerment on the married mother's standardized form. This is an unfortunate oversight because we have no recorded data to directly compare with the single mothers' views on: to what extent they feel empowered by the government. However, the researcher was able to decipher from certain responses made by some married mothers, what their thoughts were on empowerment issues especially in the case of physical abuses they experienced as emerged as the data analysis progressed.

#### 4.5.2 An unhealthy view of father'

Fathers tend to be viewed in a better light in both groups of mothers than men' and husbands'. Participant 8's negative view of father' deserves comment. I can still sense the disgust in her unpremeditated vehement denunciation: ~~—~~"Makes me feel like vomiting! The only father I know is my mother". This is one of the youngest mothers, still a student and was involved in unprotected sex for which she blames the presidential role model in terms of many wives and unsafe sexual practices. Her father abducted her mother as a 17 year old girl, following the cultural practice of ~~—~~"ukutwala" (explained in chapter 2 and earlier on in this chapter). Unfortunately, he failed to show that he cared or try to win her love when she stayed with him. His girlfriend and he were constantly fighting. Through emotional absence and neglect, his daughter finally gave up on him and left in disgust, bitterness and hurt, which are still palpable even now as revealed by her confession.

McClung (1985:22) rightly states that people ~~—~~unconsciously tend to attach feelings and impressions that they have of their own earthly father and other authority figures to their concept of their heavenly Father. Good experiences bring us closer to knowing and understanding God, just as bad experiences create distorted pictures of our Father's love for us". It is important that fathers be made aware of how important their role is in their children's lives. I have heard of many individuals who rejected God as Father on the basis of their having been abused or neglected by a biological father. As McClung (:19) states ~~—~~"There is only one way out of the prison of hurt: forgiveness ... many have done it and now they are free". This is also confirmed by

Van Eck (2008: 9) who states that, as far as healing and restoration of broken relationships and families are concerned, “true healing and spiritual prosperity comes, not from religion, or tradition, but flows naturally from a true, personal relationship with God, our heavenly Father”. Thus individuals like number 8, need nurturing by concerned adults, at college, in the community etcetera for them to experience surrogate fatherly care, similar to the one Weinstein (1995: back-cover) advocates, which provides “support, protection and supervision ... assistance, feedback and dialogue ...”. Participant 8 has indicated that she is open to counseling and assistance, which is a good sign. Steps have been taken to ensure that she has access to help when she needs it, through her college under a trusted Christian teacher counselor there.

Single mother participants 4 and 7, do not know their fathers. Whilst number 7 from a matrifocal set up is not concerned about this, number 4 still hurts about the father absence. In the word association she describes ‘father’ as “should be good, kind, caring not like my own father who abandoned his family”. This is a 39 year old mother, with her own cohabitation family of four and yet she is still hurting over father absence of someone long dead. That is how serious parenting is, it is not the job for quitters or the faint-hearted, it is a God given responsibility to care for the helpless babies till they reach maturity levels. McClung (1985:22) expresses it well when he says: “God wanted us to come into this world as babies, totally dependent and helpless, because he intended the family to be a place where his love is lived out in such a way that children grow up feeling understood, loved and accepted. Because of this kind of loving secure environment, the children will feel confident about themselves and will have the same view of themselves that God has: someone who is wanted, important, valuable and good”.

#### 4.5.3 A demeaning view: “men are dogs”

Participants’ view of men in general was predominantly negative. There were some negative vehement responses like the following: “men are dogs” from 2 of our youngest participants 6 and 8. This disclosure was as fascinating as it was shocking to me because of the conviction and ease with which this particular phrase was uttered,

not by one, but by two of our youngest single mothers, who also happen to be students. It could be because of the following reasons: being young, and most recently having experienced double doses of pain from betrayal/rejection by their boyfriends, coupled with the agonizing physical pain of childbirth of an unwanted baby, in the middle of a busy college term, with inadequate materials to handle a needy infant, facing criticism from relatives etcetera, we can imagine the emotional turmoil. As the Word of God says: “for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12: 34 cf. KJV). The NIV reads: “For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks”. All the pent up bitterness, anger and loathing was expressed in that short metaphoric sentence: “men are dogs”. The lack of qualification is another mark of blind fury, implied in the generalization ‘all men are dogs’ and yet the young mothers’ experiences of men could have been restricted to the ones who let them down. We should bear in mind, however, that some men’s behavior and dealings with women are ignoble: sexually exploiting and discarding them at will, unconcerned about the consequences. It all boils down to a lack of self-respect and care for others resulting in treating them disrespectfully.

In Shona we have a saying that describes unfaithfulness in some men that goes like this: “Varume imbwanana. Kwadzinopiwa mukaka ndiko kwadzinomhanyira”. The literal translation is: “Men are puppies. Where they (puppies) are given milk, there they run” in other words, ‘they run where they are given milk’, with ‘milk’ representing favours. In our empirical context, favours imply sexual gratification. This of course implies the men’s lack of discrimination and loyalty (like gullible puppies) in the quest for sexual favours. Another negative connotation concerning dogs is when someone exclaims at you: “Uri mbwa yomunhu iwe!” meaning: “You are a human dog you!” serving to reveal one’s contempt and uttermost disgust at someone’s behaviour. In Western cultures, dogs are respected loved and well known for their faithfulness to their masters highlighted in the simile: “as faithful as a dog”.

As for participant 6, there is already regret at having initiated divorce proceedings against her first husband whom she had married at 17. That remorse came following further encounters with men, especially the father of her second child, whose involvement with another woman when she was already carrying his child, proved the

height of betrayal. However, she does not seem to see her own fault, that involving herself in unprotected intimate relationship with this man before understanding his intentions towards her, is as much his fault as it is hers. Blame shifting has been a human problem since the Fall of Man recorded in Genesis 3. Adam blamed Eve, who blamed the serpent because the couple had disobeyed God's command not to eat of what is popularly known as 'the forbidden fruit'. The irony here is amazing as I am discovering. Some have interpreted the forbidden fruit as 'sexual intercourse' that led to Adam and Eve's discovery of their nakedness. To extend the comparison, our participants practiced unprotected sexual intimacies whose consequences (pregnancy) led to their emotional pain and bitterness against their accomplices. Metaphorically speaking, if 'men are dogs', how would bitter and disillusioned men describe the females who let them down? 'Women are ...' With children exposed to all this name calling, where will it end? One day the child may ask: 'Where is dad?' (cf. chapter 2). There is need for conciliation and attitudinal change in the way men and women treat each other. The onus, as I see it is more on the men's side to try and prove themselves worthy of women's respect by being more committed and responsible in their dealings with them and the children they make together. This is not to say that all men are guilty of neglecting responsibilities. Peaceful conflict resolution is critical in all human relationships at all levels as a model of care and other centeredness.

#### 4.5.4 Perspectives needing adjustment

In chapter 5, we will examine the importance of knowing our divine origin and identity. Being 'made in the image of God' precludes having animals as predecessors, be they dogs, chimpanzees or gorillas. Human beings and not animals will account for their actions and words. 'But I tell you that men will give account, on the Day of Judgment, for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned' (Matthew 12: 36-37 NIV). Of course these verses were spoken in the context of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit but it should also help us to guard what we say. I am reminded of the four letter, swear words, even exclamations that call on the name of the Lord in vain: thoughtless utterances, demeaning words, condemning words, discouraging words, insulting

words etc. Ironically, children are very quick to learn bad words and readily assume the attitudes of the caregivers. Parents and care givers need to watch what they say, especially in the presence of the children.

Correct perspectives between the genders are crucial in order to restore some kind of balance to relationships. For example, number 8 has to be careful not to let her experiences color her view of men in general. She still has an obligation to honor and respect her father, irrespective of his faults, though she is not compelled to love him. Without his contribution she would not even exist. As for the boyfriend, she is as much to blame as he is. She did not report that she was raped. She had indulged in consensual sex which unfortunately, culminated in the hard to accept pregnancy and consequent birth of her child whom she has come to accept and love dearly. According to her confession, her fear was that she might die leaving her son before he is old enough to fend for himself. To me this speaks of love and commitment, a love that seeks someone else's good and not harm. As she watches her son grow, why not spare a kind thought for the man who gave her that unique gift- the human being- that God enabled them to make together even though the context was not ideal for responsible child care. Through patient dialogue, meeting practical needs the mother is facing, in hand-up rather than hand-down situations, the researcher is convinced that, by God's grace, there will be attitudinal change towards: the father of her child, her own father in particular and men in general. We are all entitled to our attitudes, yes indeed, but there are some attitudes that are not helpful to our health but are detrimental to emotional and spiritual well being.

The question is what can be done to make men see how damaging their actions can be to women so that they learn to bear the consequences of those actions and take responsibility. We already read in chapter 2 how both men and women were disgruntled and disenchanted with one another, in the long history of the gender debate. Women want their space and independence from men and the men no longer know what is expected of them or what to expect of themselves (cf. Dobson, cited 1.4.3 :19) because of the changing roles that are confusing most people. Chapter 5 will give some answers for human development in important values like caring in three-folding family set ups which are gender inclusive, conciliatory, sustainable,

affirmative, participatory etcetera. The Sonke Gender Justice Network's manual "One Man Can ..." (accessible online: [www.genderjustice.org.za](http://www.genderjustice.org.za)) will be welcomed and applauded as a "a green light at the end of the tunnel gender discrimination". However, emphasis will remain on spiritual transformation that turns a "heart of stone" into a "heart of flesh" (5.2.4).

#### 4.5.5 An erotic view: men "make you feel good sometimes"

Participant 7 values men's friendships since they "make you feel good at times", but are to be kept at arms length and certainly not to be married to because "they are untrustworthy". On the "husband" word association test item (see Appendix B, question 17). I still hear her emphatic exclamation: "No! Untrustworthy, abusive and controlling". She has 2 small children aged three and a year old baby, each by a separate father. She is the only one who seems to have grasped the nature of the relational dynamics between men and women, admits to the sexual pleasures and is determined to take her share and escape "unharmed" by their domineering/controlling tendencies. At 25, she has already indulged in friendships with men that made her "feel good" and produced, by choice, two babies born within two years of each other, each by a different father.

There could have been other men in-between or after these. Steyn (1987: 161) explains that, "the sexual act is no longer defined merely in terms of procreation, but has increasingly become defined in terms of the inherent pleasure associated with it. The emphasis is on sexual satisfaction for both the man and the woman without fear of pregnancy owing to the improvement of contraceptive techniques". The participant did not have to be pregnant. This is why the phrase "by choice" was inserted. Sexual promiscuity is not tolerated by the "Word of God as stated in Colossians 3: 5-6 which reads: "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming". God's holiness cannot abide sin. He loves the person but hates sin. People need to be warned about the coming wrath of God and that any delay in His return is so that more people may turn to him and be forgiven. Sexual pleasure

is not forbidden in God's word as some people may suppose, given all the moral restrictions'. Ecclesiastes (9:9) which reads: "Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love ..." portrays sexual pleasure also. But, as the word 'wife' implies, it has to be in the context of marriage and proper child care by responsible male and female adults. Under 'theme and message', The Song of Songs (Solomon), "illustrates the beauty and purity of marital love" which "places human sexuality in its proper context ..." (*Holy Bible: New International Version*, 1999:754) This was also reflected in the social sciences literature (2.1.1: 40) where Reiss (cited in Steyn, 1987:146) defines marriage as: "an institution comprising a socially acceptable union of individuals in husband and wife roles with the key function of legitimizing parenthood".

## 4.6 The married mothers view of husbands

### 4.6.1 Married mothers' current experiences

Examining the problems faced by the married mothers makes one realize that life is not necessarily easier for them just because they are married. Marriage does not imply resolution of all one's child care problems, no. It simply implies that there is someone to share them with. Married mothers have to content with the following issues, as well which came up during the individuated interviews with the focus group members:

- Unfaithful husband/ child out of wedlock/ no discussion on the issue (11)
- Smoking in the house, a bad example to the children/ unhealthy habit (12)
- Lax discipline of children by husband/ financially demanding relatives (13)
- Father's lack of emotional involvement in the home ( 15 )
- Husband disrespectful to wife/ not bother with personal grooming /16/
- In-laws dislike wife especially mother-in-law to whom husband is closer (17)
- Abusive/ unemployed husband /18/
- Foreign husband disliked by wife's relatives causes tension in the home /19/
- Task overload for wife, unfaithful before; demanding relatives /20/

The majority of married mothers in the empirical study preferred the married mother status except those who had abusive, non-working husbands who made their lives unbearable. In them I sensed a cry for marital relations that were wholesome and not abusive.

Overall, two distinct pictures of husbands came up:

- 1) husbands were considered essential to the family for reasons summarized and listed from both married and single mothers' contributions such as: protection, security, provision, care of family needs, supportive, companionship, life partner, friend, leader, responsible, loving, helpful, advisor, good future for children, planning together, trustworthy, good for the kids etc.
- 2) The negatives about husbands were: not good, neglects wife, cheating, abusive, one killed wife, irresponsible, violent, lazy, selfish, uncaring, cruel, unloving, confusers, liars, ever-changing, untrustworthy, controlling, No!

#### 4.6.2 Marital unfaithfulness

As already pointed out in Boonzaier (2006: 149) on the South African scene (2.4.1), research evidence discovered that:

- –successful masculinity involved having multiple sexual partners ...
- 70% of abusive men had been unfaithful to their marital partners ...
- marital infidelity was constructed as a unique manifestation of abuse and a sign of men's power in heterosexual relationships also the ability to become or remain socio-economic providers for their families, unfortunately, the dynamics of the times are not facilitating this and gender identities are being thwarted (Moore cited in Boonzaier:149).

All this contributes to a lot of mistrust and emotional upheaval in the home for both spouses as the wife reacts to a husband's treachery, who in turn asserts his freedom.

In this study, 40% admitted that their husbands had been known to be unfaithful at one time or another. What of the discrete occasions far from home? Married mothers also stated that when they had problems, they discuss with their husbands and that most of the times, this works for them.

Number 11 said she was good friends with her husband and discussed problems together, as a general rule. However, in the one case of unfaithfulness and extra-marital sex which led to the birth of a child, he remains tight lipped and won't discuss it. This destroys confidence and trust. It leaves the wife with doubts, wondering if he is going to bring this wife home, carry on the relations with her or the affair is over and done with. Motshologane (1987:199) reports that:

~~P~~auw found the main objection to extramarital love affairs to be their adverse effect on family relations. They lead to disharmony between husband and wife, and the wife whose husband has a lover is neglected both sexually and otherwise. Pauw maintains that the general attitude is that no man can satisfy two women, particularly, in sexual matters, and in the maintenance of the family. Moreover, the fatherless children born out of extramarital affairs are regarded as prospective delinquents ... these liaisons easily lead to violence”.

Men in polygamous set ups indulge themselves sexually at the expense of their several partners or several wives. I once heard it said: ~~It~~ is a great man who can keep one woman happy and fulfilled” (author unknown). Most men prefer the hit and run encounters. They do not wait to unravel the enigma that's constituted in one woman.

Another serious concern, according to Pauw (cited in Motshologane, 1987:199) is that ~~the~~ fatherless children born out of extramarital affairs are regarded as prospective delinquents”. The participant is advised to restrain herself from nagging which most men find irritating, and she may unwittingly invite a beating: ~~these~~ liaisons easily lead to violence” (:199). I had a friend years ago who got her first beating after 15 years of marriage, for having challenged her husband based on evidence (pre-natal medical bills) she had found in his pockets that pointed to his having an affair and a baby on the way, with the maid of honour, at their wedding. Talk of the guilty are afraid! Thankfully, the Lord used a host of people and influences to help restore that

marriage. To date, as far as we know, the marriage is strong. Their two children, one boy and one girl both of whom were teenagers at the time of the crisis, finished their studies and married well in church. All this can be attributed to Christ's redemptive power, as my friend thankfully affirmed later. This is how the Christian witness spread in her family: following her conversion to Christ that transformed her outlook on life enabling her to forgive her husband and enhancing her love for him, he forsook his mistress and child and devoted himself to his family. Soon afterwards he also committed his life to the Lord. A few years later, their twin children were married in Church to Christian partners.

Back to our study, there is hope and potential healing for participant mother 11. The husband has not chased her away; they have an easy friendship, which is lacking in most marital relationships, they budget together, and share costs and responsibilities. Above all, he has apologized. The reason he gave for not talking about the affair is, he does not want to hurt her feelings any more than he has done already. What normally happens with cases of this nature is that, the woman is hurt, so she argues and convinces herself that if he can have extramarital affairs, what should stop her from similarly indulging herself? Reasoning of this kind is destructive to family life and leads to worse trouble as the problem spirals out of proportion. One woman confessed on e- T.V. 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree program, how she became involved in extra-marital affairs in order to get back at her husband who was chronically unfaithful. Unfortunately, she ended up reaping the HIV infection whirlwind. For the sake of family stability, there is need for the guilty party to repent, apologize, work things out, and endeavor to be faithful to one's spouse and practice safe sex as well.

Sensitive issues like these, need to be discussed privately, so that children do not overhear the sordid details of such arguments, which may be characterized by raised voices, anger etc. Most mothers are already following that procedure admitting that they have no recollections of hearing their own parents arguing openly. However, there are issues that remain thorny between couples, and may need mediation from a trusted friend of the family or even the pastor if people are believers. The discussions on handling conflict in 5.4.2: 216 and 5.4.3: 219 encourage people to stay within

peace-making parameters and not bear grudges against people, or expose children to ugly conflicts which may leave them highly agitated and insecure.

#### 4.6.3 Extended Family influence: good and bad

The greatest challenge to peaceful co-existence in the traditional African home has mostly been the voicelessness of women, which left the husbands and their extended family members to make decisions for them. This kept most women uncared for and as outsiders in their own homes, contrary to God's Word which commands a man to "leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2: 24) caring for one another and their offspring. This is supported by the Lord Jesus' statement in Matthew 19: 6 that: "What God has joined together, let man not separate". This is the plight of most married participant mothers especially numbers: 13, 17, and 19 (see table 2 under the heading 'Reasons for single mother statuses' and 'Reasons that might lead to divorce for the married'<sup>17</sup>). Extended family members are priceless, but once an individual is married, there has to be space made for the new in-law to experience oneness with his or her chosen spouse, as well as feel that she is a valuable addition to the family as a whole.

This is important in African cultures where payment of the bride price is sometimes wrongly construed, by some, as purchase of a slave master's rights to abuse, ignore and torment the married woman. Participant 17's ordeal of being resented by her mother-in-law, thus putting a wedge between her and her husband, and her and the rest of the in-laws, is commonplace, and deserves our sympathy. One divorce occurred between 2 sincere Christians, when a daughter-in-law could not tolerate anymore, the mother-in-law's entrenched presence and intense influence on her husband which totally eclipsed hers. As the saying goes, truth can be stranger than fiction. If I did not know the couple and their close family members who gave me the details, I would have presumed that situation to be an exaggeration, serving to blow facts out of proportion. But, it is verifiable truth. Many years after this divorce, despite their two teenage children's need for them both, the couple is still living apart.

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<sup>17</sup> I added this to distinguish the reasons for single mothers' status, from that of challenges faced by married mothers that could lead to divorce and hence the single mother status, if left unresolved.

I trust that with the Lord's help, reconciliation is still possible even though the father and the children have immigrated.

My hope and prayer is that, number 17 be reconciled to her husband and that the mother-in-law restrains herself and encourage the couple to draw closer to the Lord and to each other, since both are active Christians in their Church. The Church has been known to reinforce submission of women even in the most abusive of situations without intervening to ease the women's suffering. Family three-folding does not condone this. One may rightly quote a verse like this: "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed ..." (Acts 17: 30): Jesus Christ. The Sonke Gender Justice Network's "One Man Can ..." manual and workshops should help men to adjust their attitudes to women (ch.5).

#### 4.6.4 Rape, Spousal rape and child abuse

Participant 16 is a survivor of male propagated abuses. Over 20 years ago she experienced traumatizing rape at the hands of a white male but dared not report the case for fear of reprisals during the apartheid regime in South Africa. She later got married but her experience of rape negatively affected her relationship with her husband somehow. As long as she and her husband worked and lived in the suburbs, away from extended family influence, they were fine. Problems started when they had to move to the informal settlement and their lives were exposed to the critical eyes of watchful relatives. They mocked her husband for being too close to his wife instead of indulging himself. He drank heavily and deteriorated even in his personal hygiene. Not bathing for days on end, he became filthy as well as abusive, publicly humiliating his wife by dragging her into the shack to be intimate with her. Finkelhor (cited in Viljoen, 1987:381) explains that: "Research on marital rape suggests that a widespread, largely unrecognized, and perhaps more important sexual issue in marriage, is aggressivity- the desire to hurt, humiliate and dominate through sex".

At one time, the participant's husband spat on their son's face, crudely swearing at and belittling him. The son was emotionally hurt by these actions. Viljoen (1987:373) also speaks of child abuse as having the longest tradition. In some cultures, spanking is accepted as, "normal, necessary and good" (Strauss cited in Viljoen: 376). But spitting on a child shows that the man had really lost control of himself. In the end, the participant had to have him placed under restraining orders, for the family to attain some measure of peace and quiet. All these things happened in the children's presence in their teenage years. Experiences like these are ones that would put single mothers and single ladies off marriage for life. This is a true case of father absence though present. The father's presence was detrimental to the social, emotional, financial and physical well being of his family.

Fortunately, the mother is an amazing woman and her determination to overcome difficulties and her desire to help stranded children can only come from the Lord. She works very hard and is studying God's word in preparation for ministry with children. She also wishes to help new people coming to live in the city by dialoguing with them on the potential dangers they were likely to face, and giving them hints on survival tactics, without them resorting to robbery and theft. I trust that the Lord will fulfill her desire to care for other people. She is prepared to welcome her husband back, provided that he mends his ways and start respecting her and the children. She sends him money regularly so that he may not be stranded financially, in the rural area where he is living right now. With patience, one hopes that he recovers soon in order to help his wife provide for their children, before it is too late for damage control.

#### 4.6.5 Unemployed husbands and spousal abuse

It was not only participant 16 who endured abuse. The four married mothers who opted for the single mother status also seem to have had enough share of abuse at the hands of their husbands. Their real sentiments would not be truthfully reflected on Table 4, since the tendency was for the mothers to give their idealized version of what a 'husband' should be rather than a description of their own as I explained elsewhere. Anderson & Jack (cited in Buskens & Webb 2009:10) observed a similar tendency

when she said: “Women may be very sensitive to what they expect researchers want to hear, because they feel insecure when they have to express who they are and what they are feeling ... voicing the culturally accepted part of the female role as well as the muted sounds of their authentic personal experience”. Fortunately, I got more information under marital problems the participants face on the standardized interview form (see Appendix C, question 9).

Due to the changing times, the father is no longer a role model or source of information as was the case traditionally. With the TV news telling what’s worth knowing and children learning how to use computers which most of their fathers never did (Jithoo 1987: 64-65), “the mother is gradually taking over the father’s family care functions and the father is reducing his psychological involvement with the family”. As Van Wyk (1997:70) also observes, redefinition of the family roles leads to “the father becoming uncertain and feeling threatened” since he now has “to define his role in the family ... compete with his wife as breadwinner and educator in the family”. Worse still, “less emphasis is placed on his authoritarian position of power”.

What I have discovered with the married mothers is that, tension increases in the home where wives are the chief breadwinners. In such cases, I suspect that men begin to feel worthless and some may indulge in substance abuse to hide their frustration and so become abusive in order to dominate their wives. There could be other reasons like: wives becoming proud, arrogant and demeaning a husband for failing to contribute financially, which would be provocative, unwise and uncharitable.

#### **4.6 Emerging themes, concepts, issues**

On the next page, I have summarized the major concerns that I gleaned from both the single and married mothers as they unburdened themselves during the interviews and often provided more information than the questions demanded. However, no information was wasted. Using the extra information they provided, I was able to plot a dendritic pattern (fig.3: 175) that shows the links amongst the various issues that still beleaguer women in today’s world. Since the explanations have already been made

throughout the data analysis in this chapter, I will conclude our lengthy discussion by examining the diagram briefly, to see what can be used as entry points in order to address those issues that keep women, children and also men from fully realizing their potential to sincerely care for one another as unique individuals made in the image of God, and worthy to fulfill His purposes. Solutions need to be found in order to address outstanding gender issues. Widespread use of the One Man Can... manual is one potential solution.

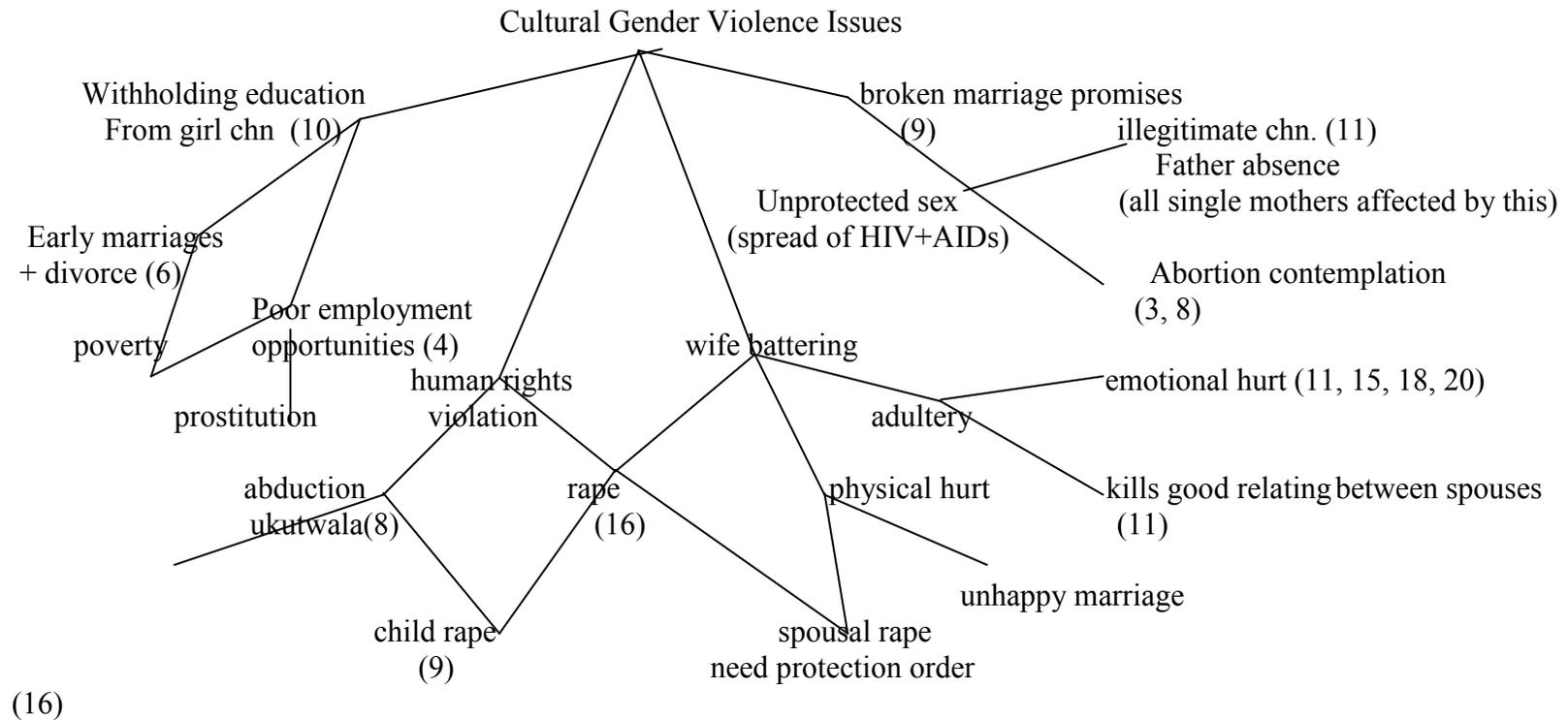


Figure 3: A web of cultural gender violence issues N.B. Bracketed numbers ( ) represent the participant mothers affected

N.B. Another web of related issues can be designed to show solutions that have already been found and are being implemented through:

- (a) empowerment of women educationally through bursaries (6, 7, 8); on line study (10); adult study (3, 16); jobs (all mothers employed except participant 4; some mothers able to enroll their children in better schools though expensive (15, 10) and
- (b) empowerment of women through providing prison sentences for sex offenders (9); government restraining orders/ protection orders against spousal and child abuse (10, 16)

#### 4.7 Mothers' proposed changes for the community

Appendix B, questions 19 and 20 required single mothers to state what changes to families in their community they would make if they had the power to do so. They were also required to write a message to be read by everyone on an imaginary community board. This was meant to assess their capacity to think big, beyond their own individual problems. Although I had not included the two questions on the married mothers' standardized interview guide, I also asked them the two questions in addition to the 15 they had already (see Appendix C) so that altogether they had 17 questions. Below I have summarized and listed the issues that came up. The bracketed numbers below, are reference numbers of the participants who made the proposals

- The need for teaching mothers how to care for their children well ( 2, 3)
- Everybody to *engage in fighting crime* (4)
- There should be *no violence against women* (10)
- Campaigns against child abuse and rape of women are necessary (6, 9, 16)
- Child care facilities to remain open till 6 pm for greater child security (7)
- There should be *jobs for each family* to enable the members to survive (7)
- HIV/AIDS *awareness campaigns*; safe sex practices: condom use (8, 9)
- *Faithfulness* in marriage defeats HIV/AIDS (11, 14)
- The need for communal disciplining of children (12)
- Fathers are failing to discipline their children (13)
- Fathers need to show interest and be involved in their children's lives (15)
- Promotion of girl education (10)
- Urgent need for sports ground to engage the youth in gainful activity (11)
- Awareness programs to advise people on how to cope with the demands of town life and care for their children properly (16)
- In-law issues and marital problems need addressing to save marriages (17)

Based on the underlined phrases, 13 mothers expressed child care concerns like: safety, discipline and general well-being. Obviously that should be top priority on the communal agenda. Other concerns are italicized and need to be considered too.

#### 4.9 Summary of findings

Henning (2004: 107) argues that: “Processed data do not have the status of ‘findings’ until the themes have been discussed and argued to make a point, and the point that is made comes from the research question(s). There was a reason why the topic became an investigation in the first place and now is the time to use the ‘worked’ data as evidence in the continuing arguments (and sub-arguments) about the researcher’s point of view or emerging knowledge claims”.

As stated in chapter 1, there is trouble in the family arena globally leading to escalating rates of single mothering and other forms of being family or households. With their increase, comes feminization of poverty which seems to mostly pursue single mothers and their children. Literature examination of the causes of single mother status revealed changes in morality codes due to migration and rapid urbanization. These, eroded African traditional norms of behavior which placed high emphasis on sexual abstinence until after formalizing marital unions between a man and a woman through bride-price negotiations by their two families.

Promiscuity in urban areas, the quest for hedonistic pleasures, marginalization of marriage and irresponsible human multiplication through the practice of unsafe sex, have all led to the birth of “illegitimate” children by single mothers, most of whom struggle to support their children. In the context of father absence, literature search showed that socio-economic unrest also increases since most fatherless boys and young men tend to copy inappropriate and often deviant male role models from the media and society. This was proved empirically when participant mothers consistently and emphatically expressed negative views of ‘men’ as: full of nonsense, selfish, irresponsible, uncaring, drunkards, rude, poor role models, murderers, killers, substance abusers, ‘dogs’, untrustworthy, abusive, controlling, liars, unfaithful, unappreciative, cheat, ruthless, playboys, commit crimes, alcoholics, violent, immature. Most mothers explained that it’s mostly the young men who are unreliable, selfish, violent and destructive.

Both married and single mothers harbor bitterness, anger, hurt, hatred, and morbid distrust of men in general, some abusive husbands in particular and also, a few individual, neglectful fathers. The youngest mothers seemed to be the hardest hit emotionally as already explained in the findings. Some mothers' own childhood experiences of father abuse or father absence have left negative impressions in them that, even time, is failing to heal. The despair felt by some mothers over being over-worked, undervalued, taken for granted by husbands and their extended family members, shows that culturally, some married women and their children consider themselves disadvantaged by marriage unions. Most of the single mothers expressed gratitude for the child welfare grants they receive monthly, as empowerment by the government serving to alleviate their economic struggles, even though the amount is not much. A few were bitter that they were considered ineligible due to their being in a slightly higher income bracket than most of the other single mothers.

Some single mothers have experienced broken marital proposals, broken child care promises, cultural gender violence in the form of neglected education, "ukutwala" abductions, spousal neglect, abuse, rape, exposure to unprotected sex, unfaithfulness, broken communication, work overload etcetera. Each mother seems to have an unresolved issue with one man or another. There has to be a way of resolving the impasse between men and women for them to share the same moral values and principles that respect human dignity and worth as well as being other-centered.

I should point out though, that, some mothers' responses were balanced, well seasoned ones and not over-generalized exaggerations. I got realistic responses from numbers: 2, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16. For example, number 15 qualified her view of 'men' by saying, that some are good leaders and teachers, others are violent and abusive. Participant 16 was even more eloquent starting with the qualification that men are 'different'. Having been raped by a white man during the apartheid era when young, and also having been exposed to spousal rape and abuse, she had reason to tarnish all men with the same brush describing them, for example, as 'rapists,' or whatever, but her perspective was clearly rational. She was calm and controlled as she shared a secret she admitted she had never shared with anyone else because the

contexts weren't right. She has suffered a lot in her life, had had an unhappy childhood on account of an abusive 'mother'. Sadly, a younger sister is hostile to everybody, fights physically and is abusive to that mother. Fortunately, when participant 16 became a born again Christian, her worldview was transformed enabling her to forgive all her tormentors, and hence the response seasoned by an understanding that men are 'different'. Because of sin, some are really bad.

I will also draw more attention to participant 14, a mother who had her first born out of wedlock with a different man. She experienced forgiveness when she became a Christian and in due course, she got married to a God-fearing man to whom she is very close, and who also does not hold her past mistake against her evidenced by the existence of the child she had before conversion. Her relationship with her husband is admirable in that they pray together, budget together and discuss issues. She is tranquil and content with her life. In Gerdes (1987:306) it is stated that, strong families are based on strong marriages where there is mutual appreciation, joint activities, good communication, high commitment to promoting each other's development and welfare, commitment to spiritual values and a spiritual lifestyle, mutual support in times of adversity, a strong link with the community and openness to new ideas. In such families, pathology is absent. These qualities are coveted by three-folding (cf. chapter 5).

Participant 14 advocates faithfulness to one's partner as a means of defeating HIV and AIDS. She was also emphatic about the importance of talking to children about the facts of life. What motivates her is the concern that already 13 children are HIV positive at the local primary school. Quite alarming considering that in reality, the figure could be much higher than this. She has great potential as a motivational speaker.

Other statements deserve comment here and are the more striking in that they issue from the only two mothers who initiated divorce proceedings against their husbands, hitherto unheard of in African cultures. Number 5 stated that belief in God leads to peaceful lives or words to that effect. Number 6 said that "Children are a blessing from God. Take care of them!" Both of these statements are very true.

Such mindsets demand an understanding of what God's intention is for families, how they should be structured and how members ought to relate to each other. Chapter 5 seeks to explain this "intellectual puzzle" from mainly a biblical stance. What family paradigm can glue us together in universal consciousness of what it is to be human, caring, peace-loving, forgiving, child caring, with principles that are gender inclusive, attitudes that are conciliatory (forgiving) and mindsets that are affirmative of the uniqueness of others made in God's image.

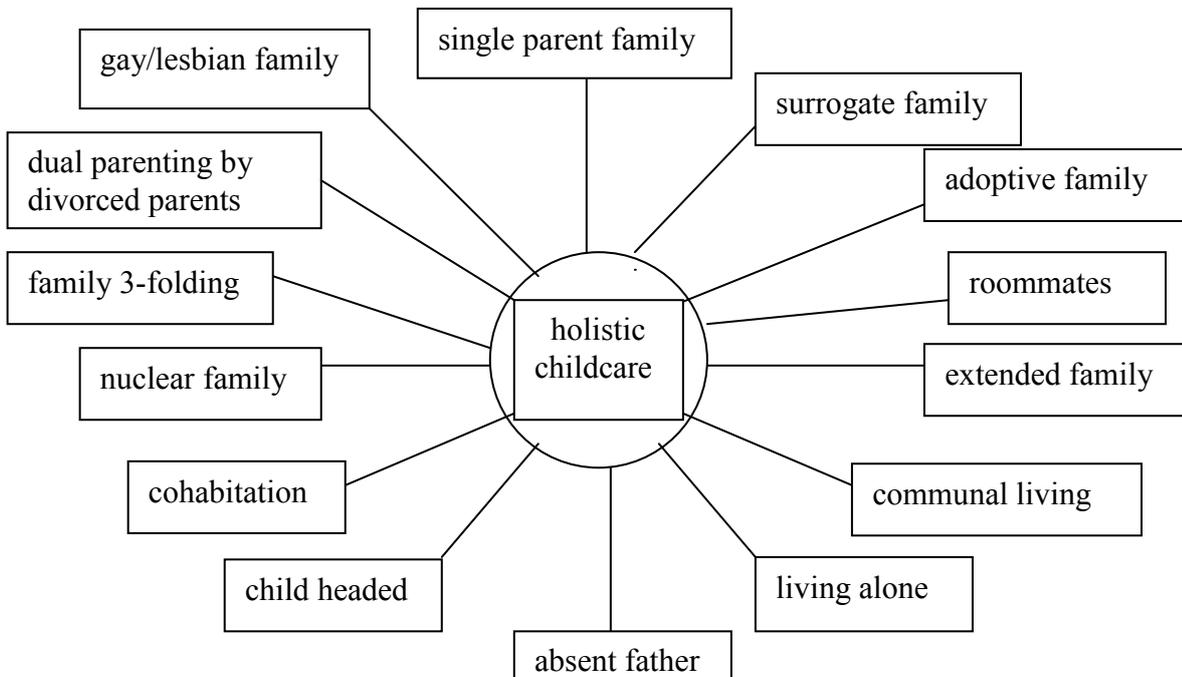
## CHAPTER 5

### PROPOSING FAMILY THREE-FOLDING VIRTUES AS BIBLICALLY SOUND AND DEVELOPMENTALLY AGREEABLE

#### 5.2 Introduction

In chapter 1 (fig.1), Burkey (1999:38)'s model was modified by the researcher to hypothetically establish the family as a foundational and transformative tool in societies for effective human development because of its proximity to, and capacity to shape the lives of young children. The family can be used effectively in engendering care consciousness in children as a means to attaining social development sustainability. However, family diversity (1.1 represented in fig. 4 below), itself a demonstration of lack of family relational sustainability at the nuclear level, requires redefinition and modification of what family is or should be, in both composition and purpose. The study did not critique family structures as such but made references to some that were radical contradictions to the emerging family three-folding paradigm principles that are broadly outlined in this chapter.

Fig. 4 Family structural diversity: N.B. More structures can be added or subtracted.



Some of the structures mentioned (fig.4), may best be described by the concept: household which Bender (cited in Bernardes 1997:45) explains as a residence group that carries out domestic functions whilst a family should be seen essentially as a kinship group". The emphasis in this study is on the family defined as kinship group at the nucleus level, as the basis of holistic human development for sustainability purposes. As argued in Bernardes (1997:10) that though the nuclear family may not be in the majority at a particular moment in time, it is none the less a stage through which all families must pass" thus, the central importance of the model of the family (is) a key focus of analysis". However, Bernardes (:11) maintains that because of social class, gender or ethnicity ... people come to that stage by a wide variety of different routes" and has extremely varied" outcomes ranging from abuse and divorce to different types of marriage". She introduces the concept of family pathways" which involve the life courses and practices (which) link families to other subsystems of the community" (:47). Her proposal is that we should think of individual life courses meeting, sometimes being or becoming interdependent, even combining and perhaps later parting..." as one develops from childhood upwards.

That type of research promises to be interesting too, but the pre-occupation of this study is with the foundations of humanity, the nuclear stage" referred to above, to utilize it and maximize its potential to sustain relationships in deliberately planned human reproduction and nurture of children, compared to instinctive animal reproduction. The study's interest is in the holistic care of the child from conception, birth through the formative child development processes until he/she is old enough to live responsibly, making wise decisions that show care for oneself and others.

### 5.1.1 Biological basis of three-folding

A dictionary edited by Wehmeier, McIntosh & Turbull (2005:1000) defines nucleus as, the central part of some cells, containing the genetic material" or the central part of something around which other parts are located or collected". The nuclear family is defined as a family that consists of father, mother and children, when it is thought of as a unit in society". A zygote is defined as a single cell that

develops into a person or animal, formed by joining together of a male and female gamete (a cell that is provided by each parent)” (Wehmeier et al.,2005: 1715). Both the father and the mother contribute important identity marks that will determine, to a large extent, what the child would look like and what kind of person he/she will turn out to be. One adopted son confided that he had always wondered why he was so different from the members of his adoptive family and yearned in his heart to know his biological parents. He sought, found them and was content (cf. 2.2.3.4). For others, there will always be those difficult unanswered questions of who one’s biological parents are and why one was given away. Psychologically, such unanswered questions can haunt one and be a source of inferiority, rootlessness, fear and self pity. Social parents, surrogate parents, god-parents, guardians are amazing people and worthy of everyone’s respect but still their genetic constitution is not reflected in one’s body. Some rare diseases are inherited and ignorance of one’s biological parents may complicate the search for comprehensive treatment and cure.

A biological father and a biological mother with their child/children are genetically linked and constitute a threesome which is interwoven in folds of: care/neglect/abuse; interdependence/ dependence/ independence; love/ hate/ indifference; conflict/conciliation; authority/submission/responsibilities/obligations; work/fun/recreation; etcetera. Family three-folding represents: a basic, natural, human unit which involves care of a defenseless child who takes after two people who ought to love and care for each other and their offspring.

#### 5.1.2 What the study has accomplished so far

- Chapter 1 established the family as indispensable to human development. Holistic child care was seen as foundational to sustainable social development and its consequential reduction in delinquency, prison convictions and crime.
- In chapter 2, marriage was considered ideal for formation of new family units, sanctioned sexual intimacy between a man and a woman, legitimate child bearing and dual parenting of children. Abusive marital relationships, divorce, widowhood, feminism led to the disintegration of the nuclear family, which is generally associated with: male domination, functional imperatives,

patriarchy, authoritarianism, gender bias, as well as discrimination against women and children. Single motherhood is widespread and growing by leaps and bounds, but poverty makes most mothers rely on government help. Since more mothers are becoming single parents, child welfare payouts are bound to be unsustainable. What then? Father absence is multifaceted and deprives children of holistic care and discipline. There is need to strengthen dual parentage by caring mothers and fathers. Mothers, both single and married ones should be heard on problems about families and the care for children

- In chapter 3 (the empirical research methodology), talking to the mothers in real life, showed that (chapter 4: research findings): single mothers were generally not impressed by men's self-centeredness and tended to be cruel, irresponsible, violent and uncaring (cf. Table 4). Married mothers, whom many assume would be happier, found life hard. They had too much work to do, some husbands involved themselves with other women and most relatives were a problem. Most men are naturally disgruntled (because of father absence?) that they tend to be abusive, fight most of the time, indulge in sexual activity, substance abuse to try and drown their sorrows. Some fathers and husbands have extra-marital affairs which interfere with family care. Smoldering bitterness, self-pity and anger lie thinly veiled beneath the surface of civility and endurance in most families.
- Chapter 5 suggests an outline, in broad terms, of a good basic family structure and relational adjustments that need attention between men and women, husbands and wives, children and parents to establish the family on firm relational foundations that should last a lifetime. It also advocates a marital bond strong enough to take better care of children and teach them sound values, morals and principles that encompass polite behavior, diligence, caring, honesty, helpfulness, self-control in all situations at home, school and in the community. When parents are committed to each other and take their child care responsibilities seriously, and their neighbors do the same and everyone else does that, there will be a general consciousness of respect, peace, care and love in the home and in the community.

### 5.1.3 Revisiting the intellectual puzzle: the light at the end of the tunnel

Hints calling for an alternative family set up, one that is: inclusive, promotes marital unity in child care and affirms individuals, were given by the following three authors (reiterated from 2.3.1) arguing that:

- “No new models for how society could or should be changed to give mothers, children (and hence fathers and others) a better deal are provided” (Woollett & Phoenix, 1991: 226).
- “Social Sciences currently tells us ...next to nothing about what will make marriage more likely among single mothers” (Edin & Kefalas, 2005: 5).
- Apart from the predominant cultural and media stereotypes of being “powerful and controlling in relation to women in heterosexual relationships... Clearly there is a silence around alternative ways of being men” (Shefer & Portgieter, 2006:119).

The demands are for relational changes in how men treat women in order for marriages to succeed and so attract more women especially single mothers to join the institution. Attempts have been made globally, to impose state legislation on family relational matters. In the States, government initiated family reforms were labeled “the new paternalism”, as former presidents, Clinton and Bush sought to “reform American family values” and “were willing to put government force behind these reforms” through a message to welfare recipients, single mothers and absent fathers (Browning, Browning & Evison, The Atlas Serial Collection. June 3-10, 1992. Adobe Reader ([Familybreak.pdf](#))). It did not work and there is still trouble on the American continent on the family front. Butler (cited online above) stated that: “The breakdown of the family is a national problem ... divorce, single parenthood, absent fathers, out of wedlock births, declining incomes of single mothers and their children and the failure of many fathers to pay child support, are issues that affect all sectors of society- white, suburban, rural, middle and upper class ... Family crisis is everybody’s crisis”. The crisis persists and hence the drive to find workable solutions to what is actually, a glocal<sup>18</sup> problem.

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<sup>18</sup> The word glocal‘ is derived from globalization‘ a term coined by Robertson (cited in Anderson: 1999: 7), and combines the meanings of the words: global and local to imply universality.

In the U.K. the Child Support Act of 1993, set up to “pursue absent fathers for payment of child maintenance”, proved to be highly controversial since it deprived children of the informal help they used to get from their fathers, due to the exorbitant penalty charges the fathers had to pay (Bernardes, 1997:19) .

In South Africa, the government has also intervened and sought to better the lives of single mothers and their children, through monthly child welfare payouts, as the empirical research shows. Unfortunately, this seems to be empowering some mothers to divorce their husbands (often with good reason, at times without) in order for them to become eligible for the government payouts. The men also contribute to this situation because of polygamous mindsets and the quest for sexual fulfillment through having multiple partners. This increases chances of contracting the HIV virus and irresponsible multiplication of people (population increase) through unprotected sexual unions. During an informal discussion with some of the participant mothers, it emerged that, many children in the settlement know their fathers’ identities and encounter them frequently but the fathers do not acknowledge them, either deliberately or because they genuinely are ignorant of their paternal connection to those children. Indeed the problem is complex and defies simplistic solutions.

On “family life in public debate and policy-making”, Bernardes (1997: 14) concluded that, “no amount of public debate can resolve these problems (divorce, single parenthood, child sexual abuse); rather our attitude to, and commitment to, family life must change”. The question is, if debates, policies and government legislation are ineffective in transforming families, what then is?

The researcher is pleased to announce that encouraging research progress has been made that seems to address Shefer & Portgieter’s (2006:119) “request’ for “alternative ways of being men”. Sonke Gender Justice Network (no publication date given) has developed and produced a manual entitled *One Man Can ... Reduce the Spread and Impact of HIV and AIDS* (accessible on [www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan](http://www.genderjustice.org.za/onemancan)). This should raise awareness and sensitize men to women’s and children’s needs for tender care and not abuse. In the manual (:2), it is argued that: “Men are socialized into violence and commit the vast majority of violent acts. Men learn violence as a result

of experiencing it in childhood or as adults. But violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned. Men can choose not to behave violently towards women, children and other men”. The manual is a timely one –intended as a resource for those working with men and boys on issues of citizenship, human rights, gender, health, sexuality and violence ... The activities are intended to encourage men to reflect on their own experiences, attitudes and values regarding women, gender, domestic and sexual violence, HIV, AIDS, democracy and human rights so that they can take action to help prevent” (:1) abuses, curb the HIV/AIDS pandemic and promote equality.

The researcher found this approach to male dominance and violence to be non-condemnatory but participatory, constructive, and conciliatory. It is greatly empowering to individual men, as the caption below shows. (Adapted from the front cover page of the manual).



If men and boys are exposed to this mindset, the gender conflicts would largely be over. Kirkburton (cf. 1.3.7 and online: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_6784/is](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6784/is)) argued, in his article called “Peace begins at home” that, “individuals are the basic units of families” and that “individual peace must come first, then family peace would follow and only on that foundation would come peace of the society” leading to “world peace”. As I see it, the onus is largely on individual men to take responsibility of situations and bring reconciliation among family members in homes. Children will be better cared for in peaceful home environments. Not all men heed women’s efforts at peace-making and hence the need for men, fathers and husbands to take charge.

The “One Man Can” manual shares the family three-folding principles that consider transformation of male mindsets as crucial to the success of heterosexual marriages in order to foil relational poverty between men and women, thus depriving children of the best care that can come from both in dual parenthood. In the context of this study

the manual is deemed ‘a green light at the end of a dark tunnel’ of female ‘second class citizenship’ for those who ever considered themselves in that light.

#### 5.1.4 The logical framework of three-folding

Mason (2002: 7) argues, among other issues, that qualitative research should:

- produce explanations or arguments
- be formulated around an intellectual puzzle.

–The elements which a researcher chooses to see as relevant for a description or exploration will be based, implicitly or explicitly, on a way of seeing the social world, and on a particular form of explanatory logic”. Thus, Mason advocates transparency in the logic one uses to produce the arguments in question. This researcher’s world view and explanatory logic are expounded under 1.2.3. The word of God, social sciences, developmental trends, feminist views etcetera, all need careful considerations in order for one to be just and broadminded enough when dealing with family relational matters which are highly sensitive. Stott (1972: 18)’s insights expressed in his booklet –Your mind matters ...” are also invaluable to three-folding. He aptly sums up the Theo-centric motif of this study which promotes holistic anthropocentric ‘care’ of children by stating that: –God has revealed himself in words to minds. His revelation is a rational revelation to rational creatures. Our duty is to receive his message, to submit to it, to seek to understand it and to relate it to the world in which we live” (:18).

The Bible is the message demanding wise interpretation and contextual application of its valid principles. In another context Stott (1984: 235) values keeping abreast with developmental trends and advises that feminists complaints be listened to in order to apply God’s word wisely and appropriately. This would serve to reduce conflict, increase cooperation and lead to behavior transformation. Smedes (1983:7) too, argues that: –The design in the Creator’s mind and our minds, keeps the human community from turning into a jungle of predatory plunderers”. In general, people care for one another as best as they can. Even though marriage may be overlooked in many cases, family life still goes on in diverse forms because human beings are

created to be relational and caring. Psychopathy results from abusive or negligent relationships.

The ideal family paradigm we seek should have the following qualities:

- it should account for its origin, identity and ultimate purpose (spirituality)
- should be strong foundationally with long-term goals (allow development)
- it should respect genetic composition and species preservation (scientific)
- should combine nature and nurture for maximum development (socialization)
- it should be transformative spiritually and attitudinally (character training)
- should adjust appropriately to healthy developmental trends (progressive)
- it should consider male/female as complementary elements (gender inclusive)
- it should involve all its members in decision-making processes (participatory)
- should respect authority and other people (human dignity, identity & worth)
- should be conciliatory, affirmative, caring and peace loving (holistic)

A crucial aspect of three-folding is that it respects genuine attempts to make heterosexual families work because they are gender inclusive. They reflect the complementary nature of the different sexes.

Social sciences yielded invaluable descriptive information on family dynamics, conceptually, structurally, relationally etcetera, (cf. chapter 2) but did not offer permanent solutions. Gerdes (1997: 20-22) described the traditional, the compassionate and the egalitarian paradigms: contemporary family structures, each evolving from the one before it. Yet even the egalitarian set up is not the ideal. Gordon (cited in Woollett & Phoenix, 1991:223), one of the feminists admits: “I became convinced that equality is not what we should seek: we should aim for a society where the experience of having children could be a pleasure to all parents, male and female”. Afshar (in Eade, 2002:133-134) explains how Western feminism is rejected by Islamic feminists for attempting to produce ‘quasi-men’ preferring rather to fight respectfully for their rights, from within their culture, using the appropriate local register, for full restoration of their rights.

It is crucial that we consult the Bible as part of the interdisciplinary quest for an ideal family paradigm. Punt<sup>19</sup> rightly cautions us not to make “unqualified appeals to the New Testament in formulating positions on family or family values today” because of the historical and contextual discrepancies. However, certain principles remain “constants in context” to borrow Bevans & Shroeder’s (2004) expression which implies that Theology should be relevant and contextual but never at the expense of God’s revelation through Israel and Jesus Christ (Bosch 1991:187). The 6 constants not to be tempered with are: Christology, Ecclesiology, Soteriology, Anthropology, Culture and Eschatology

## 5.2 The Biblical basis of anthropology, family and child care

### 5.2.1 Human creation in the image of God

The Bible is a collection of books recognized and used by the Christian Church as the inspired record of God’s revelation of Himself as the Creator and His Will to mankind (Bryant, 1972). It was written over 1500 years by over 40 men living in varying historical times and circumstances and yet all tell the same story of God’s dealings with sinful men. The book of Genesis is one of the first books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch whose authorship was generally attributed to Moses. Ross (1983: 15) states that, “Genesis provided the theological and historical foundation for the Exodus and the covenant at Sinai”, “is written with the presuppositions that God exists” (:26) and accounts for Creation and how the universe came into being (:27). Man was created in the image of God (Latin: *imago Dei*).

Grudem (1994: 442) explains that: “Both the Hebrew word for “image” [tselem], and ... for likeness [demut] refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents or is an image of. The word ‘image’ can also be used of something that represents something else” thus, “man is like God and represents God”. Ross (1983: 29) adds that this ‘image’ “was imparted only to humans (Genesis 2.7)” and “is used

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<sup>19</sup> The final draft by Professor Punt entitled: “Family in the New Testament: Social location, households and traditional family values”

figuratively here, for God does not have a human form. Being in God's image means that humans share, though imperfectly and finitely, in God's nature, that is, his communicable attributes (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice), and so have the capacity for spiritual fellowship with him". This means also that we share, what have been interpreted as, relational and functional aspects or attributes of God. Where the Trinitarian unity and cooperation is perfect, family relational crises were common and catastrophic due to the Fall of man through disobedience (Genesis 3).

### 5.2.2 The genesis of monogamy (father/ mother/ children, family unit)

The family's importance in society should never be underestimated. Social sciences admits to data scarcity on the origin of families. Lee's (1977:60) sociological perspective on the origin and function of the family revealed two important shortfalls namely that:

- the data base on the origin of the family is thin, limited, inconclusive and –beyond the current capacities of science (*because*) data required for precision are now largely inaccessible" (:60) leading to unsatisfactory speculation that seemingly upholds an evolutionary perspective linked ~~to~~ patterns of interdependence between the sexes" (:61). On the other hand, the Bible unequivocally gives specific details on family origin.
- the structure of the family has always been a response to socio-economic needs of particular societies, thereby making spouses dependant upon each other for fulfillment of instrumental and expressive needs, which is not so obvious in other family paradigms (Kerckoff cited in Lee, 1977: 226).

However, the Bible, unapologetically gives an explanation on family origins as having occurred in the Garden of Eden before the Fall<sup>20</sup>, without socio-economic needs as we know them today, God had already designed the family structure as monogamous and three-fold, that is one man, for one woman with their children (Genesis 1: 27-28).

The NIV Study Bible (1985: 1) describes Genesis as a book of *'beginning'* [bereshith] in Hebrew. The Greek word [geneseos] means *'birth'*, *'genealogy'* or *'history of*

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<sup>20</sup> The Fall refers to the original sin when man and woman disobeyed God's specific command when deceived by the serpent and had to be evicted from the Garden of Eden, (Gen. 3: 23) also known as Paradise.

origin' depending on the context, and is the origin of the English title 'Genesis'. The New King James Word in Life Study Bible (1993, 1996: 4), relates the theme of beginnings in Genesis, acknowledging God as central throughout history from beginning to the end in Revelation (futuristic). Some of the beginnings mentioned are: Time space and the universe (Gen.1); the world, the earth and its creatures (Gen. 2); people (Gen 1: 27- 30; chapter 2); stewardship of creation (Gen.2: 8-17); the family (Gen. 2 and 4); the origin of Nations (Gen. 10:1); languages: cf. Tower of Babel (Gen. 11); the nation of Israel and its significance in Christian history (Gen.12)

The Bible gives explanations for all beginnings including marriage which was also instituted by God after he saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and made Eve as a companion and helper "meet for him" (Gen. 2: 18; 20b-22. King James Version). Patterson (cited in Brand et al., 2003:1681) interprets this as "corresponding to him", "possessing neither inferiority nor superiority" but providing "something different than he provides for himself". The man could not fulfill the reproductive mandate alone. After making woman, God brought her to the man who welcomed her as: "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man" (Gen. 2: 23). The 2 were to unite and be one flesh (Gen. 2: 24). Male and female are meant to be complementary and fulfill the mandate to "be fruitful and multiply" together (Gen 1: 28). This is a plausible paradigm for balanced family life as one gender contributes what the other cannot.

It is important to observe that 'people', 'children' 'human beings' are terms that are inclusive of both "male and female" as God's pattern. The fruitfulness meant, is not animal like, where mating is indiscriminately. For human beings this had to be in the context of marriage between a mature man and a mature woman for nurturing helpless human babies, who the Lord knows intimately and has plans for. Thus, when children are killed, aborted, dumped, neglected or abused, God's commands are violated: "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20: 13) is one of 10 commandments which God gave to Moses to teach to the children of Israel soon after their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. Human life is precious and God given. On the basis of this, Grudem (1994: 450) argues that, "people of every race deserve equal dignity and rights ... that elderly people, those seriously sick, the mentally retarded, and children yet unborn, deserve

full protection and honor as human beings". Denial of this leads to depreciation of the value of human life.

On marital structure, the OT does not seem to argue strongly for monogamy. One assumes from Genesis 1:27-28 and Genesis 2:22-24 that the pattern of family relationships for humanity was to be on a one man one woman basis with the command to produce children (Genesis 1:28). The seventh commandment: "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14) sets boundaries for sexual activity and is directed toward protecting the sanctity of the home ... the fundamental building block of society. The marital vow is a holy commitment, that should not be violated by sexual unfaithfulness under any circumstances" (Hannah, 1983: 140). In the contemporary world countless homes have been wrecked by adulterous liaisons and many children suffer as a result. Brand et al. (2003: 557) states that:

—Polygamy ... was one of the abnormal developments of the family in the OT and was first practiced by Lamech, a descendant of Cain. It is never cast in a positive light in Scripture but is a source of rivalry and bickering as is seen in the lives of Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 16; 29-30). The harems of the kings of Israel are presented as excess that is rebuked in the monarchy (Deut. 17: 17). Because of polygamy the kings of Israel were persuaded to worship false gods. The normal family unit in Israel was never polygamous, nor was polygamy widely practiced outside of the monarchy".

This seems to be the logical conclusion to the marital set up. Monogamy was the ideal.

### 5.2.3 Child care in the OT and NT.

God values people. They are precious, even when they are still children, who are marginalized in some cultures. Ishmael was named before birth and his life preserved by the Angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:11) even though he was not Abraham's child of promise. Moses, known to the Jews as the Lawgiver, could have been murdered by Egyptians as a baby but God had a mission for him and preserved his life openly as Pharaoh's grandson (Exodus 1: 22 - 2: 1- 10). Samuel was dedicated to the Lord by his childless mother even before he was conceived and he served God in the temple even as a small boy (1 Samuel 1: 11, 20). David, the last born son in his family, was

anointed king, privately by Samuel, as a young shepherd boy (1 Samuel 16: 11- 13). Jeremiah was told by the Lord, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1: 5). Even today many people have amazing stories of miraculous survival against one odd or other.

Many skeptically regard the creation story as a myth, but for believers, faith demands acceptance of divine wisdom and activity that is plausible, brings dignity, identity, worth and purpose to human life rather than embracing despair, hopelessness and apathy. To give an example: David, the Psalmist had consciousness that: “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14) as he marveled at “God’s sovereign superintendence over the natural process of reproduction” (Ross, 1983: 892). Unique DNA evidence should fill anyone with awe and confidence at how special one is before God. If a man believes that animals are his antecedents/ ancestors, we should not be surprised when he behaves like them. Values, moral standards and rationality should deter human beings from pure instinctive behavior.

Allen (2001) did a comprehensive study on: *The Role and Education of Children in the Old Testament Times*. Her study yields useful insights on family set ups and child care issues for those unable to access original works for themselves. Perdue (1997:244) rightly states that: “Much about the family in the Hebrew Bible must remain the object of supposition and intelligent guesswork, hardly producing the stuff of divine fiat and authoritative prescription and proscription”. Two Hebrew words [bayit] and [bet ab] mean, ‘house’ and ‘house of the father’ respectively (Perdue, 1997:174). He proceeds to explain that:

“The household was primarily a kinship system that included lineal descent and lateral extension: grandparents, adult male children and their wives and children, unmarried children, and widowed and divorced older daughters who may have had children. Marginal members of households outside of this immediate kinship structure could include debt servants, slaves, concubines, resident aliens, sojourners, day laborers, orphans and Levites, along with any of their family members” (Perdue, 1997: 175).

According to Wright (cited in Allen, 2001:9), “sociologically the [bet-ab] was the most important small unit in the nation and for the individual Israelite, man, woman, or child- slave or resident alien- it was the essential locus of personal security within the national covenant relationship with Yahweh”. Thus for social, economic and theological reasons, the father’s household was indispensable.

Children were highly prized and “every birth was considered a divine miracle” (Allen, 2001:10 citing Grassi, 1992) and “to have many children was a coveted honor”. Barrenness was a cause for shame and women like Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth and others had a hard time and needed God’s intervention in begetting children (Gen. 21:6; 1 Samuel 1: 1-20; Luke 1: 5-25 respectively). Perdue (1997:189) explains that households esteemed having many children because they were “future contributors to its labor force”, they “provided the lineage for preserving the patrimony and perpetuating the ancestral name” as well as provision of “care network for sustaining older parents”. All this accounts for why “there is no reference in scripture to intentional abortion or infanticide” (189). Daughters, were not as highly regarded as sons because they left their fathers’ homes to marry and so enriched other households. Family strength was measured by the number of sons a man had (De Vaux cited in Allan 2001: 11). The social structure was also hierarchical with elders and men at the top of the social ladder and women and children at the bottom of the ladder. Despite their importance to families, children were still regarded as powerless. “Parents had almost absolute authority over children, who were educated through strict obedience, often enforced by severe physical punishment” (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13) (Allen, 2001:11).

Harsh punishment must have been reserved more for those who were willfully disobedient. In Deuteronomy 6: 4-9, Moses taught the Israelites that, commandments of God were to pervade their consciousness, sub-consciousness and passed on to their posterity in the course of daily living. The mode of training seemed to have been more interactive than authoritarian. Children were free to ask questions (Deut. 6: 20) following which the fathers would expound the commandments and reveal how God miraculously redeemed them from Egyptian bondage and entered into covenant with their forefathers. Proverbial sayings were also useful in the training of children.

Proverbs falls under Wisdom Literature and Buzzell (1985: 901) explains that it “is a book of moral and ethical instructions, dealing with many aspects of life. The teachings ... guide its readers in how to lead wise godly lives and how to avoid the pitfalls of unwise, ungodly conduct”. Solomon authored most of the proverbs. The addressee “my son ...” appears 15 times between chapters 1-7 and many times elsewhere (Buzzell, 1985:902) implying an interactive approach to the training of a child. Proverbs empowered the Hebrews to effectively socialize their children in upright moral conduct. Proverbs 13:24 reads: —“He who spares the rod hates his son but he who loves him is careful to discipline him”.

Parents and members of the extended family were the primary caregivers of children and gave them both moral and vocational instruction (Allen, 2001:64). Biblical evidence in the OT shows that children were to be taught (Deut. 6: 6-7); trained (Prov. 22:6); disciplined (Eph. 6:4); and shown good examples of good conduct by parents (2 Tim. 1:5).

Perdue (1997: 207) argues that, —“The social reality of Israel as a cluster of families held together by kinship, tradition, custom, law and religion was never abandoned ...” despite monarchical changes. Children in the Bible were valued but not pampered, disciplined but not neglected. The widows, orphans and the marginalized had to be supported too. Children had the duty to honor, obey, learn from their parents and care for needy parents.

### **NT References:**

In the NT account of the virgin birth (cf. Luke 1:26 – 38), when Mary, engaged to be married, conceived of the Holy Spirit (:20), before the marriage, Joseph was warned not to break the engagement because she was going to mother the long-awaited Messiah (:21). The set up favoured three-folding. When Mary conceived, before marriage, Joseph was warned not to divorce her (Matthew 1: 18 – 25). In the first century, it would have been scandalous for Mary to have a child out of wedlock. Without Joseph, Mary would have found it extremely hard to protect Jesus from the murder of children by Herod let alone escape to Egypt on her own with a baby, for

sanctuary (Matthew 2: 1-23). Jesus needed the care and protection of an earthly father too and so he grew up as Joseph's son who became known as the Carpenter of Nazareth, his father's trade (forgotten extra-biblical source). This story illustrates the importance of a basic family unit composed of father/ mother/ children. As a boy of 12, Jesus had remained in the temple in Jerusalem following a Passover feast. His parents had assumed that he had gone home, ahead with other children. When it became obvious that he had not, both his father and mother went back looking for him, found him and took him home (Lk. 2: 41-52) . There, he "grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men" (Luke 2: 40, 51). Given the hassles of child rearing, it is ideal that dedicated parents share child care responsibilities. In view of his redemptive mission, it was also fitting that Jesus grow up in an environment where he was loved, cared for, protected and appreciated as a child.

In the contemporary world where single motherhood is proliferating, the concerns are of a different nature. Abuse, rejection or neglect by a parent can lead to low feelings of self-worth which may be a hindrance to accepting and worshipping God as a loving Father in Heaven. Single parenting also leaves children more vulnerable to issues like sexual abuse due to a parent's work commitment outside the home. A pair of eyes cannot be as effective as two pairs of eyes in child care. Crèches are often too crowded for healthy child care. If individuals fail to take good care of a precious young life they produce together in an act of physical intimacy, what more important things are worth taking care of? The best recourse, at grassroots level is for the basic family unit to carter adequately for its own needs. When it stands solid, only then can it have the capacity and energy accommodate stranded kin and aging parents. In terms of effective witness, on the issue of destitute widows and orphans, Paul wrote to Timothy: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever". This also refers to the extended family already, which, in the post-modern world, is failing to cope with economic pressures pressed on it.

There are many similarities between the Hebrew/Jewish culture and the African traditional culture as well as Indian and other Eastern cultures. In pre-colonial Africa family setups were also extended ones, maybe not as big as the Israelis of old. Children were also highly prized as they contributed to farm work and household

chores especially when older. However, with changing lifestyles propelled by modernity, for most people children are now a liability and no longer an asset and hence the careless handling of children's lives among the poorer communities. The family of God is acknowledged as universally caring (cf. 5.5.1). This obviously extends beyond individual family units, which, I still maintain, are crucial to a more decisive spread of care consciousness.

#### 5.2.4 The Commandment to honor parents

Every person has parents, be they biological, social, adoptive or guardians. All children were commanded to obey their parents by the fifth commandment: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20: 12). This commandment was taught by Moses and is the only one with a promise attached to it. It implies "obedience and submission to them" not cursing them, and "repudiating their authority, was a capital offense" (Ex. 21:7; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20) (Hannah, 1985: 140).

Edwards (2002: 175) grieves that in contemporary societies:

"The biblical models of father and mother have been rejected as 'gender stereotyping' ... models of parenthood are varied ... maybe an 'open marriage' where the children hardly know who their real parents are, a temporary 'shacking up' for convenience or pleasure, a homosexual model ... a violent storm-filled home of drugs and drink, a house where mother and father are rarely at home, or a feeding and sleeping centre where television rules and parents are 'distant' ... After three decades of a philosophy that drove women out of the home and into the office and factory, it is slowly dawning upon politicians, sociologists and journalists that we have made a terrible mistake; unfortunately young people and parents have not yet come to the same conclusion".

Edwards proceeds to argue that "never in modern history has the fifth commandment been so neglected and so necessary". Most young people take themselves as the know-it-all generation. Technologically, they may be more advanced than most parents but they may still benefit from their parents' wisdom born out of experience, if they listen.

Willard (1998) discussed under 2.1.3 revealed how some parents are poor role models and belittle their children even when they are more knowledgeable in some things. Christ welcomed little children when giving his disciples a lesson in humility and Edwards (2002:176) explains that:

—to welcome a child is to treat it with dignity, respect and care; and this surely involves caring for its physical, mental, and social life ... We feed our children with sufficient food, clothe ... comprehensive education ... but their souls are starved, their emotions are hurt and their minds are filled with violence. Our children are neither cared for nor disciplined and we have kept them in ignorance of the laws of their Creator". Parts of the United States —had parents accountable for the actions of their dependent children, even to the extent of giving parents the criminal record their children have earned. Similarly in the United Kingdom parents can be fined for some crimes that their children commit ... At least it is having the effect of reminding both children and parents of their proper relationship to each other" (: 176). He concludes by saying that, God's word —provides us with the only model that can give our children a home to enjoy and a father and mother to honor".

Without some concerted attempt at forging strong, loving parent/child relationships that are automatic and natural, holistic child care in our dynamic world may be impossible. There are too many forces vying for children's attention and tend to drown out parental voices and sound advice.

#### 5.2.5 Current efforts at reshaping marital and family relationships

Bernard (cited in Blaisure & Allen, 1995:5) had assumed that "upgrading" marriage for women" would solve issues but changed her view after reviewing the literature on marriage and concluded that marriage is more attractive and healthier" for the husband than for the wife. Blaisure & Allen (1995:6) view the traditional marital lifestyle as "patriarchal but father-absent" (Luepnitz cited in Blaisure & Allen 1995: 6) and impervious to change or modification like "a tenacious script that some couples are attempting to rewrite with much effort and disappointment" Blaisure & Allen (1995:5). They quote feminism which argues that "traditional gender-structured marriage" is economically, emotionally and physically unviable due to its rooting in

patriarchy which is hierarchical and devalues women's work and their gender. Much literary and practical evidence proves marital bleakness for most women.

Makgoba (2009:2), describes Ackermann as a feminist theologian. He acknowledged the suffering of women at the hands of a patriarchal world and a patriarchal church and praised Ackermann for bringing liberation to the marginalized and oppressed people through *praxis* ... the interplay of reflection and practice, which has found voice in the holistic nature of her own life and teaching" (:3). In the light of the pessimism expressed concerning the impact of patriarchy in the cases cited above, coupled with the participant mothers' predominantly negative perspectives of men who, according to Dobson (1978: 154 quoted in chapter 1), are apparently no longer sure of *who they are, what women want from them, or even what they want from themselves*", surely the stage is set for alternatives that aim for sustainable relational care between the genders. Three-folding seeks to contribute to relational success and to improvement in the quality of interaction between the genders.

Below, I quote from two different authors who portray the researcher's view point:

- *Proper diagnosis of the true nature and root causes of the problems is a precondition for any attempt to solve them or reduce their negative and humiliating effects*" (Terreblanche, 2002: 26).
- *For human kind, nothing lies so close to the heart as understanding one's fellow human beings*" (Emilio Betti cited in Thiselton, 1992). *The process entails recognition of the limits of my own understanding, and learning to listen, with patience and respect, not only to what the other person says, but also to why the other person says it. In Christian spirituality or pastoral theology we should probably describe this orientation initially as one of openness. To be open is to let oneself be sufficiently vulnerable to be influenced by the other towards self-change*" (Thiselton, 1992:33).

With regard to the first point, the correct diagnoses may be that, gender conflicts have contributed to family disintegration and children are experiencing care deficits. Both genders seem reluctant to yield any room. What next? The next point explains the need for personal vulnerability. Without open and flexible hearts, attitudinal changes will not happen and the relational impasses will remain in place. Both men and

women need to make adjustments to accommodate one another and be united in their child care concerns. The conciliation referred to, does not necessarily involve getting back together couples that broke up a long time ago due to genuinely irreconcilable differences. Let us rather aim, as far as we are able, at retraining ourselves to accept and affirm the other gender in such a way that family members openly discuss their relational issues and use gender differences as sources of strength rather than as weapons of war in the home. The retraining may commence with little boys and girls and counseling of engaged couples to help them with attitudinal adjustments.

On family life and policy-making, Bernardes (1997:14) rightly argues that ~~no~~ amount of public debate can resolve problems such as: child sexual abuse, divorce and single parenthood; rather our attitude to, and commitment to, family life must change". In view of the ~~trans~~formation of domestic relationships", the Commission on Social Justice argued that there were now new challenges to contend with namely:

- For families: a renegotiation of the relationships between mothers, fathers and children
- For employers, new demands for flexible work patterns, support for child care and other measures to accommodate caring work within the home
- For governments, a fundamental review of the social security system, child care and social services (Bernardes, 1997:15).

Most employers allow parents to take time off in order to fetch children from school or drive them to certain activities, or stay home with a sick child etcetera which is plausible. In three-folding, cooperation in the home and at work, caring negotiations, compassionate understanding of difficulties individuals face on child care issues are part of the package for relational success. Although gender differences are acknowledged, they have no negative connotations because both men and women's hearts are open to adjustment in order to accommodate the wishes of other members in the family.

Transformation of attitude, behavior, and mindset is possible under the power of the Holy Spirit that subtly changes hearts, enabling one to act differently to how one would normally act. An example I can give is of a gang leader, Nicky Cruise, invited with his gang, to Church by a missionary pastor, Bruce Wilkinson. The gangs meant

to cause trouble and so when Nicky and his gang were asked by the pastor to take up the offering, he thought of stealing some of the money. However, in the back room while counting the money, he underwent a spiritual transformation whereby he became overwhelmed by remorse and guilt over his sinful life and could not steal. He found himself weepy and repentant. Only the Lord could have changed Nicky like that. To date Nicky is a believer. He came to South Africa about three years ago and shared his testimony at His People Church in N1 City. Ezekiel (36:26-27) reads: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws”. In this passage, the Lord’s promise of future restoration of Israel (facing imminent exile then), was verbalized by through Ezekiel. This future restoration will not only remove past sin, but, will also, “involve the positive implanting of a new nature in Israel’s people that will make them righteous” (Dyer, 1985:1297). This was fulfilled in the advent of Jesus Christ and his redemptive mission (his life, death, resurrection and ascension) followed by the disciples’ infilling by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as promised, that enabled them to be effective in preaching the gospel boldly whereas formerly, they were scared (Acts 2). The same promise holds good for all believers

Hearts that are open, willing and teachable are ones that will reach beyond the impasse posed by failing marital relationships. Both parents’ are vital in their children’s lives and ought to be actively involved throughout the maturation process of the child, starting with the conception, birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood etcetera. Other details are for the couples to reasonably settle between themselves given the complexities of modern life, for example unemployed husbands, maternity leave, sickness and other issues. The child should never experience a parental love or care deficit in three-folding, regardless of circumstances. Parents should be prepared to shield children from negative and harsh experiences in life and yet, they should use them in training children to be wise.

### 5.3 Family three-folding: defined and critiqued

#### 5.3.1 Definition

Structurally at its basic level, family three-folding is a monogamous marital set up maintained in the father/ mother/ and children/ family unit, living together in inter-dependent, inter-generational relationships. Attitudinally and relationally, the commitment to caring for one another, unequally, ungrudgingly, sharing costs, responsibilities, affection, joys and sorrows of life, is real and noticeable. Three-folding family encompasses Edith Schaeffer's (1975) definition of family as an educational system, an economic unit, a religious institution, a recreation centre etcetera. In other words, the family should be an environment of daily learning to care for one another's needs in a peaceful, homely and enjoyable atmosphere. Bernardes (1997: 67) explains that in Family Citizenship, "families have rights and duties concerning all members with no priorities ... we should focus upon relationships between all parties rather than insist that one party (say, parents) has responsibility towards others (children)". However, family three-folding maintains that care for each other precludes infants and young children who still need direct nurturing and instruction at all levels before they can also contribute to caring for others in small ways. Children's presence can boost parental self-worth; bring joy, fulfillment and purpose to life. "A mother can, at least temporarily, re-enter the world of childhood" and experience "the freshness, the wonder, the delights of living as a child" (Woollett 1991: 57). Children can be taught to worship God in sincerity and truth. Given today's economic challenges, limiting the number of one's children through family planning, can lead to better care and appreciation of each child.

The traditional nuclear family that characterized industrial society is floundering badly today. The evolving family three-folding paradigm (ch.5.) found enhancement in Perlas' social three-folding', which entailed participatory involvement of all three key institutions of society namely: government, business and civil society, in developmental schemes. The three-folding aspect of the family refers to the intricate, multi-faceted, gender inclusive, relational folds, of roles, functions and reversible dependence, independence and interdependence, as children develop to become adults capable of raising their own children as well as looking after their aging and frail

parents. The three-folding family does not necessarily exclude other needy members of the extended family, but accommodates them corporately without being negatively affected. Smedes (1983:79)'s definition of family as: "a group of people bound together in a covenant of care for one another", sums up the family three-folding motif where marriage vows are taken seriously and children are holistically cared for.

Marriage and family begin with leaving and uniting. God made the first two people of opposite genders for procreation purposes, companionship and stewardship over his creation. Genesis 2:24, implies that marriage involves "leaving" one's parents' sphere of direct influence in order to form a new relationship with one's spouse. The problem with most traditional African cultures is that the wife is the one who does the leaving of her family and physically joins the husband's. Only one person ends up adjusting to new circumstances and suffers emotionally due to thwarted expectations of closer ties with one's spouse. The man will be hindered from caring enough for his bride by the interfering and critical presence of his extended family, as in participant number 17's life. Unless the man is sensitive enough to his new obligations to his wife, unnecessary hurt may be the end result. A person can put up with a certain amount of frustration beyond which, marital breakdown occurs. Admittedly, housing is a huge problem among the disadvantaged communities, in which case, the leaving can take the form of determined emotional separation from one's relatives of long standing in order to accommodate the newest comer in one's life. Children should be accommodated and their demands for nurture should be met but without compromising the couple's unity. The parents have joint child care responsibility. Parent/ child relationships were to be characterized by respect, honor, patience and genuine concern for other's feelings.

### 5.3.2 The Trinitarian relational model

Our God is relational, and desires us to cultivate good relationships with each other within our families, with our neighbors and with fellow believers. Within the Godhead, there is no hierarchy. According to Grudem (1994: 251), the "truth about the Trinity has sometimes been summarized in the phrase "ontological equality but economic subordination" where the word ontological means "being". The members

are the same in essence, but differ in their roles and functions. There is harmonious partnership that brings us to faith, enabling us to persevere to the very end. God the Father planned our salvation, which God the Son executed, and God the Holy Spirit sustains and completes it (:249). Thus, all three members of the Godhead are one, and yet they are distinct persons, “equal in all their attributes ... subordinate in their roles” and each honours and respects the other members. The Lord Jesus is always referring to his unity with his Father in heaven as his intercessory prayer for the believers portrays: “. . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you sent me” (John 17: 21). This prayer revealed Jesus’ concern and love for his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion.

There is no jealousy or strife but the uttermost respect, cooperation and consensus among members of the Trinity. At Christ’s baptism, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven like a dove, the Father’s voice was heard acknowledging the son as his beloved (Luke 3:21-22). At Jesus’ birth, the heavenly host sang beautifully (Luke 2: 13- 14) as they proclaimed joy to the world at the birth of the Savior. The angels also attended to him following the devil’s temptations (Matthew 4: 11). Ephesians speaks of the unity of the body of Christ built by believers exercising their gifts in humility, patience and love, to encourage each other (Ephesians 4: 11-12). In three-folding, family members should be there to love, care for, encourage and support one another. They should not seek to humiliate; mock, abuse, neglect, despise or abandon one another, which is common in families, as the empirical findings showed.

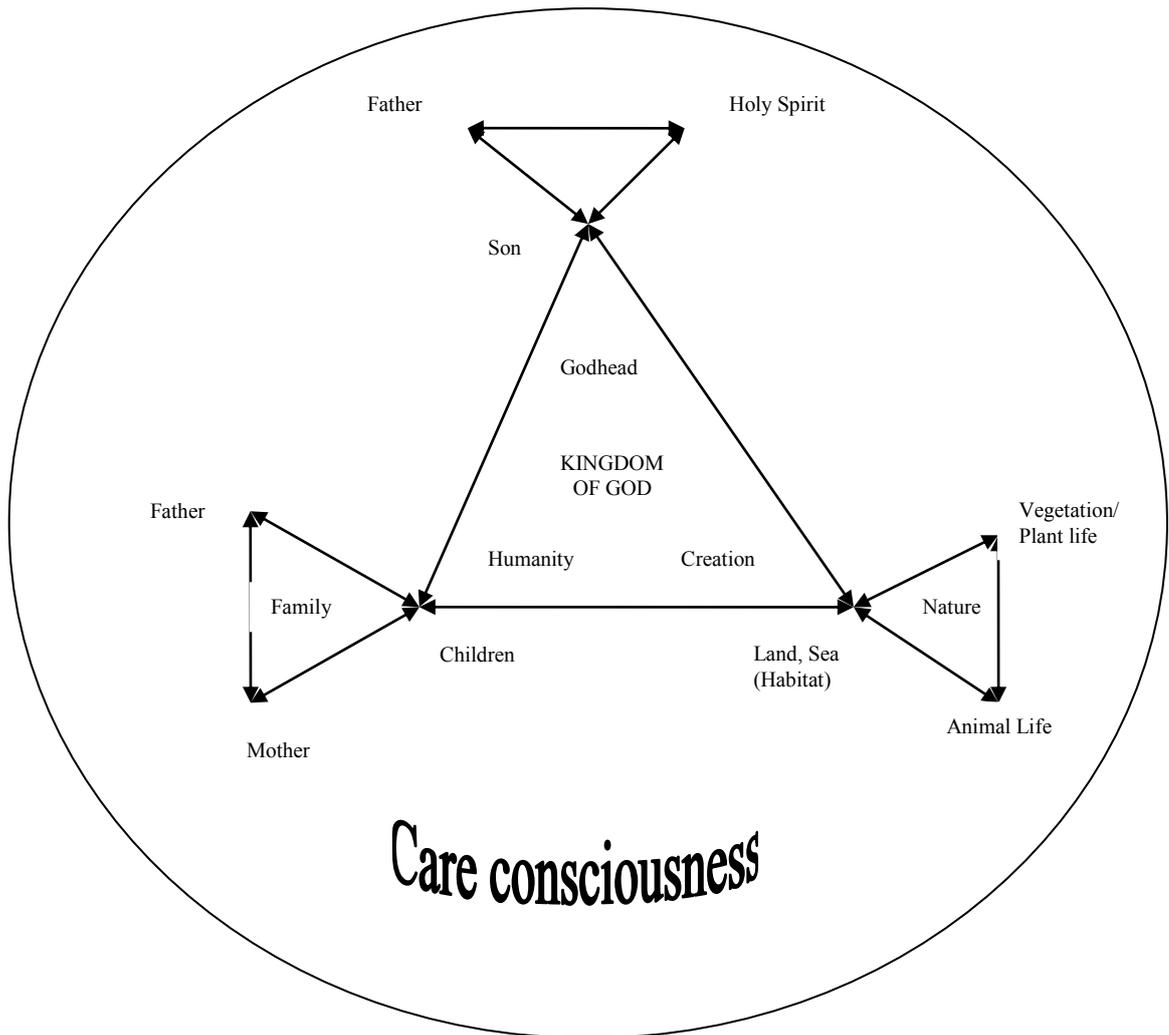
Strong (cited in Grudem, 1994: 152) argues that “Priority is not necessarily superiority ... we frankly recognize an eternal subordination of Christ to the Father, but we maintain at the same time that this subordination is a subordination of order, office, and operation, not a subordination of essence”. This insight can revolutionize family relationships, if we understand male priority as some example of “First, Among Equals” (cf. one of Geoffrey Archer’s fiction book titles). Alternatively, executive board members may appoint one of them to be chairman and another to investigate and report back on something (cf. Dr. Williams at BISA). This does not make the appointed members lower or better than the others not elected. If husbands,

wives, and children understood family relationships this way, there would be peaceful co-existence and less strife due to authoritarian attitudes in the homes. There would be greater respect, humble service to others, more tolerance and sacrificial self-giving for the good of others. The researcher perceived the Trinitarian model (fig.5) as a typology of the family and its relationships. The word ‘\_typology’ is used rather loosely to mean ‘\_a pattern’ of good relating that is affirmative and conciliatory for the sake of maintaining relational balance.

How God patterned relationships is awesome (fig.5). First the Godhead, then nature and finally human beings, are all triangular relationships desperately and inextricably intertwined for perfect logical balance and co-ordination, impossible to achieve if one uses other shape combinations. Somehow if one removes any one of the three sides, the result is a twosome that collapses the pattern completely, such that it no longer fits in with the rest of the diagram. As an example, if one removes the animal habitat labeled the ‘\_land and sea’, where will the vegetation and animal life grow? Similarly, if we remove the human ‘\_father’ from the family equation (when a single mother wants just the babies, not the fathers, cf. participant 7) where would the seed for conception of children come from if men boycotted having sexual relationships with women (cf. gay people) or refused to be sperm donors?

In chapter 2, it was stated that children served to give fathers and mothers a sense of identity, grown up status, worth and pride as they raise children, whilst childlessness led to feeling of some inexplicable sense of inadequacy and failure which can be psychologically damaging to women who cannot bear children of their own (Woollett in Phoenix et al, 1991: 53-54). God in his wisdom, made everything well. Upsetting the balance of nature or family life leads to serious problems. Ecological damage through natural disasters, human exploitation and carelessness upsets the ecological balance making people run out of food. Human beings, are God’s stewards, created to care for nature which, in turn, supplies their needs (Genesis 1: 28-30). If parents fail to sustain children economically and socially, the children are likely to turn out delinquent.

Fig. 5 Trinitarian Relational model of care



The Sovereign Lord watches over all his creation and sustains it with loving care. The diagram above represents balanced caring relationships, which, if maintained consistently, would lead to global care consciousness to help people overcome selfish and exploitative relationships. Unfortunately, divorces caused by attraction to other sexual partners, upset this balance leading to disintegration of the family pattern. The abandoned women end up as single mothers struggling to raise children alone, which is not easy, as the empirical study showed. Logically, there should be a father in attendance, willing, able and ready to help out. Already, the balance that God intended is upset since dad's function in the family remains unclaimed due to massive and global male abdication of family responsibilities that leaves mothers and children

suffering in many ways. Some branches of feminism also contributed to upsetting the family balance through abdicating motherhood responsibilities as discussed under chapter 2. Reasonable compromises need to be made all around so that children are not disadvantaged. The vicious circle of gender conflict has to be broken if peace is to reign in families and homes. The mother's prenatal care cannot be substituted. At birth and when the baby is very young, the father's emotional and material contribution enables the mother and child to thrive until both are strong. Extended family members can be supportive but cannot replace the child's father's presence by the hospital bedside. When a mother is worried about the lack of care by the father's child, her depression can also affect the child.

The question of inclusion of genders is covered here somewhat, in the triangular set up of the family, where originally God brought Eve to Adam for companionship, co-stewardship with the instruction for the two to produce offspring. The distinction "male and female" (Genesis 1:27) was emphatic. Homosexual parenting presupposes homosexual marriages which are not addressed in the Bible. Judging from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah known for their practices of homosexuality, on which "the Lord rained down burning sulphur" (Genesis 19), it is advisable to heed the warning and flee from the wrath of God expressed in Romans 1: 18- 32. "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men ..." (Romans 1:26-27). About a year ago a big group of women went on a march in support of lesbianism in one of the townships of Cape Town. It was an astonishing revelation of social dynamics. To avoid speculating, research needs to be done to account for lesbianism among single mothers and single women not keen on marriage. What needs to be emphasized in communities is that, no matter how much one disapproves of the gay lifestyle, no one has a right to mock, ridicule, exclude, ill-treat or attack people of a different sexual orientation. It is a punishable crime to molest other people just because they behave differently. We all are made in God's image, have the same rights and deserve respect. Discussions can be done on advantages and disadvantages of various human relationships without individuals turning verbally or physically abusive. After all, you cannot force people to believe

what they do not want to believe or force them to act differently until they are intrinsically ready to do so.

### 5.3.3 Male authority, leadership and responsibility

Ephesians 5: 22ff has always been a thorny gender issue but should not be if marriage is to be made attractive for single mothers (Edin & Kefalas, 2005:5) and women in general. Henry (1991: 10) has an interesting argument on Genesis 2: 21, where Eve was made out of Adam's rib, stating that the woman was ~~not~~ made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved". He further states that this was the first marriage instituted and ~~God~~ as her Father, brought the woman to the man". Patton and Childs (1988: 155) affirm that God called people to live family life under authority and to freely be committed to others and God by covenant and communion with them in very intimate relationships. The Triune example should be applicable to family situations where the husband exercises his authority to willingly practice service [diaconia], to his wife and children.

The Lord Jesus redefined greatness by pointing out the value of servant-hood in the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:4-17) and sacrificial death. His whole life demonstrated this sacrificial self-giving. The way up in God's Kingdom is down (popular saying). Whilst the wife is to be submissive to her husband, this is not to be of a forced kind. As McArthur (2005: 1701) expresses it, ~~the~~ submission is not the husband's to command but for the wife to willingly and lovingly offer". He goes on to say that, ~~husbands~~ are to love their wives with the same sacrificial love that Christ has for the church", to the extent of giving up his life for her. What an impossibly high standard for men to emulate. On the other hand, the love of the husband is not for the wife to nag about but to hope for as she continues doing everything well as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

A lecturer once baffled the married, male students by asking: ~~Men!~~ Are you having trouble with in-submissive wives? Just do what the word of God says. Love them!" It is as easy as that. Marriage should not be a battlefield where the winner dominates the

others. God the Father did not send his Son to die for us because we were worthy, –But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Because Christ humbled himself and was obedient unto death, God gave him the highest honor (cf. Philippians 2: 5-11). In three-folding, both the husband and wife have no problem with submission issues because of Christ’s example. All family interactions are characterized by peaceful service to others (Colossians 3:12-25). One who wishes to be great in God’s Kingdom has to be the servant of all, and the Lord Jesus himself –did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10: 43-45) and taught servant-hood by example (cf. washing the disciples’ feet). Humble service to one another is crucial for marital success.

#### 5.3.4 Developmental input in marital relationships

Cole & Cole (1985:134) argue that –relationships in which the partners are not perceived as equals are not growing relationships. Instead, they stagnate into dullness and boredom by maintaining the status quo and, consequently, fail to meet emotional needs of either partner”. They state that such a marriage is based on assumptions which prohibit space for personal growth and development. The equality they mean does not imply –that spouses must be identical and split all responsibilities down the middle. Instead, we mean that both partners are valued for the special qualities they bring to the marriage and are given the fullest range possible of opportunities to continue to grow as individuals ... and build a marriage based upon shared values”. A –companion marriage” (Burgess & Locke cited in Cole & Cole 1985:134) resulted from liberation movements of both men and women from –being locked in stereo-typed male and female roles” allowing men –to become more expressive and it opened up new frontiers for sharing work roles in the maintenance of home and family” (Burgess & Locke cited in Cole & Cole 1985:136). Marriage is seen as dynamic and so marriage enrichment retreats, growth groups and support groups helped couples to acquire interpersonal skills in communication, conflict management, and problem solving (:137). Mace (cited in Cole & Cole 1985:137) saw –a primary coping system (*as*) prerequisite to the development of a successful companion marriage”. The coping mechanism involved 3 aspects namely:

- Commitment to growth
- An effective functioning communication system (plus informed judgment)
- The ability to make creative use of conflict

Other components are (: 139-140):

- Temporal (time) and spatial (space) management to maintain order and avoid unnecessary tension
- Catering for energy levels: in order to relax and work together harmoniously
- Accommodating different learning styles: for couples to respect and appreciate each other's style (Reiss, Duhl & Duhl cited in Cole & Cole 1985)
- Separateness and togetherness are important for allowing development of individual interests and for enriching togetherness

The writers conclude by saying that, "Marriage takes hard work, and it is impossible to achieve a mutually satisfying relationship without commitment by both spouses to continued growth" (Cole & Cole 1985:140). Each couple has to decide on the best arrangements for it. Three-folding supports all efforts that endeavor to keep marriages intact and prosperous. However, a couple should not be too focused on its own growth to the exclusion of other relationships. Room needs to be made for children, parents, friends, extended family members and other people otherwise too much self-centeredness may stifle holistic development of the couple.

### 5.3.5 The wife's submission to her husband in marital relationships

Moralistic Christianity is criticized for ~~its~~ insistence on living by rigid rules and functioning within narrow roles ... And nowhere has the damage been greater than in marriage (*where*) in the name of submission, wives have endured every imaginable form of abuse" like beatings and spousal rape ~~and~~ their lives have been tragically emptied of meaning and joy" (Crabb, 1991: 32-33). Crabb is relentless as he explains how ~~men~~ have twisted biblical teaching on headship to justify dominating their wives, in some cases ordering them about as a master would order a dog. Headship, a principle derived from Ephesians 5, is traditionally understood to mean that the husband should assume leadership in the home and church. Yet biblical teaching never indulges the sinful human tendency to lead as a power-hungry despot... Husbands who would never think to wash their wives' feet (let alone the family's

dishes) or to respect their wives' opinions enough to be guided by them have little understanding of either servant leadership or their own arrogance." What a revelation, and that from a man! My heart goes out to the abused mothers in the study who are overworked on all fronts and have no joy in their lives. Three-folding seeks to address such issues by empowering both men and women to harmonize their relationships for the benefit of their children who are always negatively affected by discordant parental relationships.

In chapter 4, participants 16, 18, 19, and 20 all seem to yearn for wholesome marital relationships where husbands are respectful, co-operative and non-abusive. These were the only married mothers who preferred to live their lives as single mothers (see Table 4 under chapter 4). Crabb is right to lay the blame for failing relationships on 'sinful nature'. As Gentemann (cited in Viljoen, 1987:390) predicts that: ~~abuse~~ of women will go on for as long as society continues to value dominance in males and submission in females", supported by Viljoen's argument that, ~~traditional~~ sex-role socialization often leads to the justification of violence against women" whose ~~learned~~ helplessness contributes to low self-esteem and depression and is used to explain psychological paralysis on the part of battered women" (:390). Three-folding does not condone abuse of power or use of violence in any form, not even redemptive violence (cf. Wink: 1986). Rather, peaceful resolution of outstanding relational issues, is the recommended strategy. Failing which, government imposed restraining orders may be enforced on a spouse who continues to subject members of his household to abuse.

Family three-folding appreciates Stott (1984:235)'s input (already mentioned under 5.1.4) that encourages ~~double~~ listening" to scripture and feminist grievances. He argues that this ~~should~~ save us from denying the teaching of scripture in a determination to be modern, and from affirming it in a way that ignores the modern challenges and is insensitive to the people most deeply affected by them". In other words Stott is urging contextual application of scripture. In fact, three-folding is practically impossible without scriptural understanding of one's identity in Christ and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to help one to act contrary to societal norms and expectations. For men to change their conceptual understanding and definition of

themselves as the dominant sex and channel their power into servant-hood, demands much more than is humanly possible. It involves a “dying to self” that only the Holy Spirit can endow. It is essential for men and women “to be truly one in Christ” with “no disqualification on account of sex” (:238-240). In Galatians 3:28, Paul puts all races, all social classes, and both genders on the same level, all are “one in Christ”. Following Christ’s example of servant-hood, and service [diakonia] to others, should direct all family interactions for the family to flourish as it should.

Grudem (in Piper & Grudem, 1991:194-195) specifies that submission does not mean:

- Making the husband usurp Christ’s place in a wife’s list of priorities
- Giving up independent thought
- Yielding to bad influences
- Giving in to every demand of the husband
- Being fearful or timid
- That the wife is inferior in any way

As Grudem (:196) sees it, submission is an attitude, “a respectful affirmation”, “an inner quality of gentleness that affirms the leadership of the husband in the marriage” stressing that “obeying [hypakouo] is the means ... (of) ... being submissive [hupotasso]”. Grudem (:206) describes considerate leadership as “not harsh or domineering”, does not seek to hurt but to build up someone. What a far cry from the experience of some women who are beaten up or raped into submission. The word of God is clear on male headship in the home (Ephesians 5:21-33), but according to divine principles, the headship is not “negative, oppressive” but “nourishing, cherishing” (Knight III in Piper & Grudem: 173). What grief can a wife suffer under considerate leadership? The sad thing is that men were socialized into believing that to be a good leader one has to be tough, rough and insensitive. It will take time to undo all these negatives. However those genuinely desiring to change will do so. Three-folding values godly leadership as defined in these paragraphs.

### 5.3.6 Parental care, authority, children's rights, training children in obedience

For children, Smedes (1983: 74) writes, "authority is a healthy expression of strength" and children thrive under it. Three-folding finds the motto that says: "children are to be seen and not heard", to be oppressive, exclusive, un-affirming, demeaning and unwelcome. "Authoritarian people stifle freedom; authority requires freedom to make it work ... authority works only when people give free and critical consent" (:74). Inclusion of children in healthy discussions concerning serious issues not only sharpens their capacity for sound judgment, but also empowers them to make meaningful contributions. In a home without authority, Smedes (:75) alleges that the child loses a strong sense of his/her own identity. On the other hand, "purposeful leadership" helps "children to live with and recognize true authority".

This inevitably brings up the issue of parenting strategies. Through listening to one's children, one discovers what their deep seated career desires are, what friends contribute to their lives, what girlfriends/boyfriends they have. What a great honour it is when children confide in a parent their deepest feelings of joy, fear, sadness concerning life! For through such breakthrough, parents can guide, encourage, advise as well as pray for each child at his/her point of need. When the time comes, it will be easier for parents let the children make their own decisions concerning their own careers, who to marry, what church to attend etcetera? But when there are communication barriers, a parent will find it incredibly hard to let go the reins of control over a child's life. As parents age, they need to learn to accept help from their children. If children are always looked down upon, criticized and excluded from discussions on issues that concern them, they will not be able to practice role reversal well (cf. granny bashing). This may lead to further alienation between parents and children at a time when the former are especially vulnerable. Family three-folding encourages intergenerational care as holistic and essential.

Smedes (1983: 83) explains that the Lord Jesus declared children's rights against abuse in Matthew 18: 6 as did the prophets who sought justice for orphans. He lists the following as probable rights:

- the right to life
- the right to care
- the right to safety from abuse
- the right to fairness
- the right to unconditional acceptance

Ephesians 6:1-3 instructs children to obey and honor parents followed by a promise of long fruitful lives. Obedience implies a response to teaching and instruction in a positive way. At times the state can interfere with parenting tactics as Donahue (cited in Dobson, 1995: 91) argues: “If children were granted the same rights as adults, the very seat of parental authority would collapse. Absent the social base, all the individual attributes that freedom is predicted on would never develop. Society and the liberty that it inheres would self-destruct”. What Donahue is opposed to, is the ruling out of parental influence over their own children under the guise of children’s rights. The rights listed above seem fair enough in the context of abuse, neglect, abortion, injustice etcetera. The rights serve to protect children from severe and negative parental influence.

The marital bond should be in place before children start arriving. Probably this is why God made Adam first, so that he would welcome Eve and the two of them together would welcome their children in joint parenthood. It would have set a different model of family life for the Lord to have brought Eve with an infant already in her arms. It was important for Adam to mate with Eve so that together they would watch their child grow and witness its birth together. Next is the issue of deferred sexual gratification compared to instant gratification. Promiscuity knows no self-control. Most young men have not been exposed to models of manhood that know how to respect women and refrain from abusing them sexually as the rape of children, in the study shows. Committed parents need to train their children in honouring and respecting all people including those of the opposite sex, as the saying goes: “Charity begins at home”. Children learn mostly from copying behavior of adults or peers. They need support and good role models in being responsible men and women able to control their sexuality.

The Westminster Catechist defines the purpose of man as “knowing God and enjoying him forever” (recalled from class notes). Proverbs 1:7 supports this, stating that: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and learning”. For a parent to teach a child to fear the Lord he/she has to be a believer. Smedes (1983:80) concludes that “the heart of family is the parents’ calling to pass on the moral and spiritual reality of life to their children. The covenant of caretaking then creates the family”. In that set up, “a parent has authority” and “the child has an obligation to honor the parent” (:80). However, in teaching children “What costs a parent authority is not the chance of being wrong in his or her beliefs, but failure to believe anything” (:81). Children need to be guided by parents with firm convictions in what they believe life is about. Living life in line with those principles helps to stabilize family living.

The seed of God’s word needs sowing in the fertile soil of a child’s mind and heart so that when difficulties arise, the child will make appropriate decisions that honor God and bring glory to his name. The researcher has great respect for how her father brought up his children although there was a period, when she rebelled for a time, when she went away to High School, against what she thought then, was a regimental style of worship. She later saw how committed her father was in training his family in righteousness. The training has to be consistent, sincere and innovative to keep children interested.

Moses (in Deuteronomy 6:7-9) instructed the Israelites to know and obey the commandments and to teach them to their children. “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates”. This may seem a bit extreme and dramatic but the Israelites literally followed these instructions. The emphasis was on intimately knowing and obeying God’s commandments. Today most family values are dictated by the T.V. around which the members congregate. Unfortunately, in the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures, family cohesion is broken down. As one of the mothers said, children need to be taught the facts of life. T.V. shows are glamorous but very different from real life. Teaching

children takes patience, to sit down with them, watch what they watch and dialogue with them on what is good and why certain behavior is not acceptable. Three-folding encourages parental involvement in children's worlds for informed parental guidance.

#### On sexuality

Self acceptance (gender, warts and all) is the key to contentment. If one does not accept oneself then who will? Feelings of worth should not preclude development in areas that need improvement. Affirmation of others results from affirmation of self as God made one. In many cases, people wish they were somebody else or were of a different gender. In the study (1.4.4), an example was cited of a little boy who preferred to be a girl because of father absence and his care givers were mostly women. Also, the baby girl next door was always smartly dressed in lovely pink colors. This should give a parent opportunity for teaching on God's image and the uniqueness of each individual. The parent could emphasize how much she/he loved the child exactly as he/she is and that God has a purpose for him/her specifically. Children also need to learn how to distinguish between innocent, friendly touches and sexual caresses they receive from other members of the family or other people at school or community in order to resist or report them. Harris' (2006) life skills book on the school curriculum, seeks to do that by discussing "ok touches" and "not ok" ones. Teaching children about the dangers of keeping company with bad people is what Psalm 1 is all about. The book of Proverbs also helps in providing handles for parents to instruct their children in ways that lead to righteous living, keeping away from potential pitfalls etcetera.

#### The power of prayer and faith in God

Praying together as a family helps to keep the family united as the mother in Appendix E<sub>5</sub>, last paragraph, stated from experience. She herself grew up in a family where there was no love and no care. She was familiar with hearing the words: "I hate you". If the parents do not know the Lord, they cannot convey what they themselves never experienced hence the warning she gives us "Jesus is the only hope you can cling on. Without him, you are lost" (cf. a divorcee mother, of Afrikaans background).

The Appendix E<sub>6</sub> mother, widowed and looking after 3 young boys, was cared for by an Anglican Reverend and his wife. The boys needed a father figure and the Reverend was there for them: counseling and encouraging the boys in a way the mother would never have managed on her own. Today, these boys have/ are excelling in academic studies and sporting activities. This proves what Weinstein (1995: 112) advocates as crucial for children at risk: surrogate parents who provide support, protection and supervision mentioned (cf. 2.2.3.4). The young widow's advice is very touching: –When offered help, take it and commit yourself to the Lord". Really awesome! There are some people who are too proud to accept help from others. A popular saying goes: –Pride goes before a fall". Accepting help does not mean that one is a beggar. Catherine Marshall (1980: 39) shows amazing insights from her mother who taught her children that, –no matter what little you have, you can always give some of it away ... you can't feel sorry for yourself and you can scarcely consider yourself poor. One's attitude has to be right in giving and accepting help from other people. It all starts with training when children are young.

#### **5.4 Three-folding as conciliatory in human relationships**

##### 5.4.1 Cultivation of conciliatory mindsets

Given the latent hostilities unearthed in most of the participant mothers' perspectives of men, fathers and husbands, there is need to help people know how to handle their differences and grievances. If we were to also qualitatively investigate the men in the participants' lives, I presume that they would also have a lot to say for themselves that may contradict the views the women might have of them. However, based on the findings available that reveal abuse and gender-based violence in families, from the generic literature study (2.2.3.2) and the empirical study findings (ch.4) there is justification for discussions on this. The word of God does not forbid people to be angry but it insists that: –In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Do not give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:26-27). In three-folding, people aim to resolve their differences as quickly as possible to dissolve anger and not let it fester in the heart. Prolonged anger is detrimental to emotional and mental health as many people have learnt the hard way. Becoming uncontrollably

angry and lashing in violence action against others is not acceptable. Neither is the bearing of grudges which only serves to torment the grudge bearer in the form of diseases like blood pressure, headaches, ulcers etcetera. Peaceful conflict resolution is desirable. Self control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit along with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness (Galatians 5:22-23). All these are desirable qualities to strive for in family three-folding.

Masango (cited in Chapman & Spong, 2003:104) affirmed the usefulness of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He explained that: “as people were pouring out their stories it also opened up the wounds of those who were listening. The difficulty was that they did not know what to do with their own pain that was invoked by the pain of others. Much help was needed, and is still needed, there”. The grieving together is good but, as Masango (:105) added, the church has to “lead people on a spiritual journey of continuing to nourish the soul. In worship, in the study groups, and in various organizations we must begin to move the people ... to a deeper level of spirituality which will bring back those Christian values of respect and humility” A similar experience needs to take place where single mothers can open up to one another to share their disappointments and sort of grieve together. Married mothers can also do the same under different categories depending on issues they are battling with in order to bare their hearts to one another in neutral contexts backed by sharing God’s word for healing. Three-folding is ready to open doors for dialogue to occur between the genders in communities. A most welcome ally is Sonke Gender Justice Network and its “One man can ...” manual already discussed (5.1.3). There are no short cuts to the healing of hurts, apart from direct confrontation with the problem in prayer, in practice and in willingness to forgive, forget and move on.

#### 5.4.2 Conciliatory processes: The Slippery Slope of Conflict (Sande, 2004: 22)

From childhood, people need to be made aware of conciliatory strategies to keep relationships within peaceful zones for healthy living. Most people do not know how to handle disagreements constructively. Even respectful opposition to an idea they propose is like a declaration of war. The “slippery slope” (fig. 6) gives one an idea of the safe parameters within which to operate when dealing with conflict issues with

other people. Beyond stipulated peace-making areas, the relational ground gets too slippery to stand on such that one may end up losing control completely and murder someone, in a fit of uncontrollable rage on one extreme, or committing suicide in desperation on the other extreme.

In figure 6, responses that are peace-faking are listed on the left as:

- Denial: of the true state of affairs by stating that a relationship is alright when in fact it is not.
- Flight: is when one chooses not to even talk about the situation that is causing tension. Participant mother 1, confessed that her husband continually refuses to discuss his extra-marital affair that led to the birth of a child out of wedlock. This is really eating her up because now she has no idea about his intentions towards this child and its mother. He did apologize to her about the indiscretion but still her hurt remains because of this flight from open talk leaving the issue unresolved especially on the wife's part.
- Suicide: is the ultimate show of despair and failure to deal with a situation. It is a crisis to be taken very seriously. The person needs to be encouraged to rethink her position and find alternatives because "death is a permanent solution to a temporary problem" (Rhodes university pamphlet: "Helping Someone in a Suicidal Crisis"). The suicidal person should be given professional help as soon as possible.

The Slippery Slope of Conflict (Sande, 2004:22)

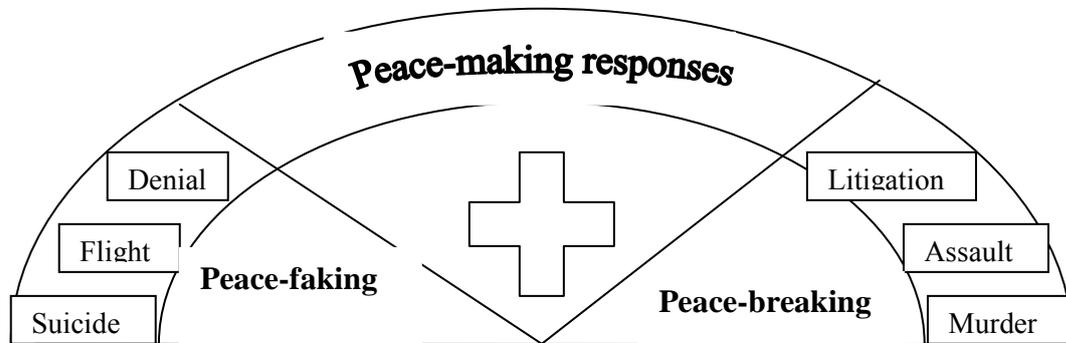


Fig. 6 : The Slippery Slope. (adapted from Ken Sande's *The Peacemaker...*2004 and class notes BI 2005).

Peace-breaking is the other extreme, when nothing can be resolved except through the courts and lawyers, assault and murder. The assaults may be verbal as is the case with participant 8 and 6 calling men “dogs”, or physical abuse where the intention is to hurt the person one thinks has wronged one, as in the case of participants 10, 16 and others who had restraining orders imposed on the physically abusive men. This is why it is crucial to resolve conflicts quickly in three-folding for the relationship to remain in a healthy condition where there is effective communication. As for murder, it may seem a far fetched way of resolving issues, but prisons are full of people who, in a moment of blind fury, attack someone viciously and so spend the rest of their lives behind bars should the attacked person die. Earlier on the importance of prayerfully thinking of ways of controlling one's response to provocative situations or people was mentioned. Matthew 18:15-17 gives the proper procedure for resolving differences between people. Criticizing people behind their backs is unhelpful. Facing them with the truth and working things out amicably brings peace and tranquility in life.

Peace-making responses are those that seek to negotiate and reach compromises in relationships and that is the way to go. Discussion, negotiation, mediation and

arbitration are central to this mode of reconciliation. Church discipline leans more towards peace-breaking if an individual refuses to be disciplined. On the other hand, overlooking an offense leans too heavily towards denial: pretending that everything is alright when it's not. The best way is to communicate with others and so walk in the light together rather than harbor ill-feelings, whose basis the other person may not even be aware of. It is through Christ, the Prince of Peace<sup>21</sup> that we become effective peace-makers.

Authoritarian men, with mindsets bent on dominating others (women and children especially, within family spheres), will, naturally, have the most difficulty in adjusting to the conciliatory mode of family three-folding. Entrenched mindsets are difficult to dislodge in most cases. However, the "One man Can" manual offers hope in bringing about attitudinal change to those willing to participate in the workshops. The onus is on the producers to advertise this manual extensively mass media and influential men like Angus Buchannan. He could also be recruited to train men to train other men on how to make good use of the manual nationally.

A different strategy could be employed to help men in rural areas, who are steeped in traditional ways, for example the man on the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree "ukutwala" programme on e-T.V. (cf. 2.2.3.5), who explained that he was tired of cooking, fetching water, washing his own clothes etcetera, and decided to "bride snatch" a young girl, whose name and age he did not even know, to do all these things for him. They could be warned of the legal implications of abducting someone. Community leaders could engage men in dialogues on the wisdom of forcing someone to live intimately with one against that person's wish. How sustainable can that relationship be? They can remind one another about what it was like under the apartheid regime when they were forced to do what they did not want to do. Some may want to argue that cultural practices should be maintained. Fortunately, the government no longer permits such degrading practices to continue. Abducting unsuspecting young women under the guise of "ukutwala" is now considered a punishable offense. That is how family three-folding looks at it too.

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<sup>21</sup> Isaiah 9: 6

Having said that, women who were negatively affected in the past by unwholesome cultural practices, are urged to forgive and forget in order to move on. Participant 8 has to somehow come to terms with her father and her boyfriend's rejection if she is to pass on correct attitudes to her son. Any voiced negative attitudes she harbors against the men in her life for the hurts she experienced, will end up being internalized by her son, who may turn against her later or be set against his biological father and grandfather. As she develops in care consciousness, she may even initiate reconciliation with her father and former boyfriend for the sake of her son.

#### 5.4.3 Strategy for handling conflict: a practical guide

Lampen & Lampen (1997:11) mention that in order to resolve conflict and build peaceful relationships, three skills are fundamental namely:

- Affirmation implies:
  - respect for one's conflict partner's good qualities
  - no automatic rejection of her/his ideas
  - the ability to consider the conflict partner as a potential ally in problem solving
- Communication signifies:
  - listening well to the other person in order to understand his/her point of view concerning the cause of conflict
  - the ability to provide one's own version of the problem without anger, resentment, malice or mistrust
  - good communication is a step towards better conflict resolution
- Cooperation means:
  - coming together for discussion
  - its success lies in exchanging ideas with no one dominating
  - it entails recognition of abilities in others which one may not have
  - seeking consensus,
  - helping and encouraging one another

The strategy is very simple but powerful if executed conscientiously. The best strategies are never complicated. Individuals tend to be prejudiced automatically against their conflict partners whom they envisage as enemies. Three-folding adopts what shall be termed the “ampen ACC trilogy” (affirmation, communication and cooperation) as crucial for training children and adults in conflict resolution skills development.

#### 5.4.4 Unhealthy self-interest: the killer of good relating

Three-folding promotes relationships of interdependence among family members as well as interdependence of the family with other families within the community. Individualism is acceptable up to a point, further than that it creates an unhealthy self-sufficiency that cuts out other people as redundant in one’s life. Crabb (1991) identifies self-interest as “a deadly problem that kills good relating” adding that culture is preoccupied with roles and appearances, addresses symptoms and not root causes thereby overlooking the real killer of good relating. “Self-centeredness is the killer. In every bad relationship, it is the deadliest culprit. Poor communication, temper problems, unhealthy responses to dysfunctional family backgrounds, co-dependent relationships, and personal incompatibility—everything ... flows out of the cesspool of self-centeredness” (:28). Crabb’s view is that men and women tend to be preoccupied with “their own happiness and personal satisfaction” and not the other person’s. Most caring people are quick to help relieve the pain and bring healing to “wounded hearts” (:26) without scrutinizing the real cause of the hurt. This is an important point for three-folding. Active involvement in other-centeredness leaves little or no room for self-pity and nursing personal hurts. All should look to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4) and not be obsessively pre-occupied with oneself. In three-folding, grievances should be aired in peace-making modes already explained. Speeches are seasoned with respectful, clean language that is encouraging to the hearer.

Bellah et al. (cited in Cheal, 1991:42-43) worry about “the weakening of motivational commitments to collective purposes of families, communities and the nation”, “the unchecked growth of individualism, “inside the family as well as outside it””. Cheal

(1991:42-43) identifies the following: “utilitarian individualism”, “expressive individualism”, “individualized modern project of personal growth”, “self-realization”, “self-knowledge” which Bellah et al. (cited in Cheal) condemn for having “dropped the traditional sense of obligation to others that was derived from socially binding moral codes”. Any pursuit for personal fulfillment at the expense of one’s commitment and obligations to family is deplorable, immature and unfair. Kinnear (1999:37), referred to pervasive father absence which resulted as men walked out “on their family responsibilities ... found marriage and children burdensome ... interested in themselves ... their pleasure and happiness come first”. Some women too have neglected families in pursuit of personal goals though it is generally women’s obligation to care for children and families. Three-folding does not aim to witch hunt but to encourage everybody man and woman to repent and do what is right. All need to heed the call by Isaiah (55: 6-7): “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon”. There is hope for anybody willing to turn away from doing the wrong to pursuing the right. Reconciliation and restoration are possible for all, even couples who are ready to give up, because of God’s grace and mercy on the penitent.

Children need training in caring for others and not to always seek to be the centre of attention. There is a difference between spoiling a child with too much attention and neglecting a child by denying attention that is due to her/him, important for building self-worth. Like the patriarchs and other God-fearing people, self-worth should be based on, “faith in God, wisdom and godly character traits” (Meier 1977: 5). As the Appendix E<sub>4</sub>, a widowed young mother expressed so well, “it is easy to fall into the trap of being overprotective ... love the child without spoiling him/her ...if they do wrong, they will get a penalty for wrong doing”. I have the privilege of knowing this mother personally. She is an exemplary mother who looked after her child alone for over 15 years following the death of her first husband. Because of her faithfulness, the Lord has rewarded her by enlarging her family as a wife to a widower with three kids, all of whom love her so much. Not many women can take on such a mammoth task and survive intact.

#### 5.4.5 True fellowship and intimacy in family three-folding

Barnette (1961: 112-3)'s input is invaluable to family three-folding. He mentions the purpose of marriage as: companionship, procreation and sexual fulfillment (*on a one man, one woman basis to foil jealousies and transfer of diseases*). He also lists four fundamental principles for marriage namely:

- monogamous marital unions (Matthew 19: 4-6; 1 Corinthians 7: 10) where –every child needs his father and his mother for the full development of personality... stability of the family and nation depends upon the kind of union which monogamy provides”
- permanency: marriage should be a lifelong commitment
- Fidelity and –agape-love ... (is) more than mere affection or an emotional impulse. It is love which expresses (by an attitude of) considerateness, trust, mutual helpfulness, justice, and forgiveness ... love is the supreme motive and controlling spirit of the husband-wife and parent-child relationship” according to Colossians 3: 19f (: 113).

All these are crucial for marriages to be sustainable. Healthy parent-child relationships remove threats of rejection, replacement and favoritism that haunt the –unwanted child, the illegitimate child, and the adopted child who never develops a full sense of belonging to the family” (:123). Love is the key to caring, to resolving issues quickly and to peaceful co-existence.

In Chapter 2 we discussed absentee fatherhood of all sorts, its adverse effects on children and self-serving motherhood that does not have child care at heart. All this was also reflected in the empirical research and local news examples where some mothers kill their own children due to poverty, rejection and desperation. Some men normally pretend to love and care, in order to take sexual advantage of lonely women, and then abandon them once they fall pregnant. Here there is no desire to relate meaningfully with the partner beyond the temporary mating of bodies and sexual satisfaction. What a far cry from Christ's desire to have true fellowship [koinonia] with his Church. His plea: –Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3: 20). This is an invitation to heart fellowship with Christ. Imagine how

rich and rewarding family life would be if each man and woman sought that kind of intimate fellowship with a spouse and children regularly! There would be little or no straying beyond the fold. In Aland (1983) the Greek word: [koinonia] is defined as: –fellowship, a close mutual relationship; participation, sharing in; partnership; contribution, gift”. Where there is true fellowship, there is little abuse and fighting. Unfortunately, most couples aim for the physical mating of bodies and little else. Marriage is a covenant of companionship, the place for true intimacy, reflecting the model of Christ and his Church in true love [agape] and unity. People hunger for meaning, community and true fellowship in life. Unfortunately, they find themselves in non-committal relationships with mates whose real interests lie elsewhere, for example, T.V, other men, other women, sports, hobbies or pets. Three-folding encourages focusing on one’s spouse and children for building a strong united family as the basis for meaningful relating at personal levels and with the broader community.

## **5.5 Family three-folding as gender inclusive care consciousness**

### **5.5.1 God’s universal family: caring, inclusive, domination free**

The three-folding family paradigm encourages gender inclusive, conciliatory and caring attitudes not forceful, domineering, abusive, violent or disrespectful ones. These are developmental attributes that could revolutionize family relationships and make married life attractive to those who fear wife battering, work overload, emotional abuse, spousal rape, being taken for granted and many other innumerable private marital offenses known to individual couples themselves as a constant source of acute emotional pain to a spouse. Examples of these are: withdrawal into a wall of silence, marital unfaithfulness as a way of getting back at a spouse, discussing a spouse’s faults in his/her presence, refusing sexual intimacy in order to punish a spouse, or making unreasonable demands and blaming the spouse for not meeting them. The family of God is made up, universally of all who believe in him regardless of color, race, gender or creed. It is an encouraging picture of God’s sovereignty. People should be told of their divine origins and identity for them to place their faith in God. John 3: 16-17 speaks of God’s love for his people that made him send his Son

not ~~to~~ condemn the world, but to save the world through him". All who believe are given power to become sons (and daughters) of God and joint heirs with Christ. Onwumbiko (2001) has a rich understanding of family from an African perspective.

Ideally, one's family meets one's basic needs and should be characterized by love, care, shelter, security, socialization, identity, recognition, acceptance, respect, understanding, a sense of belonging and no stigmatization. Unfortunately, in many people's cases, thought of family/home provokes a nightmare of negative experiences of abuse, conflict, disrespect, misunderstandings and general relational issues. When one becomes a ~~born~~ "born again" Christian, one automatically joins the universal family of God that joins all believers universally in worship under the Lordship of Jesus Christ who has been given dominion over all things (Philippians 2: 9-11). Confession of one's sins and genuine repentance leads to forgiveness and restoration. However, even in the Church situation, one needs to remain alert to relational discord resolve disputes the biblical way (cf. Matthew 18: 15-17). Gossiping is not an option but non-violent confrontation leads to conflict resolution as individuals in a dispute listen and try to understand each other's perspective. If this fails, a trusted person may be consulted before involving Church leaders as a last resort.

Every believer has a God-given gift to actively be involved in caring for others even as his/her own needs are met by others (1 Corinthians 12). Paul aptly uses the word ~~body~~ "body" of Christ of which each believer is a vital member. Now in the study, some mothers were demeaned, taken for granted or rejected by fathers when they were still infants or by boyfriends they had affairs with later on in life. In God's family there is no rejection but affirmation. There is rebuke for sin and carelessness, and plenty of encouragement to do what is right. 2 Timothy 3: 16-17 tells us that ~~All~~ "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". Through these words, Paul emphasized to Timothy, the effectiveness of God's word in bringing about spiritual development. Training, teaching, rebuking, correcting and encouraging, are key principles in family three-folding that enable the young to develop character and integrity. A caring family trains and expects one to give of one's best and not deliberately do wrong. The story of Nora Campbell below shows

deliberate sinning, from a Christian perspective. It also demonstrates exclusion of the male gender from a family set up and a somewhat hostile stance against men.

### 5.5.2 Deliberate male exclusion from the family unit

An article on the internet entitled: “~~Reverend~~ Mother – a Novel” (Appendix F), posted on 13 December 2010 (reverendmother/Just another Word Press. com site [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)), came to my attention for its title and curious contents. It reveals how Nora Campbell, a former radical socialist became an ordained minister and was constantly in conflict with other Church leaders until the time when she decided to have a child out of wedlock and Nora’s services were terminated. She sued the church for wrongful dismissal and employment discrimination. Naturally, the court encountered legal, ethical and moral dilemmas in trying to resolve this issue. Hebrews 10: 26-27 explains that, “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and a raging fire that will consume the enemies of God”. In verse 24 says “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds”. Nora became popular with women movements and is cheered wherever she goes. Her argument is that, her desires and aspirations for a family and children are the same as anyone else’s. Our world is no longer attentive to normative, biblical values even within Church contexts. Each man and woman sets his own standards and this reminds me of the book of Judges 21: 25 when “Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit”. Trouble awaits unlicensed freedom. “Marriage should be respected by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Hebrews 13: 4), emphasized the importance of sexual purity and marital faithfulness. This upholds the seventh commandment: not to commit adultery

### 5.5.3 Inclusion of God in single parent families

God is a Father to the fatherless. Ironically this is quoted next to Nora’s story with her fatherless child. Appendix 4 mother quoted this from Psalm 68: 5 where God is said to be “a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows”. This psalm was written by David where “God is worthy of praise because of his triumphant work: He delivers

and comforts the downtrodden (fatherless and widows) ...” (Ross 1985: 843). In genuinely stressful situations, the Lord is faithful. Even the slave girl Hagar was heard by the Lord and sustained. All the 6 Appendix E mothers unanimously brought God into their experiences thereby balancing the spiritual and the material. The Triune God is “a fountain of sending love (Bosch, 1991; Bevans & Schroeder, 2004) and sends his Church into the world to heal the broken-hearted, set the prisoners free, to preach the good news to the poor, recovery of sight to the blind and proclaim the year of the Lord and all was manifestation of the presence of the kingdom of God among his people (Luke 4: 18-19). The passage with these prophetic words was read from Isaiah 61: 1-2, by the Lord Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth, which prophecy, he said was now being fulfilled in the mission he came to accomplish. What Bosch, Bevans and Schroeder are saying is that, the church has to minister to the physically and spiritually needy individuals as integral to *missio Dei*.

Woollett & Phoenix (1991:225) state that: “In Western societies, disapproval of ‘single’ or ‘young mothers’ is often expressed in terms of the cost to the nation of babies whose mothers can support them only with state assistance”. If only people understood the pain and hurt experienced by these young ‘abandoned’ mothers at having been loved and discarded, ‘expecting’ babies they had not even planned on having, they would be more sympathetic. The empirical study made the researcher aware of the dilemmas and ordeals that single mothers face. However, there is hope in three-folding. The single mother who believes needs not fear stigmatization or rejection. Participant married mother 14 revealed her radiant confidence in God’s forgiveness of past indiscretions. She is a born again believer happily married to a different man, one who shares her faith. Even married mother 16, abused and humiliated by her husband for so long, still oozes confidence in the Lord. Although her own mother was abusive to her when she was growing up, she does not seem bitter against her due to her faith in God’s forgiveness, which enables her to also forgive those who sin against her. She commits all problems to the Lord in prayer.

People need the Lord. Given the strained relationships between married mothers and their husbands, single mothers’ bitterness over lack of support in child care issues, the researcher noticed a difference in mindsets of a few of the mothers who seemed

confident and conciliatory in their understanding and description of men. Their positive views, agreed with those of the study group Christian single mothers whose testimonies spoke of God's help during hard times.

A man or woman who trusts in the Lord is –like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Psalm 1: 3). –Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jeremiah 17: 7-8). Both these quotes refer to the seasoned actions of a godly man/woman who is not negatively affected by circumstances because of confidence in God. Thus a single mother who loves and trusts in the Lord is safe under God's care and that of his people and needs not panic.

In May 2011, there were discussions on radio CCFM on the stress, anxiety, fatigue, discouragement and feeling off-balance that single parents experience, due to a host of issues including work overload. They are not to be shunned or pitied but need to be affirmed, admired, encouraged and supported emotionally, materially and spiritually. The –spoiling a single mum campaign” was announced for people to be a blessing to a single mum and help lift up her spirit through sending flowers, groceries, vouchers for a meal, buying her a book to help her with parenting strategies and even offering to baby sit so she can have some free time. What a campaign! Three-folding supports strategies that empower people in difficult positions to cope better.

## **5.6 Towards a holistic definition of care consciousness**

### **5.6.1 Global care consciousness**

On their own the mothers in Appendices E<sub>1</sub> - E<sub>6</sub> were all in grave trouble. Invariably their faith in God enabled them to cope as God sent others to help them out, or provided circumstances that facilitated their coping with the demands of life. Luke 4: 18-19 the Lord Jesus described his ministry as one of: preaching the good news to the poor, healing the broken hearted, proclaiming freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, release for the oppressed and proclaiming the year of the Lord's

favour. In short, Christ was involved in care ministry from beginning to end. There is hope for the mothers who are in desperate circumstances because –Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8) refers to the steadfast integrity of Jesus who is utterly dependable such that those who put their trust in him, benefit. He is their good shepherd who makes them enjoy life to the full (John 10:10b). Knowing Christ and fellowshiping with him rejuvenates a person spiritually.

Figure 7 below is not meant to create a Utopian world on earth but to make the world habitable enough for people to live normal lives as they fulfil their God-given roles in life without unnecessary suffering and fear for their lives. It will also help individuals to see the fruit of their labours if there is sustainability, achievable through caring and responsible actions by all.

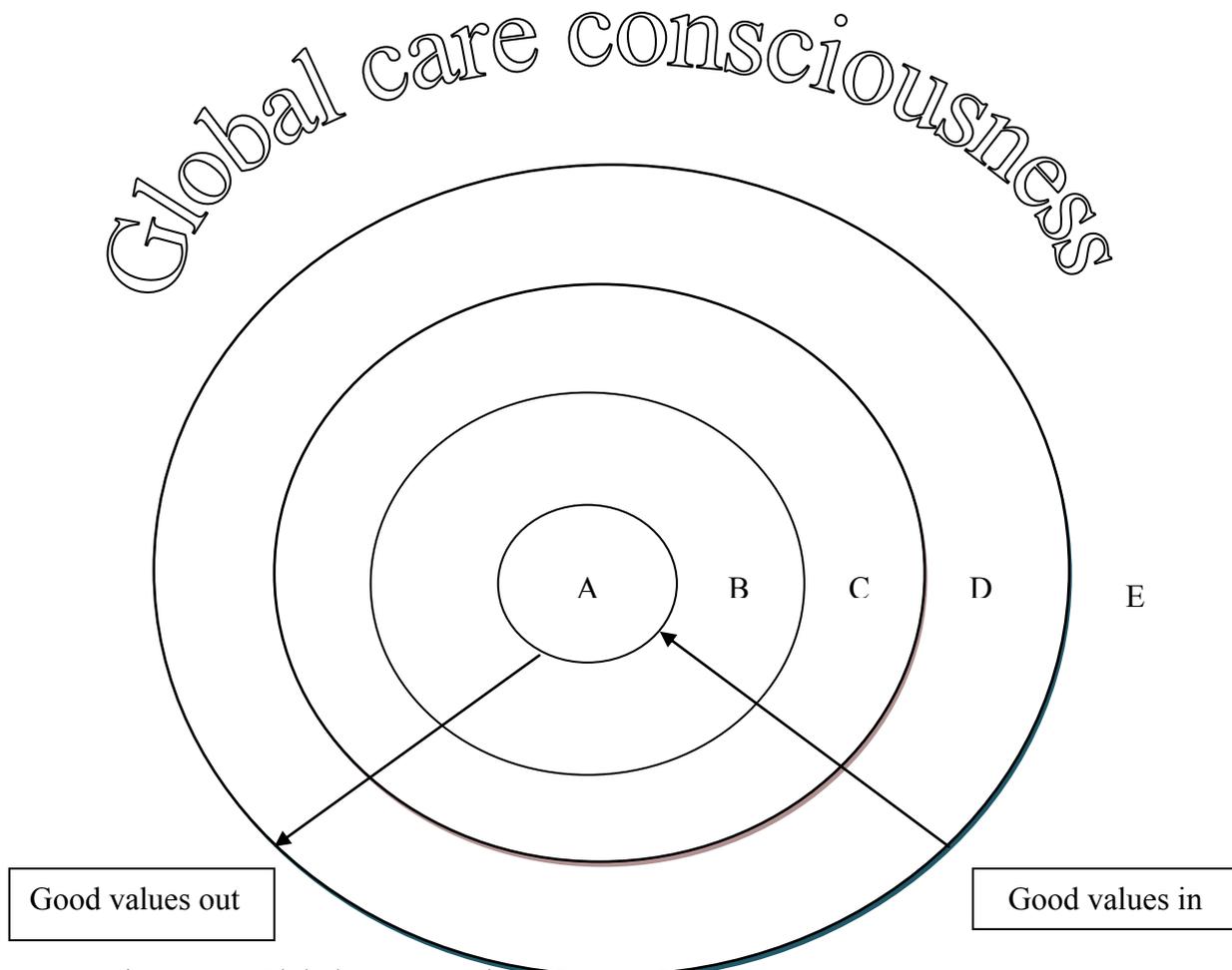


Figure 7: Global care consciousness

Key:

- A The individual is schooled from birth in care consciousness as a way of life
- B Family surrounds each member with love, care and support throughout life

- C The Community/School/Church/Peer groups all enhancing caring attitudes
- D National acknowledgement of care consciousness through rewarding those who demonstrate care with publicity whilst phasing out highlights of violence
- E Global care consciousness that would make anyone feel safe and at home anywhere in the world

Through the caring and modelling of sound values by parents, three-folding seeks to engender caring attitudes in children in all eco-human relationships. By letting one's children know that they are loved, accepted unconditionally, that they belong, will serve to build confidence in them and so empower them to want to do better. Through patient modelling of good values that show care and kind instructions on how to behave kindly towards others, a parent can instil attitudes that will define what kind of adults these children will turn out to be. Learning to care does not happen overnight. It takes time for one to have integrity of personality and character. Willards advocates social transformation through character formation in children (discussed in ch.2). Dual parenting is crucial in three-folding to achieve this end. As figure 7 sums up, all members of the community should be involved in care and trust building. The widowed mother of Appendix E<sub>6</sub> testifies to how a Reverend and his wife cared for her and her three sons as natural family members would have done.

#### 5.6.2 Care consciousness is essentially God consciousness:

As has been argued in this chapter, based on empirical findings, mothers were generally bitter against the men who fathered their children, because most of them do not seem to care about those children. The pregnancy and birth of the child terminated such affairs. Blame shifting did not and still does not solve anything. Most mothers

were blind to their own faults, for example, the fault of engaging in sexual intimacy with a man without taking the necessary precautions or without checking out his intentions first. Once people stop pointing fingers, take full responsibility for their own actions as well as teach others especially their children to do the same, we should be able to witness an increase in caring awareness. As figure 7 shows, when good values are sown into an individual's heart, good values are generally expected to come out (Matthew 7:18)<sup>22</sup>. Bernardes (1997:110) points out that, "all human beings, from birth onwards, play an active part in determining \_who they are' ... influenced by nature and nurture but the real point to grasp is the way in which human individuality operates in social contexts." Three-folding believes that when children are exposed to sound spiritual values and internalize them, for example principles of the word of God, this will help to guide them on solid ground in the slippery aspects of life. An example of this is the issue of abstinence from sexual activity till after marriage. Those who obey are able to finish up their schooling hustle free, that is, without fears of pregnancy and the desperation experienced by most single mothers from consequent rejection by a sexual partner.

In the empirical study the participant mothers whose responses were respectful and non-abusive, were mostly those who professed their faith one way or another. This led the researcher to believe that, care consciousness is God consciousness. Through the power of God the Holy Spirit, individuals are able to care much more than in their own capacity since as human beings, we are limited in our caring capacity but, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). Spiritual transformation is described in 2 Corinthians 5: 17 which states that: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Paul goes to state that, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (:18-20). God cared for human beings so much that he "made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God". In Chapter 6:1,

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew 7:18 reads: "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit"

Paul considers the Corinthians and consequently all believers, to be “God’s fellow workers” whom he urges “not to receive God’s grace in vain” by neglecting to reconcile people to God and to one another in families and in the communities.

Reaching out to other people with the good news is an effective way of spreading God consciousness. Matthew 5: 9 says: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God”. A peace maker is a caring person and reflects one of God’s qualities. As the Lord Jesus stated: “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too, am working” (John 5:17). God’s work is that of sustaining the world, the people, plants, animals etcetera (Matthew 6:25-33). The Trinitarian model (fig.5) portrays the care equilibrium. Care is an integral part of three-folding and reflects God’s own nature. God cared enough for us to send Jesus, who cared enough to die in our place so that we may experience spiritual wholeness and fellowship with God. Sin breaks fellowship with God and for this reason family three-folding does not condone pre-marital sex although repentant individuals are forgiven, as in participant 14’s case.

## 5.7. The three-folding family surprises

### 5.7.1 Affirming God’s way

When situations are difficult to understand and things contrary to expectation happen, Isaiah (55: 8-9)’s words quoting the Lord, make sense: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways... As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts...” Matthew 18: 18-20 stipulates that, where two or more people worship together, the Lord Jesus promises to be with them in Spirit and whatever they bind or agree on, on earth, will already have been bound or agreed upon in heaven. When one prays in line with the will of God one is empowered by the Triune God to influence situations. Appendix 4 mother told us that, God is a father to the fatherless. It logically follows that, a believing single mother, worshipping with her child or children, also constitutes a healthy three-folding family, spiritually speaking, because of the Lord’s presence, as Father to the fatherless. This is wonderful news for three-folding because it is inclusive of single parent families. “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind

has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit ... The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2: 9, 14).

However, the best news is that believers will stand complete before God, regardless of earthly family structures, because there is no marriage or marital qualifications for entry into heaven (Matthew 22: 30) except that of spiritual rebirth (John 3: 3; 1 John 5: 1, 11 - 13) leading to the eternal union between the Church and the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s family (mothers and brothers), are those who do God’s will (Matthew 12:46-50). That may sound like a rejection of his earthly family when, in fact, the Lord Jesus was taking family to the level of universal and eternal significance.

The Lord Jesus’ ministry and teaching were radically different to that of the religious leaders of his time who could not comprehend his theological stance because of spiritual blindness and sin-hardened hearts. He taught people to “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:44-45). As Paul states (1 Corinthians 2:8), “None of the rulers of this age understood it (it referring to God’s secret wisdom cf.:7), for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”. The Pharisees and Sadducees were legalistic and so missed out on the spiritual and practical demonstration of God’s power to seek and save sinners which is why Jesus had come into the world. They were too critical of Jesus to notice the evidence of God’s grace. It may be that married people are critical of: divorcees, single mothers, single fathers, and those who give up their children for adoption etcetera without knowledge of the experiences that made them become single. Some mothers may have escaped life threatening relationships and so ended up being single for the sake of preserving their lives and the children’s lives. When people are in difficulties, judgmental attitudes do not help, but hand-ups do. Family three-folding is not legalistic but serves individuals at their points of need.

In three-folding, a believing single mother need not be ashamed of her status but has to be exemplary in her conduct, and relationships especially with married men. Like

all believing women, she should be diligent in caring for her family's spiritual and practical needs as best she can. Through active involvement in the family of God, she will find her place and discover that her needs are met providentially, as the study group single mothers' testimonies show. All appearances of evil should be avoided to discourage damaging gossip.

### 5.7.2 Three-folding: eclectic and adaptable

Some characteristics of harmonious family life gleaned from the social sciences can also be used to enhance three-folding as the examples below prove. Cheal (1991:44) argues that it is crucial to combine –contemporary knowledge with tradition received from the past, preserved by communities of memory' such as the churches". Also, cooperative interaction' that keeps the family viable is present in 6 functions identified by Hill (cited in Cheal, 1991:65) namely:

- Physical maintenance of family members through: food, shelter and clothing
- Responsible multiplication
- Socialization of children for their roles in society
- Maintenance of discipline and order
- Maintenance of morale and motivation
- Production of goods and services

The spiritual dimension can be added as integral to cooperative interaction, as Appendix E<sub>5</sub> mother said: a family which prays together, stays together'. Of course it takes more than mere praying together to include whole-hearted commitment to God.

Gerdes (1987:306-307) describes strong' families as those that are happy, cope successfully and where pathology is absent. He states that insights may be gathered from them for marriage enrichment programs and counseling people in marriage and remarriage situations. Qualities of a strong marriage are listed below:

- Mutual appreciation and enjoyment
- Joint activities
- Good communication
- High commitment to promoting each other's development and welfare
- Spiritual values and commitment to a spiritual life style

- In times of crisis members are mutually supportive
- There is a strong link with the community
- The strong family is open to new ideas (Stinnet, Otto cited in Gerdes 1987:307).

Three-folding adopts such ‘strong’ family qualities as desirable for spreading care consciousness in society. It also promotes the importance of parent-child frank talks on sex, love and character, setting personal boundaries and keeping commitments, based on Swartz and Capello (2000)’s book entitled: *Ten Talks About Sex and Character*. Harris’ (2006) book titled “Let’s Talk ...” has already been referred to in this chapter. This will assist three-folding children to internalize correct principles for dealing with members of the opposite sex, way before dating commences. Marriage is a lifelong commitment and preparation for it has to be taken very seriously. It should never be rushed, should never be based on impulsive decisions, infatuation or the desire to change someone’s character and personality as this can only lead to frustration for both partners, even a termination of the marriage. Young people need counseling on such issues in order to prevent heartaches and end vicious circles of found and lost love. A broken love relationship is easier to handle than a broken marriage, often involving heart-rending custodial disputes over children. The extended family members and friends from both sides are also caught up in between the unraveling marital relationship. The marital union has to be strong to weather the storms of life and be strengthened by them. With that said, a few reflections will help restore the correct perspective on family paradigm changes.

### 5.7.3 The truth about paradigms, holistic thinking and approaches

“There is nothing new under the sun”, “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again” (Ecclesiastes 1: 9). “Whatever is has already been and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account” (Ecclesiastes 3:15). These quotations are believed to have been authored by Solomon, the wisest king, and serve to highlight the repetitive nature of human efforts. The paradigm in question has also been lived out or tried out by some people already.

In Bosch (1991: 184-185), a ‘paradigm’ is described as a slippery concept, and “no one can actually ‘create’ a new ‘paradigm’ it grows and ripens within the context of an extraordinary network of diverse social and scientific factors. The old fades away as the new emerges”. The search for a new model may be a search for a paradigm that may already be there waiting to replace the existing one and the old paradigm may not completely disappear but live on (:186). This finds support in Reid (1995: 152-153) who argues that “paradigm shift” is neither a monolithic entity that has to be dismantled nor a deterministic framework allowing only standard and uniform responses, but a complex of ideas, assumptions and social practices which individuals consciously or unconsciously endorse ... Individuals and social groups can – and – do adopt new values even while the established paradigm remains dominant”.

Reid (1995: 153) maintains that:

- “radical changes” come from “processes of gradual change as new ideas gain acceptance”
- “progress can only be made through protracted arguments and negotiations within social groups at all levels in societies that permit discussion of social and economic priorities”
- this can be facilitated by “intermediate objectives such as raising awareness of the issues (through):
  - arguing the importance of change,
  - discussing the feasibility and advantages of change,
  - persuading people it is to their advantage to change
  - and creating an interest in alternatives and a desire for change”

All this applies to the three-folding family model. It is not new, but has been there from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1: 27-28; 2: 22-24). Different cultures and even biblical characters in both the New Testament (N.T.) and the Old Testament (O.T.) deviated from this God-given design of one man one woman and children. Some had polygamous marriages, some divorced wives at will, while others indulged in homosexuality etcetera, all of which was not sanctioned by God. We are not to copy the bad examples or try and justify them as some are accustomed to doing. The

paradigm being outlined is, first and foremost, biblical. Morally, it is a reasonable and healthy way to live for all members. It is gender inclusive, meets individual men's and women's emotional and sexual needs in the security of marital bonds that preclude extra-marital sexual relations thereby ruling out jealousy induced conflicts and the possibility of contracting and spreading HIV/AIDS. Three-folding augurs well for dual parenting that can bring about holistic development of children in caring home environments free from relational tensions, all things being equal.

As the chapter has revealed, there is nothing new, unique, strange or mysterious about family three-folding, as some may have supposed. It is not tricky or tactically different but it is steeped in what is already known but unpracticed by many because of relational imbalances which three-folding sought/seeks to address using many allies. The term "three-folding" borrowed from Perlas' (2000) "social three-folding", refers to a developmental strategy he conceptualized for "shaping globalization" through partnership formations between the business, government and civil sectors for better service delivery. Globally, dictatorships are giving way to democratically elected governments which can be ousted for failure to conform to public demands. According to Perlas, the dyad of politics and the economy formerly excluded civil society and its cultural power from decision-making processes. This left the masses with unmet needs. This is being addressed through social three-folding, pioneered in the Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21) in the Philippines.

Reid (1995: 153) advises that "holistic thinking" is crucial for development to be sustainable, explaining that holistic approaches try "to identify more satisfactory structural solutions" than settle for problematic "simple" solutions. An example of this in family matters is, child welfare payouts Reid (: 154) proceeds to state that, problems are recognized as symptomatic of deeper causes whose connections may be complex and so "holistic thinking pursues connections and leads to integrated approaches that try to accommodate different sectoral interests". On the family front, the challenges faced by most single mothers in child care issues require holistic analysis. In family three-folding, the fathers', mothers' and children's interests are all reasonably accommodated in joint parental decision-making. Children have a say in matters that concern them also although it benefits them to listen to the counsels of

their parents. Holistic awareness leads to long-term sustainability. In the study the researcher sought to outline a family paradigm that requires thorough groundwork to establish firm family foundations based on attitudinal change of the formerly powerful. In the past, gender bias led to exclusion of women from participatory involvement in development –orthodoxy” (cf. Kothari & Minogue, 2002) as well as from patriarchal family decisions. The result was lack of sustainability. As argued already, the researcher finds single parenting especially by single mothers unsustainable too in the long run.

The ‘three-folding’ strategy devised by Perlas seemed popular enough to be incorporated into UNO policies as a viable one, the researcher was inspired to employ the term and the participatory inclusion strategy to the family set up as a means towards resolving the gender conflict between men and women/ husbands and wives as well as address the generation gap issues between parents and their children in order to restore unity and good will in family set ups. This may seem like a revival of the nuclear family. Yes and no. What is emerging is a redeemed and developmentally up to date, nuclear family that upholds human rights at the same time shaping individual members to be caring, responsible and other centered. In three-folding, men still head their homes but with such care, commitment and consideration that the women and children have no cause to complain and so flourish as individuals within the home and the community whilst at the same time all family members remain inextricable engaged in relational care and functional interdependence in the home.

God made each person unique and precious and no earthly structure should undermine this. Men are crucial just as women are to families. Lynn (1974:43) argued that –progressive loss of the paternal image leaves cultures vulnerable to ... alienation, irresponsibility, anxiety and aggression” culminating in social instability at various levels. Men are welcome as heads in family three-folding households but they have to prove themselves worthy of that responsibility. For those who are believers, the Holy Spirit can be trusted to mould character and guide them in their dealings with family members. Otherwise the Sonke Gender Justice Network whose manual is highly recommended can go a long way in bringing about attitudinal change that is desirable in restoring damaged relationships between men and women for the sake of holistic

child care. It is never too late to repair damaged relationships. Only when a person is dead will it be too late. Forgiving and forgetting are welcome virtues.

## **5.8 Preliminary Conclusion.**

Contours of a three-folding family set up were established through toning down sore issues by recommending that: male domination and authority be translated into humble service to the other members of the family; submission of wives should not be doormat fashion but becomes intelligent participation in decision-making. Where there is no consensus on an issue, out of reverence for Christ, the epitome of submission, the wife need not go toe to toe with her husband, for the sake of peace in the home. The husband need not ~~always~~ insist on his own way hence the injunction ~~Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ~~ (Ephesians 5:21). Irreconcilable differences need not break fellowship between couples but serve to affirm the uniqueness of our individuality. Children's rights are to be observed even as parents train their children in righteousness. Awareness of conciliatory attitudes and their position on the slippery slope is important to keep members in the safe zone, relationally speaking. A believing single parent, who by grace qualifies to be in the family three-folding paradigm because the Lord is a Father to her fatherless children and a defender of widows is welcome in God's Kingdom. The Lord's ways are higher than ours. This message should bring hope to some of the discouraged single mothers yearning for fulfillment in their lives.

Accepting the single parent family does not imply that ladies are licensed to fall pregnant out of wedlock. No! The commandments are to be obeyed at all times. However, in the event of a genuine mistake, the offender can be reconciled to God through confession and repentance. The message advocating dual parenting by committed parents living together; should be unequivocally presented in homes, schools, churches, communities and nationally for the sake of holistic child care and family well being.

Patton and Childs (1988), Punt (2009) and others, who argue that: pre-occupation with the correct family structure without caring for the families, in whatever structural form they appear, is unholistic, unsustainable and ultimately self-defeating, are also right. Family three-folding does not quarrel with that, but seeks long-term solutions to the issue of family relational instability and unsustainability that is so detrimental to individual and societal well being.

Based on Myers (1999)' recommendations, spiritual poverty may be relieved through allowing people to discover their identity through gospel story telling. Relational issues can be repaired through mindset and attitudinal changes in dialogues and workshops planned according to expressed needs of the people of the community.

On stigmatization of single mothers (Kinnear, 1999:22), labeled and excluded by some people as not qualifying as "real families" and are looked down upon because of the potential their children have of becoming delinquent criminals (Phoenix & Woollett 1991:5), the best way to prevent more women from experiencing such disempowerment is through dialoguing with teenage girls even when still very young, on the importance of three-folding family values. Meanwhile single parent families need all the support they can get materially, spiritually, socially, emotionally etcetera for the sake of holistic development of their children.

Emphasis may be placed on respecting other people and their decisions. Ministry of healing, encouragement and empowerment is crucial among single mothers especially. Stigmatization and labels, for example "charity case, welfare recipient, unwed mother" are dehumanizing and belittling, making mothers feel socially and politically powerless in the face of hostile attitudes. Once they regain confidence, they may volunteer to share their experiences with other young people as a warning against making wrong decisions that can wreck their lives.

## **5.9 Preliminary recommendations**

Further research

Research may also be carried out along similar lines to how the qualitative one (chapters 3 & 4) was conducted, man to man this time, to ascertain man's attitudes and perceptions towards women and child care issues in this dynamic world. A clearer picture of how the family is viewed by either side should emerge to enable conciliatory measures to be put in place.

#### Development

Swanepoel and de Beer (1998:22) propose networking –as a way of solving the co-ordination problem ... means to know the organizations in your communities and establish contact and maintain a process of sharing information and ideas” for action co-ordination. They quite rightly advise against going to people with a preconceived plan or programme. The agenda must be blank for those involved to fill in. One has to guard against paternalism and authoritarianism. The local people's views, wisdom and feelings should be respected (:32). Humility, compassion, servant-hood and diligence are essential qualities in a development worker, whose role (:33) is to advise, advocate, enable and facilitate local development, physically, morally and spiritually.

#### Missiology

On the Mission front, ‘prophetic dialogue’ (Beavan and Schreider, 2004: 4, 395) seems to be a comprehensive strategy which is pro- justice, peace, the disadvantaged; it is relational, conversational and appreciates the human situation as potentially good and trustworthy because of the Triune God's grace and missional activity in the world. Christians participate in God's mission to the world. Thus there is no assumption of authority or superiority. –Today's mission is to be characterized as an exercise in dialogue carried out in humility” (: 395). This strategic mindset echoes one expressed in Bosch's *Transforming Mission* (1991: xiii; 483-486) where meeting mission challenges today called for dialogue, vulnerability and –bold humility”.

Brainstorming prayerfully for workable alternatives and solutions to issues that bog down the community is vital, accompanied by testimonies of those whom the Lord will have helped.

Support groups under selected, mature and caring mothers may be a viable way of handling emergencies like fire outbreaks (as happened recently) when food pantries,

used clothing of good quality, utensils and bedding may be vital in assisting the unfortunate mothers in child care concerns.

Changing mindsets through dialoguing with individuals or groups of people about their divine identity will awaken a sense of God consciousness that will serve as an entry point to helping them to care more for their children, property, other people's needs etcetera. This can be pursued formally or informally as the case permits. Mourisy (1997:15) reflects on the importance of linking private faith to public action as "the real measure of Christian discipleship and being a church". She lists advantages of Community Ministry as: an eye opener; involves caring for others beyond oneself and one's family; brings transformation (:17); brings theological understanding (:20, 21); prompts thoughts about God and human vulnerability in non-believers (:22) and links gospel and society (:23-26).

Harper (1999)'s and Jacobsen (2001)'s approaches to holistic ministry are steeped in Christo-centric, powerful worship, prayer, dynamic pastoral leadership and congregational participation. August (1999, 2010) aptly sees the Church as a ready-made, stable community-based organization that can be mobilized to accelerate social transformation. This is why it is critical for churches to unite, have a common vision and so network in order to have impact in the societies and communities where they operate. The mothers' preoccupation is with child care and the supply of basic needs followed by the need to fight crime in their neighborhoods (see the list in 4.8).

A God-fearing husband and wife who put into appropriate practice what Scripture teaches, have a rich harvest of rewards in terms of peace of mind, shared workload and holistic child care that is inclusive (male and female); conciliatory (where differences of opinion call for discussion and compromise) and affirmative on two aspects namely:

- i) accepting God's design of family as the correct one in the natural world
- ii) married couples accepting each other as unique and complementary individuals

The Sonke Justice Network's Manual entitled "One Man Can" is a timely one and ought to be used extensively to build universal consciousness of care for other people especially in most men and the self serving mothers (cf. 2.2.3.3).

A similar manual could also be produced to help empower women. Most women with traditional mindsets may still be propagating feelings of inferiority, servitude in girls.

Engaging women at all levels of society in dialogues especially among those of low socio-economic status is important to enable them to contribute constructively towards ways of attaining economic independence instead of advertising their bodies for survival through prostitution.

## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **CONCLUSION: FAMILY THREE-FOLDING IS NOT JUST CONCILIATORY AND AFFIRMATIVE BUT IS MUCH, MUCH MORE ...**

#### 6.1 Introduction

The final chapter is crucial in that it sums up the explanatory arguments, research findings and then concludes the study by making ministry recommendations for addressing family care deficits through three-folding dialogues at any and all levels of society as a response to a ‘glocal’ crisis of gigantic proportions.

The study was motivated by the escalating rates of single parenting, mostly by mothers, as an indicator of deteriorating marital and family relationships in the contemporary society. The problem statement was: given the complex reality of family structural and relational metamorphosis, in a dynamic world, what family paradigm can be outlined as conducive to inculcating sound universal values of what it means to be truly human, that is: rational, relational, responsible and caring for one’s own offspring, other needy human beings as well as take good care of nature for sustainable livelihoods. As rational beings, what attitudes and behavioral patterns would we outline as wholesome in individual development of our children? Since the bulk of parenting is shifting towards mothers it seemed logical to hear them out, especially single mothers on how they were coping with child care. A series of questions listed below helped to elicit some answers from them, which were then

analyzed, interpreted and evaluated accordingly enabling the researcher to reach the conclusions she did.

- What are the causes and effects of single motherhood?
- What challenges do single mothers face in child care issues?
- How do single mothers view government empowerment policies for women?
- What are their perspectives of men, husbands and fathers?
- What are some of the effects of father absence on children?
- What family paradigm do mothers believe is best for holistic child care and care consciousness training so that children grow up to be caring, responsible people?

My hypothesis was that, the ideal family is one which is: monogamous and gender inclusive, with biological parents living together harmoniously, taking care of their children holistically. I had also assumed that single mother family structures are default survival mechanisms struggling to cope with the crisis of family disintegration, erosion of traditional marital and family values due to modernization, poverty, gender role disputes, absent fathers, divorce, widowhood

Unemployment, misery and inability to cope with family relational failure manifest themselves in substance abuse, violent crime, child rape, baby dumping, general socio-economic unrest and other negatives which seem to highlight moral decadence and lack of sound normative values in our families

Admittedly, these issues are inextricably interlinked in a way that defies simplistic solutions and hence the purpose of this dissertation to meddle with the roots of people: the family, parents especially, as foundational to individual human development and everything else in society that emanates from there. As long as men and women remain locked in gender disputes, relational poverty flourishes with no reconciliation and children pay the price.

## 6.2. Summary of chapter arguments

Chapter 1 introduced ‘care’ as foundational to individual development in care consciousness as a step towards family relational stability and sustainable socio-economic development. ‘Children learn what they live’ and often, abusive adults are normally those who were abused or neglected as children. Statistical evidence showed enormous government expenditure on child welfare grants (1.4.3). Budgets for correctional services for juvenile delinquency and crime could be drastically reduced as biological parents, naturally care for and interactively discipline their own offspring as a preemptive measure against wild behavior and crime tendencies in their children. The money saved could be used for job creation schemes to reduce poverty and unemployment. The rapid decimation of populations due to the HIV/ AIDS pandemic has also exacerbated the problems of child care and governments efforts to reduce the suffering of destitute children is highly commendable. However, for long term solutions, we have to dig deeper in order to break the cycle of human suffering. In this study, questions sought data triangulation through literature reviews and an empirical study on issues already reiterated under the introduction to this chapter.

In chapter 2, the role of dual parenting in the nuclear family was discussed in interdisciplinary epistemological searches, commencing with marital issues that sanctioned sexual liaisons between men and women, thus, paving the way for legitimacy of children for responsible multiplication and ordered existence in society. The dual parental bond was seen as ideal for cultivating an environment conducive to maximum child care, character formation and good role modeling. However, the reality proved different, given the escalating numbers of single mothering globally, which proved to be the major challenge to dual parenting of the nuclear variety. Reasons for non-marriage were diverse. Some mothers are widows, some were divorced, others divorced husbands, yet others chose not to marry in pursuit of freedom from male domination and abuse, still others preferred their financial freedom, while prison sentences kept potential husbands out of reach etcetera. Feminism featured as an ideology that mostly discouraged traditional nuclear family structures by virtue of its link to patriarchy. Numerous debates on gender, family and child care were alluded to. Polygamous mindsets of some African men dissuade them from being tied down to one woman; separations on the basis of sexual

incompatibility; urban migration; ethnic violence leading to displacement of people etcetera, are some of the reasons why many mothers are single.

Father absence of different sorts, was seen as the critical shortfall in most children's lives. They then ended up with juvenile delinquent problems, costly to government as chapter 1 also endeavored to point out. Abuse in the homes often perpetrated by substance abuse did not augur well for holistic child care and only served to propagate more suffering as abused children end up being abusers themselves when old because children learn what they live (cf. chapter 1). There was also the issue of South African violence as a legacy from Apartheid, which has yet to run its course (like an epidemic) before the formerly marginalized can psychologically free themselves enough to regain moral balance. Cultural violence in the form of "Musangwe" among the Venda people and Zulu fights with clubs among boys, are hardly conducive for engendering care consciousness in children and ought to be discouraged at grassroots levels. The same goes for "ukutwala" (bride snatching) where young girls were abducted and raped into marriage.

At least three authors expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of models for people to enjoy family life without the power struggles and irreconcilable differences between men and women. This also led the researcher to seek phenomenological understanding of single mothers through the empirical component of the study described below.

In chapter 3 the research design included an empirical study in a local informal settlement in Cape Town, to establish reasons for the single mothers' phenomenal increase, the non-marriage situation, and the mothers' views of men, husbands and fathers. The positive and negative effects of father absence were also taken into account based on generic literature (chapter 2), for explanations and for data triangulation purposes.

10 single mothers were selected using mixed sampling methodology as well as 10 married mothers who formed the focus group for comparative purposes. In-depth

interviews were found to be the best way to elicit the essential data. The standardized, open-ended interview forms helped to allow all the participants to answer questions on the same issues, but, in their own way, using their own words probed by the use of the projective technique. It was very helpful to have categories, topics and concepts ready made, because it relieved the agony of sorting data, haphazardly collected. Nevertheless, there was still plenty to sort out since mothers brought out much more than the questions demanded. Specifically, questions sought reasons why the mothers were single, what child care challenges they faced, what marital status they preferred and whether or not the child's father contributed maintenance, as well as what family structure they considered ideal for holistic child care etcetera (for details, see Appendices B and C).

Data analysis was rigorous, reiterative and selectively systematic using the Cresswell model juxtaposed with some of Tech's ideas, in order to generate findings, interpret and evaluate them for the writing of this report which is what Chapter 4 is about.

In chapter 4, the use of tables facilitated data analysis. Actual words spoken by the mothers revealed complexities and anxieties in their lives (both married and single). Gender violence issues like: withholding education from girls, child rape, spousal rape, physical and emotional violence which led in, some cases, to the enforcement of restraining orders, were some of the concerns that emerged as mothers sought to unburden themselves to the researcher. Cultural gender violence is alive and flourishing in the lives of some of the participants. Issues hitherto considered archaic, for example, "ukutwala" proved to be haunting some mothers currently. Child care concerns, extended family problems, abuse still rear their heads making life difficult such that 40% of the mothers contemplated life as single mums. Most fathers were unconcerned about children and neither visited nor contributed financially to their care. Bitterness, anger, hostility came out as men were termed, by some disgruntled mothers: "dogs", irresponsible, selfish, violent, abusive and so on. A few displayed emotional hurt. One young mother practically broke down and needed time to recover her composure. Remarkably most mothers indiscriminately condemned all men which I interpreted as indicating enduring deep-seated hurt. The majority of the mothers

opted for dual parenting even though some of them preferred the single mother status because of fear of marital abuse. Bitterness underlined most sentiments on men.

A few mothers rationally qualified their answers to credit differences among men in behavior and character. It was a blessing to be afforded insights into individual mothers' experiences and thought patterns. Those who believed in God were calm and peaceful as they related their experiences and understanding of God's power to forgive even the vilest offenders. Their attitudes were conciliatory, affirmative and served to support the theological basis for chapter 5 alongside the Bible Study single mothers' and some single other Christian friends' written personal testimonies (see Appendices E<sub>1</sub> to E<sub>6</sub>).

In chapter 5, in response to the cry for an alternative family paradigm, to make men, women and children enjoy family life better; the researcher revisited the 'intellectual puzzle' seeking an ideal family set up. The "One Man Can" manual produced by the Sonke Gender Justice network was recommended as conciliatory and empowering to individual men for mindset transformation in their treatment of women. Family three-folding was then defined and critiqued based on biblical teaching. Perlas' "social three-folding" tripartite partnerships that are inclusive of all sectors of society, to foil globalization's negative trends, was also taken into account as applicable to the three-folding family relational and decision-making set up. Since mothers are already included in job markets outside the home and contribute economically, and children are more technologically advanced than most of their parents, it does not make sense to exclude them from family discussions. Other qualities that characterize 'strong' families from generic literature were also incorporated into family three-folding as desirable for maintaining family relational stability.

The Bible was quoted as an authoritative source of reference, with appropriate qualifications, as Punt rightly cautions us in his final draft, already referred to. The origin of human beings and creation as a whole was given. Emphasis was laid on our divine origin, that we are "made in the image of God" functionally and relationally and hence the stewardship we have over creation. Children are precious before God and need tender loving care and training in righteousness. Three-folding was modeled

on the Triune God's relational model which, in human terms, was gender inclusive, affirmative and conciliatory. The slippery slope served to explain how to respond in conflict situations. Three-folding recommends staying within peace-keeping zones for one's mental health and peaceful co-existence with other people.

Parental bond is crucial. While the man retains headship of the home, he is non-the-less a servant leader, based on Christ's example. The wife's submission is not doormat fashion enforced by beatings, harsh words or abuse. She is a co-parent with her husband and her active contribution in decision-making processes enriches her family. When there is no consensus she may yield to her husband's decision, for the sake of peace in the home. However, a wise husband knows that excluding a wife's desires, counsel and guidance can lead to fatal mistakes. Children are affirmed, loved, cared for and trained in voicing needs and handling hurts without hostility, for peaceful conflict resolution in order to foil destructive behaviors that militate against sustainable human and social development.

The family of God was briefly handled as the new model to follow because of its eternal significance. This brought home the awareness that it is virtually impossible for human beings to care holistically due to the self-centeredness of sin-hardened hearts (Romans 3: 23 –for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...) and no amount of human training can make caring sustainable without Spiritual transformation, which renews the mind (Romans 12: 2). Thus 'care consciousness' was seen as analogous to God consciousness. God alone cares holistically, selflessly as manifested by the Lord Jesus' death on the Cross for our redemption so that all who believe in him may have everlasting life. To date, we are in the year 2011 based on the time when Jesus ministered here on earth. As he promised his disciples before his death and resurrection, he ascended in order to prepare a place for believers and will return to take them home to his Father (John 14:2-3).

Preliminary recommendations were made for further research; for networking with organizations already operating in the community; for dialogue and missionary engagement on spiritual and family three-folding issues; and promotion of the One

Man Can ...” manual (cf. Sonke Gender Justice Network) to help men overcome learned violence and learn to care for women and children better.

Chapter 6: A three-folding family paradigm enables relationships to function as God intended: in love, care and unity. In 1.1 of this dissertation, Viljoen (1996:29) asked if we should accept the single parent as a family type and not as pathology. The answer is yes. A single mother (especially one who believes in God) with her child, also constitutes an invaluable three-folding family set up, at the basic level, because God promised to be a Father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5), that is, he comforts and encourages them and also promises to be in fellowship with two or three people gathered in his name (Matthew 18: 20). This refers to Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit who was to encourage the believers after he ascended. A single mother’s extended spiritual family would be other true believers, always ready and willing to support and encourage her. The single mother needs not fear rejection, exclusion or stigmatization in her new family of God, where she is valued, loved and should experience a sense of worth and belonging.

Caution advises the need for sensitivity in interactions between the genders, to avoid misunderstandings. The devil is cunning. He can twist something good and make it scandalous, if people are not diligent and watchful in their prayer-life. Appendix E 4’s unfinished narrative would have revealed how the young widowed mother discovered that she was, unwittingly feeding a pastor’s fantasies as he began to psychologically reject his own wife in preference to her (evidenced by his diary). Broken-hearted, the genuinely shocked widow withdrew and sought fellowship elsewhere, to enable the pastoral couple to regroup.

Our God is relational. No one can go it alone in the Kingdom of God. A family of one is pathological, if care is self-centered. Believers are not advised to divorce unbelieving spouses but rather let the unbelieving spouses choose options, because of the Lord’s intervention and sanctifying grace that ensures that the children, made in union with an unbelieving spouse, are ~~h~~oly” (1 Corinthians 7: 14). ~~T~~he Christian spouse was a channel of God’s grace in the marriage” (Lowery, 1983:518) and for this reason, if the unbelieving spouse desired to continue with the relationship, the

believer was not advised to divorce. This wisdom is applicable today also. Children benefit more from an intact marriage than a severed one.

A single mother and her children are vulnerable to many forces and influences and hence the importance of Spiritual covering. Marriage is not reassuring for most women unless the marital relationship is loving and caring so that children also learn to love and care for others too. No one has a perfect relationship and all have to learn to care, to forgive and forget. An unforgiving spirit stifles one's liberty in the Lord. I hope the mothers in the study, who are still harboring bitterness and anger in their hearts against the men who wronged them, learn to forgive them.

### **6.3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study purpose sought an entry point for dialogue and mission around the integrative theme of family relationships and promotion of caring attitudes (cf. 1.4.6). There are many entry points for dialogue and mission but this requires networking with others with the same vision. The Sonke gender justice network is one possible ally to help sensitize men and boys to gender violence against women. The churches especially, should be willing to engage their congregations in ministry to neighbors and others in the community who may be despairing about their marital and family relationships. Ministry strategies will be varied, aiming to meet individuals at their points of need. Ministry should be to all, and by all, who are interested in seeing families flourishing and operating as they ought. The word of God repeatedly urges in Revelations (2: 7, 11, 17; 3: 13): ~~He~~ "who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches". These words were spoken by Christ to John in his futuristic vision of the end time events including the second coming of Christ (Walvoord, 1983:925). John wrote to the believers to encourage them to remain faithful to God in the face of trials. Similarly rather than giving up on marriage, there is need to make a concerted effort in looking for ways to make it work in order to bring stability and holistic development to those who are most vulnerable without them, namely, the children.

Mangalwadi (in Miller, 1998: foreword) argues that ~~the~~ fight against poverty may mean battling ideas that cause poverty... To challenge cherished cultural beliefs that cause suffering often results in one's rejection and crucifixion". He also believes that, ~~tolerating~~ false ideas and evil social practices can be wickedness and cruelty". Thus poverty need not be interpreted solely in economic terms. There is need for exposing people to biblical teaching on how family life ought to be lived, in love, peace and harmony. Dual parenting by a married couple is best for holistic child care. Of course no one can force people to do what they do not want to do (cf. Stott, 1984). The congregation (cf. August, 1999; 2003; 2010) is the best tool for spreading care consciousness by modeling it in the community. Christian families can work with struggling neighbors and care for them holistically. This does not necessarily mean that Christians have it all under control but what it shows is the importance of involvement in communal issues, doing one's best to help find solutions, at the same time trusting God to sort out the difficult parts.

#### Participant Mothers

- Participant mothers have already mentioned communal needs listed in chapter 4.8 where child care and seminars on parenting were on the priority list. Interactive discipline of children and the need for a sports-ground to occupy the youth gainfully also need urgent attention. More dialogue is called for the community to brainstorm on how they envisage meeting those needs themselves and what extra help is needed. People develop themselves but may need some encouragement and practical assistance here and there.
- Material assistance may be provided to desperate individuals, like fire victims as the need arises, through food parcels and used clothing pantries, contributed by Faith communities that are able to do so. This happened recently following an outbreak of fires that destroyed many dwellings.
- For normal living there is need for support groups to be formed among mothers, headed by concerned and capable mothers, for moral support, practical advice and counseling opportunities, preferably under church leadership. These can meet regularly or informally to discuss difficulties.
- Parenting strategies, that can help children grow up holistically, should be shared in seminars in the community by respected motivation speakers from the

community itself and beyond. Support group leaders are encouraged to attend or send a representative so that all groups of women would gain from those seminars through informal report backs. Most working mothers may not have time to attend seminars due to work overload and hence the need for informal report backs on a one on one basis, to benefit them too.

#### Community Leaders:

- Community leaders need to be encouraged to participate and contribute their wisdom in matters pertaining to single mothers, for data triangulation.
- Conciliatory attitudes and peace-making modes of conflict resolution may need to be discussed by all residents in workshops as a means to diffusing abusive and confrontational encounters within families and among community members.
- The Sonke Gender Justice Network manual entitled “One Man Can...” can be introduced for the leaders to judge its efficacy for communal use.

#### Missionary Intervention

- The Mission strategy may involve individuals or manageable groups when engaging mothers in prophetic dialogue, in what Bosch describes as “bold humility” to discuss Christ’s redemptive work and its significance for humanity. To be prophetic is to speak in support of the marginalized, the weak and the have not. To dialogue is to affirm other people as worthy partners in the search for solutions to puzzles in life. Opening up oneself to sharing ideas is a battle half won.
- Believers are to model how the wealthy can care for the materially needy and the healthy can care for the spiritually or physically sick.
- As Dobson pointed out, women are influential in shaping men for the future, which they should do diligently, as mothers nurturing children, as they guide the

moral growth of boys; as girlfriends practicing abstinence till marriage; as single ladies and young widows pursuing ascetic lifestyles that keep society morally pure and free of the HIV/AIDS virus, till committed in faithful marital unions that are lifelong and caring.

- The fathers are redeemable if they keep open minds and choose service to others [diakonia], rather than hostile domination of women and children. A timely manual —“One Man Can” can be advertised and used intensively to help.

### Formal Education

- In schools, Life Orientation can make inroads in promoting harmonious co-existence among boys and girls as well as promoting control of their sexuality to prevent rape of women, girls and boys, that is so common in society. It would be worthwhile to examine the syllabus and check out how family relationships are addressed and taught to enable children to be reconcilers and not aggressors.
- the Sonke Gender Justice Network manual entitled —“One Man Can” can be introduced on the school curriculum as a decisive means for resolving gender problems
- Introducing three-folding family set ups can be simulated in drama classes

Blankenhorn (cited in McConn, 2000:6) stated that fatherlessness is —the engine driving our most urgent social problems from crime to adolescent pregnancy to child sexual abuse to domestic violence against women” and a host of other misdemeanors including substance abuse. Responsible, loving and involved fathers have an important part to play in family well being and child care issues to foil father absence and restore balance to the family set up. Single motherhood, the default family structure when there is no marriage between a man and a woman or where the marital relationships fails, is a status fraught with challenges that make many mothers despair if left without effective family emotional support, and child welfare financial support. The study has proved that people, especially children need holistic care in order for them to grow up as caring/responsible people. Family care, particularly, from dual parenting by committed biological parents, is foundational to human development in

sustainable relationships which endow the individual with a sense of worth, dignity, affirmation, appreciation and identity.

Where family structures are nuclear but abuse is rife, life is miserable for members, just as father absence leaves children with a sense of “hollowness” in their hearts. The study showed that, most mothers would rather stay single than be married to an abusive and uncaring spouse much as they may covet dual parenting as the best model for child care and teaching in care consciousness. It is time men and women learnt to co-exist as complimentary members of each other and put a stop to the gender conflict and violence. The Sonke Gender Justice Network’s manual entitled: “One Man Can...” is recommended as a starting point of dialogue between men and women in communities on such issues. This is a long term concern that may not even benefit immediately, the women and children in conventional nuclear set ups. Nevertheless, children need parents of both genders, if they are to experience holistic human development. Van Vliet’s hypothesis, that women opt to raise children alone as a strategy against poverty, marital failure and uncaring fathers, was vindicated. Reconcilable mindsets are vital if and men need to attend workshops that will help them curb their domineering traits in order to be responsible leaders in their homes supported by wives who feel appreciated, loved and affirmed. The children too will flourish as they witness dual parental teamwork for their benefit. This will break the family relational impasse. Communal power can be harnessed for the promotion of family three-folding principles and participatory decision-making processes at the basic level of society, which is, the home environment.

Family three-folding is a healthy paradigm for all to aim for. It is founded on biblical principles that are:

- a) gender inclusive: male and female, image of God, different but complementary
- b) conciliatory: as sinners saved by grace, men/husbands and women/wives repent of their hostile attitudes towards fellow image bearers, learn to forgive each other and peacefully co-exist under the same roof taking holistic care of their children
- c) affirmative in that we appreciate one another as unique contributors in our families and communities.

Family three-folding promotes sound families based on strong, loving committed parents in enduring, non-abusive marital bonds that provide children with a sense of security, identity, worth and belonging. Character training has to commence in the home, under the guidance of caring, responsible, loving heterosexual, biological parents, as God intended and as a model of what family life should be. Care consciousness has to be learned and one cannot care enough without the Holy Spirit enabling one to do so and hence the need to turn to God for forgiveness of sin and for Spiritual sustenance. We are God's image bearers and need to reflect his nature. We are to be holy as he is holy and he cannot abide sin, though he loves the person. Children need to know of God's love and care for them and their obligation to be good stewards in all eco-human relationships.

The majority of the mothers acknowledged that children are better taken care of by both parents. However, where family structures are not ideal, where abuse is rife, then the child is fortunate to have a caring mother. God is Sovereign and does damage control by being a Father to the fatherless for individuals abandoned or neglected by earthly fathers. Single parent families are also three-folding ones, based on faith in the redemptive work of Christ. Family three-folding is much more than merely conciliatory and affirmative. It is inclusive, participatory, biblical, logical, reasonable, practicable, holistic, developmental, progressive, eclectic etcetera. The study has achieved much more than the research questions demanded. Gender relational issues between men and women are deep rooted but with both sides willing to reexamine attitudes, intentions etcetera, at personal levels, there is hope for repairing damages and building a better foundation for child care through promoting family three-folding.

Finally, responsible fathers are needed by their children and mothers need caring husbands to help with child care. People bear God's image and should not mate indiscriminately like animals. Each child requires a loving and caring live-in mother and live-in father, in a monogamous family set up that may or may not include live-in extended family members. Family relationships are meant to be stable and supportive and not shift like sand. Selection of a life-long marital partner, thus, demands conscientious deliberation and not hurried infatuation. Married couples need to plan

their family carefully so that they produce children they can sustain economically, educationally, socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Those who choose not to marry should take precautions and not sow ‘wild oats’. Unplanned children end up neglected, abused and are more likely to be delinquent. Generic literature revealed the main sources of social problems to be linked to, among others, disgruntled, abused and neglected individuals when young. To prevent this from being a vicious circle, why don’t we all ensure holistic care of each individual child through advocating family three-folding as a means to attaining society, development and peace (sodepax Dunne, 1969)?

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## Appendices

### Appendix A



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#### **STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

The research topic is: **“Family Three-folding: A Conciliatory and Affirmative Paradigm for Individual Human Development in promoting caring consciousness in society”**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by VimbainaShe Siwella, pursuing an MTh. Degree in Development Studies, in the department of Practical Theology and Missions at Stellenbosch University. The results will be contributed to the research thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are:

- **a leader**
- **a single mum**
- **a married mum**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study is designed to assess the causes, challenges and possible impact of single motherhood in general in order to establish, through dialogue, the best way for bringing about individual development, especially children's, in caring attitudes for the good of families and society in general.

## **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Fill in some personal details on the questionnaire form, home background, marital status, job description, how long you have been resident in the area etc
- Answer some questions put to you on your personal experiences of marriage, non-marriage and family matters
- This will be a once off fact finding strategy unless there is need to clarify some things
- However, further interaction, should participants so desire, is the ultimate aim of this initial step for dialoguing on marriage and family issues, especially their impact on children's lives and damage control tactics.

## **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

No risks are involved. You are free not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Your input is important, whether it is 100% or not.

## **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Frankly there will be no immediate, tangible benefit except participation in contribution to scientific understanding of what is true reality for single mothers, to avoid wrong conclusions being drawn up due to lack of consultation.

If correct deductions are made and further dialogue engaged in, basing our understanding on God's divine purposes for individuals and society as a whole and obedience to what is best for all of us that will be an important step forward.

## **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There is no payment for participation.

## 6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of pseudonyms or numbering system. No names will be revealed.

## 7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## 8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

- If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me: Investigator VimbainaShe Siwella [vimsiwella@gmail.com; 021 782 9876]
- or my Supervisor, Professor August [kta@sun.ac.za; 021 808 3856 or 021 808 3577]

## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
--

The information above was described to me .....  
.....  
by ..... in English/ Xhosa and I am a participant in  
command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I .....  
..... was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were  
answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal  
Representative                      Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ -  
and/or his/her representative \_\_\_\_\_ He/She was encouraged  
and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English/  
Xhosa and: no translator was used/ was translated to me \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

***Signature of Investigator***

***Date***

## Appendix A<sub>1</sub>



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### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

---

Isihloko ndaba soluphando sithi *–Family Three-folding: A Conciliatory and Affirmative Paradigm for Individual Human Development in promoting caring consciousness in society.*”

Uyacelwa ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kwezizifundo zophando ezenziwa ngu VimbainaShe Siwella, owenza izifundo ze MTh degree eze Department of Practical Theology and Missions e Stellenbosch University.Imiphumela iyokuvezwa kumqulu wophando olu. Uyewa khethwa koluphando ngenxa yokuba ubandakanyeka kulamabakala alandelayo

- Inkokheli
- Umama oyedwa
- Umama otshatileyo

#### 10. INJONGO ZEZIZIFUNDO

Izifundo zenzelwe ukuphanda unobangela, imicelimngeni, negalelo elikhoyo komama ababodwa, gabalala ngengxoxompikiswano ngokungena nzulu kwiziBhalo, nendlela esulungekileyo ukukhulisa umntu, ngakumbi umntwana ngesimilo senkathalo ukuzuzisa usapho nokuhlala gabalala.

#### 11. INDLELA EZIZOLANDELWA

Ukuba uyafuna ukuthatha inxaxheba ngokunga nyanzelekanga kwezizifundo singathanda ukukubuza oku kulandelayo:

- Fakela incukacha zakho kwimi buzo ese-fomini leyo, imvelaphi yekhaya, imeko yomtshato, umsebenzi wakho, unaxesha lingakanani na uhlala kulindawo uhlala kuyo nezinye nezinye,
- Phendula eminye yalemibuzo eziswe kuwe ngokwamava akho ngomtshato, ngomtshati, nangemiba yosapho,
- Esisenzeko siyakwenzeka kubekanye ngaphendleni kokuba kunemiba efuna ucaciso oluthe vetshe
- Ngapha koko uthethwano oluqhubekekayo lungenzeka ukuba ubani unomnqweno woko ngoba ngumdlawesi wesigaba sokuqala ngengxoxo mpikiswano ngo mtshato, nemiba yosapho ngakumbi imiba echaphazela ubomi babantwana nendlela nobuchule bokulungisa umonakalo.

#### 12. INGOZI EZIMANDLA NOKUNGA-NELISEKI

Akukho ngozi zinokubakho. Unelungelo lokungaphenduli namnye umbuzo othanda ukungawuphenduli. Igalelo lakho libalulekile, nokuba ngu 100% okanye hayi.

#### 13. INZUZO EZINOKUBAKHO KUMPHANDWA OKANYE UKUHLALENI

Inyaniso yile yokuba akukhona kubakho galelo, nzuzo imandla ngokukhawulezileyo ngokoyondelelwano lokwazi ukuyinene kumakhosikazi awodwa ukunqanda izivaleliso ezithe zaziswa kusilelo loku dibanisa.

Ukuba ulungiso lwezaphulo lwenziwe ngakumbi ngengxoxompikiswano ethe yenziwa, ngokusekelwa kwi ngqiqo ngokwe cebo nenjongo emsulwa kaThixo ebomini bomntu lowo okanye ekuhlaleni ngokubanzi no kuthobela okoku lungileyo kuthi sonke oko kuya kuba yingqubela phambili.

#### 14. UBHATALO KUMTHATHI NXAXHEBA

Akukho bhatalo kumthathi nxaxheba.

#### 15. IMFIHLO

Naziphi na inkcukacha ezithe zafunyanwa mayela nezifundo ezinoku bandakanya imhfhlo zakuthsiyilwa ngokwemvume yakho okanye ngokwemvume yomthetho. Imfhlo iyokuqhushekwa ngokwe gama elifihlakaleyo okanye ngobalo oluthile. Akukho magama ayakuthsiyilwa.

#### 16. UTHATHO NXAXHEBA NOKU RHOXA

Unako ukhetha mhlawumbi ubekwezifundo okanye ungabikho. Ukuba uyavuma ngokukhululekileyo ukuba kwezifundo ungarhoxa nangaliphina ixesha kungekho miphumela yalo naluphina uhlobo. Unganga vumi ukuphendula nayiphina ongafuni kuyiphendula ubesenako uqhubekeke nezifundo ezi. Umphandi unako ukukurhoxisa ukuba kuvela imeko ezinyanzelisa oko. Ukuba kune mibuzo emininzi ongafuni kuyiphendula lonto kukuzi guzula ngokwakho ngoba akukhonto inozuzakala kuwe.

#### 17. IQAPHELO NGABA PHANDI

- Ukuba unemibuzo nayiphina okanye uloyiko ngoluphando khululeka utsalele mna: Umphandi \_\_\_\_\_
- Okanye u-Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

### 18. AMALUNGELO OMTHATHI NXAXHEBA [LOKUPHANDWA KUYE]

Unako ukurhoxa kwisivumelwano sakho nangaluphina ixesha ungaqhubekiki kwaye kungabikho sohlwayo kuwe. Awunyanzeliswa nazeziphina imbophelelo zomthetho okanye amalungelo okanye amancedo ngoba uzibandakanyile kuphando olu. Ukuba unombuzo malunga namalungelo njengomthathi nxaxheba koluphando tsalela u: Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development

<b>Sayina Mphandi okanye wenawezo mthetho</b>
---

Yonkeinto engentla icacisiwe kum.....  
 ngu ..... nge siNgesi/ Xhosa kwaye ndingumthathi nxaxheba ngolulwimi okanye ndanelisekile ngumguquleli. Mna .....ndalinikwa ithuba lokubuza imibuzo kwaye zaphendulwa ndaneliseka.  
 Mna Ndiyavuma ngemvume ekhululekileyo ukuthatha inxaxheba

**Igama lomthathi nxaxheba**

\_\_\_\_\_ Igama lowezomthetho (Ukubakukho isidingo)

\_\_\_\_\_ Sayina Mthathi nxaxheba okanye Umeli wezomthetho

\_\_\_\_\_ Umhla

<b>Umphandi Maka-Sayine</b>
-----------------------------

Ndiyavuma ukuba ndicacisilwe konke okuqulathwe kulomqulu ku\_\_\_\_\_ -naku bamelibakhe \_\_\_\_\_ ebekhuthazekile wandinika ixesha elaneleyo ukubuza imibuzo nayiphina. Intetho yethu ibingeNgesi-Xhosa nange kwaye ebekho umguquleli ukunceda \_\_\_\_\_  
 nge \_\_\_\_\_.

maka-sayine

Mhla-ka

Appendix B

**Single Mothers:** Pseudonymn/Participant No ..... Age:.....

Personal Background:

1. a) Which province are you from? .....Name of your Chief.....
- b) What are your educational qualifications? .....
- c) What work did you want to do? .....
- d) Is there anything that hinders you from achieving your dreams?

2. My mother is a single mum/ widow/ divorced/ separated/ never married /married/  
dead/ a pensioner/ employed/ unemployed (tick all points applicable to your mother)

3. Tell me about your father, mother, their marriage and family life.

4. Briefly describe your childhood with your brothers and sisters? (happy/ sad/ memories etc)

5. Of all your family members, who influenced you most? Explain.

**Your Life Now:**

6. Details of your children:

Name	Age	School/caregiver	Father information
1.			
2.			
3			

7. How old were you when you had your first child? ..... By **choice** or **accident** (Tick)

8. Tell me about the man who made you a single mum? (love/ promises/ regrets etc.)

9. Can you tell me about how you felt then?

10. How do you feel now?

**Challenges:**

11. a) Some parents have difficulties in raising children. Mention any problems you may have with your children as a single mom?

.....  
.....

b) Who helps you to take care and discipline your children?

.....

12. Does the government help you with child support monthly? **Yes/ No**

R.....

13. What are your fears for yourself and for your children?

14. In the new South Africa, do you feel empowered by the government as a woman?  
If so how?

15. Do you think your life is better as a single mum than as a married mum?

Explain.....

16. Do you have a message for married

mums?.....

17. What picture comes to your mind when I mention the following words:

• -husband"?.....

.....

• -men"?

• -father"?

18. What is the ideal family for children to grow up in and learn to care for others (tick):

- i) their mothers and grandmothers
- ii) their fathers and other relatives
- iii) with both father, mother, siblings and other relatives
- other combinations

.....

**YOUR IMPACT ON SOCIETY**

19. If you had the power to make changes in your community, how would you change families?

20. If you were allowed to put up a big notice-board in your community what message would you present for all people to read?

**At the back of this page, add any details you want on life as a single mum.**

## **Appendix B<sub>1</sub>**

### **Umama Oyedwa:**

- 1(a) Usuka kweliphi iphondo?.....Igama lomphathi (Nkosi)  
 (b) Zithini iziqinisekiso zemfundo yakho?.....  
 (c) What did you want to do after school?  
 (d) Igaba zikhonqizithinteb kwimpumelelo yamaphuphe akho?
2. Umama wam akatshatanga/ ngumhlokokazi/ uqhawule umtshato/ bohlukena/ akazange watshata/ utshatile/ ufile/ngumuntu omdala ofumana ipension/ ugeshire/ akageshwanga.
3. Ndixelele ngetata, nomama wakho ngomtshato wabo nobomi babo njenge family.
4. Chaza ngokufutshane ukukhula kwakwo nabantakwenu nodode wenu.
5. Kumalunga efamily ngowuphi eyena ukunika inkuthazo chaza?

### **Ubomi Bakho Ngoku:**

6. Inkcukacha ngangabantwana bakho:

Gama	Ubudala	Isikolo/ umlondoloz	Utata
1.			
2.			
3.			

7. Wawubudala kangakanani xa wawufumana umntwana wokuqala?

8. Zintoni imeko ezakwenza ukuba ube ngumama oyedwa (ongatshatanga)?
9. Ungandixelela ukubaweva kanjani
10. Uva njani ngoku?

**Imiceli Mngeni:**

11. (a) Abanye abazali banobunzima ekukhuliseni abantwana. Chaza ingxaki onokuba nazo xa ungumama oyedwa? ....  
(b) Ngubani okuncedisayo ukunakelela nokugegesha abantwana bakho?
12. Ingaba uhulumente uyakunceda ngenxaso yabantwana **Yes/ No** Ngenyanga R.....
13. Intoni amaxhala akho nangabantwana bakho?
14. Ingaba urhulumente uyakuxhobisa njengomama?
15. Ucinga ukuba ubomi bakho bungcono kunobomama otshatileyo?
16. Ingaba unawo umuyalezo womama obatshatileyo?
17. Kuvela mfanekiso mni engqondweni yakho xa kuthetwa ngala magama:
  - Umyeni?
  - Amadeda
  - Utata
18. Abantwana bakhula ngcono xa bekhuliswva:
  - i) ngomama nomhakhulu babu
  - ii) ngotata nezihlobo zabo
  - iii) ngutata, nomama navabatwana bako wabo

**Ukuba unganamandla/ amagunya okwenza utshintsho:**

19. Kwindawo ehlala kuyo, ungazitshintha njani ifamily xa unokuvunyelwa ubeke isazisi kwindawo ohlala?

20. Kuyo myalezo mni onokuwubhala ukuze abantu bawufunde?

**Appendix C**

**Married Mothers**

Pseudonym/ Participant No.....Age ...

1. a) Which province are you from? ..... Name of your Chief.....
  - b) What are your educational qualifications? .....
  - c) What work did you want to do?
  - d) Is there anything that hinders you from achieving your dream?
2. My mother is a single mum/ widow/ divorced/ separated/ never married /married/  
dead/ a pensioner/ employed/ unemployed (tick all points applicable to your mother)
3. Tell me about your father, mother, their marriage and family life.
4. Briefly describe your childhood with your brothers and sisters?
5. Of all your family members, who influenced you most? Explain.

**Your Life Now:**

6. Details of your children:

Name	Age	School/caregiver	Father information
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

--	--	--	--

7. Do you have any worries concerning your children now? Explain.

8. Tell me about your marriage (place/ lobola /duration/ children before marriage/ regrets etc.)

9. Most married couples experience conflict of one kind or another. Tick any areas of disagreement between you and your husband. You may tell me more if you want.

- Unfaithfulness
- Substance abuse
- Lack of care
- Finances
- Discipline of children
- Relatives
- Other issues (e.g. fear of divorce?)

10. a) How do you deal with disagreements in your family?

b) Does that work well for you both?

11. How do you and your husband support your family?

12. If you could choose, would you be **a married mum / a single mum / a single lady with no children**. Give reasons for your preference.

13. Do you have a message for young girls concerning marriage?.....

14. Do you have any message for unmarried ladies/ single mums?  
.....

15. What picture comes to your mind when I mention the following words:

- ~~husband~~?.....

- -men"? .....
- -father"? .....

**Is there anything you want to add concerning married or single life for women?**

Appendix C<sub>1</sub>

**Married Mothers**

- 1(a) Usuka kweliphi iphondo?.....Igama lomphathi (Nkosi)
- (b) Zithini iziqinisekiso zemfundo yakho?.....
- (c) What did you want to do after school?
- (d) Igaba zikhonqizithinteb kwimpumelelo yamaphuphe akho?
2. Umama wam akatshatanga/ ngumhlolokazi/ uqhawule umtshato/ bohlukeni/ akazange watshata/ utshatile/ ufile/ngumuntu omdala ofumana ipension/ ugeshire/ akageshwanga.
3. Ndixelele ngetata, nomama wakho ngomtshato wabo nobomi babo njenge family.
4. Chaza ngokufutshane ukukhula kwakwo nabantakwenu nodode wenu.
5. Kumalunga efamily ngowuphi eyena ukunika inkuthazo chaza?

**Ubomi Bakho Ngoku:**

6. Inkukacha ngangabantwana bakho:

Gama	Ubudala	Isikolo/ umlondolazi	Utata
1.			
2.			
3.			

7. Ingaba kukhona okukuhluphayo ngoku okunxulumene nabantwana bakho. Chara.

8. Ndixelele ngomttshato wakho (indawo, lobola, ixesha, abantwana phambi komtsato, nezisolo njalo njalo)
9. Kwimitshato emininzi, abatshati baba nengxabano. Tikisha indawo ongavumelani kuzo nomyeni wakho. Sixelele ngokubanzi ukuba uyafina.
- Ukungathembeki
  - Ukusebenzisa iziyobisi
  - Ukungabinankathalo
  - Izimali
  - Ukugeqesha abantwana
  - Izamlamane
- Eminye imiba
10. (a) Umelana njani nokungaboni ngalisolunye efamilini?  
(b) Ingaba lonto iyanisebenzela?
11. Niyixhasa njani ifamily yenu?
12. Ukuba ungakhethiswa ukhetha ukuba ngumama etshatileyo/ ongatshatanga/ intombi engenabantwana
13. Do you have a message for young girls?
14. Do you have any message for unmarried ladies/ single mums?
15. Kuvela mfanekiso mni engqondweni yakho xa kuthetwa ngala magama:
- Umyeni?
  - Amadeda
  - Utata

## Appendix D

**Community leaders:** Headmaster/ Teacher/ Pastor/

**Safety:**

1. Is the neighborhood safe for bringing up children?
2. What is the major challenge to balanced child development?
3. Are there specific networks that ensure child safety in the community?

**Family Set-ups:**

4. What family units/ groupings are common in your community?

How do these contribute to family stability and the raising of children?

5. What is your estimate of the ratio of married mothers to single mothers?
6. If single mothers are more, what do you suppose are the reasons for father absence?
7. Are there any known negative consequences of single parenting?
8. What stigmas, if any, are attached to unmarried mothers in your community?

Explain.

9. What do you consider to be the best family set up for promoting caring attitudes in children?

**Communal set-ups:**

10. Are there counselors available to residents with domestic struggles? **Yes/ No**

Please name them.....

You may add any other issues in connection with the raising of children and family life in your community. (You may use the space below and at the back of this page).

## **Appendix E: Christian ladies' testimonies of God's help in crises**

### Appendix E<sub>1</sub>

–It was like riding an emotional roller coaster”

[a cohabitation, coloured mother's experience]

My experience with my first pregnancy as an unmarried mother-to-be was like riding an emotional roller coaster.

Besides the marvelous physical changes, pregnancy is an emotional experience because of the hormones that are in play. And for a reason I cannot explain the negative emotions are much stronger than the positive ones if you are not committed to the father in marriage. I cried a lot, I struggled with self-worth.

This unpleasant emotional journey was despite the fact that I had a loving relationship with the father of my baby and went on to marry him 30 months later. I barely survived emotionally during the pregnancy. And this is how I coped emotionally-by surviving!

In simple terms having been blessed to experience life for 49 years I accept the truth of the existence and importance of conscience. It was not intended for women to carry, bear and raise children as a single entity.

Sure, I understand that many young women are disillusioned about young men and believe they can do 'it' alone when in truth this is going against the conscience. It contributes directly to the breakdown of the family structure and in turn society.

Having then borne two children in wedlock I CAN COMPARE and there is a difference-it is a far more positive experience. More secure, less vulnerable, morally supported = peace.

Sure there are exceptions where the young man that fathered the child is dangerous to the health of the mother and child, Dangerous to the emotional well-being of the mother. This then takes us to WHO are you making your children with? The responsibility is yours to own and you should not be flippant about falling pregnant.

My advice to any young woman, sister is, YOU DO NOT WANT TO HAVE A BABY IF YOU ARE NOT MARRIED. Just believe me, there is no need to experience this mistake for yourself. Listen to advice from older women with self honesty and open hearts. I cannot say for sure if the unnecessary negative emotional experience a mother-to-be goes through when not married affects the baby whilst still in the womb but a child needs both parents, ideally committed in marriage. It is the law of creation for mankind.

We are not like the majority of animals that were not given a conscience and whose survival does not depend in any way on family structure.

Family structure impacts on society which has a moral fibre that is essential to the survival of mankind as God intended.

There is also the financial aspect for most young women but even if a woman does not need financial assistance, she needs the moral support from the father.

There are also legal aspects like naming the child. My first child was registered in my maiden name and I had to change it after we were married. This whole experience of whose name the child should bear was another negative emotional experience.

AGAIN, I say, if you are speaking negatively of the father then you were irresponsible in falling pregnant!

This mindset amongst young women must change. They need to examine their motives for falling pregnant. They need to accept the truth of **—WHAT WE SOW, SO WE SHALL REAP.**“

My advice:-

Do not have unsafe casual sexual experiences. The choice is yours, unless you are raped.

Ideally do not have casual sexual experiences at all. But I was young once- so I understand the difficulties involved in abstinence- but in my time of youth the world was as a different place and each generation must take responsibility for the safekeeping of the rule of pro-creation in the TIMES that they live in.

Examine your motives for wanting to fall pregnant. Be fair when considering the circumstances of the young man involved and the child that you will give birth to.

Remember all actions should have a motive, and this motive is the foundation of the consequences of that action. If we do not give ourselves motives then the brain automatically kicks in with negative thoughts that play over and over again in our minds and in truth then that is a negative foundation.

## Appendix E<sub>2</sub>

I always heard God saying: **I WILL LOOK AFTER YOU**  
[a divorcee, coloured mother's experience]

I married and had 5 sons. My marriage was not a good one especially after I had decided to follow Jesus and serve him. My husband had other goals in view which made things very difficult because we then drifted apart and went in opposite directions.

My baby was 9 years old when we separated. Life became so tough from that time. My husband refused to give any maintenance and I forced to look for employment which was not easy to find, being past 50 years of age. I struggled very much to keep food on the table, to pay rent, school fees, buy uniform etc. It was very sad to have my children living without their father but it was good to have so much inner peace.

My two older boys were married and the next chose to be with me and not stay with their dad. It was amazing how we got through each day, each week, each month. I had to trust God for everything and he proved Himself to be more than faithful. If it were not for him, I don't know where I would have landed. I remember a time – one of many- when there was no food, I went to the letter box, found an aerogramme from my brother in Australia. Nothing is allowed in an aerogramme so I thought it was just some up to date news. I opened it – and out fell a \$50 bill. I eventually had to sell my

car as there was no money for repairs. I had to move house several times because of rent increases. In all of my struggles, I always heard God saying: “I WILL LOOK AFTER YOU”. I believed him. I prayed much and held onto God for many things that seemed impossible. I did home caring and each time a patient died, I was recommended and very seldom without work.

My boys are all grown up and independent and I can look back and see how God aided, strengthened, guided, encouraged and carried me through my dark years of struggling. He is true to his word – the Bible – and he rewards those who seek his help and who follow him. I could have tried many other ways and means that were not in line with his word. But I definitely would not be as happy as I am today. I believe doing things the wrong way ends in regrets and difficult consequences. I would strongly advise all single parents to TRUST GOD IN EVERYTHING, because the struggles decrease and the blessings increase as we trust and follow him.

### Appendix E<sub>3</sub>

#### **Fear Not for I am with you ...** [a white widow's experience]

My husband passed away in 1981 at the age of 48 - I was 46. I had 4 children aged 25, 20 > just started 2<sup>nd</sup> year university with three years to go, a 15 year old in grade 11, turning 16 two weeks after her father died. The last child was 11 years and was in grade 7 – a good keen ballet dancer.

My husband died on a mountain trail on Good Friday at 3p.m. on the first day of the Methodist youth group Easter camp, with 30 - 40 young people and about 6 adults. He was bringing up the rear when he collapsed and died immediately. It happened a kilometer from where I was. The horror and trauma of being told that your husband had gone especially as I was expecting him to walk in at any moment was unbelievable and confusing. My daughter who had also been on the trail was devastated and uncontrollable.

To make matters worse, my mother had passed just two weeks before my husband. The days that followed were a blur (the memorial service held on Easter Monday), but, I knew that with the Lord's help and support, I would be walking a different path guiding and supporting my children

My one disappointment was my eldest son, who blamed God for taking his father and to this day, he has been unable to come to terms with the situation. We were a close

Christian family. We were with one organization for 19 years and my husband was a lay preacher. We were both committed Christians when we got married. The minister and members of the church were always there for me guiding and supporting the family. I was recommended for a job as a school secretary and was to start after the May long weekend.

Unfortunately and to my sorrow, the principle phoned me and asked me if I would mind standing down as the previous secretary wanted to come back. I agreed but you can imagine I almost went to pieces when I put the phone down. I put the phone down. I sat down and broke down – it was as if the Lord was bringing me down to the bottom of the barrel so that I would know that He would bring me up again. I knew then that He would carry me always through all my hardships – joys, stresses, and difficulties to come. He answered my prayers in the most incredible ways. He provided me with another job through someone without me applying. I worked there for nine years.

Throughout my nine years of widowhood and with the Lord's help I saw my children through their studies and graduations and weddings. I wept tears of joy and satisfaction when attending my son's graduation. We were both there and knew his father would have been very proud of him.

To those grieving for a loved one, remember these words from Isaiah 41: 10  
–Fear not, for I am with you. I am your God, I will strengthen you: I will help: I will uphold you with my victorious right hand”

## Appendix 4

The ordeal of a young, black, widowed mother, of a two year old baby girl:

My husband death was very sudden even though he had been ill for some time, all hope and faith was raised that all would be well. We hoped he would rise up and walk again fit and jovial as was the case before. When the news came, there was a feeling of being let down, sudden deprivation which was like part of your flesh has been gruesomely torn from you; let down by God who supreme as he is was the only one with the power to grant life and perform the impossible. The week prior to this death, in-laws had raised accusations particularly against me the wife. This resulted in a sharp division within the family of those that supported me as an innocent victim in the ordeal and those who felt I had every motivation to plan the very death of my husband. There were accusations about witchcraft which could only be emanating from my maiden family and those that upheld this belief wanted everyone to go to consult a witchdoctor.

Now that the worst had occurred, these accusations naturally heightened. It was painful enough to lose a loved one but to be accused of being the one who took his life made it worse. My husband's family did not contribute towards the burial as is the norm but they made so many demands such as selecting a burial place 300km from the city where we lived. I was supposed to pay and organize travel arrangements for

everyone. Thank God I had a bigger family in Christ that took the burden as its own and managed the whole event. My mother-in-law, who was the chief accuser, apologized days after the burial, making it easier for me to cope with the pain.

The change of life was immediate. We used to live in a large four bed-roomed house outside the city, and my family felt I needed to move since I was alone with a daughter barely two years old. A place which was once home, a joy to be in, where a full family had meals, entertained visitors became like a haunted eerie place not worthy to be called home. So I moved into my sister's apartment in the city center and asked a friend to move in with me. Even with a friend staying with me the level of loneliness cannot be described; I know what it means to be in a crowd and be lost in your thoughts; to be in a church service but miles away from the happenings. Just watching my daughter who could not say 'daddy' anymore, was a pain.

Two months later my mother-in-law started working out a plan where one of my late husband's brothers, who was not married then, was now tipped to take over his brother's inheritance. I was given a sister-in-law to stay with- who did not know how to deal with my pain. She had a health problem which meant that I had to frequently consult with the brothers when she fell ill. The brother who was part of this plan, started frequenting home – sometimes twice a day (mornings and evenings) until I got very suspicious. I felt like these people were taking advantage of me and even felt they were dishonouring their late brother. For me, it was not a man I was looking for, no I was grieving for my husband, my first love, a specific person with a name. No one could just have been a substitute. So how can these people think in this manner – that all I'm grieving for is a man, so that whoever, can take that place. Ridiculous! My mother-in-law realized I was not responding to the actions and decided to confide in a close friend of mine. She deliberately told her what the plan was, knowing fully well that I would get to know about it and that made my life even more miserable. How do you entertain people in your house who you know are planning something of this nature behind your back?

At that point I had to confront the reality and aborted their plan. Needless to say, it was not an easy confrontation which could easily have turned against me. The first

year of my widowhood was therefore marked with all these events, painful memories, unanswered questions, and tearful nights. In the second year, when the depression would not lift partly because I would always interact and see the same people who were our common friends, go to the same places etc, memories were too fresh to erase. I could not move on with life. I was too young and most people would look at me and my daughter with such a pitiful look it was as if I was a sorry sight! In the same year as is expected, the in-laws visited my parents to decide on what would be my future. It was agreed that no one would take over the wife for an inheritance – I flatly declined. But some of my family members felt I could not raise a tiny baby single-handed. They thought that I would not be able to perform the traditional rituals required. I made it clear that God would do it and the child would grow not because of rites and rituals but because of God given and ordained .....

God opened an opportunity for a job in a different city which made things better. The job was new and so it threw an immediate challenge at the work front which really helped me take my mind off the usual treadmill. However, financially, things were tough. I had to engage in a small business to make ends meet. Even then, I still ended up borrowing when I was short of money. My new workplace and church setting became a door of hope from my depression. The pastor's wife committed herself to ensure that I became alive once again. She had always known me as a vibrant young woman who loved the Lord and so she knew the life I was leading then was not the real me..... (to be continued in another study)

## Appendix 4 a.

It is easy to feel pity for oneself ... God is a Father to the fatherless

[Lessons learnt by the black widow of Appendix 4]

### Challenges

- The world sees it as abnormal for one to raise a child single so it is easy to feel pity for oneself
- One has to double up in terms of roles i.e. play the father figure as well as being mother which is not an easy balance
- It is easy to fall into the trap of being overprotective
- Financial means may be limited forcing the single parent to compromise living standards
- Social life for the child may end up being unbalanced – e.g. mother only exposes the child to single sex persons
- That practice, may pass on traits of bitterness or sorrow to the child especially if singleness was through divorce or through painful death.

### Tips – what I learned

- Do not feel pity for yourself or for the child. You are created in the image of God, you are adequate as you are
- God is a father to the fatherless, make sure the children know this father who will never leave them nor forsake them
- Treat the children as any mother would – discipline when necessary

- Love the children without spoiling them. Let them know that they are loved but if they do wrong they will get a penalty for wrong doing
- Create good social relations with relatives and friends who are of the opposite sex BUT make sure you do not compromise your moral standards. Many children get exposed to unethical behaviour and end up becoming unruly because of exposure to bad influences

## Appendix 5

–A family that prays together will stay together”

[divorcee mother / Africaans background]

When you are young and you learn to know love, you take a step into your future. If you had parents that loved you and they also told you about God, life can be wonderful; not a future without knowing God. You would also learn what love is, you had a chance of having a good life and marriage. Now with me, the most important things were missing, how can you start marriage with a black empty future?

My mother passed away when I was born; my father got married again and then there were three more children. So, being in love, you take a step into your future, never ever having heard the word –We love you” only –I hate you”. There is a big responsibility on the shoulder of the parents, to let the children know they are loved.

When you are married and there is the knowing you are going to have a baby, you will let that child know you love him/her, for the rest of their life. You just don't start a family without a father. If you do not get married, just stay together without God; you do not only take your life in your hand but you are also a stone in the pathway of your children. A stone, more a stumbling block and they don't know what to do. The other thing is if you do not teach a child how to behave, how can he learn what is right and what is wrong. If there is no father how will they learn how to behave, they will not know how to behave or say what is wrong. If there is no Father from whom are they going to learn how to treat a Mother? Father or Mother can teach a child what love really is. There is no father to show a child or tell the child to love and respect

their mother ... to be a happy family. No one can teach them to obey, or to be a guide. How will they know if the Father is not there to teach them? What does the Bible say about –a stumbling block”? May God help the parents to teach their children first about God and love. Then they will know what to do. A family that prays together will stay together. Keep your faith and keep on believing. Jesus is the only hope you can cling on. Without Him you are lost.

## Appendix 6

–Very hard when children are alone”

[a widowed mother]

My husband was deceased. Very hard when children are young to feed and clothe them. School requirements – Books, stationery and train fare to school. Children need a male figure in the house, which my children didn’t have not even an uncle, because I come from Zim. A reverend helped counsel the 3 boys.

We lived in a church. –the Reverend and wife helped in a big way. Supplied cooked meals sometimes. Would write letters to school, that I’m single mum I can’t pay fees.

Advice to others: When offered help, take it and commit yourself to the Lord

## Appendix F

### Norah Campbell's testimony

[Downloaded from the internet to show the need to choose carefully what battles to engage in if feminists are to be credible and win support from all quarters of the society]

#### Reverend Mother – A Novel

Posted on December 13, 2010 by reverendmother2011

*Nora Campbell, a radical socialist in the 1970s, had a crisis of faith after the demise of communism. Disillusioned, she joined the church where she became an ordained minister. But it was difficult for Nora to leave her radical past behind and she butted heads with church authorities. The ultimate test came after she decided to have a child, even though she was not married.*

*The church, finding Nora's actions unacceptable, stripped her of her authority, position, and title. She sued the church for wrongful dismissal and employment discrimination. The court case and the surprising turns unearthed the legal, ethical, and moral dilemmas thrown up by Nora and her pregnancy in a largely conservative church and society.*

For more details go to [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

#### Chapter twenty eight

The ballroom waits expectantly. The high powered women view the very pregnant woman in their midst with quaint fascination. It is the annual banquet of the Business Women and Professional Club, a group of mainly upper class business and professional women and wives of the rich and powerful. "The idle rich," Nora used to call them. She feels strange among them and regards herself as an irony. These are women she vilified and ridiculed for much of her life.

Adam Goldstein's article turned her plight into an international drawing card. Women's groups in Europe, the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean contacted Nora, and she has since received invitations to be interviewed by local media and to speak at various functions,

but this is her first public event. Other than the Associated Press interview, she has not commented publicly.

Too many of the guests want her to talk about herself during the pre-banquet reception. Nora deftly deflects the questions and seats herself, focusing on the uninteresting program in her hand. She tries little chitchat with those seated with her at the head table and forces herself to smile. The meal is totally tasteless, though she guesses it is some high society fare. She now desperately wants the evening to be over. Nora smiles across at Janet who sits at another table.

The time finally comes for her to speak. The emcee's introduction is superfluous but Nora accepts it graciously and lumbers up to the podium. A hush descends on the room and the clatter of silverware on plates subsides. She looks over the room of mainly females with a few husbands and boyfriends towed along. Cameras flash, reporters place tape recorders on the podium and four television cameras train focus on her. The nervousness runs down her spine to her toes.

"Ladies, gentlemen, it takes some bravery on your part to have me in your midst this evening." The audience gives an uncertain chuckle. "Courage is a most uncommon virtue these days, so I do not take your invitation lightly," Nora smiles, deliberately flattering the crowd. "I dare say it takes some courage for me to be here, being in the condition I am. I hope there's a doctor in the house cause you could be called to attend to an emergency any minute." The audience laughs, reading well the tone of her voice even as she glances down on her protruding stomach.

"I'm sure some of you are most curious to hear juicy details about my pregnancy and conflict with the church. I can't say I blame you. It does read like a good story. But for me, this is not a media event to celebrate. It's a most personal struggle that has taken on gargantuan proportions. I feel that I'm being drawn into a most public debate and battle when I'd rather stay in my little corner.

"I'm the first to admit that what I've done is most unusual, perhaps unique. I've dared to challenge long held traditions and beliefs. What makes it especially difficult is that I'm female. A female rebel is itself an oddity in our country. But there're some battles that only a woman can fight. Men cannot fight them for us, nor should we expect that they should." Several handclaps sound round the auditorium.

"As you may have learned by now, based on a published article that has gained widespread attention, I did not engage on this quest to strike a blow for women's liberty or women's rights. I did what I did because the same blood that runs through all other women's veins runs

through mine, and the same desires and aspirations that other women have I too have. I'm a woman like any other woman. And one of the aspirations of many of us is that of having a family, or more specifically, the desire for children. Mine has not been any less.

"We're told that children should only be had within the traditional confines of a family where both parents are married. Again, I do not take issue with that. That is an ideal I support. But that ideal is promulgated within a context where women are deprived, where there is the remotest chance that we can have a family with children.

"A number of you may be part of the church, and I understand if you disagree with what I'm doing. But it seems unfair, doesn't it, that the church is filled with mainly women – very few men are in the church – and yet we're told not to marry men who are *not* part of the church, or worse, we should not marry any man who is not part of *our* church because that would make us 'unequally yoked.' So you have a situation that a woman who desires children either does not have any, or she must leave the church if she is to have children. A number of women have done that. They leave the church, have their children, and then return. The church then receives them *and* their children with open arms. Some of these children eventually become leaders or prominent members within the church. Where does the hypocrisy stop?"

The crowd mutters and several heads nod in agreement, scattered handclaps rounding the room.

"One of the things said to me is that having a child is not a right. Well, we do lots of things that are not ours by right. Men arrogate to themselves an authority over us women that are not theirs by right. Men withhold from us our rightful place in business, in the professions, in the church, in the home. We have a right as equal participants with men in all spheres of society. Yet men assign to us the place we should be while they keep for themselves the positions of influence and power and wealth. We're placed in positions of dependency where we have no choice but to be dependent on men.

"So the church tells me I don't have a right to a child, a church whose leadership is overwhelmingly male, and most of whom have had their own children. Can you imagine if your boss were to say that to you, that you don't have a right to a family, or to have children, and fires you if you do? Can you imagine if the government was to say that to us, that if we were to have children we would lose certain benefits, because we've exercised an option that is not ours by right? What word is there for that other than tyranny that I, or any one of us women in here, are told that we do not have a right to have children?"

“I made the decision to have a child because I believe it is *my* right to do so. And I made the decision that I would not leave the church to have that child and then return, as other women have.

“The church, of course, would have none of it. They threw me out. I determined not to leave voluntarily, so I was booted out. Well, I guess one could say they exercised their right to oppose my rights as a woman.” She pauses for the irony to sink in.

“Part of the smokescreen put before us is the legitimacy of the method I’ve chosen to have my child. But let’s not be fooled. The method doesn’t make a difference as to how the church would’ve reacted. But let’s think about the method for a moment.

“The church has always been the last institution to embrace change, whatever the change is. The church is by nature suspicious of anything new or different. Most religions are. There were instances when the church rejected a new method or invention or discovery or thinking but has since embraced these. When the pill came into common use, one of the strongest opponents to the use of the pill was the church. Today, most major Protestant churches embrace the pill and other forms of birth control, or at least, they do not oppose its use. When reggae music became popular, the church was at best lukewarm toward this form of music. Now, the most popular gospel artistes in this country have embraced both reggae and dancehall music.

“Artificial insemination and other forms of assisted reproductive technology are relatively new. These are options available to women to have children, and because the church has not grounded its feet where such technology is concerned, it stands opposed to it. But I dare tell you that by the time my child becomes an adult, such technology will be embraced by the very church that now stands opposed to it.

“I’ve thought about this long and hard. Several choices are left open to me – either accept the church’s ruling and walk away, or challenge the church’s ruling. Neither is a palatable choice. None is painless. To accept the ruling would be to agree that what I’ve done is illegitimate and wrong. I honestly do not believe so. To challenge the ruling is to challenge that which is dearest and closest to my heart, because I still feel a strong bond with the church. I have therefore thought long and hard in contemplating my next move, and it is in that vein that I conferred with my attorney.”

Nora pauses for dramatic effect. Low mutterings sweep through the room followed by a further and deeper hush.

“The advice given to me is that I do have just and reasonable cause to take action against the church.”

Again, Nora pauses for dramatic effect. She shuffles her papers, then looks at the audience with a steely gaze.

“A motion has therefore been filed in the Supreme Court that my constitutional rights as a woman and as a professional have been violated by the action of the church.”

A buzzing sound bursts through the ballroom as awe wends its way through the audience. Nora lifts her voice as she speaks.

“I can assure you that this action gives me no pleasure. I feel compelled to do it out of sheer necessity, both to clear my name and, even though this was not my original intent, to safeguard the rights of women, especially my sisters within the church.

“Some people will find it strange that I would take such action against the church. I know some will view this as blasphemy of the worst sort.”

Then Nora begins to look pointedly into the faces of some of the ladies as she speaks in a stronger and firmer voice.

“Tell me, if you were working in a law firm, and you were fired for getting pregnant, what action would you have taken? If you work in the offices of any of our financial institutions and you were dismissed for having a baby, what is the most reasonable course of action that you could think of? If as a woman you were deprived of your livelihood and from practicing your profession simply because you desire the most precious gift in the world, the gift of a child, what would be the most natural course of action?”

“I’m a professional, a trained professional within the church, and I’ve been denied my rights to practice my profession simply because of my pregnancy, not because of any other action on my part. I’ve been deprived of my livelihood as a minister of the gospel because I dare to have a child. Which other profession, which other sphere in society would tolerate such illegal and oppressive action?”

Nora’s voice rings even louder as the audience listens in awestruck silence.

“And I dare anyone to get biblical with me! Mary the mother of Jesus got pregnant before her marriage to her husband, yet it is he that we serve and it is she that we revere. Rahab is listed as a female heroine in the scriptures and she was a prostitute – a prostitute who is an ancestor to Jesus! Tamar tricked her father in law into sleeping with her so that she could have a child – this Tamar too is an ancestor of Jesus!

“As far as morality goes, these women ought to be disgraced rather than lauded. Have I tricked anyone? Am I a prostitute? I have neither tricked anyone nor am I a prostitute, yet I’m treated as if I’m worse!

“If the way the church has treated me is reasonable, then we need to root the stories of these women out of the very Bible we revere.”

The stunned audience, after a split-second silence, thunders into applause. The roar of hands runs for more than half a minute. Nora calms herself and speaks in a lower, more modulated tone.

“Frankly, I have no idea what will come of this action. I’m sure that a long road lies ahead. It’s never easy to oppose or confront a bastion of power. It’s never easy to stand up to those who feel that their rules operate outside of the ambit of the laws of society. That’s the situation with the church. Its rules are supposedly beyond the pale of the general system of justice. It sets its own rules and it enforces those rules. In terms of its internal operations, it scoffs at the idea that others should tell it how it should manage its own affairs, or challenge its own laws.

“But the church cannot operate as if it’s an independent state within a state. When it comes to trampling the rights of others, the church should be made to give an account in the same way any of the other institutions you represent here tonight are expected to. If the church is obligated to give heed to the laws having to do with taxes and finance, it should not be exempt from those having to do with the rights of persons. Discrimination on the basis of gender has for too long been a feature of the life of the church and it is time that it stops.”

Nora surveys the room in the middle of her final pause.

“I hope some of you here will stand with me. But I intend to fight this to the very end, even if it means going alone.”

A standing ovation continues until Nora is fully seated at her table.

For more details go to [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

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