

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION



2018-2020 THEME: THE FAMILY

PRODUCED BY: INTERDIOCESAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 2017

CATHOLIC WOMENS ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

VISION

**To become true witness of
Christ, inspired and
empowered by the Holy Spirit**

MISION

**To promote the spiritual growth
and personal formation of its
members**

WE VALUE:

**Prayer
as a way
of life**

**Selfless
service to
God and
Humanity**

**Spiritual
growth and
personal
formation**

**Faith, Action
and
Evangelisation**

**Christia
n Family
life**

**Love,
Forgivene
ss, Peace
& Unity**

MOTTO: FAITH AND ACTION

(James 2: 14 -18)

A WORD BY THE INTERDIOCESAN PRESIDENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Catholic Women Association for allowing me to serve with a team of dedicated and motivated women of faith. In everything, we give thanks to the Lord. The past three years witnessed CWA's continued spiritual yearning and growth. The display of love and sisterhood became visible as we journeyed together. The theme ***Life in the Spirit*** which guided and supported us throughout the three years was more than a fulfilling experience. The highlight was when we, through the help of the Holy Spirit managed to crown our faith by undertaking a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Rome.

With renewed hope and optimism for new beginnings, the Glory of God has taken us into another leap of faith and CWA spiritual visioning in the renewal of the face of the earth in the next three years; under the theme: ***The Family***. We trust in the promise that the Holy Spirit will guide our path, and teach us all we need to know.

As I pass the leadership baton and usher in the 2018-2020 CWA Theme booklet, whose outcome derive directly from the hard work of the Dioceses once more, let me thank the Holy Spirit for the road travelled by CWA this far, and the new opportunities ahead. That we venture into the new season with a new theme speaks to the commitment and resolve to continuously reflect and introspect as we continue on our spiritual journey. Working collaboratively with each other and with God on our side, the CWA Family and our individual families should beacon shining examples of being the salt of the earth. God willing power coupled with our determination is a winning combination and should get CWA to even greater heights in our relationship with God with the family at the centre.

I wish to greatly appreciate the Executive Committee, Inter-Diocesan Spiritual Director and Diocesan Spiritual Advisors for their individual contribution towards the production of this theme booklet. Special thanks goes to the Task Team, whose commitment, enthusiasm and tireless effort facilitated its production. Well done phenomenal women, please keep the CWA flag flying high.

May I invite Dioceses, deaneries, branches and individual members to use this booklet in their deliberations, mainly as a guide to facilitate and augment spiritual growth and enrichment, and strengthen family ties at all levels.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you each one of you, and highlight the family, as a God given crucial unit of existence, which deserves to be cherished. Let us go out into the world and espouse in earnest the true meaning of a Christian family life.



Maureen Mabena

Interdiocesan President

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INTRODUCTION: 2018 - 2020 CWA THEME: THE FAMILY

A. THE PROCESS

As is customary and practice, CWA adopts a thematic approach to addressing and focusing discussions and spiritual growth aligned to term of office currently, 3 years. The theme: *The Family* came as a result of extensive consultations guided by the CWA Inter Diocesan Executive across its structures and general membership over the year 2017, following the call for Diocesan submissions in 2016.

Diocesan submissions broadly covered the following: Youth is our future, The Family, The Family and Modern Challenges HIV, Divorce etc., CWA for Love and forgiveness, Family and Mercy, The Family and Prayer, CWA and the Year of Mercy, CWA and Unity, CWA and prayer, CWA for unleashing the diversity of religious cultures, The gift of Understanding and Eucharist and its role in the Christian life and family. A consensus was reached on the choice of The Family on the grounds that:

- It was considered topical, relevant and broad enough to encompass/merge others.
- The family, the basic foundation for the society is challenged hence the importance of being proactive to give this institution special focus and attention. (We are aware that pope Francis dedicated 2015 to the Family and this, in view of its critical nature needs constant reference)

B. MOTIVATION FOR FOCUS ON THE THEME: *FAMILY*

The family is a fundamental aspect of the church let alone the society. We are all born into families. Even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was born in this context conforming its importance and centrality in life. God put us all in families to experience love and learn how to love others and share. God adopted us into his family and made us heirs of his kingdom through his son Jesus Christ who earned us this privilege. We are all called to lift God's name by respecting this. Through communion we have also united with him and have become one in flesh.

This basic and divine unit of existence builds the church. Its role is thus not only important to the human kind but for the fulfilment of our mission on earth. It continues

to change both in nature and form. Despite its critical role and placement by God it is more than ever before challenged and consequently needs special attention especially in view of the implication to God's creation and the church.

The Holy Spirit plays a pivotal role in this institution and should continuously be called upon for its restoration and development. The effects of modern world and sin on this institution cannot be overstated and calls for renewed vigour to place into the hands of its creator, God himself.

C. SUB THEMES AND PRESENTATION

To explore this topic, the following Sub themes which are not *mutually exclusive* were accepted and shared amongst Dioceses and consequently presented in the same manner in the booklet.

1. What is the family and why is it important anyway?: (Gaborone)
2. Marriage and family: (Polokwane).
3. The family and communication: (Kimberly)
4. The family and Prayer: (Rustenburg)
5. The family and Values: Moral degradation. (Witbank)
6. Youth, the foundation for the future family. (Klerksdorp)
7. Challenges facing the family (Christian family): The Christian family living in times of change: (Tzaneen and Gaborone)
8. The Family and health: (Dundee and Johannesburg)
9. Family: love and forgiveness (Pretoria)

CHAPTER 1

1. WHAT IS THE FAMILY? ITS ROLE AND IMPORTANCE

1.1 THE FAMILY

1.1.1 The family is the basic unit, an essential building block and a vital cell of society. It is a group of people of various ages who are usually related by birth, marriage or adoption. This includes married adults with or without children. They maintain a common culture and are often governed by family values.

1.1.2 **Family ties:** The members of a family usually feel that they have a special relationship with each other based on some or all of the following:

- Blood – knowing that they have the same ancestors
- Affection
- Duty-due to a traditional sense of obligation
- Shared experiences
- Common interests
- Culture

1.2 FAMILY STRUCTURES

1.2.1 There are mainly 2 types of families which continue to evolve with the changing situation and circumstances. These are:

1.2.1.1 **The Nuclear family:** This is a smaller family comprising parents and children and usually stays in a household and support and love one another.

1.2.1.2 **Extended family:** The extended family is a large family group, a multi-generational family that may or may not share the same household. . It includes family members who either share blood relations, relation by marriage, and/or legal relations. This includes grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. Such a family is the basis for the traditional pattern of family life in many countries. When the members of an extended family are closely connected by affection, duty, common interest, or daily acquaintance, they may help and support each other in a number of ways such as:

- Providing comfort at times of distress
- Helping the parents to bring up their children
- Looking after the children in an emergency or when the parents are working
- Giving advice on problems
- Helping financially

Grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins are a major source of support when the nuclear family is faced with serious malfunctioning problems

1.2.2 The Changing Family Structure

In recent years, changes to the traditional pattern of family life have been taking place worldwide resultant in other types of families including:

1.2.2.1 Child-Headed Family

A child-headed family is a family without a parent and or adult caregiver/s and which is headed by the eldest/responsible child assuming parental responsibility.

1.2.2.2 Cohabitation Family

The cohabitation family consists of two adults staying together without any contractual agreements with or without children.

1.2.2.3 Non-Household Family

A non-household family is a group of non- related people staying together sharing responsibilities and governed by family rules.

1.2.3 The Evolving Family Roles

At the beginning of the 20th century the roles of husband and wife within the family were distinct. The traditional role of the husband was to be the 'breadwinner' and to make the important decisions, whilst that of the wife was to care for her home, husband and children.

During the course of the century these roles have become blurred in many families. Many women have paid jobs and many of the household jobs are shared by both sexes. The change in society has been reflected in legislation steering the evolved roles.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE, ROLE AND PURPOSE OF FAMILY

1.3.1 Importance of Family

The family is divine in nature and God designates it as the fundamental building block of society, both on earth and through eternity. As such, it becomes the foundation for civilization and a sanctuary for the individual.

God sends each of us to earth helpless. We are born into families. It's a given that we must depend on our family from the beginning. By design, we are given a family to provide for us, to protect us, and to prepare us for the challenges we'll face in the years ahead.

It is at home that we learn to walk and to talk. We share expressions of love. It is through family life we learn (purposefully or inadvertently) the habits, emotional responses, obligations, and values that will begin to shape our adult selves. Through the family we learn the social graces of loyalty, cooperation, and trust. It is where we learn to love ourselves and each other, to bear one another's burdens, to find meaning in our life and to give purpose to others' lives, and to feel the value of being part of something greater than ourselves.

There is a universal desire for oneness among people. We want to belong. That is why we collaborate, support common causes, cheer for sports teams, have self-identity and nationalism and congregate in different social groups. The family is the basic source of these relations.

1.3.2 Functions of the Family

These include and are not limited to the following:

- The family provide for children's needs including: food, shelter, clothing and education. It's humbling when we realize that our family on earth is patterned after our family in heaven. We are children of divine Heavenly Parents who also provide for our needs with a physical world and all the bounties in it. Our Heavenly Father has the power to protect us, though just as mortal parents may do. Our Heavenly Father provides us with rules (or commandments) that can teach us the skills, the habits, and the values that will continue to shape our spiritual selves.
- It is our duty, even a sacred responsibility, to care for those in our family. In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," God expressed that parents are "to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their

physical and spiritual needs.” We are also told that parents “will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2010, 129).

- It offers secure environment in which they can develop into young adults, learn to love, build character and companionships.
- Families beget families and contribute to God’s recreation. As they say **“There is no greater joy than a family.”** On the issue of forever family Tim Gates, maintains that composing a family is the most important thing he’ll ever do. He credits his parents and the generations who came before them for who he is and who he hopes his kids will become.
- Building strong, united families is the remedy for many of society’s failings. One of the blessings of belonging to a family is the inspiration to make choices beyond self-interest and immediate gratification. The family can encourage our commitment to individuals, communities, and God.
- Through the Proclamation to the World, families help strengthen each other and fulfil God’s purpose on earth and **wove** the fabric of humanity together.
- Whether parent or child, sibling or spouse, every one of God’s children has a role in taking care of one another. And like the pattern set by our heavenly family, we must provide and care for each other with love. We can follow Heavenly Father’s example by encouraging our loved ones in their trials, listening to their worries, cheering for them in their efforts and successes, and comforting them in their sorrows.
- By upholding God’s principles in our homes, we can influence those around us. Many people take pride in their family names and the heritage of honourable people they represent. Others are setting aside past mistakes and seeking to fulfil the divine roles of family anew. No matter our past, all of us can have essential roles in nurturing and strengthening our family ties on earth into relationships that can link generations in love throughout the eternities.

1.4 THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE FAMILY

In the Introductory section of this booklet, we spoke of the institution of the family as the “the vital cell of society and that it “was cemented by the fact that Jesus was born and lived within a family.

From the Biblical perspective, there are two important/essential elements of family namely: marriage and parenthood.

From the biblical perspective, the family is a masterpiece of God's creation and was introduced in the beginning with the Story of Adam and Eve Gen 1:27 - 28) who God blessed and said they should be fruitful and multiply to fill the earth and subdue it whilst at the same time ruling over all other creatures of the earth. Its importance and sanctity are highlighted in the 5th and 7 commandments.

Families need to build their foundation on God and his love. From the beginning God's original design and intention for families and marriage was for them to be the foundation of love. "Wives, submit to your husbands, as it is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged" (Col 3:18 -21).

(Genesis 4: 9). Today's families continue the legacy of disobedience to God. Our families are destroyed by the sinful choices made at the expense of family values. Those choices continue to destroy the love, warmth and unity which are supposed to hold or bind families together.

The importance of family as a fountain of love and hope was fulfilled when the God of hope (Romans 15: 13) prepared for our salvation and revealed himself to the world through the **family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**. His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, became man and was loved, though he was God, humbled himself (Philippians 2: 6-11) as a family member and was obedient to Mary and Joseph until He was ready to fulfil His mission of our salvation.

It was Jesus who taught us to refer to God as **Our Father** (Matthew 6: 9-13). It means we are all **God's children**. It is Jesus who is known as the Son of God. The Church is regarded as the **Bride of Christ** (Ephesians 5: 25-27). The Triune Godhead in which God is our Father and Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord who makes us co-heir to the Kingdom of heaven.

As Christians we are referred to as **Brothers and Sisters** in Christ (Eph 1: 3-7). Mary is known as **Mother of God** (Theotokos), our Mother, and **Mother of the Church** (John 19: 26-27). Family is related by blood. As the Christians we were saved and enjoined in God's family through the Blood of Jesus Christ. We are all family. "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me," (John 17: 21). It is interesting to note that all the words in bold above, are associated with the concept of family. Families are forever, created by God for us to experience first love, first support and first protection on earth.

There are many types of families but our discussion centred on Christian family. God calls every one of us to help to build strong Christian families because Christian families are the pillar of Christian society. But the institution of family is on the brink of total collapse. The family values are no longer respected. Families are now faced with the challenges and problems which were unheard of in the past. It is no longer fashionable to be model Christian family with God at the centre. This challenges are Christians

1.5 FAMILY LIVING CONCEPTS

Every social model that intends to serve the good of man must not overlook the centrality and social responsibility of the family.

In this chapter we look at concepts which are basic to the family as a social unit, these being the fabric that are critical to families to grow and stay together. We later we want to look at some of the straw bales which our culture is pressuring us to use/do in our homes/families, and which we must reject if we are to have wholesome families.

1.5.1 The Social Unit

- "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7).
- "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Proverbs 10:1-5).
- "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1, 2a, 4).

From these and similar Scriptures, we can easily see that God intended the family to be the most basic social unit of society. Having ordained the home to be the primary place of social interaction, God laid down guidelines for proper interaction.

Now a days families including Christian families find it strange or don't have time to have the whole family home for an evening. Father, mother child schedule their own individual activity for all the evenings of the week days. (Cinema, Party, Motshelo, Multilevel Marketing Business Meeting, Work, Prayer Group, Choir, Sport Practice, Gym, the list is endless. Such social chaos was virtually unheard of for the family on past generations. This calls for fathers reminded of the seemingly little rubrics that tie the family together and keep it from falling apart. Such concepts include

1.5.2 The Family Should Work Together

Obviously the job scene is changing in our modernized society. The family farm is no longer the norm. The ideal thing is not simply in starting a family business, but in valuing family interactions.

Where the father can work with his family, he should. Where he cannot work with his family in his occupation, he should keep that occupation from swallowing all or his working energy and plan work at home with his family in his off time. Gardening is an excellent off-time work project. It is good for children to see their parents work. It is good for families to figure out work-related problems, divide up responsibilities, and share the rewards of hard work

1.5.3 The Family Should Eat and Talk Together

It is true that some schedule conflicts cannot be avoided especially as older teens begin to interact more in the adult world. It is also true, however, that much of the meal disruption today is simply the result of over involvement. It is not wrong to be busy on good activities but something basic is wrong when the unhurried family meal is the rare exception.

In evaluating activities which keep the family apart at mealtime, it is well to consider the difference between service activities and self-serving activities.

Service activities are love's responses to the needs of others. People who are serious in their commitment to Jesus Christ will often find themselves busy in service activities. Jesus found mealtime with His disciples being cut out by such activities, and He took steps for relief. "And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6:31).

Self-serving activities, on the other hand, are things we do primarily for our own enjoyment, pleasure, or interests. This kind of activity is not altogether wrong.

1.5.4 The Family Should Worship Together

While it must be recognized that collective worship finds its centre in the church, worship is a vital part of the family's social structure as well. Families should pray together, sing together, read God's Word together, and offer thanksgiving together. It is impossible to verbalize all the ways in which healthy family worship time provides security, stability, wisdom, and maturation for family members.

The same forces which rob families of mealtime together rob the same families of worship time together. The hurried life, especially the indulged hurried life, grows impatient with the quietness necessary for reading and prayer. There are far more exciting things to do. But as we noted before, the exciting things are seldom the fulfilling things in the long run. The family which is too fragmented for worship together is living by a value system which cannot build strong Christians. Rather, such a value system actually prepares children to yield further to the pressures of sin and worldly society.

1.5.5 The Family Should Play Together

Much as recreation and fun have been overplayed in our society, play has a very proper and wholesome place in the family. It is good for the family to laugh together. It is good for children to see their parents in the informal and sometimes blundering and comical situations of playtime. Games can reinforce such principles as fairness, honesty, group effort, and courtesy. Unstructured play, such as building cities in the sandbox or tenting on the living room floor, can encourage creativity and cooperation. Reading or telling stories can be both enjoyable and informative.

1.5.6 The Family Should Interact Socially in the Instruction / Learning Process

God calls parents to be good teachers and children to be good learners so that they in turn can become good teachers of their children. Children need the experience of learning from their parents; parents need the experience of learning from their children.

The centre of learning for children in our society is moving away from the home, and the source for learning is moving away from parents toward the

"expert." Unfortunately, the expertise of man generally moves away from the fear of the Lord, and thus often at the "best" of educational opportunities.

To summarize this section, we would repeat that God ordained the family to be the basic social unit of society. It is the centre around which its members interact in such common activities as work, play, worship, eating, learning, and talking.

1.5.7 Heritage-Blessing or Curse: The family should take note of potential cultural conflict and Christian values.

We live in the present. We face present situations however we also have the challenge and baggage of our past in the form of "heritage." Any given family is in many ways a product of its heritage. It was produced by people and events from the past. The decisions and character of father, grandfather, and great-grandfather have flowed into making any family what it is. Anything from physical features to little habits to outstanding traits to guiding beliefs and values can be part of one's heritage. We will always have the influence of the past, but we are never fully controlled by it. And we must, both for our own good and for the good of future generations, be making those choices which leave a heritage of godliness.

Heritage can be either a blessing or a curse. David wrote, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Psalm 16:6). By this, David was not saying that everything in his past had been godly. David had suffered and was suffering many troubles and injustices. But David had walked with the Lord, and in his walk with God he has found a rich heritage.

In verse 5, David introduces the most significant factor in heritage. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." The presence of God in one's life more than anything else determines the impact and worth of his parental heritage. He who walks with God can look back, even upon a heritage of sin and failure, and see the goodness of the Lord drawing him to Himself.

From the human standpoint, we might even say that the presence of the Lord works retroactively in respect to our heritage. No matter what our past, if we turn in repentance and humility to the Lord, He is able to turn past troubles and injustices into unexpected present blessings in our lives.

Thus we come to see that no one can confine the effects of his life to himself. He who lives righteously passes on an influence of righteousness.

He who loves in sin passes on a heritage of sin. And in both kinds of heritage God is at work, on the one hand declaring, "The generation of the upright shall be blessed" (Psalm 112:2), and on the other hand, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:7).

1.5.8 Honouring Parents guarantees God's promised reward/favour

God's expectations for the family are based solidly upon Scriptural principles. Among the commands God gave to His people was one specifically related to families. ***"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).***

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, notes that this is the only command of the ten to which a promise is attached. The promise has to do with well-being and long life. In as much as life is a social existence, and in as much as the family is the basic social unit, it follows that our obedience or disobedience to a basic family principle will directly affect our lives.

Of course, the other side of the coin is that parents are to be honourable. That is, they are to be venerable, loving, and wise. The truth, however, is that all parents have faults and fall short of the ideal. Does a parent need to be honourable to be honoured?

The direction God gives for children to honour their parents makes no exception for parents who are not honourable. In another authority relationship where God calls for honour, He says specifically, "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward [unreasonable]" (1 Peter 2:18).

Young children do not grapple with whether they should obey or not. They tend to respond as their nature dictates. Older children and youths, however, begin to analyse their parents' performance as well as their own reasons for or against obeying.

Those with Christian teaching struggle with this command of God in view of their imperfect parents. Three things must be kept in focus for those whose parents may not be honourable:

1.5.8.1 One must honour the position of a parent even when the parent does not seem deserving of honour. All authority rests

in God. The position of parenthood with its responsibilities was given by God and where parents are unfaithful in their responsibilities, they are unfaithful not simply to their children, but to God.

1.5.8.2 The giving of honour is more dependent on the heart of the one honouring than the life of the one being honoured. To honour parents, one must have an honouring heart, that is, a heart with the qualities suited to honouring. Such qualities include submission, love, faithfulness, meekness, wisdom, etc.

1.5.8.3 Since God commands honour to parents, and God is perfectly honourable, obedience and honour can be given to imperfect parents as obedience unto God. As long as we focus on the imperfections of earthly parents, honour will be difficult. But when we focus on the glory and perfection of our heavenly Father, we have no reasonable option but to honour Him. Since He told us to honour our parents, our honour and obedience to them can be viewed as honour and obedience to Him.

1.5.9 Identification of Well-Functioning Families

- Socially and emotionally stable relations: Psalm 23: 1-23; Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 11:29
- Family member feel supported and needed: Jeremiah 33: 3; Isaiah 43:5
- Financially stable: 2 Thessalonian 3:6
- Well balanced and Healthy Children – perform well in life. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 3John1:2; 1 Tim 4:8; Acts27: 34
- Older people and people with disabilities are protected and supported. Isaiah 46:4; Leviticus 19:32; 1 Peter 5:5 ; Job 32:6-7
- Involvement in community life: Proverbs 16: 1-33
- Utilisation of community services and resources: Psalm 133:1-3; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 15:5-7

SUGGESTED EXERCISES FOR ENGAGEMENT

- Why do think the family is important?
What is your own view of the family?
- What strategies would you cam implore to bring the family together
- Which other concepts should be exploited in full, discuss?
- How can CWA facilitate guarding against the degeneration of the Christian families?

CHAPTER 2

2. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

2.1 CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MARRIAGE

- 2.1.1 The biblical meaning of marriage is a covenant, a sacred bond between a man and a woman instituted by and publicly entered into God and normally consummated by intimate Interaction. The family founded on marriage between a man and a woman is important both for natural reasons, as the principal place of interpersonal relationships, and also for supernatural reasons, as a divine institution.
- 2.1.2 In the Catholic Faith, marriage is a sacrament, what is a sacrament? "It's an outward sign of inward grace, instituted by Christ and is entrusted to the church, by which the divine life is dispensed to us." Most Christians view marriage as a Holy Matrimony, a state instituted and ordained by God for a lifelong relationship between one man as husband and one woman as wife it is considered to be the most intimate of human relationships, a gift from God and a sacred institution.
- 2.1.3 The Catholic marriage is and can be celebrated within or outside the Holy Mass, this ritual is celebrated in honour of two adults who went through the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of Eucharist, the sacrament of confirmation, they must be capable of being married, they must be a man and a woman who are free of any impediments. They must both be old enough to contract marriage according to Local Civil Laws, they should not be married to someone else, they must not be related to each other, they should be capable of understanding what is marriage and responsibilities that comes with it and in order to enter to a valid marriage, each person must freely choose to give himself or herself freely to the other and accept the gift of the other forever.
- 2.1.4 Marriage is a life time commitment between a man and a woman and a covenant. As in the Old Testament God initiates the covenant to the Israelites, "You will be my people and I will be your God. That's the reason why in the marriage ceremony the bride and the groom exchanges vows promising to be with each other for better and for

worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health till death do them part.

- 2.1.5 **Genesis 2:24** "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and they become one." This implies total commitment and belonging to one another, which will not allow interference from any other source.

2.2 WHY SHOULD WE MARRY AS CHRISTIANS?

- 2.2.1 We marry because marriage is a gift from God, it is part of creation that men and women should live together. It was manifested from the story of creation in **Genesis 2: 18** when the Lord said "It is not good for a man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for Him."
- 2.2.2 **Other Bibles** says "I will make a helper suitable for him", it provides a relationship through which husband and wife support each other, help and complement each other, the relationship that is built on love and faithfulness. Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the ribs and brought her to him. Then the man said "at last here is one of my own kind, bone taken from my bone and flesh taken from my flesh."
- 2.2.3 One of the Lord's purpose of creation was reproduction. God made humans in two sexes to complement one another, to image of his glory and bear children. Children are a blessing and the fruits of two adult's intimate interaction.
- 2.2.4 God ordained or blessed the marriage institute for the fulfilment of multiplication of human beings. It is well clarified in **Genesis 35:11** "And the Lord said to him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be on you, and kings shall come out of your lions. **God's Word of Translation** put it clearly ".....be fertile and increase in number"
- 2.2.5 God is love, He created everything out of love and because of that love. He created man in His own image, because of the love He had for the man, he created a partner for him. With the same love a man accepted a woman to be his partner.
- 2.2.6 Love becomes an icon of the relationship between God and His people and vice versa. God's way of loving becomes the measure of human love. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to "love the

Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your mind.” Then He added “the second most important commandment is like it: love your neighbour as you love yourself.” **Matthew 22: 37, 39** and Ephesians **5: 25** “For husbands, this means love your wives as Christ loved the church” In this sense you worship God when you love your spouse. **Romans 12:10** “Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honouring each other.”

- 2.2.7 Marriage is perfect and complete when the two partners love each other unconditionally. Love is defined adequately in **1 Corinthians 13: 4 -8** “Love is patient, love is kind, It does not envy it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour other, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no records of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love is eternal and never fails. But where are prophecies, they will cease, where are tongues, they will be stilled, where there is knowledge, it will pass away.”

2.3 MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

- 2.3.1 Marriage is created by God to be perpetual, and not to be ended no matter what or by anyone. As we come from sinful deeds of Adam and Eve, God knew that divorces will occur, in the old testament he laid down some laws to protect the rights of divorcees, women in particular.
- 2.3.2 Mark 10:2-12. Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” “What did Moses command you?” he replied. They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.” “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate. “When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

- 2.3.3 It is very much clear that God did not want divorce, no matter what the view one takes on the divorce issue. **Malachi 2: 16** says "I hate divorce" says the Lord God of Israel, "The man who hates and divorces his wife," says the Lord, the God of Israel, "does violence to the one he should protect" says the Lord Almighty. Marriage is a life time commitment "so they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate." Matthew 19: 6.
- 2.3.4 When getting married, one man and one woman make a vow to commit to each other for better or for worse. This vows are made in church before God. We learned from the scriptures that it's sinful to break vows or not to fulfil them. Meaning divorce is a sin as the vows will be broken.
- 2.3.5 Whether is to God or any other person, we should not make vows that we will not keep. **Deuteronomy 23:21-23** "When you make a vow to the Lord, you shall not delay to pay it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you.
- 2.3.6 That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth" and **Luke 16 :18** says anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
- 2.3.7 God designed or ordained marriage as a Holy covenant between a man, a woman and God. Marriage is binding commitment of unconditional love towards an imperfect person, sees beyond weaknesses of a person. It's an agreement of loving, honouring and respecting that person for life. **Ephesians 5:22-25** recommendation to the married couples "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savoir. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."
- 2.3.8 This is one of the underlying reasons that God commanded that husband and wife "become one flesh"—to portray the fact that we are ultimately to become spiritually at one with Christ and God the Father. Jesus prayed to the Father regarding His followers, "And the

glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one ..." (John 17:22-23), confirming what is said Matthew 19: 6," So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."

2.4 HERE ARE SOME OF THE COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND ANNULMENTS.

- 2.4.1 As a Judge and a Defender of the Bond within our respective dioceses' Catholic Marriage Tribunal, we encounter misunderstandings every day about the declaration of nullity (or annulment) process.
- 2.4.2 Often, the people question the need for an annulment before approaching a new marriage.
- 2.4.3 Their misunderstandings commonly arise from misconception as to what the Catholic Church teaches about marriage, and consequently, why the Catholic Church judges some relationships not to be marriages.
- 2.4.4 A Catholic annulment, also known as a declaration of nullity or invalidity, is a statement of fact by the Catholic Church. After carefully examining the couple's broken relationship, the Church states that a valid marriage, as the Church defines marriage, never existed.
- 2.4.5 It is not "Catholic divorce," as some have called it, since divorce looks at the moment the relationship broke down and says, "A marriage existed, and now we are ending it." The annulment process says, on the other hand, "From the very beginning, something was lacking that was necessary for this relationship to be called a marriage."
- 2.4.6 Quite often, what is lacking at the time of the civil contract is one of the essential elements or properties of marriage we have noted. The mature consent of the spouses in undertaking the marriage covenant may also be lacking.
- 2.4.7 Of course, the Church recognizes the couple's initial love for one another. It also realizes that this love led to some form of relationship. In addition, the Church acknowledges that there was a valid civil contract and recognizes that the spouses were lawfully married in the eyes of the state.
- 2.4.8 Therefore, all children born of this valid civil contract are legitimate, according to the Catholic Church. In keeping with canon 1137, they are known as the legitimate children of a "putative marriage."
- 2.4.9 All these civil and legal realities the Church recognizes. But the annulment process looks at an entirely different realm — the spiritual

— which falls within the Catholic Church's domain of competence to judge.

2.5 WHY IS AN ANNULMENT NECESSARY?

- 2.5.1 The Church teaches that marriage is permanent. If a sacramental marriage is created, no human power can separate what God has joined together (see Mt 19:6). According to the Church, no civil authority has the power to terminate a sacramental marriage.
- 2.5.2 For this reason, once two people stand in front of God and contract a marriage, if they enter into a marriage covenant as defined by the Catholic Church, this covenant cannot be dissolved so long as both parties remain alive.
- 2.5.3 The marriage bond is in place until death. As a result, no new marriage covenant can be created with someone else.
- 2.5.4 Any person who has entered a genuine marriage remains bound to that spouse. The spiritual bonds of marriage, if formed, cannot be ended by civil divorce. In the eyes of the Church, divorce ends the various civil, financial, and legal bonds previously contracted between spouses, but not the spiritual bonds.
- 2.5.5 For this reason, the Catholic Church investigates, through the annulment process, whether an actual marriage, as defined by the Church, came into being. In carrying out this investigation, the Church examines various facts presented to the marriage tribunal by those seeking the annulment and their witnesses.
- 2.5.6 If the Church then determines that no genuine marriage came into being, these individuals are free to marry someone else if that person is also free to marry.

2.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY MARRIAGE

Marriage as an institute also can face challenges. Sooner or later all couples faces the “worse” or “poorer” or “sickness”. This is the time when couples must get support from their church, family, friends and relatives. There are many challenges that can put marriage at stake.

- **Abuse:** Whereby one partner abuses the other emotionally (belittling him/her or by saying vulgar words towards him/her) or physically (beating or hitting other partner)
- **Infidelity:** When one partner is unfaithful to the other, having extramarital affairs.

- **Disillusionment:** When you are disappointed about someone and you don't know if you love him/her anymore. It always accompanied by a general feeling of loss of excitement and passion for your spouse.
- **Infertility:** When a couples is unable to bear children
- **Communication:** Lack of communication between partners whereby one partner do as he/she pleases in the marriage and does not communicate or involves one partner in decision making.
- **Finances:** Financial problems which may be caused by reckless spending of money or leaving beyond your means.
- **In-Laws:** Too much interference by in-laws, you find that they are always part of decision making.
- **Death:** Dead of a loved one is a heavy weight for a marriage. You find that one partner is withdrawn because of devastation.
- **Illness:** Many kinds of illness can impact greatly in a marriage. It may be physical, mental and emotional sickness. Let take chronic illness, this can test the "in sickness and in health" part of marriage vow. Chronic illness can demand a change of daily leaving partner that can be a heavy burden to one partner.
- **Time:** When one partner does not give the other partner or members of the family time and attention. The partner does not balance his/her time correctly between the work and family, church and family or friends and family.

Marriage there is the product of love influenced or directed by Holy Spirit. However, when conflicts occurs, it's an indication of another opposite spirit working. Like in the Garden of Eden when the serpent destroyed the harmony that God created. **John 10:10** "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Marriage couples must be ready for the challenges, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Lord Jesus' promise to us is for us to live and in abundance. As Ephesians 6: 10-20 "Finally be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the

breastplate of righteousness in place, ^{and} with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ^{for} which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should".

A verse 12 of the above quote says "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

If you are riding in the storm its normal to feel weak and beaten, like you have lost. We must treat challenges the way the Holy Spirit influenced marriage, this time the evil spirits now influence a person to do the opposite, we don't have to fight the person but the spirit in a person that came to steal, kill and destroy as is said in John 10:10

But there is a promise in the word of God which is mentioned in Hebrews 4:12 thus "The word of God living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and the joints and the marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

A person need to get support from the church, family friends and relatives consultatively with the Bible by reading the words of God to empower the spouses with the spiritual knowledge and understanding of the situation. That they may be able to fight evil spirit with the Holy Spirit.

2.7 HOLY SPIRIT IN THE FAMILY/MARRIAGE

Every marriage goes through tests and crises, but these can bring about an increase in love, and every new couple should remember this. True love provides the strength needed to meet every test. It means deeds, acts of serving one another in humble, mutual submission. True love is born of the Holy Spirit.

But the true love that stems from the Holy Spirit is not brought about by human effort. A married couple who experiences its blessings will notice their love increasing with each passing year, regardless of the trials they may encounter. Decades into their marriage, they will still find joy in making each other happy.

When two people seek to have a deeper, more intimate relationship, they usually do so in terms of mutual emotions, common values, shared ideas, and a feeling of goodwill toward each other. Without despising these, we must recognize that the Holy Spirit opens up an entirely different plane of experience between husband and wife.

Certainly, marital love based on the excitement of emotion can be wonderful, but it can all too quickly become desperate and unhappy. In the long run it is an unstable foundation. Love gains certainty and firmness only when it is ruled by the Spirit.

If we seek only the unity and love that is possible on a human level, we remain like clouds drifting and suspended. When we seek unity in the Spirit, God can ignite in us a faithful love that can endure to the end. The Spirit burns away everything that cannot endure. He purifies our love. True love does not originate from within ourselves, but is poured out over us through the Holy Spirit

Marriage in the Holy Spirit is a covenant of faithfulness. Where there is no loyalty, there is no true love nor real happiness. In our society, marriages are being tested as never before, but this should refine and increase our commitment to one another. Faithfulness springs from the inward certainty of our calling. It comes from a joyful submission to God's plan.

God's order for marriage has three levels. First is the marriage of God to his people, of Christ to his church, and of the Spirit to our spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). Second is the community of God's people among themselves – justice and common fellowship in spirit and soul. Third is the unity between one man and one woman (Eph. 5:31), which "is visible to and understandable by all."

Paul the Apostle also draws a parallel between marriage and spiritual unity when he tells husbands to love their wives "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). For Christians, marriage is a reflection of the deepest unity: the unity of God and his church. In a Christian marriage, therefore, it is the unity of God's kingdom, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit that matters most. Ultimately, it is the only sure foundation on which a marriage can be built. "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).

Marriage should always lead two believing people closer to Jesus and his kingdom. It is not good enough for a couple to get married in a church or by a minister. To be drawn nearer to Christ, they must first be fully dedicated as individuals to the spirit of God's kingdom, and to the church community that serves it and stands under its direction. First there must be heart-felt unity of faith and spirit. Only then will there be true unity of soul and body as well.

If the person already married to someone of a different faith wished to join the church, the priest would do his utmost to preserve the marriage, as long as the new member did not feel hindered in faith by his or her spouse.

When the love of a man and a woman who desire to be married is dedicated to the Holy Spirit and placed under His rule and direction – when it serves the unity and justice of God’s kingdom – there is no reason why the two should not marry. But when a couple lacks spiritual unity, marriage in the church should be out of the question. If the church is truly the Body of Christ, the unity of its members under God must come before everything else.

Here it should be said that the demands of a Godly marriage can never be met by a human system of answers or solved by means of principles, rules, and regulations. They can be grasped only in the light of God’s unity, by those who have experienced his Spirit, accepted it personally, and begun to live in accordance with it.

The very essence of God’s will is unity. This is why Jesus, in his prayer, prayed that his followers should be one, just as he and the Father were one (John 17:20–23). It was God’s will for unity that brought Pentecost to the world. Through the outpouring of the Spirit, people’s hearts were struck, and they repented and were baptized. The fruits of their new life were not only spiritual. The material and practical aspects of their lives, too, were affected and even revolutionized. Goods were collected and sold, and the proceeds were laid at the feet of the apostles. Everyone wanted to give all they had out of love, yet no one suffered want and everyone received what he or she needed. Nothing was held back. There were no laws or principles to govern this revolution. Not even Jesus said exactly how it should be brought about, only, “Sell your possessions and give to the poor” (Matt. 19:21). At Pentecost it simply happened: the Spirit descended and united the hearts and lives of those who believed (Acts 2:42–47).

Genuine unity, like joy or love, cannot be forced or created artificially. Only the Spirit can bring unity. Only the Spirit can free us from our pettiness and from the forces of guilt and sin that divide us from God and from each other. With our own wills we can certainly try to free ourselves from these forces, and we may be able to overcome them to a certain degree and for a certain period of time. But we should remember that ultimately only the spirit of love can overcome the flesh.

Again, we must never forget our dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25). Even within a marriage, if our relationship is based only on mutual feelings or common values and not on the Spirit, it runs the risk of being swallowed up by the erotic and emotional. We ourselves are not capable

of bringing about the spiritual unity in which two hearts become one. That can happen only when we allow ourselves to be gripped and transformed by something greater than ourselves.

When a marriage is anchored in the Holy Spirit, both partners will feel that their love is not a private possession but a fruit and gift of God's all-embracing love. They will still have to combat selfishness, superficiality, or other disorders, but if they keep their hearts open, the Spirit will always lift their eyes to God and his help.

The Spirit must come to each of us, whether married or unmarried, again and again. God wants to transform everything in our hearts and give us the strength to love. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul says, "There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance. Love will never come to an end." Love is born of the Holy Spirit, and only in the Spirit can a true marriage be conceived – and endure.

CHAPTER 3

3. THE FAMILY AND COMMUNICATION

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Families are communication imperative hence the critical role of communication in the family. Not only does it keep the families together, it also minimises conflicts and facilitates positive relations and image amongst them and the community at large. It is therefore very important that the family members communicate at all times in a clear, accurate, unambiguous and coordinated manner that responds to the challenges of the day. Two-way communication process is more productive and healthy.

Through communication, the family acknowledges the fact that all the views of the members are important and this will ensure that the family functions very well as all members are shown respect and recognition. This also shows that the family is committed to a transparent and effective relationship in building the family up. There should be no domination, but listening to each other and supporting each other.

3.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE FAMILY

Communication has a responsibility and authority of ensuring that all activities within the family are done in accordance with agreements of all in a coordinated manner. Unity is promoted within the family especially when all members are consulted before decisions are taken and equally informed of the outcomes of the implemented decisions.

Effective communication brings everyone on board irrespective of their social standing, circumstances and disabilities. Members will learn and adopt better means and strategies of communicating as in the case of using sign language when there is a member with hearing impairments or guiding in other situations like blindness accordingly. It stabilises and make family homes welcome.

3.3. ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective family communication will include the following elements:

- Appropriate use of language
- Having regard and respect for one another
- Clear and convincing communication
- Display caring and concern and not being judgmental,

- Be fair at all time. Do unto others what you expect them to do unto you.
- Admit errors or lack of knowledge on a subject matter and asking for clarification
- Trusting the people you are talking to
- Walking the talk and thereby keeping your word, being truthful and honest.
- Being sensitive to the other person's needs and communication.
- Listening and responding effectively
- Providing the timely feedback.

3.4. FAMILY AS SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION

Pope Francis says family is where people learn Communication (*Catholic News Service, Jan 23, 2015*)

The womb which hosts us is the first 'school' of communication. "This encounter between two persons, so intimately related while distant from each other, an encounter so full of promise, is our first experience which we all share, since each of us was born of a mother."(www.catholicsun.org)

"After birth, the family is where we learn to live with others despite our differences". "In the family we realize that others have preceded us, they made it possible for us to exist and, in our turn, to generate life and to do something good and beautiful. We can give because we have received. The cycle is at the heart of the family's ability to communicate among its members and with others. More generally, it is the model for all communication." (www.catholicsun.org)

"He also stressed the fact that perfect families do not exist, and said that we should not be afraid of imperfections, weakness or even conflict in family life, but instead should learn to deal with them constructively." Hence the need for effective communication.

"As a primary context in which human beings learn to communicate, the family is a key model for how to relate with others. Focusing on family life in terms of communication, the Pope said, will help to make our interactions "more authentic and humane," and enable us to see the family in a new light. We can relate this inference to the story of the Holy Family in the Gospel of Luke, 2:41-52. Here we can see communication that is indicative of a family that prays together, a family where the parents take an active role in the child's early formation years.

In the same way media can be positive in facilitating communication, it can also gravely affect family communication and hinder effective physical contact.

As we are all aware, the Law of God governs the family. All family life is a great gift from God and it is in the family that God wants to reveal himself more closely to us. There are countless examples that speak of how we can experience God intimately in our lives through communicating with him. A great deal of responsibility rests on parents to communicate this Law of God to their children.

3.5. THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE FAMILY

Kay Ireland Jun 13, 2017 observes that effective communication within the family can lead to better relationships between the members of the family. It must be built on a foundation of trust, listening and understanding. The more effectively your family can communicate together, the better. It will keep you open to share thoughts and feelings, coax expression out of your children and foster a safe home environment in which all members of your family can feel comfortable and secure in their relationships.

3.5.1. Effective Family Communication

Outside of the home, communication is when you express your thoughts, feelings and opinions to someone else, while they listen and reciprocate. In the home, communication takes on a much more personal level. When you communicate within your family, you can expect a listening ear that can gently soothe or an honest opinion to direct you on the right path. Making sure that your family works on communication skills can keep your family tightly knit while being open and honest with each other.

3.5.2. Self-Esteem

The children of parents who allow them to freely express their feelings, thoughts and opinions have higher self-esteem overall (University of Delaware). This is because they are raised in an environment where their thoughts and opinions are valued and recognized.

3.5.3. Expression of Feelings

Studies have shown that anger also subsides when a child learns to effectively communicate her feelings, (University of Florida). Learning how to effectively express feelings can reduce the arguing and yelling in a household as well as increase satisfaction and the sharing of feelings. When a family knows how to communicate effectively, then all of the members of the household learn conflict management, problem-solving skills and the sharing of thoughts and ideas.

3.5.4. Acting Out

Some children learn to act out or create problems for shock value when they want attention from their parents. When parents and siblings allow for better communication, there is no need for children to use those shock tactics, because they are given the time and patience to talk about their feelings and communicate their needs.

3.5.5. Listening Skills Development

Effective communication in the home will stay with children as they move through their lives. The communication skills of expression, listening and conflict resolution will affect their school, social and eventual professional life. They'll learn how to listen effectively, reserving judgment and showing empathy. They'll learn the right words to use when communicating with others. And most of all, they'll develop skills that will affect all of their future relationships; professional, educational and personal.

3.6. WOMEN AND COMMUNICATION

As we celebrate women's month and for the remainder of this month, sadly, there are countless women suffering new injustices. But Malika Ndlovu in her poem, "A Woman's Path", writes, ... "she alone can hear the music of her heart, her breath, her feet, beating the growing river of red through the mist, above the mountains ahead a rainbow like a dream faintly emerges beckoning her to the other side, she follows her heart-breath-beat and feet they know, the way they will not stop not until the dark descends again when time will play her trick of dejavu".

In our own situation today, the challenge is facing women in and outside the church straight head-on. The various strata of women's lives can be a testimony of how difficult it is today more than before for women to take their rightful place in society. It is as evident as in our own homes, in our

neighbours 'homes. Many mothers are struggling to keep their families safe. Many young women are having a difficult time being themselves, in the true sense of the word. The true identity of women has been compromised by many factors.

The challenge for women today is to turn things around. They have to tap into those parts of their being where resides the will power assert themselves. This is a power that God has implanted in each and every one of us. That will power will enable them take their rightful places in society. It is in their nature to face challenges head-on. It is also in their nature to be proactive. They do not always wait for things to happen, they make things happen. Gcina Mhlope, testifies to this fact, "Maybe my voice would be carried by the wind to reach all the other women whose names are not often mentioned the ones who sell oranges and potatoes so their children can eat and learn, the ones who scrub floors and polish executive desktops in towering office blocks while the city sleeps. The ones who work in overcrowded hospitals, saving lives, cleaning bullet wounds and delivering new babies. And the ones who had given up their places of comfort and the protection of their skin colour... and what of the women who are stranded in their homelands, with a baby in the belly and a baby on the back, while their men are sweating in the bowels of the earth? May the lives of all these women be celebrated and made to shine, when I cry out Mama Nokukhanya's name KO – KU – KHA – NYA!!! And we who are young, salute our mothers who have given us the heritage of their Queendom!!!"

These words capture will power that women have. They articulate in essence the determination women have to make things happen. These words also paints a picture for us of the internal struggle of how life goes on among human beings.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know that you ought to answer every man (Colossians 4:6). "We can draw inspiration from the Gospel message which relates the visit of Mary to Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-56). "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit cried out in a loud voice and said, ' Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (Vv.41-42)

We are told that this episode from the Gospel of Luke "shows us how communication is a dialogue intertwined with the language of the body. The first response to Mary's greeting is given by the child, who leaps for joy in the womb of Elizabeth. Joy at meeting others, which is something we learn even before we are born, is, in one sense, the archetype and symbol of every other form of communication." More beautifully put it is said that the womb is 'a

place of listening and physical contact where we begin to familiarize ourselves with the outside world within a protected environment, with the reassuring sound of the mother's heartbeat.

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CHAPTER 4

4. THE FAMILY AND PRAYER

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Prayer is creatively using God blessing of time with Him who loves us. It can be many things to many people. It can be a source of guilt for those who feel they should pray more; anxiety for those afraid to pray in public; scorn for those who reject its efficacy; befuddlement for those who don't understand it; and blessing for those who experience its true value.

4.2. DEFINITION OF PRAYER

Prayer is conversation with God; the interaction of the soul with God, not in contemplation or meditation, but in direct address to Him. Prayer may be oral or mental, occasional or constant, informal/impromptu or formal. It is a "beseeching the Lord" (Exodus 32:11); "pouring out the soul before the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:15); "praying and crying to heaven" (2 Chronicles 32:20); "seeking unto God and making supplication" (Job 8:5); "drawing near to God" (Psalms 73:28); "bowing the knees" (Ephesians 3:14).

Prayer is frequently commanded in Scripture (Exodus 22:23, 27; 1 Kings 3:5; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 37:4; Isaiah 55:6; Joel 2:32; Ezek. 36:37, etc.).

Pray, noun: "To ask that the laws of the universe be annulled in behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy" (Ambrose Bierce, 1842-1914).

"Prayer is like the dove that Noah sent forth, which blessed him not only when it returned with an olive-leaf in its mouth, but when it never returned at all" (Robinson's Job).

Prayer presupposes a belief in the personality of God, his ability and willingness to communicate with us, his personal control of all things, and of all his creatures and all their actions.

4.3. ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

Acceptable prayer must be sincere (Hebrews 10:22), offered with reverence and godly fear, with a humble sense of our own insignificance as creatures and of our own unworthiness as sinners, with earnest importunity, and with unhesitating submission to the divine will.

Prayer must also be offered in the faith that God is, and is the hearer and answerer of prayer, and that he will fulfil his word, “Ask, and ye shall receive” (Matthew 7:7,8; 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 14:13,14), and in the name of Jesus Christ (16:23,24; 15:16; Ephesians 2:18; 5:20; Col. 3:17; 1 Peter 2:5).

No rules are anywhere in Scripture laid down for the manner of prayer or the attitude to be assumed by the suppliant. There is mention made of...

- kneeling in prayer (1 Kings 8:54; 2 Chronicles 6:13; Psalms 95:6; Isaiah 45:23; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; 9:40; Ephesians 3:14, etc.)
- bowing and falling prostrate (Genesis 24:26, 52; Exodus 4:31; 12:27; Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:35, etc.)
- spreading out the hands (1 Kings 8:22, 38, 54; Psalms 28:2; 63:4; 88:9; 1 Timothy 2:8, etc.)
- standing (1 Samuel 1:26; 1 Kings 8:14, 55; 2 Chronicles 20:9; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11, 13).

If we accept the “Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13), which is, however, rather a model or pattern of prayer than a set prayer to be offered up, we have no special form of prayer for general use given us in Scripture.

4.4. WHY DO WE PRAY AS A FAMILY?

One of the most basic and important questions we can ask about prayer is simply: Why pray at all, and more so, why do we pray as family? Think about it:

- The Bible says that God possesses all knowledge and wisdom (Psalms 44:21; Matthew 6:8; 1 John 3:20). Which means that we can’t tell Him anything in prayer that He doesn’t already know.
- The Bible says God is all-powerful (Job 42:2)—prayer can’t ‘boost’ His ability in any way.
- The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). That means that prayer can’t make Him love us any more than He already does.
- The Bible says that God is in sovereign control of the universe and orders all events according to His will (Ephesians 1:11). Doesn’t that mean that He will achieve His purposes whether or not we pray? Isn’t prayer superfluous?

So, to repeat the question, why pray at all?

One common answer to this question is that God doesn’t intend prayer to change things outside ourselves, but rather to change us. Well, while the

second part of that claim is true, the first part is manifestly false. Yes, prayer does indeed change us, and that is surely one of God's purposes for it. But the Bible says that prayer actually changes things in the world. Examples abound, but here's a clear one:

"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the Earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the Earth bore its fruit." (James 5:16-18)

According to this passage and many others in the Bible, prayer actually changes things. But how does this fit with the Bible's description of God as sovereign, as the One who knows the end from the beginning and ordains the events of the universe? If God has already ordained that something will happen, does it really matter whether or not I pray for it to happen?

The answer is emphatically: yes, it does matter! And here's why—God ordains ends and God ordains means. For example, when God ordains that a Tabernacle be built, He calls and gifts two men named Bezalel and Oholiab to build it (Exodus 35:30-35). When God ordains that Cornelius the Gentile hear the gospel for the first time, He sends the Apostle Peter to tell him the gospel (Acts 10; cf. Romans 10:13-15).

The same is true with prayer. To use the example of Elijah from James 5, above: God ordains the ends (that the rain will stop) and He ordains the means (Elijah's fervent prayer for the rain to stop). Elijah's prayer really was effective to stop the rain! God really answered his prayer.

Both the prayer and the answer to the prayer were ordained by God. This explains how prayer can have real results and God can be sovereign at the same time. God ordains the end result and God ordains your prayer as the means of getting to that end result.

Why does God choose to work this way? Why not just do everything Himself? Why include us? I believe the answer is so that His people can be involved in His work and thus be drawn closer to Him. Each week my four-year-old son Samuel helps me to take our trash to the local transfer station. The reason that I include Samuel in this task is not because I need his help. I include him because we grow in relationship as we work together. That's why God includes us. That's why He tells us to pray.

Next time you pray, think: This prayer really matters. God has ordained that I pray. He intends to change me through my prayer, and He has ordained that my prayer will be put to some good purpose in the world—to bring about a good result. Dr Stephen E. Witmer, AIIA Institute.

4.5. TYPES OF PRAYER

There are different kinds of prayer: secret (Matthew 6:6); social (as family prayers, and in social worship); and public, in the service of the sanctuary.

Intercessory prayer is commanded (Numbers 6:23; Job 42:8; Isaiah 62:6; Psalms 122:6; 1 Timothy 2:1; James 5:14).

Examples of prayer in the Bible

The prophet Isaiah praying

- Abraham's servant prayed to God, and God directed him to the person who should be wife to his master's son and heir (Genesis 24:10-20).
- Jacob prayed to God, and God inclined the heart of his irritated brother, so that they met in peace and friendship (Genesis 32:24-30; 33:1-4).
- Samson prayed to God, and God showed him a well where he quenched his burning thirst, and so lived to judge Israel (Judges 15:18-20).
- David prayed, and God defeated the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15:31; 16:20-23; 17:14-23).
- Daniel prayed, and God enabled him both to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream and to give the interpretation of it (Dan. 2:16-23).
- Nehemiah prayed, and God inclined the heart of the king of Persia to grant him leave of absence to visit and rebuild Jerusalem (Neh. 1:11; 2:1-6).
- Esther and Mordecai prayed, and God defeated the purpose of Haman, and saved the Jews from destruction (Esther 4:15-17; 6:7-8).
- The believers in Jerusalem prayed, and God opened the prison doors and set Peter at liberty, when Herod had resolved upon his death (Acts 12:1-12).

Paul prayed that the thorn in the flesh might be removed, and his prayer brought a large increase of spiritual strength, while the thorn perhaps remained (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

4.6. ANSWERS TO PRAYER

We have very many testimonies that prayers have been answered (Psalms 3:4; 4:1; 6:8; 18:6; 28:6; 30:2; 34:4; 118:5; James 5:16-18, etc.).

Other examples:

- Miracles
- Abraham (Genesis 17:18, 20; 18:23-32; 20:7, 17,18)
- Moses for...
 - Pharaoh (Exodus 8:12,13, 30,31; Exodus 9:33)
 - the Israelites (Exodus 17:11,13; 32:11-14, 31-34; Numbers 21:7,8; Deuteronomy 9:18,19, 25)
 - Miriam (Numbers 12:13)
 - Aaron (Deuteronomy 9:20)
- Samuel (1 Samuel 7:5-12)
- Solomon (1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 6)
- Elijah (1 Kings 17:20-23)
- Elisha (2 Kings 4:33-36)
- Isaiah (2 Kings 19)
- Jeremiah (Jeremiah 42:2-10)
- Peter (Acts 9:40)
- the church (12:5-12)
- Paul (28:8)

4.7. TEN TIPS TO HELP YOUR PRAYER LIFE

If praying does not come effortlessly for you, try these tips for making your prayer life more focused and effective.

For a few hardy prayer warriors, talking with God is as easy as breathing; it happens almost effortlessly. When you ask them how they do it, they simply shrug and reply, "I just pray." Unfortunately, that's about as helpful as John McEnroe saying "I just hit the ball," when asked for some tips on more effective tennis. It may be easy for him to "just hit the ball", but most of us hackers need a little more fundamental instruction to get the job done. With that in mind, we've included here some practical guidelines that might make your time with the Lord more fruitful. Not all of the suggestions will apply to your particular situation, but if you begin by incorporating a few of them, I'm confident your prayer life will improve.

- 4.7.1.** Choose a specific place to pray away from distractions so you can concentrate. Ringing phones and crying children will sabotage your "quiet time" before it gets started.
- 4.7.2.** Pray at the same time every day, if at all possible. Make it part of your regular routine and it will become habit. Write it into your schedule and then treat it just like a daily appointment.
- 4.7.3.** Pray out loud. Many people can pray under their breath or in their minds for long periods and still maintain intensity, but for most of us it's a quick ticket to dreamland. When we pray out loud we have to form intelligent sentences. We have to concentrate more on what we're praying about.
- 4.7.4.** Keep a note pad handy so you can jot down different things that come to mind while you're before the Lord. Sometimes you'll get great ideas totally unrelated to what you've been praying about. If you jot them down, you can quickly get back to the topic at hand without being too distracted.
- 4.7.5.** Make a list to keep track of your prayer needs. This can be done several ways. Prayer needs can be listed by category like "Church," "Family," or "Unsaved friends." Or they may be listed by the days of the week. Each day you pray for a different set of needs. You may want to include prayer every day for a different area of society that has a tremendous influence on the direction of our nation. These seven categories include 1) the church and religion, 2) the family and the home, 3) the media, 4) government, 5) education, 6) business and commerce, and 7) the arts and entertainment.
- 4.7.6.** Redeem time for praying out of unused corners of your schedule. Those who have to drive to work can use the time talking with the Lord instead of screaming at traffic (just don't close your eyes!). Busy homemakers can combine prayer with housework, especially if the task doesn't require a lot of concentration. Joggers, swimmers and cyclists can use their workout time for prayer. Sometimes my best times with the Lord have been chats during long, early morning walks or jogs along the beach.
- 4.7.7.** Change the pace during your prayer time. Include praise, thanksgiving and singing as well as petition. Spend some of your time reflecting on the Scripture, meditating on it and digesting its meaning.
- 4.7.8.** Keep a prayer journal. Here are two variations of this idea. The first is to keep track of what you prayed for and when you prayed for it. Leave a space to jot down the answer when it comes. This will help you to keep alert to God's answer so you can thank Him promptly. Sometimes prayer answers come in the back door and you don't

want them to slip by you. The second variation is to write the entire prayer in your journal. Make it a personal letter to the Lord on a daily basis. Just write "Dear Lord" instead of "Dear Diary."

- 4.7.9.** Pray with someone else. Though some prayers can only be said in solitude, there will be times when you'll want to join hearts with another person in prayer. If you commit to meet on a regular basis, the accountability can really help build consistency. Such prayer trusts can become powerful, life-changing events.
- 4.7.10.** Pray one-sentence prayers. If the thought of labouring over a topic wears you out, pray short, sincere prayers instead. A sentence or two may be all that's needed to exhaust the topic for you for the time being. If so, just move on to the next item without feeling guilty for your brevity.

4.8. THINGS TO PRAY FOR

In addition to following the suggestions above, here are a few more thoughts that will help. In the front of your prayer diary list three or four promises from the Scripture on prayer. Read them as an encouragement before you start. Start your prayer time with a hymn, focusing your heart and mind on the Lord. When you pray through your prayer list for the day, include the items on your daily schedule. Pray also about the things not on your schedule but still on your heart. Be sure your prayer time includes some of the specific things that God tells us in His Word to pray for. Below are a few examples:

- 4.8.1.** Pray for the harvest.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matt 9:37-38)

- 4.8.2.** Pray for national and local leaders of government.

"I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." (1 Tim 2:1-2)

- 4.8.3.** Pray that God will open doors for ministry of the Word.

"Praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ..." (Col 4:3)

4.8.4. Pray for those who have mistreated you. Forgive them.

"Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." (Lk 6:28)

"So shall my heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." (Matt 18:35)

4.8.5. Pray that you may do no evil.

"Now we pray to God that you do no wrong..." (2 Cor 13:7)

4.8.6. Pray that your love may abound toward all people.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment..." (Phil 1:9)

4.8.7. Pray that your whole spirit, mind and body be preserved blameless.

"Now may the God of peace sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess 5:23)

4.9. FIVE POWERFUL PRAYERS FROM THE BIBLE

If you ever feel at a loss for what to pray, there's no better guidebook for petitions to our Heavenly Father than the very book He wrote—the Bible. Almost every book in there contains a plea or request, and page after page points to another reason we need a Saviour. So, when you feel like you just don't have words, turn first to the Word.

Although we could list hundreds of prayers, we plucked out five of our favourites to show just how filled to the brim the Bible is with ways to call upon our great God.

4.9.1. The Prayer of Jabez ([1 Chronicles 4:10](#))

When the author of Chronicles dutifully provides us with a list of Judah's descendants, he can't help but stop himself. Right in the midst of all these names, he comes to Jabez, a man he wants us to notice, a man of true honour. If you've ever felt like you've caused pain or if you've ever wanted to believe that God can do more than you can ask or imagine, this prayer is for you:

“Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request.”

4.9.2. The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)

This prayer is the true classic. Most of us have said this prayer and could likely recite it right now. But there’s much more to this model than Jesus gave us than rote recitation. This is a prayer with real power: God’s kingdom coming, God’s will being done, all that we need for the day. It’s truly power packed. So, take a closer look at what it teaches:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

4.9.3. Jonah’s Prayer for Salvation (Jonah 2:2–9)

We may never be swallowed by a great fish, but we can still experience the shame and regret that Jonah felt after he ran from God. The prophet’s plea to the Father provides a poignant scaffolding for our own prayers of repentance. And remember that God heard and answered this humble, honest prayer

“In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the depths into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’ The engulfing waters threatened me the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head

To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit “When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

“Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What

I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

4.9.4. David's Prayer for Deliverance (Psalm 3)

This one was a tough choice because the Psalms are stuffed full of cries and petitions. If you ever want a primer for prayer, you can't go wrong with this wisdom book. But we chose Psalm 3 because it provides a concise portrait of crying out to God in the midst of great stress. David's words are no less relevant to our modern workplace and lifestyle as they were to his battles:

Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.

Arise, Lord! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.

4.9.5. Hannah's Prayer of Praise (1 Samuel 2:1–10)

When Hannah received the child she begged God for, her first instinct is to praise the One who provided. She wants to thank Him for His greatness and His deliverance. Too often we pray before receiving, but then forget to pray after God answers. Let this prayer guide you in thanks:

"My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. "There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.

The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he

exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour.

For The Pillars of the Earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."

CHAPTER 5

5. YOUTH THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE FAMILY

5.1 YOUTH

Youth constitute the critical component of the family given its placement and potential for family continuity. Youth are considered by far the heirs and future of families and consequently foundations of future nations and sustenance of humankind. Generally considered in the primitive years of 13 – 35 (May vary from country to country), they **are generally the most active and vulnerable members of the society.**

5.2 YOUTH AND FAMILY

Youth should by nature, be at the helm of family interaction and communication. However, given the socio/cultural, physical and psychosocial realities and the changing family landscape, youth are often seemingly isolated, distant and as a result become a challenge and the subject of concern. Given this reality, it is imperative that they receive special focus and attention. They are pivotal in the impartation of Christian family and moral values and should occupy the centre stage in this.

More than ever before youth find themselves recipients of the declining Spirituality and consequences of moral degeneration and family disintegration.

5.3 CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH

Challenges faced by youth are multi-faceted are not except from the general problems faced by modern society (Discussed in detail in Chapter 7), even though there are special ones which seem to affect them most. These include spiritual, social, technological, health and material challenges such as the below listed:

- Addiction and Abuse of substances
- Access to Technology (Abuse) and pornography
- Negative media influence
- Financial Pressures and materialism
- Parental Negligence

- Broken Communication with parents
- Effect of Absentee parents: father, mother or significant other.
- Anti-Christian cultures and belief including Satanism
- Bullying
- Same sex attractions
- Prostitution.
- Human Trafficking
- HIV AIDs and Lifestyle deceases (Obesity)
- Gangsterism
- Unemployment

5.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN YOUNG PEOPLE

Undertaking the following can greatly improve the Youth relations within families and help alleviate the problems imposed by the ever changing society and environment.

- 5.4.1 *Development of a conscious habit of expressing gratitude to parents.*** This facilitates appreciation of parent's role and contributions thereof.
- 5.4.2 *Discussion of plans with parents.*** Sharing plans (long and short term with parents affords them opportunity guide, handhold and offer meaningful feedback. both short-range plans for the week and any long-range plans you may have for the next year, several years, or your life. Failure to communicate is one of the most common problems between teens and their parents.
- 5.4.3 *Seeking Parents advice.*** This is important even in situations where assumptions are made what the parents will say. Asking parents what they think offers opportunity for meaningful interaction and gaining respect and the benefit of further openness with them. Many teens complain about over restrictive parents. However, they soon realise that but probably the biggest cause of over restriction in parents is under accountability in teens.
- 5.4.4 *Valuing evenings at home.*** This will entail re prioritising and establishing schedule with their input.to avoid unnecessary conflict with their. There will come a time (and shortly) when youth will be nostalgic of the opportunity and wish could turn back clock just for one evening return.

- 5.4.5 ***Being proactive and looking for opportunities to do before being asked.*** It is hard to describe all that happens when a task is done voluntarily as a gesture of kindness. The work becomes lighter, the worker is changed, and the one for whom it is done is affected. Parents find immeasurable joy in those who honour them in this way.
- 5.4.6 ***Honour your parents when away from them.*** Those young people who are really serious about honouring their parents will find that their actions do not change when they are removed from their parents. Neither do their words. Neither does their appearance.
- 5.4.7 ***Involvement of parents on critical undertaking critical decision of life like when taking steps to acquire a life companion.*** This is not saying we should return to the oriental custom of parents arranging totally for the marriages of their children. It is to say, however, that the notion that only "I" can ultimately tell who is best for me is a false notion in the other extreme.

THINKING TOGETHER

1. Should a family's schedule be slow-paced? Busy? Hurried? What actually is a slow-paced schedule? What is a hectic schedule?
2. What work or service projects could families do which would increase healthy social interaction?
3. Can children be overworked? Underworked? What are the results of either? What determines a proper balance of work and play?
4. When barriers exist between parents and children, what practical steps can be taken by the parents to resolve them? What steps can be taken by the children?
5. When persons from a former generation are not Christians (parents or grandparents), what guidelines can be followed to keep interaction wholesome?
6. Currently, what seem to be the most dangerous cultural pressures acting on the family? How can families withstand these pressures?
7. Which of the suggestions for avoiding materialism seems most important? Which is perhaps most neglected?

WORKING TOGETHER

As a family, analyse the health of your interaction. Where is improvement necessary, and how might it be accomplished?

1. As a family member, consider honestly how well you are contributing to a healthy family unit. What is your personal problem area? Poor communication?

Disrespect? Ingratitude? List ways in which your problem has been demonstrated recently. List some steps you could take to improve.

2. List specific ways you might practice the guidelines for avoiding materialism. Discuss them with your family and decide how you can carry through with them.

CHAPTER 6

6. THE FAMILY AND HEALTH

6.1 HEALTH

Health is a state of physical and mental wellbeing not simple the absence of disease. Wellbeing varies along a continuum at one extreme people feel tired, sick and run down, have many short term illness like cold, flu, arthritis that interfere unhealthy, tired, no energy, headache, stomach ache, feeling faint, being in pain, difficulty breathing whilst on the other extreme people feel healthy and energetic, feel happy, hopeful about the future. Physical wellbeing consists of feeling fit and able. Most people fall somewhere between these two extremes.

6.2 FAMILY DYNAMICS AND IT IMPACTS ON HEALTH IN BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE WAYS:

6.2.1 Positive aspects of family dynamics and health

- A family social support decreases the likelihood the onset of chronic diseases, disability, mental illness and death.
- Close knit and supportive family provides emotional support, economic wellbeing and increases overall health.
- Marriage provides companionship, emotional support and economic security.
- Marriage is associated with physical health, psychological wellbeing and low mortality
- Married people are less likely to have risky behaviour such as heavy drinking and high fat diets
- Social support from parents, friends and relatives has positive effect especially on mental health.
- It decreases, incidence of depressed symptoms and increases recovery from depression, psychological distress, and psychological strain.
- Social support improves cardio vascular function.

6.2.2 Negative aspects of family dynamics and health

- Poor quality relationships harm physical and mental health
- Persons in unhappy marriages show worse physical and mental health than unmarried persons

- Marriages dominated by unequal division of decision making are associated with high levels of depression
- Growing up in an unsupported, neglected violent home is associated with poor physical health
- Knowledge about the disease improves the child's self-management of the illness and overall health status e.g. childhood cancer and heart disease.

6.3 HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION.

- Most diseases are associated with unhealthy behaviours e.g. smoking, lack of exercise, poor nutrition and alcohol abuse
- Risky health behaviours normally to affect families because similar diets, environments and habits are shared
- In common cases family supports and encouragement is helpful in quitting smoking, whilst negative behaviour such as nagging and criticism predict failure to quit.
- Positive results in weight reduction have been common when spouses are supportive.
- Childhood obesity prevention is more successful when parents are involved in weight reduction

6.4 SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS IN RELATION TO HUMAN HEALTH

6.4.1 Health is a human right and there is an inter-relation between spiritual and physical being.

God's purpose and promise to all mankind is to have eternal life "John 3 vs 16" For God loved the World so much that he gave His only Son, so that who believes in Him will have eternal life.

6.4.2 Health begins before conception. "Jeremiah 1 vs 4-5". I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. God purpose is to preserve life during pregnancy until delivery "Judges 13 vs 7" You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must not drink wine or any alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food.

6.4.3 Healthy Lifestyles improves life expectancy. "Daniel 1 vs 8-12" Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water. At the end of ten days Daniel looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating all kinds of food.

6.4.4 Healthy heart generates life for the body "Proverbs 4 vs 20" Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your

life about, especially our families. Forgiveness is an essential part of strong and healthy family relationships. God loves us. "We love because He first loved us (1 John 4: 19).

6.5 POPE FRANCIS DEDICATED 2015 AS THE YEAR OF THE FAMILY. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THERE ARE THREE THINGS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

- 6.5.1 The Christian family must be humble enough to know that they need God to keep their families together (Prov 9: 10). They need his blessings, strength, forgiveness and the simplicity to pray together as a family. Family prayer makes a family strong. A family that prays together stays together
- 6.5.2 The Christian family must keep and practice their faith (Prov 1: 7). The family must uphold the Christian values. During this era when family life is being destroyed, they must hold the torch of families very high and keep them burning.
- 6.5.3 They must be on a mission to promote Christian families. Like salt, light (Matthew 5: 13-16) and yeast they must make a difference and ensure that faith remains in the family
- 6.5.4 A Christian family experiences love, peace and happiness which comes from the harmony of putting family first. It comes from the sense of joy we experience through the beauty of family togetherness. This great sense comes from the presence of God in the family (John 13: 34- 35). If God is not the centre of our families, we fight, hold grudges and lose the harmony. Selfishness and self-centredness prevails and that family joy fades to be replaced by pain, decrease and enmity.

CHAPTER 7

7. CHALLENGES FACING THE FAMILY (CHRISTIAN FAMILY)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The family is the core of society and is integral to the general well-being of individuals in relation to their psychosocial, emotional, physical, spiritual and economic needs. The institution, which has undergone several changes which have impacted negatively on its structure and ability to fulfil its roles, continues to be challenged across its sphere. Families need to be empowered and strengthened to prevent vulnerability and the possible disintegration of the family.

7.2 CHALLENGES FACING FAMILIES

Challenges facing modern family are multi-faceted covering the Spiritual, Social, Psychological and Moral. Financial aspect/realm of being and include amongst others the following that have been generally identified as most common across Diocese.

- Communication Issues especially lack –technologies disturbing the communication. What's app, television,
- Loss of love and quality time -neglect
- Grief
- Balance of work /family
- Absentee father, mother, parents
- Anti-Christian Cultures and belief
- Addiction and Abuse of substances
- Parenting
- Laws have been introduced which give women much more independence
- There are more single-parent families and step-families.
- Divorce is easier, and has become more socially acceptable
- Same sex attractions
- Family and different sometimes conflicting religions/cultures
- Access to Technology and pornography
- Negative media influence
- Financial Pressures and materialism'

7.2.1 Below mentioned follows a brief exploration of some of the family challenges

7.2.1.1 The changing role of parents

The removal of Father as head and provider, and the emergence of Mother as a career woman has done damage to the family often eroding the confidence and self-concept of the father whilst depriving the children the quality of character building and maturing originally provided by the committed mothers

7.2.1.2 The Diminishing Family and Materialism

Changes in the average size of the family have been caused by various factors. The diminishing family better fits the materialistic values and the career mindedness of the men and women of today. Children are in some instances a viewed as threats to personal interests and material prosperity. The Christian view of family is highly challenges and compromised.

The Bible says, "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3- 5). God considers children a divine blessing to the home, and we must certainly acknowledge that the decrease in children today has not made for a happier, healthier family unit. Christian parents, who walk in step with God, will love children, will see them as a blessing, and will not succumb to the self-centred pressures of society

7.2.1.3 Materialism

Materialistic values are robbing Christians of their vision for the kingdom of God, and robbing Christian families of the peace of contentment and the joy of sacrifice.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the

love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:6-10).

The following may be helpful for families who wish to counteract the pressures of materialism: (Challenges).

1. *Learn to live simply.* This is important no matter what the income level. Simple toys, simple foods, simple vehicles, simple clothing, simple living quarters, with godliness, can still produce a contented family, even in a world of affluence.
2. *Practice cheerful giving.* A family does not need to be rich to give. Giving may be monetary, but does not need to be. A plate of cookies, fresh garden vegetables, and verses of wise sayings neatly printed, notes of encouragement to friends, fresh flowers, and hour or two of help to a neighbour--these are all ways of giving. It is nice to give to friends, but Jesus said we should also give to those from whom we expect nothing in return (Luke 6:35).
3. *Live sacrificially.* This is closely associated with giving, but it is not necessarily the same. We can fairly easily give out of our abundance. Every Christian should experience the joy of consciously denying himself in the process of giving.
4. *Develop wise buying habits.* Avoid replacing that which is still serviceable just because you are tired of it, or for the sake of novelty or prestige, or to compete with others. Much money is squandered and unavailable for use in the kingdom of God because people are catering to their vanity and selfish desires.
5. *Avoid wasteful living.* Many toys and recreational vehicles consume resources unwisely. Sometimes the market for certain things seems purposely geared to the throw-away mentality. Disposable diapers, for example, are now so widely used that they pose a national disposal problem in the United States.
6. *Channel resources into kingdom-building activities.* Money, time, goods, and even skills should be viewed as the property of God. We have been commissioned to use these things in the interests of our heavenly Father. If we waste these things on pampering ourselves, surely we will need to answer as unfaithful stewards.

7.2.1.4 Parenthood and the diminishing family values

The absentee parents as well the teenage parenthood affect the family fabric, the quality and the maturity to cope with the demands of parenthood. Children are socialised by single parents and or the nannies who may not stand up to the expectation of the requisite family values. Parenthood more than ever before requires more preparation and management

7.2.1.5 Authority concepts

The changing authority concepts, rights and liberation misconception and legal issues are placing tremendous pressures on those who would order their homes according to the Word of God.

7.2.1.6 Knowledge Explosion

Many of the changes have come about through the rapid change in our technological society. New inventions, and thus new ways of doing things, hit the market continually. The latest break-through is scarcely broken in until it becomes outdated with a new discovery.

Parents, particularly those who did not continue their education beyond high school, often find it difficult to comprehend what is going on. The effect is felt in the home and even in the church. This modern knowledge has in many cases intimidated ancient wisdom. Parents are made to feel incompetent to guide their children and are encouraged to seek the advice of "experts" when in reality the children desperately need the wisdom of their parents.

7.2.2 Other challenges that Put Families at risk

7.2.2.1 **Poverty:** Family social health cannot be maintained below a certain resource threshold as poverty undermines the ability of families to perform their expected functions. Essential services such as health, social welfare, social grants, education, shelter, electricity, water and sanitation are critical to the functioning of family life. : Psalm 23: 1-23; Proverbs13:22

7.2.2.2 **Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence is a major problem in South Africa and it is detrimental to the human rights of family members. Education programmes that highlight the difference between cultural practices that do not harm women and children as opposed to

violence against women and children (some cultures believe that men have the right to physically punish their women/wives) should be developed: James4: 11-12; Psalm 3:7; Proverbs 11:29; 1 John 1:9

- 7.2.2.3 **Substance Abuse**: Substance abuse has become a global problem with far reaching effects on all dimensions of life. Treatment programmes for substance abusers and rehabilitation processes should be implemented from a family perspective. Those who have suffered from addictive behaviours have found that their addiction affects all aspects of their life. But recovery is possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. "For those of you who have fallen prey to any kind of addiction, there is hope because God loves all of His children and because the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ makes all things possible" Ephesians 5: 18; Proverbs 20:1
- 7.2.2.4 **HIV&AIDS**: Some children, especially those affected by HIV/AIDS may have multiple caregivers. The family may divide the children for the sake of management and at the same time disturb the stability of the family and creating a gap for the siblings.
- 7.2.2.5 **Gender Inequality**: Gender equality is not an issue that only concerns one gender, but requires active commitment between men and women and should be promoted. Parents should learn to equally treat their children in the family in order to foster respect and unity within the family. No child is greater in standard than the other because of her/his gender, educational achievements, disability, colour of skin etc. Proverbs 1:8
- 7.2.2.6 **Unemployment**: Some families have all members not having a permanent employment rendering the economic hub of the family at a disadvantage. The family therefore is unable to meet basic needs; Proverbs 22: 7; 2Thessalonians 3:6
- 7.2.2.7 **Divorce and Family Breakdown**: Divorce is a trial that affects the entire family. Those affected by divorce can receive strength and comfort from the Lord's promise: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matthew 11:28, 30). High divorce rates and separation of parents have a direct impact on children's behaviour, social competence, academic achievement, stress levels, resources available to them and whether they maintain school attendance and friendship ties, among others. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Matthew 19:1-12
- 7.2.2.8 **Abuse**: Abuse not only injures the body, mind, and spirit, it is a violation of the teachings of the Saviour. Victims of abuse can seek help from their priesthood leader to guide them through the process

of healing. "We are all under the Saviour's command to love and care for each other and especially for the weak and defenceless" (Dallin H. Oaks, "Protect the Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012). Isaiah 1:18; Acts 3:19; Isaiah 43:25-26; 1 John 1:9

7.2.2.9 **Grief** : Grief is a part of mortality. But because Jesus Christ has suffered the pains and afflictions of all mankind, we do not have to endure it alone. "Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Saviour will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments" Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Psalm 23:4

7.2.2.10 **Pornography**: Pornography is a toxic counterfeit and misuse of the sacred and powerful God-given gift of human sexuality. Pornography negatively impacts our relationships with God, family, and ourselves. Nonetheless, peace and recovery are possible. "Repent and, if necessary, repent again and again and again and again until you—not the enemy—are in charge of you" (Boyd K. Packer, "How to Survive in Enemy Territory," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012).

Same-Sex Attraction: The experience of same-sex attraction is a complex reality for many people. The attraction alone is not sinful. While individuals do not choose such attractions, all individuals choose how to respond to them. "Let's work together on this and find friendship and commonality and brotherhood and sisterhood. It's important that there be love, and that there be hope" (D. Todd Christofferson, mormonsandgays.org). Romans 1: 26-28; Jude 1: 5-8; John 8: 7-11

7.2.2.12 **Suicide** : Although it is wrong to take one's own life, only God can judge such a matter. "Obviously, we do not know the full circumstances surrounding every suicide. Only the Lord knows all the details, and He it is who will judge our actions here on earth" (M. Russell Ballard, "Suicide: Some Things We Know, and Some We Do Not," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987). 2Samuel 17:23; Is 41:10; Jeremiah 29:11; Ps 55:22

Classification of challenges according to life cycle

LIFE CYCLE	CHALLENGES	CAUSES PRECIPITATING FACTORS
<p>Children</p> <p>Mark 10: 14 Ephesians 4: 26-27 Proverbs 29:22 Ephesians 6: 4 Ephesians 4: 15-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse-sexual, physical, emotional, psychological • Child labour • Bully by other children • Neglect, abandonment, exploitation, trafficking, • Family conflict or domestic violence, divorce, separation • Step-parenting • Child labour in the farms • Non maintenance of children by their biological parents • Lack of discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Next of kin • Someone known and trusted by the child • Friends • Disobedience of the child • Satanism • Failed relationships between parents • Parents working away from home • An absent father figure • Negative media influences
<p>Youth</p> <p>Ecclesiastes 8: 2-5 Matthew22: 21 23: 2-3 Romans13: 1-7 Titus3:1 1 Peter2: 13-17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse-alcohol and drugs • Crime • Sex work (prostitution) • Sexual relationships outside marriage-pressure of both the peers and the parents • Termination of pregnancy (abortion) • Unemployment • Initiation schools for girls and for boys respectively • Same sex relationship • Satanism • Lack of discipline • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer pressure • Coerced by parents or adults • Exploring • Family background • Disobedience of the child • Satanists or devil worshippers • Today challenges are chatting or mix it Satanism • Presently used as a way to get gifts from the friends and relatives • Promote early sexual involvement of the young people-they want to test it • An absent father figure • Negative media influences
<p>Adults</p> <p>Milachi2: 16 Matthew 19:6, 8 Deuteronomy 24: 1-4 Matthew5:32 and 19:9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfaithfulness of partners • HIV/AIDS • Relationships-sexual, social, contract e.g. business partnership • Conflict between Western and Traditional marriages • Unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty-fronting of people for economic gain, BEE, BBEE • Opportunists i.e. big business people • Partners working away from each other-distant relationships-out of sight out of mind ideology (man may

LIFE CYCLE	CHALLENGES	CAUSES PRECIPITATING FACTORS
Genesis2:24 Matthew19:5 Ephesians5: 31 Ephesians 4: 32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiteracy • Conflicts in marriage • Divorce and separation • Lack of communication concerning issues of sex and marriages • Widow Abuse –financial (material possessions or estate left by late husband) sexual abuse (cleansing ritual), emotional abuse (blamed for the death of the husband-there is a saying that a man is killed by his wife but a women is killed by her unfaithfulness) • Difference if Educational qualifications between husband and wife • Balance of work and family 	marry another women in Johannesburg without the consent of the wife) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment • Substance abuse-alcohol and drug abuse • Extra-marital relations • Bigamy • Interference of in-laws • Inferiority/ superiority complex. • Negative media influences
Elderly 1 kings1:15 Ps 71:18-19 Is46:4 Leviticus 19:"32 Proverbs 16: 31 Luke2: 36-38 Ps92: 13-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse by family members (physical, social, economic, sexual, emotional) • Alzheimer, dementia • Loneliness • Witchcraft victims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension money taken away by family members- • Money cater for the whole family as some members are not working • Money not meeting the basic need of the elderly • Vulnerability of the elderly
Women and girl child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women to women oppression in the family • Oppression by the male members • Oppression by in-laws • Barren women will always be blamed-to save marriage the family will organize a man to sleep privately with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status of the women in the country • Comparison between boys and girls (value in terms of family heritage)

LIFE CYCLE	CHALLENGES	CAUSES PRECIPITATING FACTORS
	women for procreation reasons	
People with disabilities Jn9:2-4 Exodus 4: 10-12 Ps139:13-14 Is 55:"9 Proverbs3: 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of understanding about disabilities Deut27: 18-19 Leviticus 19: 14 Luke 14: 12-14 Rom 8:18-22	Disability is regarded as a result for witchcraft-albinism, mental health,
Ancestral worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the following events: Annual ancestral worship New job Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 20:25 Luke 16: 19-31; Hebrews 7: 25 2 cor11: 14 1 Chronicles 10: 13-14 Acts15: 28-29; 1 Peter1: 18-19	Belief system Socialization Nature/nurture controversy Anti-Christian culture
Witch doctor	When is he/she visited for both positive and negative reasons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The barrenness of the women Job hunting Casting a spell For defence on someone Revenge Feared as a leader, or worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity or wealth for winning gambling Fame Winning a woman's heart Ritual murder-difficulty to prove Lighting or striking by lightning
Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-Christian Night-visit the witchdoctors and the fortune tellers Visit witchdoctors outside their local areas Advice consultation of the witchdoctors even by the fellow Christians-saying God needs to be helped Satanism practiced by some members of the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak faith Desperation Satanists or devil worshippers Today challenges are chatting or mix it Negative media influences

LIFE CYCLE	CHALLENGES	CAUSES PRECIPITATING FACTORS
Cultural issues	Marriage type-polygamy is practiced by most men irrespective of the culture Men live a double standard life and it is accepted by family of origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support by the culture and the family • The well to do who can afford can have two families and both not even knowing about the other

Conclusion

In conclusion, we observe that whilst there is no perfect family, the modern family values have overtaken the Christian family values. Today's modern family has no time to sit, pray and even enjoy a family meal together. The rapid developments in information and communication technology has cut off communication among family members (Proverbs 11: 29). Even if they can be in one room, each of them will be busy on the mobile phone. The family that talks and prays together have a chance of staying together. The challenges that faces modern families makes a "perfect family" an endangered institution.

CHAPTER 8

CWA COMMITTED TO THE YOUTH OF THE CHURCH

8.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

We live in a time where our countries are free politically, in movement, in speech and in many other things which were not possible pre independence especially in South Africa. This has brought a lot of joy in people's lives to know and be able to choose without hindrances imposed by law. Freedom has brought upon many and equal rights to those who live in our country especially human rights. South Africa is hailed across the world as having a marvel of a constitution and a champion of human rights. It is with rights that a responsibility comes and a lot of people are still grappling with that. This is excessively true in the family structures of our society as children come to headlock with their parents on issues of rights.

Many parents have negated their duties to teach, discipline and share with their children due to somewhat lack of knowledge or options to take on such tasks in the new South Africa. Equal opportunities or the freedom to seek such opportunities has also contributed immensely on this problem as many parents are relentlessly seeking to create a better life by working hard and in most cases away from home.

The Apartheid Spatial design in RSA which is a continued legacy has played a critical role in this regard and continues to make it possible that parent's work far from their homes. This surely makes it difficult to have time for parenting and passing down valuable cultural and traditional wisdom which cannot be taught through any text book. Surely we can point out to a lot of reasons why our Society has lost morality especially amongst its younger generation but broken family structures is at the core of them all.

The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are rooted to Love and Love is closely related to family bond as its foundation. The first person you interact with on earth when you are born even before while you are still in formation is a mother. She with other family members will nurture you until you are of age to stand on your own; it's a natural phenomenon of life. We do however live in a time when this ideal occurrence is disturbed by many things of life which unfortunately are self-imposed are forced upon by circumstances we find ourselves in.

Today the youth is facing more than before enormous societal challenges and leads to unimaginable ailments. CWA recently ran a workshop with the

youth in Ikageng to uncover these ailments and we came up with the following as serious issues that the youth is dealing with:

- Drugs and alcohol abuse
- Sexual intercourse
- Prostitution
- Bullying
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Blesser/ Blessee syndrome
- Crime (Gangsterism, Murder, Robbery, Rape and etc.)
- Human trafficking
- HIV infections
- Satanism

The problems are multi-pronged and are not limited to these ones we have identified and communities differ where you find some are dealing with others and some not. Thus, it also needs to be noted that the environment plays a critical role as well which boils down to our point in the beginning because it fundamentally a family unit structure within a community that sets the type of living environment. Many cultures that harnessed unity, care and communication have eroded within our Society – churches and communal activities that brought people together are no longer deemed necessary or fashionable amongst young people.

The existing opportunities have also made us unwittingly selfish as we all race to beat the scourge of poverty which somehow continues to ravage our communities.

In recent times, as we face the decay of morality the question that has been forthcoming is that “where is the church in all of this and why does it not take its rightful position in society?” The question although relevant, but it is very contradictory as people are the church themselves; It is like the head asking the brain to think. The nature of people however is that we always look outward for solutions or blame and barely inside.

8.2 GOALS/OBJECTIVES

CWA has committed itself to look within and come up with solutions given the experience of the young adults which makes up most our movement and the wisdom of our adult members. We do recognize the enormity of our problems especially pertaining to the youth and wish to tackle them appropriately through our reach within the ambit of the church.

The following are the desired objectives in the fight against this moral decay which inflict on our young people:

- a) Formulating and Promoting enhancing family unit structured programmes
- b) Formulate Catechism based Early Childhood Programmes within the Church
- c) Reignite Spiritual and Christianity Faith belief through Action
- d) Promote and enhance programmes of self-sustainability through SCC's
- e) Challenge the Mind, Body and Spirit of Young people in their daily lives

8.3 PROCEDURES/SCOPE OF WORK

8.3.1 Formulating and Promoting enhancing family unit structured programmes:

- Have a dialogue communicate with the parents and youth to discuss issues such as education and other social issues.
- Invite an expert in that specific field to advise on how they are succeeding

8.3.2 Formulate Catechism based Early Childhood Programmes within the Church:

- As the Church already has Sunday School programme – encourage members to participate as teachers, ASB's

8.3.3 Reignite Spiritual and Christianity Faith belief through Action:

- As parents it is our duty to teach our children to love our children and guide them through God's word:
- Proverbs 22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.
- Proverbs 19:18 – Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.
- Proverbs 23: 13 – Don't fail to discipline your children, they won't die if you spank them.

8.3.4 Promote and enhance programmes of self-sustainability through SCC's: to contribute to the Church's be self-sustainability.

8.4 THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES SHOULD BE PROMOTED FOR FAMILIES

Relevant programmes should address the following:

- 8.4.1 Raise awareness on the role of the family and strengthen the relationships within the family in order to reinforce its union and stability in assuming its functions;
- 8.4.2 Encourage participation of all members of the family in the management of family affairs;
- 8.4.3 Involve the community at large to raise awareness on the positive role the family can play in society;
- 8.4.4 Promote community associations/networks, which can support families in times of need;
- 8.4.5 Promote dialogue among family members about issues concerning the family and those affecting society;
- 8.4.6 Organise youth discussions on family life and parent child relationships.
- 8.4.7 Organise information programmes (TV, Radio, leaflets, seminars, catechetical program for families etc.) about the adverse issues facing families in order to prevent the dislocation of the family; and
- 8.4.8 Promote mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation within the family especially with regard to older persons and people with disabilities.
- 8.4.9 Support programmes by the religious sector that assist the family to acquire and reinforce social values that will enhance family life.
- 8.4.10 Programmes for the spiritual development of family members as a support system to families and their active involvement in such programmes.
- 8.4.11 Awareness and education programmes to promote values such as, love, care and respect in families
- 8.4.12 Family wellness programmes that form the basis for the moral renewal of the broader society and social cohesion.
- 8.4.13 Community upliftment programmes introducing positive role models to children with poverty on the rise and the youth finds itself at the centre of unemployment – develop programmes that we source our own repositories (e.g. CWA to take initiative to take youth for workshops on how to make Rosaries etc. and sell it and contribute to the church)

8.5 STRENGTHENING MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES

- 8.5.1 The Strengthening the Family and Strengthening Marriage courses can help couples enrich their marriage relationship and improve their skills in parenting.
- 8.5.2 Christians are all part of the body of Christ and we all have different functions. Some of us are strong in this area and some are strong in that area. Some of us can do this and some of us can do that. We must use what God has equipped us with to work together and have fellowship with one another.
- 8.5.3 As a community we must work together to advance God's kingdom, encourage each other, build each other up, and we must bear each other's burdens
- 8.5.4 We must never isolate ourselves from other believers. If we do, then how can we aid others in their time of need and in our time of need how can others help us if we distance ourselves? Not only is it pleasing to God to see the body of Christ working together as one, but we are stronger together and we become more like Christ together than we do alone. Have fellowship with one another and you will truly see how important and awesome community is in your Christian walk of faith
- 8.5.5 **Counselling services:** Admission that there is something wrong with me or my family is the giant step to the road to recovery, reconciliation and unity. Counselling can either be at the family level, or through extended family members, through the Church structures or through professional counsellors in our community. **John 8:34; Proverbs 10:12**
- 8.5.6 **Effective communication:** Communication is a two-way process. Family members should be free to express their views in the family. This will build confidence in the members and all issues faced by members will be attended to at a family level. Communication brings the family together. The members learn and appreciate each other and can be able to defend one another when the enemy strikes. Effective communication is communication with love. **Proverbs 15:27; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Ephesians 4:2**
- 8.5.7 **Support groups:** There are communities that have established support group in order to share and support each other on issues of commonality. These may include support group for parents of children with disabilities, HIV and AIDS, Substance abuse, Victims of Violence and Crime, etc. Families with related challenges should not be shy or afraid to join these groups as they will help them. **Romans 12:9; Romans 13:10**

- 8.5.8 **Building a Bible centred home:** The family that prays together stays together. We need to create an atmosphere in our families where the Bible becomes a centre of our home. Reading the Bible and sharing the Word of God in the family. All members should be encouraged to be part of the Family Prayer. **Joshua 24:15; Matthew 22:27-29**
- 8.5.9 **Parenting:** Parenting is not an easy task. Not all mothers and father are good parents. Many parents find it very difficult to raise their children very well. There are child and family centres in the communities that are ready to assist the families with such programs. **Proverbs 31:15-17; Matthew 23:6-8**
- 8.5.10 **The family as a school of life:** When the parents understand child development, they will be able to help the child to grow well and support all the developmental stages. Some of the things in life cannot be learned from outside the family and these may include among others, love, respect, honour, care, anger management, tolerance, etc. These attributes when they are learned earlier in life they are fully embedded in the life of a person and they nurture his/her behaviour, action, reaction and response to life situations. The family can teach the child responsible behaviour and the application of consequences thereof. This will build confidence in the child's life. **Ephesians 6:1-2 ; Song of Solomon 8:4-8**

8.6 CHALLENGE THE MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR DAILY LIVES

The church has a programme which was Pope John Paul II's integrated vision for the human person – one where body, soul and spirit are truly united. He seeks to explain what the body means as a sign of the person, how it shows the person's call to be a gift, as well as how it reveals the nature of God and His plan for mankind.

As CWA, we could see how we can implement some of the teachings to our youth and teach them what God intended their bodies to be, what it means to love, being single, marriage and sex – this programme would alleviate the social issues the youth finds themselves in regarding unwanted pregnancies, abortions, HIV infections and etc.

8.7 INTEGRATION OF VARIED YOUTH PROGRAMMES INTO THE CWA ANNUAL PROGRAMMES OF ACTIVATES

8.8 KEY PERSONNEL

CWA has majority of Young Adults in the Dioceses – we could introduce a task team or a representative in the committee or any of the council members to liaise with the committee.

8.9 EVALUATION

At the annual conference where reports are submitted also emphasize how branches have carried their tasks in the youth development.

CHAPTER 9

THE FAMILY A PLACE FOR LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

9.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this discussion is to capture the spirit of Christ Jesus on the family. We aspire to find the family as a place of love and forgiveness. In this, we are inspired by the teachings of Jesus by his example to give up his life for us on the cross and pleading to God the Father that “forgive them for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23: 34).

9.2 LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Not long ago, most of us would have read in some the Catholic documents and social media’s reaction of one of another messages from Pope Francis on Family. This message went viral because it touches the core of family problems and went on to offer a solution towards healing our ailing and limping families. He reminded us that, *“There is no perfect family. We have no perfect persons. We are truly not perfect. We do not get married to a perfect person; neither do we have perfect children. We have complaints about each other. We are disappointed by one another. Therefore, there is no healthy marriage nor healthy family without the exercise of love and forgiveness. Forgiveness is vital to our emotional health and spiritual survival.*

The Catholic Bishops Extra Ordinary General Assembly of 2015 in Sydney Australia observed that **“the biggest challenge to the family today is that we have forgotten how to love”**. This is a tall order and a challenge for Christians. It requires serious introspection and retracing our steps. Why do we have this situation when we follow the icon and author of love?

The concept of love has been explored extensively as an integral part and central web spanning the Family sub themes. It is central of our faith. “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son...” (John 3: 16).

God so loved the world that He gave his only Son to lead us back to our heavenly home. And on earth, God gave us the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph that we may have a role model on how to raise upright families of our own. Through the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Family, we

too can strive to lead lives that will give glory to the heavenly Father. It is in this context that we see the family as a source of love and a place of forgiveness. Such a household is built on wisdom (Proverbs 24: 3-4).

When families are founded on the principles of love and forgiveness, it means a strong Church and a progressive Society. In this modern world, devout Christian families are like a light house that leads lost ships at sea to a safe haven. Families that devote their energies to worshipping God are like jewels whose shine radiates throughout society. Great wonder it is therefore, that the family that teaches the children; the Fear of the Lord through family values has family morals that are at their highest (Prov 22: 6).

Forgiveness is a conditions directed by God. Colossian 3: 13 captures this by saying "bearing one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive".

Without love and forgiveness, the family becomes a theatre of conflict and a bastion of grievances. Without forgiveness, the family become sick. Forgiveness in the family sterilises the soul, cleanses the mind and liberates the heart and the family well-being. It is intertwined with healing.

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Anyone who does not love nor forgive will not have peace of mind. He will become sick mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. That is why it is important for the family to be a place of life and not of death. A place of healing not hurting. A stage of forgiveness and not of guilt. Forgiveness in the family brings joy, peace and healing." (Pope Francis, 2015).

9.3 EXAMPLE OF FAMILY HEALING THROUGH FORGIVENESS

Countless family situations today present the need and opportunity for forgiveness. One regular battle between a teenage son and his father ended when the youth retreated to his bedroom, packed his bags and left the

home in great anger and resentment, despite his mother's tearful protests. As he left, his father called out saying, "I know I haven't been the best father to you. I'm sorry for the pain I've caused you. I love you." The young man boarded a bus for a distant town. As he travelled, his father's words—"I'm sorry----I love you"—rang in his ears. His boiling resentment cooled, and he began to weep. He bought a return ticket at the next stop. The youth arrived home late that night to find his father in the rocking chair with his face buried in his hands. The youth whispered, "Dad" and they ran into each other's arms. The son later wrote, "Those last years at home were the best ones of my childhood. "I am sorryI love you...has healed many families. Remember that apologizing does not always mean you are wrong and that the other person is right. It is just that you value your family more than your ego.

9.4 CALLED BY GOD TO BUILD STRONG CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

In order to heal and build our families we must learn to forgive just like Christ forgave us. God calls us to build strong Christian families. He invites us daily to deepen our faith and trust him enough to help us to rebuild our fragile families. He invites us to love our families just like He loves us. Remember that Family life is like a book. Some chapters are happy, others sad, others stressful, others frustrating and others exciting. But it is up to us to forgive, turn the pages and take the opportunity to write the next chapters and ensuring that they have happy endings. We can write happy family chapters by ensuring that Love and forgiveness in the family become the pillars of our families. Family is the greatest blessing from above. We do not choose our families. We are deposited by God in our families as a gift of love. God expects us to love and forgive one another forever. Families are forever. Hence Pope Francis goes on to invite us not to build walls but bridges in our families. He encourages us to conquer all evil in our families with goodness. He calls us to conquer any family offence and disappointment with forgiveness. Let's remember always "Fenya bosula ka molemo." (Romans 12: 21).

9.5 LEARNING TO FORGIVE PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Because nobody's parents are perfect, everyone is able to see particular features of his heritage which have not been right. Wrongs in the past often show up as scars in the present. Some of these scars are slight, some are major, and some are still festering. The wrongs which caused these scars are many times real, but other times they are imagined. As one writer put it;

Just as our parents are human and subject to error, so are we. As children we interpret what our parents said and did. Well-intentioned behaviour may have been cast in the worst possible light, thus making our parents' good efforts seem wrong. A critical remark made by a parent many years ago may be replayed and blown out of proportion and significance by a child who now blames his or her parents for personal problems.

There are many reasons why we should forgive our parents. These do not necessarily make forgiveness easy, but they do show the importance of forgiveness. Obviously, the most important reason we should forgive has to do with our personal relationship with the Lord. ***"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14, 15).***

Resentment and bitterness destroy our ability to honour. Forgiveness, on the other hand, gives us a freedom to honour our parents. Forgiveness frees us to see our parents in a more objective light, and makes available to us the transforming grace of God.

9.5.1 Forgiveness in Action

Knowing the reasons for forgiveness is not always enough to cause us to exercise forgiveness. Scar tissue can go very deep. The following pointers show more clearly just what forgiveness is and how it works.

- ***Forgiveness means release.*** It means no longer holding others accountable for what they have done.
- ***Forgiveness is a choice.*** We do not need to feel like forgiving in order to forgive. We must choose to forgive. Usually when forgiveness is most necessary, it is emotionally difficult. The Scriptures do not say, however, we must feel like forgiving, but simply that we are to forgive. Choosing to forgive carries its own reward, and the act of forgiveness is often followed by emotional relief and joy.
- ***Forgiveness is costly.*** It means absorbing the "debt" instead of retaining it on record. It cancels the account held against another. The cross of Jesus is the clearest example in all history of the cost of forgiveness.

- ***Forgiveness is usually purging.*** Particularly with our parents, when we are willing to forgive, we usually find that they were not totally responsible for the problem. We come to see that our own negative responses to them may have contributed as much (sometimes more) to our injury as their initial wrong. "A big part of growing up is learning to accept responsibility for our own lives, which in this case means admitting that we may have created some of the problems with our parents."
- ***Forgiveness is an act of faith.*** This probably the most important concept of forgiveness presented here. The process of forgiveness involves a refocusing from the offender to God. Instead of looking any longer at what was done wrong in the past, we can look in faith to God who is able to work everything together "for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

9.6 CONCLUSION

We must continue to build strong Christian families guided by the Holy Spirit and light of God. Forgiveness is central to this process. Forgiving one another as family member starts from our hearts. It helps restore the peace and contentment needed in every family. It is important to remember that forgiveness is a gift we can give to ourselves as families. By Forgiving one another, regardless of the gravity of the situation is the greatest service to our families. To forgive is to let go of the hurt, bitterness, contempt and desire for revenge. Life is too short to hold family grudges. No one is perfect.

THINGS TO DO:

1. Do you hold a grudge against a particular family member? Start praying for you and the family. Make the first move towards reconciliation.
2. What are the qualities/values of a strong Christian family? Share them.

Jeremiah 29 vs 11 For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord. They are plans for good not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

In an unhealthy family, a recovery is need for the family to function effectively. These are some of the principles of recovery.