

**PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL PRACTICES
AMONGST SOME MODERN ZULUS:
AN ETHICAL RESPONSE FROM A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE**

by

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SUMMARY

There is a rise in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst some modern Zulus. The causes of this rise include the perpetual childhood of women in society and the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa. The results of this rise include teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

In Zulu traditional sexual practice the publicity of love affairs curbed sexual promiscuity. Many people were involved in the love affairs of young people. This tradition broke down because of the political, religious and socio-economic changes in South Africa.

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is sacred; it is an institution of God, a sacrament. Therefore premarital and extra-marital sexual relations taint the integrity of marriage.

A number of things can be done to alleviate the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual promiscuity. These include: changing the political and socio-economic structures of our country; empowering women; inculturation; and changing the pastoral attitude of the Church towards sexuality.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

Premarital sex; Extra-marital sex; Marriage; Sex education; Modern Zulus; Zulu tradition; Christianity; Ethical response; Attitude of the Church; Premarriage instruction; Post-marriage instruction; Marital breakdown; Premarital pregnancy.

INTRODUCTION

What went wrong? This is the question I always ask myself as I see the deterioration in people's behaviour, young and old, in matters of sex, especially with regard to premarital and extra-marital relations. Traditional Zulu behaviour has changed dramatically in sexual matters, Christian norms are ignored (or have been changed by people) in relation to sexual matters. I constantly seek to grasp people's thinking as to why they reject the Zulu tradition and Christian teaching in regard to these matters. The majority of people I have had to counsel in my experience as a pastor have had problems in the area of sexuality and marriage.

I will confine myself in this dissertation to the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst some modern Zulus. These are the people who mainly inhabit the KwaZulu-Natal region, who have embraced Western culture and modernization to a certain extent. They are, on the other hand, scattered in many parts of South Africa, especially in the Gauteng region. However, this research focuses on the area where I live and work, which is in KwaZulu-Natal.

AIMS OF THIS DISSERTATION

The aims of this dissertation are, firstly, to help me to understand the situations in which people live. Through understanding these situations, I will have a better grasp of what causes people to engage in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations, and be better able to understand the effects of these relations.

This dissertation will, secondly, help me to utilize this understanding to conscientize other pastors to study the circumstances in which the problems of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations occur. This will enable them to help their parishioners more effectively.

Thirdly, this dissertation will help me to teach the people the value of continence. It will also help me in encouraging the young people to seriously consider the premarriage classes and also to encourage the married couples to do all in their power to strengthen and preserve the love relationship between them. I can do this by preaching, teaching and arranging seminars and workshops.

Fourthly, this dissertation will, I trust, make a contribution to the academic study of theological ethics, particularly to sexual ethics within the Southern African context.

METHODOLOGY

In writing this dissertation I will, firstly, use my practical experience as a pastor. This experience has given me an insight into what is actually going on 'at the grassroots level'. I have witnessed the anguish that people experience as a result of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. I have listened to the many problems that people experience in this regard. I have only empathized with them because I did not have any tangible solutions to offer.

This has prompted me to have discussions about this with other pastors. I have sought to discover from them what they think about the whole problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations and how they handle it, and also what solutions they offer to those experiencing this problem. I have also had discussions with married couples who have children who are experiencing problems in relation to premarital sex and those who have had problems with their partners because of marital breakdown. This is the experience that will be used in writing this dissertation. In addition to these first-hand experiences, I have consulted many written sources to broaden my understanding of this problem.

In this dissertation I relate several of my own experiences and observations concerning sexual practices amongst the Zulus. This information is valid, I believe, because of the dearth of written information concerning this field of study. In this way, my pastoral experience complements my academic and theological studies.

I have to add, however, that no theology is entirely neutral. In our theological and ethical analysis we are influenced by our context. This dissertation is influenced, in general, by the political and socio-economic changes that have taken place, and are continuing to take place, in South Africa and, in particular, by the fact that I am a Zulu male and a Roman Catholic Priest.

This dissertation is written within the field of theological ethics. Thus, the analysis of the sexual attitudes and practices of modern day Zulus is examined from the ethical perspective of the Christian faith and, in particular, the moral position of the Catholic Church. In this dissertation, ethics involves an analysis of what is considered to be right or wrong in relation to traditional and modern Zulu sexual attitudes and actions. Theological ethics is further concerned with the causes and moral consequences of sexual attitudes and actions. Ethical evaluation and value judgements on the basis of the scripture and the Catholic theology are, thus, an inescapable part of such an approach.

The method employed in this dissertation will be an analysis of the premarital and extra-marital sexual practices of modern Zulu people which I will attempt to compare with traditional Zulu practice and the teaching of the Catholic Church. This comparison will show whether or not there is a relationship among these three. The current premarital and extra-marital sexual life of modern Zulu people shows that there are problems within it that need to be addressed. It is in addressing these problems that the relationship between current premarital and extra-marital Zulu sexual practice, traditional Zulu practice and Catholic teaching can be revitalized.

THE PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation will, in Chapter One, look into the causes of the rise of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. Among these causes are: the perpetual childhood of women in society, the political and socio-economic situation in South Africa and the negative attitude that the Church has had and still has towards sexuality. It will further look into the results of premarital and extra-marital sexual practices among some modern Zulus. These problems include teenage pregnancies, overpopulation, sexually transmitted diseases, and a lack of interest in marriage.

In Chapter Two the traditional Zulu behaviour in matters of sex will be analyzed. Traditional practices and taboos concerning premarital and extra-marital sexual relations shall be dealt with. This will focus on the publicity of love affairs of young men and women in which the art of courting proved that women were important and should be treated accordingly. This publicity safeguarded virginity which was regarded as very important by the Zulu tradition, by the elders and young men, and especially by the girls themselves. This gave rise to the traditional teaching about the general behaviour in premarital relations. I will also look at reasons why these practices and taboos broke down and the consequences of this social dislocation, some notable reasons being political and socio-economic factors as well as Western culture and Christianity.

In Chapter Three I will look into the christian teaching on premarital and extra-marital sexual relations with particular reference to the Roman Catholic Church. The sanctity and sacramentality of marriage will be explained and it will be argued that premarital and extra-marital sexual relations dishonour and taint the sanctity of marriage.

In Chapter Four I will suggest some possible solutions to the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst some modern Zulus. Among these solutions are the restructuring of the political and socio-economic setting of our country, making employment opportunities available and restructuring the migrant labour system, education (including sex education), housing, renewing unity and mutual support among family members, the empowerment of women both in society and Church, and a positive pastoral attitude of the Church towards sexuality, which will enhance moral commitment to continence, sexual morality and faithfulness amongst people.

CHAPTER ONE

THE RISE OF PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS: THEIR CAUSES AND IMPACT ON ZULU SOCIETY

It is a fact that there have been enormous changes in the morality of sexuality and marriage over the last 100 years. These changes have been rapid, and in some instances revolutionary, with the result that they have caught many people off balance. Changes have occurred both in attitude and behaviour. If values have changed, so have norms of conduct. These changes are the result of a multiplicity of factors influencing people in their sexual and marital lives.

To try to understand why we are presently in a state of change and confusion it is important to pinpoint the determining influences in this whole pattern of change. It is also salutary to remember that these changes in morality must be seen against the larger horizon of more general changes in the world because they are part of the revolutionary climate of our times.

Premarital and extra-marital affairs have been no exception in these changes. People are talking much more freely about sex nowadays than was the case 40 years ago. The taboos on sexual promiscuity have been replaced by pornography, the idolization of sexual pleasure and an over-emphasis on the physical aspects of sexuality. Traditional Zulu patterns of courtship and marriage have been thrown out by many people. It is not uncommon to have couples living together, or experimenting with trial marriages, wife-swopping and adulterous affairs.

I had a neighbour who had four children of whom two were already going to school (the former Mission school). In the beginning of 1992 he quarrelled with his wife and they separated. The wife took the four children with her. I took the liberty of going

to the wife's home, which is about one-and-a-half kilometres from the Mission, to chat with her about this separation as I had become fond of the family, and it made my heart ache to witness the rupture of their marriage. My intention was, afterwards, to visit her husband who was then staying with his family about seven kilometres from the Mission. After our discussion, I asked her whether she was contemplating filing for divorce. Her answer was: "It is not necessary because we are not married".

In the meantime I have discovered that of the approximately 550 families that inhabit Mophela area, about 37 couples are not married, which is about 7%. They are either 'shacking-up' together, or because a certain amount of '*lobolo*' has been paid, they are in the process of getting married.

In the three parishes that I have served since my ordination to the priesthood, I have witnessed that the majority of marital break-ups are because of the infidelity of one of the spouses, in most cases the husband. This infidelity is caused by a number of factors, a major cause being the culture of migrant labour which I will deal with below in section 1.1.2.

In 1990, in the area of Makhuzeni in the district of Bulwer, Chief Dlamini and his councillors announced that there would be a customary examination of the girls in the near future. (I had the privilege of meeting with the sickly and elderly people in his kraal for Holy Communion). One day, chatting with him, I asked him about the relevance and significance of this custom in the modern era. He said: "It helps to instil fear in the young girls not to engage themselves in premarital sexual intercourse¹ because they know that one day their intactness would be examined."

1. Premarital sexual intercourse means, in this context, actual coitus because ephemeral sexual intercourse was and still is the accepted practice in the Zulu tradition.

A few weeks after the examination I talked with the Chief again trying to establish the success of the examination. He indicated to me that in his area there were about 13 000 girls above 15 years of age, of whom about 9 000 were already engaged or having children who would, therefore, not be examined. From the 4 000 expected to come, only 57 did actually arrive, which is 1,4%. Many of the girls absconded from the area and fled to the townships and cities. Others, presumably, did not turn up because of other important commitments. Arguably this lack of attendance was a sign that they were no longer virgins.

This came as a shock to me because this is a rural area. I asked myself what the results in the townships and cities would be, where contraceptives abound.

1.1 THE CAUSES OF THE RISE OF PREMARITAL AND EXTRAMARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS

One may ask, "What causes this deterioration in morals concerning sexual matters in people?" There are many causes of this epidemic, but I am going to deal briefly with only five of them. They are the perpetual childhood of women in society, especially in Zulu culture, the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa, science and technology, the instability of some marriages and the unsatisfactory state of many marriages, and the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards sexuality.

1.1.1 The perpetual childhood of women in society, especially in Zulu culture

Wilson and Ramphele (1989) have this to say when dealing with the vulnerability of children and women to poverty in our society:

The society has been structured in such a way that women are compelled to be unusually dependent financially on their

husbands. Moreover, the combination of the migrant system, traditional law, and the sexism of both black and white society can be crippling for widows. For instance if her husband dies on the mines, her money comes through the magistrate who decides how much she should get each month. Furthermore, to wind up the estate there has to be a male relative who becomes the effective custodian (Wilson & Ramphela 1989: 178).

The law with regard to marriage has, until recently, subjected women to their husbands. It is no wonder, therefore, that we see women fighting and struggling for liberation from this oppression and injustice.

The Nguni culture and the law, especially that of the Zulus, have stressed the status of a woman in marriage as being that of a 'minor', a little bit higher than that of her female children but less than that of her male children, especially the first born. Cultural sexism does not give the woman a right even to rule her family after her husband's death. If she has no sons, or if her sons are still minors, a male from the family, e.g. her husband's brother, will take over until the eldest son reaches maturity.

The aim of the marriage for a woman, in Zulu culture, was to bear children for her husband, thus increasing the husband's clan. Infertility could result in divorce. During the proposal stage, it was made clear to the proposed girl what her duties would be when she became a member of the new family. When she agrees to marry her lover, she is at the same time accepting the conditions attached. These conditions included: extending the family by bearing plenty of children, especially sons, looking after the needs of her mother-in-law, looking after the needs of her husband, and looking after the needs of the husband's family as a whole.

Fr Patrick Whooley also touches on the subject of oppression of women in the Xhosa culture when he speaks on the *Equality in Marriage*:

A wife's first duty is to respect her husband and his people. The girl who was so uninhibited in her own home is bound by many restrictions in her husband's home. While ready to obey her husband's demands for sex whenever possible, she will never openly or directly show interest in sex or take any initiative (in Verryn 1975: 180).

Men have been free to do as they wish. They could have other wives, concubines or girlfriends while the women have to stick to their husbands.

It is against this whole background that the women have said: "We can do what you do". The extra-marital relationships of men have pushed some innocent women to engage in similar relationships. They cannot enjoy sex with their husbands because these husbands have other women or girlfriends, and they cannot "take any initiative" with regards to sex with their own husbands. Therefore they go somewhere to seek enjoyment and revenge for their husband's actions. Arguably, men's infidelity has led to women's infidelity.

1.1.2 The political and socio-economic setting in South Africa

In the past, the family was a very closely-knit unit. Life and work, production and consumption, education and recreation all took place in the family home under the protective and guiding eye of the head of the family, the father. Things were well structured and tightly controlled.

Much of this type of living was of a simple rural type and the work was largely manual. The children were important to maintain the family prosperity. Marriages were arranged so as to further the family interests. The roles were predetermined: the women were responsible for the home and the children, and the men looked to the 'financial' side of things.

The growth of the cities, the move from the land to the town and the building of huge factories changed all that. Now the father went out to work and, later, the mother. The State introduced the school system with the result that the children left the home as well. In addition the theatres, cinemas and sports grounds further enticed people to seek recreation outside their homes.

Due to all of these facilities and activities, it no longer became feasible to have a large family or home. The four-roomed houses and the modern flats encouraged "economic families". Besides, the young people widened their social contacts and thus married those whom they loved instead of those suggested or even enforced by their elders.

The extended family has by and large given way to the tiny 'nuclear family'. All of these factors have changed the image and pattern of the family. The family is no longer so united; it is an open unit and thus more vulnerable even in the area of sexuality. The children are freer to move around and have more time with their girlfriends or boyfriends.

People by nature need to work, whether it be organized or unorganized, formal or informal work. **Unemployment and lack of education** have denied many people this opportunity. Sadly, this state of affairs has led some people to engage in acts that are unbecoming. Sexual promiscuity, drinking, violence and thuggery are amongst such acts. I have noticed that children who leave school because they cannot continue (either through lack of funds or because the parents are away working), get pregnant or impregnate others at an early age. I have, furthermore, noticed that couples who have nothing to do the whole day (because they are unemployed and have no fields to till) have more children for whom they cannot care.

Housing has been a problem for many black people. It is not unusual to find more than six people inhabiting a four-roomed house. The problem of housing has been highlighted by the spreading of shacks all over the country. The congestion of people in cities and towns is inevitable at the moment, because that is where they hope to get a chance of employment. Besides threatening the lives of many, this congestion has led to lack of privacy and, possibly, to sexual indulgence and impropriety.

Worth noting under this sub-heading is **migrant labour**. This has greatly contributed to the current culture of promiscuity. Andrew Spiegel notes:

Thus we see that although there was a rationalization for the widespread extra-marital relations which occur when spouses are separated by migrant labour, it is not considered morally right. The majority of villagers agreed that the practice did occur, but a statement of indignation often followed: 'It is a mistake; it is not right; it is not the law.' At the same time possible results of such practices were elucidated: 'It causes only loud anger and hatred'. 'It leads to fighting and divorce'. Nevertheless, one woman pointed out, if one doesn't see one's husband for two full years, extra-marital cohabitation will probably result (in Verryn 1975: 480).

Spiegel refers here to the results of migrant labour on the Lesotho community, but this is not unlike the damage that migrant labour has inflicted on the morals of the Zulus with regards to sexuality. This is evident in many quarters of Zulu society.

I remember a case in 1988 in the Mission where I was serving as an assistant Priest. In the early 1970s a marriage was solemnized in that Mission. The husband was a migrant labourer coming home twice a year and whenever a need arose. When they had three children he went to work and never came home again. He did not write or send any money. In 1988 he came back from Johannesburg with another woman whom he had married in a Church in Johannesburg. He already had

four children with his second wife. The migrant labour system had turned this particular man into a polygamist.

It has become a quasi-accepted phenomenon that men who are away at work have extra-marital relationships. Others have two wives, one in the country and the other in town. It is clear that the migrant labour system has forced polygamous relationships onto some reluctant victims.

It is not only men who have been affected by these situations, women have also suffered deeply. Their husbands go to work for too long and only sometimes send money home. Under these circumstances marriage loses its meaning with the occasional provision of money being the only contact between husband and wife. Besides the pain of not having one's husband at home very often, one discovers that one's husband is having another affair in town; probably another wife and children. That is very frustrating, and that is why the woman interviewed by Spiegel said: "If one doesn't see one's husband for two full years, extra-marital cohabitation will probably result".

Spiegel further says:

Two wives of absent migrant labourers were quite happy to discuss their common concubine in front of me. There appeared to be no shame nor jealousy involved although the man concerned was not mentioned by name (in Verryn 1975: 479).

Children are also the victims of the migrant labour system. In some instances both parents are away at work for months and children have to be by themselves. In most cases they abuse this freedom and one of the ways of abusing it is to indulge in sexual activities. Migrant labour then, affects the whole family; the father, the mother and the children.

1.1.3 Science and technology

Science and technology have produced advanced forms of communication and transport. The mass media make information readily and cheaply available to all. The public is quickly informed of all advances and new items, but it is also pressurized into what it ought to accept or reject. Public opinion is very often moulded by a small group of decision-makers. They are a powerful force in shaping peoples' opinions on items as diverse as politics and washing powder. In addition, life seems to have lost its privacy, all has become public. This, too, has had an effect on the relationships between the sexes and on family life in general.

Television, cinema and theatre have played a role in the corrosion of morals regarding sexuality. Donald McCarthy says:

Romantic and passionate scenes in movies and television represent it [human genital activity] as primarily a technique to be mastered and a powerful tool to be manipulated by men and women in their encounters. It is portrayed as almost magically effective in removing barriers of misunderstanding, overcoming timidity or even antipathy, and producing the wondrous disposition of love (in Gratsch 1981: 379).

In the media, sexuality becomes a topic of commercialization. Instead of liberating people to properly express their sexuality it enslaves them to an obsessive preoccupation with genital sexual activity. Sexual curiosity is cultivated and exploited for material gain in advertising. This is a deliberate use of human sexuality for the economic benefit of those that have access to and control over the media.

Worth mentioning under this sub-section are the advances made in gynaecology, especially in contraception. A few decades ago contraception was a taboo. Today, from being a totally rejected practice, it has become a generally accepted and normal practice.

Family planning has drastically changed family patterns. Medical advances have helped to alleviate fears which at times were operative in traditional morality, such as fear of pregnancy or venereal diseases. Contraceptive devices are widely in use and even encouraged by government policies.

The alleviation of the fear of pregnancy and venereal diseases has led people to engage more freely in premarital and extra-marital sexual intercourse. More frequent male proposals and female acceptance of sexual intercourse takes place today. More married people engage easily, without fear, in extra-marital sexual intercourse. While contraceptives have doubtless fulfilled a commendable social function, at the same time they have corroded the morals of people with regards to sexual activities.

1.1.4 The instability of some marriages and the unsatisfactory state of many marriages

Divorce is a rather easy, cheap and quite frequent phenomenon nowadays. We see many marriages breaking up because of a variety of causes. Even among those marriages that still stand, we sometimes witness a degree of instability. People, by nature, love happiness and hate sadness. The state of many marriages today makes people afraid of getting married. This has resulted in many people choosing to remain either single or to cohabit.

It is difficult for most people to live without a companion unless, of course, they have taken the vows of chastity and celibacy. Consequently, people will engage in premarital sexual intercourse, and others in homosexual activities. Those who are in shaky and unstable marriages will seek satisfaction and stable relationships outside of their marriages.

1.1.5 The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards sexuality

As practical beings people look for practical solutions to their problems. This applies especially in the area of sexuality.

Sexuality has often been presented by the Church as something to be shunned because it is sinful. Sins against the sixth commandment have been put in the category of the gravest sins. Mace notes two points in this regard: firstly, that the "sexual nature of people was somehow more closely associated [by the Church] with sin and evil than were other areas of his [or her] personality", and secondly that "all forms of sexual expression outside marriage, without exception, are utterly wicked" (Mace 1970: 69).

Historically the Church has taken a negative approach to sexuality. At times the exaltation of celibacy and virginity has led some, even the married, to look down upon healthy sexual relationships within marriage. A certain imbalance has been created by the consideration of the chaste life as being superior to the marital state.

Another approach taken by the Catholic Church has been a "police morality" in which sexuality has been seen as a dangerous or "hot" subject needing to be treated with care and kept within strict legal boundaries. This surely, is a very narrow, restrictive and legalistic approach. There is very tight surveillance kept on the sexual behaviour of children and teenagers; a rigid adherence to tradition. Outwardly, this manifests itself in inflexible legal systems and rigorous punishment for offenders.

Usually, people use any means available to them to fight for their freedom. In sexuality they have used the sexual "revolution", which includes indulgence in

sexual matters, to register their objection to the strict and impractical teaching of the Catholic Church about sexuality.

To sum up, the perpetual childhood of women in society, especially in Zulu culture, the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa, science and technology, the instability of some marriages and the unsatisfactory state of many marriages, and the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards sexuality can be cited as some of the main reasons for the rise of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations.

1.2 THE RESULTS OF PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS

Premarital and extra-marital sexual relations have serious repercussions for the individuals who engage in them and for the community as a whole.

1.2.1 Teenage pregnancies

One day I was at the local clinic at Mpumalanga visiting some of my parishioners working there. It was a day when expectant mothers came for the ante-natal clinic consultation. I sat there and observed the queue attentively. My observation was that the majority of the expectant mothers were teenagers. Then I discussed this observation with the sister-in-charge in order to ascertain whether some of these teenagers were married or not. To my amazement only three out of more than twenty of them were married. One was 21 years of age and the other two 18 years of age. The sister-in-charge indicated to me that this was the normal course of events at Mpumalanga Clinic with regard to expectant mothers.

After this observation I enquired about the use of contraceptives in the area. She said that most of the parents have mythical ideas about contraceptives, especially

for the girls who have not yet had any children. They believe that if contraceptives are used before marriage, conception will be very difficult especially if the pill has been used. Also the girls are afraid that if they request contraceptives, this would be the evidence, for both their parents and the nurses, that they are engaged in sexual activities. This evidence may have negative consequences for them such as expulsion from home, enforced marriage or loss of education. According to her, there are very few unmarried girls who have a second baby because after the first baby, the majority of them will start to use contraceptives. I am able to corroborate this statement of the sister-in-charge because in the parish I serve, less than 5% of unmarried mothers have come to me for penance because they have a second child.

These teenage pregnancies have a number of negative consequences because there is no planning or preparation for them. Sadly, some of these young mothers have committed suicide because they were 'dumped' by their boyfriends and were not prepared to be mothers and face the shame and gossip of the village.

One of these negative consequences is the **loss of a hopeful future**, firstly for the young parents, especially the mother, and also for the baby. If it is discovered that a girl is pregnant she is obliged to leave school in order to attend an ante-natal clinic and then care for her young baby. This period can take up to three years depending on the particular family. Other girls discover that they have to terminate their schooling permanently, either because it is a punishment imposed by their parents or because they have to seek employment in order to rear the children. The fathers of these illegitimate children sometimes have to leave school to seek employment in order to pay the heavy fines for impregnating the girls and to provide support for rearing their babies. In some instances young people are even compelled to marry each other because they are parents already. The children of such unions do not receive adequate parenting because their mothers and fathers

are unprepared for this responsibility. So some babies are abandoned in trash cans, some strangled or aborted before birth, some given up for adoption and others reared by relatives. This is a bleak future for the little children.

Secondly, teenage pregnancies result in children who have no fathers being brought into the world. A child may have no father because either the mother, as a result of her promiscuity, cannot identify the father, or because the father denies being responsible for the pregnancy. For an African child to belong to and have a proper surname is a source of pride. This is even shown in the praises of a grown-up boy. An illegitimate child takes the surname of his or her mother rather than that of his or her father. This normally leads to loss of inheritance from both families. Although there is a rapid increase in the number of illegitimate children, this does not erase the stigma on these children for their whole lives.

1.2.2 Overpopulation

Living space is decreasing all the time, especially in the underdeveloped countries. We know today that a country which has more people than resources is doomed to poverty. Yet we witness in the underdeveloped countries a high birth rate coupled with a deterioration in the economy.

Because teenage pregnancies are unplanned, they are detrimental to the economy of the country. On one hand, people are busy conscientizing married couples to bring into the world children that they want and need, for whom adequate preparation has been made yet, on the other hand, we witness an increase in teenage pregnancies.

High population growth leads to a scarcity of housing, employment and education opportunities. It results in overcrowding, fierce competition, envy and violence. This has a negative effect on both family morality and social stability.

1.2.3 Sexually transmitted diseases

Doctor Derek Llewellyn-Jones notes:

In the past twenty years the number of people infected by a sexually transmitted disease has doubled or trebled, depending on the country reporting. The greatest increase has been amongst young people, under the age of twenty-five, and one teenager in every one hundred and fifty may contract a venereal disease each year (Llewellyn-Jones 1980: 101).

According to Doctor Llewellyn-Jones, the reasons for the increase of sexually transmitted diseases in society are complex.

In part, it is due to a more 'permissive' attitude to sexual intercourse and to the increasing numbers of people who have sex with a casual partner. In part, it is because the social and economic conditions in many countries have led to more people leaving home to work in other places or to go on holiday. In both these situations, people are most likely to make casual acquaintances to relieve loneliness or boredom. The chance acquaintance may lead to sexual intercourse with a partner who has a sexually transmitted disease (Llewellyn-Jones 1980: 101).

In other words, promiscuity has led people to be the carriers and transmitters of sexually transmitted diseases. Promiscuity also disturbs the relationships of the partners, especially the married couples.

Medical people have proved that some of these diseases can be transmitted to the unborn foetus. Therefore the promiscuity of one partner can also lead to the

suffering of the other partner and of the children, if the sexually transmitted diseases can be transmitted to these children before birth.

A still more dreaded result of promiscuity is AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). This is generally transmitted through sexual intercourse. It is presumed by the AIDS Training and Information Centre in Pietermaritzburg that, in KwaZulu-Natal alone, more than 100 people are infected each day. The more promiscuous people become, the more chances there are of contracting AIDS.

1.2.4 Marital break-downs

When it is discovered that a teenager is engaging in sexual relations, tension usually results within the family. Each parent blames the other for not teaching and training the child in acceptable behaviour. This may bring lasting discord between members of the family and can contribute to a marital break-down.

It is more serious when one of the partners in a marriage is engaged in extra-marital relations and is discovered to be doing so. Unfaithfulness is one of the most serious causes of divorce. Divorce is one of the commonest things today, even for trivial causes, and unfaithfulness undoubtedly pushes the couple towards divorce.

Unfaithfulness has bad consequences for the children as well. Usually the life lived by a parent is taken by a child as the ideal life. Therefore, unfaithfulness will inculcate in the children a culture of promiscuity. They will take this as a normal way of life. Also in marriages that have broken down because of unfaithfulness, children will have a difficult period trying to adjust to a new life. The freedom they enjoyed of staying with both their parents is reversed by the legal custody imposed by the court. This, psychologically, has negative and lasting effects on the children.

1.2.5 Married life loses popularity

Generally, a person who is sexually promiscuous may become disinterested in marital commitment because that would tie him/her down to one partner. Marriage restricts the freedom of being single, and not all people are prepared to sacrifice that freedom for marriage. It is even more difficult for a person who has had a number of partners during their dating or courting period to adapt to faithfulness in marriage.

When unfaithfulness occurs regularly people generally lose interest in their marriage partners and a continuing married relationship is exchanged for a more popular life of singleness and/or cohabitation.

1.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is evidence of an increase in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst some modern Zulus. Changes in moral views concerning sexuality and marriage over the last 100 years have brought about this increase. This has been part of a sexual revolution involving rapid changes in ideas about morality.

As this chapter has shown, the causes of the rise of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations include the perpetual childhood of women in the society, especially within Zulu culture, the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa, science and technology, the instability of some marriages and the unsatisfactory state of many marriages and the attitude of the Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, towards sexuality.

The results of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations are evident in many quarters of society. These include teenage pregnancies, overpopulation, sexually transmitted diseases and marital breakdowns. Because of this rise in premarital and

extra-marital sexual relations, married life has become less popular and singleness and cohabitation more common.

These causes and results of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations, especially the results, evoke a sense of responsibility from the community, in particular the leaders. We cannot sit back and watch the morals of our youth and adults deteriorate. What, therefore, can be done? I will deal with the possible solutions to this problem in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER TWO

AN ANALYSIS OF ZULU TRADITIONAL BEHAVIOUR WITH REGARD TO PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS

In the first chapter I highlighted the increase in the rate of premarital and extra-marital relations of modern Zulus. I have also highlighted the probable causes of this practice and the results that are brought about by this practice. In the past this has been less of a problem than it is now. This is because previously there was a system of strict education in sexual matters and a close set of relationships amongst the family members.

In this chapter I will deal with the traditional practices and taboos concerning premarital and extra-marital sexual relations, the strength of will and character that was evident in young men and women which showed itself in continence and love for each other, the causes of the breakdown of traditional practices, and the effects of this breakdown on the people concerned.

2.1 TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND TABOOS CONCERNING PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS

It is important to note the way that young men and women act during the proposal and courting stages of their relationship as this points to the kind of relationship they will have when they are married and in love.

2.1.1 Traditional patterns of courtship

The discipline of girls and boys in love matters starts during the proposal stage. The relationship that these people will build will be influenced by the way in which they relate to each other during the proposal stage. All boys received intensive training

on how to talk to girls and how they should show respect to them. It was offensive for a boy to touch a girl in whatever manner while proposing love to her.

Many people were involved in this process, either explicitly or implicitly. On the girl's side, her mother, her family adult women and, especially, her elder sisters were involved in a girl's relationship with boys. She was given instructions on how to reply to boys' proposals and she was given ample time to practise this on her sisters' behalf. This would be of great help to her when her time came to ward off boys. Vilakazi puts this as follows:

It is important to note that among traditionalists, i.e. heathens, mothers and women of the family begin to speculate about the young girl's love affairs while she is still at about 14 years. She is allowed to listen to and join in the conversation of elder sisters on matters relating to love-making and behaviour with the boys and she learns all the techniques of managing suitors: lessons in quick repartee and '*izifeno*', i.e. witticisms which are aimed at ridiculing young men and their words. Not only does she get this in conversation with her older siblings, but she accompanies her sisters to the river and to the forest and there meets the young men and assists her sisters in the general defence against the verbal and courting assaults by the young men. Sometimes she meets her sisters' suitors alone and they talk to her as if to her sisters, asking why her sisters are so hard-hearted and unsympathetic. She must, on such occasions, turn on all the '*izifeno*' and other verbal missiles in their defence techniques. She knows the feelings of her individual sisters on these matters, for these are freely discussed, and she can therefore be a reliable barometer for the suitor of his chances of success. As she herself grows older, young men begin to pay her serious attention and she fights back in her own defence. Although the language used and the general attitudes shown during the courting encounters seem hostile the whole affair is looked upon as a game which involves considerable skills (Vilakazi 1965: 46-47).

Boys started by herding goats and cattle. It is out in the veld where they see young men chasing after girls. They carefully take note of all the techniques that are used

by these young men during the proposal stages. Their elder brothers instruct them in the techniques used to trap the girls into accepting love proposals from their suitors. They will get the chance to use these techniques when they accompany their friends to propose because they will, together with their friends, talk to the girls with the sole purpose of having them accepting love proposals from their suitors. They may, in some instances, on their own, propose love to girls on behalf of their brothers. It is on this occasion where they will get the proper training because no-one will be helping them; they will be on their own. The techniques the boy gets in this training is how to handle a woman even in marriage. The saying goes: '*Mphathise okweqanda unkosikazi*' (Handle your woman with care). Vilakazi elaborates on these techniques:

Courting behaviour among traditional young men is a very important part of their education; for a young man must achieve the distinction of being an '*isoka*', i.e. a Don Juan or a Casanova. Like the girls, he acquires the knowledge of the techniques by listening to his brothers' conversation and talking to his peers, or by listening to older men when they talk to girls; and he learns directly from his elder brothers the art of verbal traps, i.e. '*kila*'. Also, as a herdboyc, he witnesses many an amorous encounter between young men and women and, on many occasions, he is personally involved in the '*shela*' procedure as an ally of his brother or some friend. He is often sent with messages to the girls and, when he meets them as they go to the river or to collect fire-wood, he 'throws' some words on his brother's behalf. Young men, when they are gathered together on any occasion, discuss verbal trappings and how to deal with difficult or unmanageable girls (1965: 47).

One art of courting girls is cleanliness. Slovenly boys rarely get accepted by girls. The culture of cleanliness is inculcated into the boy by the circumstances he finds himself in and stays with him the rest of his life; likewise the slovenliness stays with the boy the rest of his life. The important part of this process is not the physical or bodily cleanliness achieved through washing but rather an inner cleanliness which is the opposite of ritual impurity and obsession with bad spirits which makes him

unlovable and thus not appealing to girls. This ritual purification is done with certain medicines. The young man, if he knows the mixture of this type of medicine, can perform the cleansing himself; but normally this is done by a trusted and famous traditional doctor.

When the learning of courting techniques and cleansing has been completed, the actual courting starts. This is a protracted experience for the young man. A man who is short-tempered often has difficulties when it comes to courting because his temper and perseverance are rigorously tested. On the other hand, a girl who is short-tempered has difficulties as well because many young men will come to her hoping to make a conquest and thus become the heroes of the tribe. The virtue of perseverance is built and nurtured by this practice and experience.

Courting is actually a game that is enjoyed by both the young men and women. A girl that takes years to accept a boy's love proposal is seen as a tough one and a virtuous one as well. Likewise a boy who achieves positive results in few months, and who often or always comes out victorious in all his courtships, is regarded as a hero and skilful in this game.

Why I say this game is enjoyed by both girls and boys, is because of the excitement these people have during courtship. Vilakazi suggests that "it is important, in the whole of the courting complex, that there should be ample leisure for dalliance" (1965: 48). The young men do proper preparations before going out to girls. They beautify themselves with beads and take their most beautiful shields, and medicines. They do all these things just to impress the girls. Girls, also, do all in their power to go out of the house just to meet their suitors. If there is no apparent opportunity, they make sure to create one. Vilakazi says: "The girls may be out ostensibly to fetch water, to wash in the river, or to gather wood, but the times are generally very well regulated" (1965: 48).

After a long courtship period a girl may choose the one she loves amongst her suitors. She does not tell him in words that she loves him but an accepted procedure is followed which culminates in the '*qoma*' (to accept as a lover) ceremony. Vilakazi suggests that:

for a woman, to '*qoma*' is important as it marks her as a grown-up nubile girl who is mentioned when 'people of the home' are discussed. Before that, she was merely a child. To '*qoma*', therefore, invests her with status and individuality, and she is regarded as a personality in her own right. From this time on, she can no longer afford to be careless or indiscreet in her actions, for any indiscretion might jeopardize her chances of getting married (1965: 51).

Vilakazi continues and states the other important aspect of this '*qoma*' ceremony.

He says:

The '*qoma*' ceremony is also important in that it establishes an effective public control of the activities of the woman concerned. Since the '*qoma*' ceremony is given much publicity, everybody in the community gets to know that such-and-such a girl is in love with a boy of such-and-such a kraal. It is therefore a shameful thing for such a girl to be found under compromising circumstances with other men. People immediately suspect her moral rectitude and, if her sweetheart or any of his relatives heard about such a thing, she would receive the humiliation of a rejection by a man. As in many societies, it is the privilege of a woman to reject a man, and to reverse the process is to lay an intolerable burden of shame on a Zulu girl (1965: 51).

The essential factor in this process, is the **publicity** of the whole procedure of courting and acceptance. Everybody in the area knows very well who is courting whom. The whole procedure is closely followed by certain people, especially older sisters of the girls. Even when the girls have to choose their suitors, this is agreed upon by their elder sisters and they are the ones who have to arrange the ceremony. Because of this public ceremony the whole tribe and family of the girl will

know that she has accepted someone as virtually her 'lover' whom she loves and who is her potential husband.

The boy's community, on the other hand, will know that he has gained a victory and that this specific girl is now his, following his defeat of her rival suitors. He confirms this by putting up a white flag which is a sign of victory to his peer group, but especially to his competitors. This white flag which he hoists is also a sign of pride and hard work which has been completed by him.

This publicity is a procedure which is not compatible with the Western Christian way of courting which is marked by secrecy and individualism. Love matters in Western Christian circles are issues that are never publicly discussed. Even parents seldom talk about their love life in front of their children. For children therefore, love and sexual issues are taboos. Vilakazi notes, concerning Africans within the churches:

For the Christians, a girl is a child at 14, and as courtship leads to sexual sin, it is considered sinful and is therefore forbidden. As a general rule, Christian girls are still in school at 14 years of age, and there is a strict supervision on these matters exercised by teachers and parents.

The boys and girls have to find other ways of courtship. In the first place, they resort to writing letters which are passed secretly at school or through other girls. But the girls do not have anybody to discuss their affairs with. Except for the whispered bits of information which young girls exchange among themselves at school, they do not have any adult or mature advice in the matter. [...] Most of the time, it is very difficult to know anything about the love-life of Christian teenagers. Secrecy is important for them for discovery means either a thrashing from school and from the home and even expulsion from school! [...] As a result of secrecy among Christians, and absolute lack of guidance in sex matters, Christian girls get into a great many more difficulties sexually than do the heathens (1965: 47).

This clearly shows that publicity curbs the sexual promiscuity of boys and girls. From the very beginning of courtship, the whole procedure is monitored. The boys are taught how to behave themselves and the girls are taught the same thing. Both the girls and the boys are taught about the sacredness and importance of human sexuality. That is why it was rare to see any premarital pregnancy in the Zulu traditional practice in sexual relationships. Under the influence of the Western Christian tradition, premarital love affairs and '*qoma*' become an individual and secret affair only involving the boy and girl concerned.

This point of secrecy about love affairs by Christian boys and girls leads us to another sore point: the non-acceptance of responsibility by a boy when the girl is pregnant. One may say that secrecy in these matters may lead to lack of integrity and unfaithfulness. The boy may deny being the father of the child because almost no-one knew they were in love with each other and even if this was suspected, no-one would have seen them making love. So it is the girl's word against the boy's word. In addition, because everything was secretive, the girl may have had another secret lover who might be the father of the child. No-one knows because everything is kept secret. The boy also may deny being the father of the child because of fear of losing his educational opportunities. Vilakazi remarks:

It is remarkable that while most churches deal severely with the girls, very little is done to bring the boys to book for their misdemeanours. The explanation given is that Christian boys, unlike traditionalists, do not accept responsibility, but run away to the cities where they lose themselves in the crowds. Many of them deny responsibility for pregnancy at all and even deny that they were in love with the girls. It becomes very difficult for the girls to prove that the boys accused are really responsible, for their love affairs are never public or, if they are, the boy generally denies ever having had any relations with the girl (1965: 57).

There is another reason why Christian boys are intransigent in not accepting responsibility or pregnancy. This is because of severe Church penalties on the guilty parties. I mentioned above (1.1.5) that the Church, especially the Catholic Church, has rigid attitudes towards these matters which sometimes drives people away from the church. If the boy accepts being the father of the child he runs the risk of being ostracized by the Church and of having to do penance before being readmitted into the Church. Vilakazi says:

By Christian standards they should not have any premarital sex relations with women, and to accept responsibility for a pregnancy is to confess to having committed a sexual sin (1965: 58).

This tendency of Christian boys puts all the fault and guilt onto the girls. Often it is only the girls who end up being punished by the Church and doing public penance for pregnancies. The boys involved end up not having to answer for their actions. Even today the churches are still trapped in this practice because they cannot get the boys to come forward and accept responsibility for these pregnancies.

2.1.2 Premarital sexual intercourse and pregnancy

Premarital sexual relations are allowed by the Zulu customary tradition. On the other hand virginal intactness is highly recommended. In what way may premarital sexual relations be permitted while at the same time affirming the value of virginity? In Zulu tradition this was done through the so-called practice of '*ukusoma*'.

'*Ukusoma*' involved a degree of sexual licence for the unmarried by allowing ephemeral or intercrural intercourse which is actually not coitus. Both the boy and the girl were intensively trained in this practice, because laxity on this issue would result in a pregnancy. Punishment was severe for premarital pregnancy and no-one dared overlook this fact. Since many people knew which girl was in love with which

boy, their premarital sexual relations were therefore a matter of common knowledge. Those who would train these people in a '*soma*' practice would know precisely where and when the '*soma*' visits would take place. The other person who would know would be the grandmother of the girl in whose hut the food for the boy may be prepared and other arrangements finalized. Vilakazi, when talking about the procedure that is usually followed, remarks:

When everybody in the kraal is asleep, the girl's '*iqhikiza*', i.e. her senior sister who is responsible for the girl's behaviour, goes out to meet the boy. After the formal courtesies, she asks the boy for the '*soma*' fee of 10s which he must pay to the girls of his sweetheart's lineage. After this, she returns to the girl at home and informs her that her lover is waiting for her outside. Both the girls steal out again, carrying a sleeping mat, a sleeping rug and some beer for the young man. The young girl has been thoroughly schooled in the behaviour to be observed in her relations with the boy. The boy is warned by the '*iqhikiza*' to behave himself properly and the girl is told: '*Ungazeneki izinkomo zikababa*', i.e. do not open yourself to being deflowered (1965: 53).

This is the practice which has been followed by a traditional Zulu person, with variation, of course. Even today this practice is still widely used by those who are not Christians, the so-called heathens. I have asked young people, especially those coming to me for public penances because of pregnancy, whether they know of '*soma*'. To my amazement very few young Christians know about this practice. Those who know about it are generally those who have been converted to Christianity at an older age.

To my knowledge, very few 'heathen' girls have become pregnant before betrothal or engagement. This is so because coitus is expected only after a girl has been engaged, and not before. Even then the husband-to-be pays some form of penalty because the girl has not yet been formally transferred to his kraal. I personally know many boys and girls, particularly in my parish, who have children before marriage.

This is because, for them, '*soma*' is alien. They do not know of any other form of sexual relations except coitus. For many the only preventive option against conception is contraceptives or, for very few unfortunately, total abstinence. I can understand this because the

Christian practice cuts out the '*iqhikiza*', i.e. the senior girl who advises the younger ones, altogether and leaves the matter of control to the parents, the schools and the Church (Vilakazi 1965: 54).

Vilakazi continues:

Among Christian young boys and girls, there is no teaching or any form of guidance about correct behaviour when people have sex relations. As a result, when Christian young people meet and have sex relations, it is generally not intercrural sex play at all, but coitus. Anyone who has taught in African high schools and has had contact with young boys and girls as the writer has, knows that these young people have absolutely no knowledge in sex matters at all, except what they discuss among themselves (1965: 55).

I have said above that there are very few premarital pregnancies among the 'heathen' or 'uncivilized' girls. Where such pregnancies occur, Zulu tradition, according to Vilakazi, ascribes the following reasons for these:

Under ordinary circumstances, therefore, when a girl is pregnant, it is assumed that she allowed the boy to deflower her and to deposit semen into the vagina. As people say, "she slept with him like his wife" instead of "*soma*-ing". But the Zulu know that there are cases when a girl who is a virgin, i.e. has not been penetrated, gets pregnant. They explain this simply by saying that the semen slipped into the vagina inadvertently during the "*soma*" sex-play. Slipperiness is a quality of semen and it is easy, if the girl does not keep her thighs very close together, or does not wipe it off carefully between the legs, for it to cause pregnancy. A pregnancy that happens this way is not condemned as severely as the first type, because people say it was just a mishap, and there is general considerable sympathy with the girl under such conditions (1965: 56).

A further reason is thought to be mysterious. That is, an unnatural and unacceptably immoral procedure, in the estimation of the community, is followed. This usually happens when a girl threatens to leave the boy for some reason, often because she has fallen in love with another boy. This causes her partner to want to make her pregnant in order to compel her to stay with him.

This is what people call "*ukumitha ngesithunzi*", i.e. pregnancy by means of a shadow. This is a medico-magical concept. A boy who wishes to render a girl pregnant takes a grain of some medicines and eats them. He then visits the girl and has the usual "*soma*" sex-play with her. The girl will then be rendered pregnant by an "*inhlamvu*", a "spark" a grain of the semen which will be shot into her magically during orgasm, and this will cause pregnancy. This is definitely evil and immoral and is on par with sorcery in the moral evaluation of the people (Vilakazi 1965: 56).

There is a heavy fine for premarital pregnancy for the boy. He will have to pay two head of cattle plus a sum of money to be determined by the father of the girl. For an unemployed person this is exorbitant a fine, but surprisingly, it does not deter people from premarital pregnancy. Even the Christian boys are bound to pay this fine. On the Church side, boys often evade the penance because most of the time they are in towns working. We have established a procedure in Mariannhill Catholic diocese whereby both the boy and the girl have to come for public penance in case of a pregnancy. This procedure has its limitations, of course, because a parish Priest has jurisdiction over his parish only, and also only over Catholics. Therefore, he can only give penance to his parishioners. Those who are not Catholics and are not residents in his parish can go free if they do not report to their own pastors or parish Priests.

While pregnant unmarried girls do not pay a fine as the boys do, the emotional agony they suffer as a result of being deflowered is tremendous. The fact of being deflowered in itself, whether willingly or unwillingly, is extremely painful. One girl

confided in me that she was sleeping with her boyfriend using the '*soma*' way for about a year. When she lost her virginity, she said, she was guilty for the whole week. For her it seemed as if an important part of herself was gone and it seemed as if everybody knew that she was not a virgin any more. When a girl is pregnant then everybody knows she is not a virgin any more. The boys, on the other hand, are proud when they lose their virginity, but especially when they deflower their girls. The boy rarely feels emotional agony when he has impregnated a girl.

Besides the emotional agony suffered by the pregnant girls, they are, moreover, ostracized by the community. This tendency pushes young girls to go for 'shot-gun' marriages because it is only when they are married that they can be re-accepted by the community. This ostracism happens in both the Zulu traditional and Christian practices. In the Zulu traditional practice the girl would not be allowed to mix with other girls who are still virgins because, it is said, she is a bad example and would have a bad influence on the innocent girls. Moreover, it is said, she is already a woman, and women, according to Zulu custom, never mix with girls especially during dances and other community activities. On the other hand, she is not allowed to mix with married women because while unmarried she falsely assumed the state of a married woman, that is, she stole the privileges of a married woman.

In the Church an unmarried pregnant girl is punished much more severely than in the Zulu traditional practice. Vilakazi puts it as follows:

The punishment meted out to the girl is: (1) she is excommunicated, which is announced publicly in church; (2) she is given a seat at the back of the church which is specially reserved for those who have fallen into sin (this is to emphasize, rather cruelly, their lowly social status); (3) all the young girls, i.e. those who are still whole, are forbidden to associate with her for she is considered an evil influence and a bad example to other girls. Neither is she allowed to associate with married women for she has tried to steal the privileges of decent married life. [...] Later the girl is given

special classes to start right from the beginning of Christian teaching, i.e. she has to learn her catechism afresh and, after a long period of probation, to come back to the congregation to ask for forgiveness. It is only then that her child can be baptized, which is another form of punishment added to the ones already enumerated. Later on, when she gets married, such a girl does not get a "church marriage" in many churches but is married in the "minister's study" because, as the people always say, she is no longer a virgin (1965: 57).

All these punishments do not prevent young people from engaging in premarital sexual intercourse and unmarried young women from becoming pregnant. The question arises; "Are they, therefore, effective and relevant?" If not, what other alternatives are there to curb premarital sexual intercourse and pregnancies? I shall deal with some suggested solutions to this problem in Chapter Four.

I would like to add under this sub-section that virginity was highly valued in traditional Zulu sexual practice. This was the pride of each and every girl and to lose it was to lose self-esteem. The punishments and fines meted out reflected the importance of virginity. Mair remarks:

A limit was set to those pre-marital relations by the rule that the girl must not be deflowered, and some of the girls' puberty ceremonies (e.g. Venda, Zulu) included instruction on means of avoiding this. Among some tribes girls were examined periodically by their mothers or other older women to see if they were virgins, and the virginity of a bride was a matter of great moment. If she was found to be a virgin when she joined her husband a special present was made to her mother or sometimes to herself: if not, the news was conveyed to her family by some specially recognized token. If a girl was found to have been deflowered, a fine, in some cases a heavy one, was inflicted on the boy responsible and in the Nguni group this was increased if pregnancy resulted. The girl was held to have disgraced the whole company of her age-mates, who among the Pondo, went into mourning for some months, while Zulu

girls and women made angry demonstrations at the boy's hut
(in Phillips 1953: 11-12).

2.1.3 Extra-marital sexual intercourse

This practice, as an offense, was not prevalent amongst the Zulu traditionalists, yet it was an accepted practice for men.

It is important to note that extra-marital sexual intercourse was considered 'adultery' when it was committed by a woman and there were harsh penalties for such an offence. The man, whether married or unmarried, who was involved in the sexual act, was also considered guilty, but not of adultery. He was guilty of interfering with the marital rights of another man and would also be severely punished. This punishment could even include execution. The determining factor for the act to be considered adultery was whether the woman was married. If she was unmarried it would be a normal sexual act between two 'unmarried' people; the marital state of the man being regarded as irrelevant.

In traditional Zulu culture, adultery was extremely rare for the following reasons: in the first place it was not easy for a woman to commit adultery because of the intensive training a betrothed woman was given of how to behave in her new family (the family of the husband). She knew that a scandal in whatever form would not only bring shame on herself, but also on her husband and her former family as a whole. To disgrace one's parents was an intolerable shame. This intensive training, therefore, deterred the woman from unbecoming behaviour, especially adultery.

Secondly, the close relationship and the close physical proximity of the members of the family made it very difficult for married women to engage in extra-marital relationships. Almost all the activities and jobs of the homestead were done together. These were activities such as ploughing and hoeing in the fields, collecting

firewood in the forests, and fetching water from the river. In such circumstances it would not be easy for any woman to be engaged in extra-marital affairs without the knowledge of the other women, or even the grown-up girls. Besides the close monitoring of activities, the close relationship of the members gave moral support to each other in times of difficulty and distress.

Thirdly, the long distances between kraals made the practice more difficult. The young men, courting the girls, would cover these distances easily, but for old men these distances were long and tedious. This factor helped the women a great deal in evading sexual temptation.

Fourthly, the severe punishment of offenders made people afraid of committing adultery. Despite the circumstances, however, some people would still commit adultery and therefore there was a need for punishment. As I have said above, this punishment was severe and it did not exclude capital punishment. The male partner had to pay a fine in cattle, in order to cleanse the husband's house which he had defiled by sleeping with his wife. In addition to the fine payable to the husband of the wife, he was also fined by the chief because the act of adultery was a disgrace for the whole tribe. This fine by the chief removed the shame and stigma that the tribe had because of the act of adultery. Besides these fines, the man lost any status that he had within the tribe because he could not be trusted any more. These fines did not give him the right to the child if pregnancy resulted from the adultery. The child would lawfully belong to the husband of the wife, even if the wife was divorced because of the adultery.

The female partner did not escape the punishments because her brothers had to cleanse their brother-in-law's kraal which had been defiled by their sister's adulterous act. This fine had to be paid in the form of a cow. Dismissal resulting from this act was not infrequent. During Shaka's time both offenders were executed.

These penalties were as hurtful as the shame that adultery brought on the offenders. With Christians, these penalties are not rigidly enforced any more but divorce often results from adultery. Also shame and non-acceptance by the community are more hurtful to the offenders.

Extra-marital sexual relations were commonly practised by men and accepted as a normal thing provided this did not include a married woman. A married man would openly propose to other girls and would be openly accepted by them. Even their wives had no objection to this practice because it was an accepted practice and it was from amongst these girls that he could choose his other wives. Levirate, too, was accepted in the sense that the wife of a man's deceased brother was considered a legitimate sexual partner because the bride-price had been paid for her and children were to be raised for the deceased brother. This was an extra-marital relationship for the man if he was already married. Finally, the practice of polygamy lessened the temptation to indulge in extra-marital affairs.

Nevertheless, male extra-marital sexual activity despised the full humanity of women and underrated their freedom and will. Though accepted by tradition it unfairly legitimized the licentiousness of men to the detriment of the freedom, will and humanity of women because women were obliged to accept the *status quo* without questioning its legitimacy.

2.2 TRADITIONAL TEACHING ABOUT BEHAVIOUR IN PREMARITAL AND POST-MARITAL RELATIONS

It has to be noted that the way one behaves sexually when one is married is the result of education received as a youth and also of patterns of sexual behaviour practised during courtship. Inadequate or neglected education in sexuality together with sociological and psychological problems often produce immature sexual

behaviour in marriage. That is why sound and effective teaching in sexual matters was very important in traditional Zulu behaviour.

It is a pity that King Shaka abolished the Zulu traditional initiation rites. He did this because his priority was to recruit and train young men for his wars, so he did not want any time to be wasted in these initiation rites. Undoubtedly, these rites had enormous impact and significance in the education of young people in relation to sexuality. Mbiti has this to say about the initiation of young people into adulthood and preparation for marriage:

Another great significance of the rites is to introduce the candidates to adult life: they are now allowed to share in the full privileges and duties of the community. They enter into the state of responsibility: they inherit new rights, and new obligations are expected of them by society. This incorporation into adult life also introduces them to the life of the living-dead as well as the life of those yet to be born. The initiation rites prepare young people in matters of sexual life, marriage, procreation and family responsibility. They are henceforth allowed to shed their blood for their country, and to plant their biological seeds so that the next generation can begin to arrive (1971: 122).

In another setting he says:

One of the educational purposes of initiation rites is to introduce young people to matters of sex, marriage, procreation and family life. One could say then that initiation is a ritual sanctification and preparation for marriage, and only when it is over may young people get married. Since the whole community participates in the initiation rites, it is therefore the entire corporate body of society which prepares the young people for marriage and family life (1971: 135).

The abolition of this practice amongst the Zulus was a great loss to the whole nation. Other means were, however, employed to redeem the situation. The guidance by older girls and boys given to the younger ones was strengthened. No

girl would fall in love with a boy without the knowledge and permission of her older sisters who would school her in the whole procedure of '*qoma*' and of making love to her boyfriend. Likewise, the boy would be taught by his older brothers how to relate to girls especially when having sexual relations. These instructions helped to build the personality of these young men and women and to prepare them for their role in society. They would, then, be sufficiently able to control their sexual lust and prowess.

The elders of the tribe, grandmothers and grandfathers included, played their role in educating young men and women about sexuality. They did this out of their vast experience in life. It is said that one who listens to and obeys the elders of the tribe is the one who prospers and is loved by the ancestors. This belief encouraged young people to seek the advice of elderly people in most practices, especially those concerning sex, and to act as advised. This helped young people to act becomingly in matters of sex and it enriched their experience in these matters. This acquired experience helped them in their adulthood as wives and husbands, and in educating their own children and grandchildren.

The '*thomba*' ceremony was one in which young people gained an education in sexual matters. Krige writes:

While the initiate is confined in his hut, old men enter and also very old women (who in Zulu society are considered to be the same as men, having no ritual uncleanness), and these express their joy that the boy is now a person in the kraal. They add that they hope he will be a good man, and end up with advice as to how he should behave in order to be an asset to the kraal and the tribe. He is often specially taught how to behave himself with girls. He is warned that now that he is capable of harming a girl by impregnation, he should keep as far as possible from the sexual organ of a girl and confine himself, in any intercourse, to the thighs. Boys are sometimes threatened and told that if they make any girl pregnant they will either be killed or, if sent to the white people, will be

imprisoned for a long time and cause all their father's cattle to be confiscated (1965: 93).

Concerning extra-marital sexual relations, it is important to mention that the high '*lobolo*' paid for a woman either consciously or unconsciously made her faithful to her husband, thus reducing the risk of engaging in extra-marital relations. Besides the penalties imposed on an adulterous woman and her loss of reputation, the probability existed that a certain number of cattle paid for her '*lobolo*' would be refunded. This was determined by the number of children she had borne. The returning of the cattle was a disgrace for the woman for whom they had been paid. Consequently each and every married woman made certain that she did not involve herself in acts that would lead to her repudiation and its disgraceful result, the returning of the '*lobolo*' cattle.

2.3 THE REASONS THESE PRACTICES AND TABOOS BROKE DOWN

These practices were possible because of the close relationships existing in families during the courtship period. The change in life-style of the people brought about by Western culture, Christianity and the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa (especially in Natal), caused these traditional practices and taboos regarding premarital and extra-marital sexual relations to disappear (cf. section 1.1.2 above). But it is important to note that there are still areas in KwaZulu-Natal largely unaffected by these more recent influences. I am thinking here of areas such as Magudu, Nongoma and Mtuba, some of whose people have related to me the attachment of the local inhabitants to the traditional practices. Even in some areas that are known as 'civilized' or 'Christian', there are leanings towards traditional practices.

With regard to the disappearance of the traditional close family kinship and unity, Goodsell says:

The massing of people in towns and cities that followed upon the development of the factory system uprooted households from the land and shook the family to its foundations. [...] Such a movement of millions from farms to cities has resulted in a profound alteration of family life. Instead of the farm homestead set in its acres, there is substituted the apartment of a few rooms, instead of the cooperative labor of father, mother, and children in maintaining their common life, each family member seeks work where he or she can find it; instead of family recreations enjoyed together the tendency is for every individual to go a separate way in search of the type of pleasure and relaxation that appeals to him or her. The farm family is a cooperative unit; the city family is a highly individualized group with relatively few ties beyond those of mutual affection (1936: 125).

It is true that the migrant labour system has divided the family. The importance of money has superseded all other traditional values. We gauge everything today in terms of money. We compare and contrast values in terms of money. The migrant labour system appeared because people could no longer trade in their usual commodities. The concept of trade was now understood as exchanging goods for money. Since people had no money, in the sense that the colonialists understood it, they were forced to seek employment away from their homes, friends, neighbours and relatives. This situation separated them from their culture and their normal behaviour and life-style. We could, therefore, conclude that a money economy was the cause for the migrant labour system and thus the breakdown of Zulu traditional values with respect to premarital and extra-marital sexual relations.

Related to the issue of the migrant labour system and a money economy is the issue of Western culture. In some cases people moved away from their traditional practices and behaviour because the advertisements of Western culture enticed them to this new way of life. The heart of this new way of life is, undoubtedly, money. In order to climb the ladder of this new style of life and to maintain one's position, money is imperative. This is so because all the ingredients of 'being

civilized' are acquired by cash. The first and the most important ingredient for this new style of life is education. For an African education is very expensive. Without money there would be no education, and without education this new life would be impossible. Western culture has, therefore, taken over from Zulu traditional life and has caused Zulu traditional values to be neglected or to disappear.

There is no doubt that Christianity has done a lot of good for the people and has transformed the lives of many people. However, in this transformation certain problems arose. People were confused, and are still confused concerning whether Christianity and Western culture are inseparable. The confusion arose because of the missionary style of evangelization which linked Western culture to the gospel message. Missionaries were only able to communicate their message in terms of their own culture. So a person wanting to become a Christian had to first adopt a European life-style. Baptism meant the change of one's life-style and the rejection of one's cultural and traditional values. These were said to be incompatible with the Gospel values and hence were rejected. Evangelization and Western culture were inseparable.

It was expected that Christian missionaries would promote Western culture because firstly:

how a Christian missionary could proclaim the Gospel in a foreign culture without developing a superiority complex, especially when his or her own contemporary compatriots serve in that same culture as secular counterparts on behalf of the state. If the missionary opposes his own state of matters of imperial expansion, he risks being prosecuted for it, even being prevented from leaving the country to engage in mission. On the other hand, if he becomes a tool of the state to extend its influence abroad, the question is whether he is a missionary or a civil servant. It has sometimes been argued that there is no contradiction between civil service and Christian missionary activity, but that would be so only if the mandate of the Gospel

were congruent with the interests of an expansionist nation (Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike 1992: 13).

Mugambi gives us the second reason why this practice was expected from Christian missionaries:

During the colonial period in Africa the Christian missionary societies were the agencies officially licensed to inculcate the invading values and undermine the old ones; [...] missionaries might find it difficult to change their attitude towards the African cultural and religious heritage if they have been condescending towards it all along (1992: 17).

It appears, therefore, that given the circumstances, it was inevitable that the traditional practices in respect of premarital and extra-marital relations would disappear, or would lose their traditional effectiveness and impact on the Zulu people. Western culture and Christianity were the new ways of life that captured the hearts of the people. It is important to note that people often accepted Christianity willingly but were often forced to embrace Western culture because of political and socio-economic reasons.

2.4 THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE BREAKDOWN OF ZULU TRADITIONAL PRACTICES IN RESPECT OF PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONS

The consequences of this breakdown are obvious in our communities, especially among those who have wholly embraced the new Western culture in the name of 'civilization'. The expression '*abantu bazothini?*' (what will people say?) has disappeared together with the traditional Zulu practice in sexual matters. Most of the people think and care about themselves only and do not bother about the next person. The attitude is: "Everyone should care about his or her business only; no-one should pry into another person's affairs."

What we have been witnessing in the communities of Mhlanga Rocks, Durban North, Berea, Westville and other white suburbs, we are now witnessing in the communities of Umlazi, KwaMashu, Lamontville, Clermont and other black townships. People seldom notice a neighbour and do not even bother to know who lives nearby. The community and neighbourly spirit previously so much a part of Zulu tradition, has given way to a culture of the 'survival of the fittest' which asks "What can I gain from her or him, or what can she or he offer me?"

In the area of sexuality we have witnessed an increase in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations, with a corresponding increase in premarital pregnancy. This situation (cf. section 1.2) is the direct consequence of the breakdown of Zulu traditional practices in this respect.

This breakdown has had a further effect on family life. The traditional Zulu culture kept the members of the family together so that their activities were transparent and easily corrected. Now what happens in the society at large is mirrored in the family. The gap between family members has meant that people do their own thing without regard to other members of the family. This has a negative effect on the relationship of married couples and has also negatively affected their children. They will grow up in the new culture, and unwittingly fall easy prey to sexual temptation with no one to guide them.

Changes in the political arena have resulted in decolonization and the recognition of all people as human beings and as equal in all spheres. These changes also necessitate a change in our view and analysis of traditional African moral values in general, and traditional sexual practices in particular. Anyone who desires or hopes to make an impact on African Christianity cannot evade this challenge. It is in this regard that Mugambi notes:

Yet the continued undermining of a people's culture by foreigners in the name of Christian mission cannot be ethically justified. [...] It is in the interest of every nation to assert itself

culturally and religiously, and the failure to do this will lead to annihilation. Likewise, it is in the interest of the Universal Church, [...] to respect and appreciate every culture within which it makes converts (1992: 17).

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

A collective action often has good results. The traditional Zulu culture paid attention to this fact. In the area of sexuality, especially in the proposal and courting stages, many people got involved. On the girl's side, her mother, the family's adult women, and especially her elder sisters, were involved in her relationship with boys. She got instructions from these people regarding her relationships with boys.

On the other hand, the boys were instructed by their elder brothers on how to treat and relate to the girls. They were taught to handle the girls with care and affection. This collective action and publicity helped to curb promiscuity. This also helped the girls in maintaining their virginity which was highly prized.

Amongst the Zulu traditionalists, extra-marital sexual intercourse was not common because of certain reasons. Firstly, it was a scandal to be avoided at all costs. Secondly, the close relationship between members of the family made it very difficult for married women to engage in these relationships. Thirdly, the long distances between kraals made the practice difficult. Fourthly, the severe punishments for offenders made people fearful of indulging in this practice.

Traditional teaching about general behaviour in premarital and extra-marital relations broke down because of changes in the life-style of the people. This was brought about by Western culture, Christianity and political and socio-economic changes in South Africa. The consequences of this breakdown are evident in our society. They include the breakdown of relationships in both family and society.

Because of this breakdown, marital relationships suffer and children are also affected.

Is it possible to go back to these traditional practices? I do not think so. The circumstances have entirely changed from those which previously existed. It would be an artificial exercise to attempt to follow a traditional life-style in the modern era. But we could revive these older values that could be lived out without clashing with the modern life-style. I am thinking here of values like respecting one another, recognizing the value of each other as persons, collective action in instructing our youth and good relationships among people. The leaders of the community, especially the teachers and pastors, could help in this regard by teaching, preaching, organizing workshops and seminars in order to revive these values. The Christian churches, in particular, can introduce training courses for the youth to revitalize the values and practices that are no longer in existence.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING ON PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the two previous chapters I have listed and discussed the causes of the rise in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations and the consequences that these practices have had on the people who engage in them and on society in general. I have also shown that the traditional Zulu practice significantly curbed premarital sexual relations and premarital pregnancy as well as extra-marital sexual relations. This was possible because of clear and public education in these issues, and also because of the generally accepted moral norms and expectations of traditional Zulu society.

In this chapter I propose to elucidate the teaching of the Catholic Church with respect to premarital and extra-marital relations. I will, however, deal firstly with the sanctity of marriage because premarital and extra-marital sexual relations, especially the latter, taint the integrity, sacredness and sacramentality of marriage.

3.1 THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

When we speak about the sanctity or sacredness of marriage, we are speaking about its origin in God and its sacramentality. Grenz says:

Marriage is a significant institution because it arises out of the divine program for humanity, is a metaphor of deeper spiritual realities, and is intended to mirror the intertrinitarian relationship (1990: 51).

Admittedly, marriage existed long before Christ; but it is Christ who offered a radical, yet simple, interpretation of it. According to Grenz, Christ

asserts that according to the design of the Creator marriage consists of the monogamous union of a male and a female in a lifelong commitment to one another which is to be characterized by fidelity (1990: 44).

Christ confirms the important elements of marriage. He, firstly, confirms that marriage is a 'design of the Creator', secondly, that it is 'monogamous', thirdly, that it is a 'life-long commitment', and fourthly, that it is 'characterized by fidelity' (cf. Mt. 19:3-9).

It is important to note that there are different views concerning the essence, the nature, the meaning and the purpose of marriage. These different views emanate from different traditions of various churches and even from different persons within the same church tradition. For practical reasons I will not delve into these views but I will, rather, expatiate upon the sanctity of marriage as this is perceived and taught by the Catholic Church.

In the theology of Genesis we are confronted with the first deep reflections of Israel on its condition as the People of God. 'Creation' and 'Covenant' are the two great reference points when the Old Testament comes to consider the religion and morality of Israel: a life lived in fidelity to both was considered a life blessed by God. Israel considered all that was attached to its life as sacred because this life was seen to originate in God and be supported by God. This included sexuality as well as everything else in Israel's experience. How this is envisaged is seen, particularly, in the dual narration of the creation in Genesis. Despite the fact that Israel did not always live up to the ideals of the message of Genesis, it remained an inspirational text and model example for all Israelite marriages.

The two creation narratives (Jahwist tradition, Genesis 2.4b - 25 and Priestly account, Genesis 1.1 - 2.4a) depict marriage as the institution of God. This is even corroborated by Vatican II:

The intimate partnership of life and the love which constitutes the married state has been established by the creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws: it is rooted in the contract of its partners, that is, in their irrevocable personal consent. It is an institution confirmed by the divine law and receiving its stability, even in the eyes of society, from the human act by which the partners mutually surrender themselves to each other; for the good of the partners, of the children, and of society this sacred bond no longer depends on human decision alone. For God himself is the author of marriage and has endowed it with various benefits and with various ends in view: all of these have a very important bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of every member of the family, on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family and of the whole human race (Flannery 1981: 950).

Pope Pius XI in the encyclical letter *Casti Connubii* notes:

Matrimony was not instituted or restored by man, but by God; not man, but God, the Author of nature and Christ our Lord, the restorer of nature, provided marriage with its laws, confirmed it and elevated it; and consequently those laws can in no way be subject to human wills or to any contrary pact made even by the contracting parties themselves (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 532).

In the Jahwist tradition which is the older of the two creation narratives, we find God creating the man and putting him in the garden. Afterwards God is touched by the loneliness that the man feels in the garden, hence he says: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18). It is important to note that not even the rest of the creation could fill in this void in a man as is said in verse 20. God wants a helper² fit for the man. "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from

2. This means a partner, a companion, an equal person; not a servant, a slave, or inferior person.

the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:21-22). Therefore, the helpmate fit for the man is a woman. The man is extremely happy when he discovers that he has now a suitable partner and he exclaims: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23).

So the woman is suited to the man for a very intimate union between them. The sexual union is thus to be an expression of a more profound union involving every fibre of their being. Here one senses the affectionate attachment which transcends sex. The strength which the man and the woman give each other, the physical unity (one flesh) which they create, become a lasting communal life for the two (permanent and monogamous). So the woman complements the man, but not as a servant or appendage, rather she corresponds to him as an equal. This text in Genesis shows that, fundamentally, what attracts a man to a woman is that he finds in her a lost part of himself. The man and the woman make a whole; they complement each other.

In the Priestly account, which is a later and more theological description of the creation story, we see God creating people in his own image and likeness. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, ..." (Genesis 1:27-28). Here the image of God is declared present in both the man and the woman, hence the equal dignity of both partners in the marriage, since both are examples of divine origin. When God calls the two people to marriage, God calls two equal persons to share equally God's grace and blessing in this union.

God makes all things new in Christ. The Old Covenant is fulfilled and perfected in Christ. Marriage, as well, is made new in Christ in that he gives it a new meaning.

He recalls it to its original ideal (Matt. 19:4-8; Mark 10:3-9), thus the intervention of God in human sexual affairs in the personality of Christ makes radical demands of permanent fidelity on the married.

It is interesting to note how Jesus uses the reality of a marriage celebration or banquet as symbolic of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of the future glory in heaven. Furthermore, he also speaks expressly of himself being the bridegroom (Luke 5:34-35), which is a mystical symbolism.

Union with Christ is the ultimate in Christian concern, whether one is male or female, married or unmarried. Christ gives human sexuality, friendship and marriage an entirely new existence through the dynamism of his Spirit. There can no longer be any such thing as loneliness because a person lives, henceforward, in Christ in the community. There is no longer any distinction between class, race or sex: all are one in Christ.

St Paul introduces in Ephesians 5:21-33, the Covenant theme. There is a rather close connection between this text and that of Ezekiel 16:9-14. The Old Testament covenant theme between Israel and Jehovah is now related to the Church and Christ with specific reference to marriage. Thus marriage, the love-relationship between husband and wife, becomes a visible sign of actual incarnation of the love of Christ for his Church. Christ and the Church are the model couple, the Christian ideal for marriage.

Paul refers also to the command of love, which is the love of the self mirrored in the love of the partner. This marital love should be total and sacrificial just like that of Christ for his Church. This absolutely binding and unbreakable love is in itself sanctifying for the couple. It is also salvific and redemptive for the couple. The affectionate surrender of life to one's partner is an expression of the sacrificial love

of Christ for his Church. The permanent bond of marriage is a symbol of the eternal unity of Christ and the Church.

It is in this regard that *Lumen Gentium*, II notes:

Christian spouses in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that union and fruitful love which exists between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph. 5:32). They help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and by the rearing and education of their children. And thus, in their state and way of life, they have their own special gift among the people of God (cf. 1 Cor. 7:7) (Flannery 1981: 362).

Christian marriage is a sign that makes a reality present. It is a "form by means of which God's eternal love and faithfulness, revealed in Jesus Christ, are made historically present" (Kasper 1989: 30). This is the real meaning of Christian marriage. Thus only through their mutual bond in Christ will couples conquer their innate selfishness and overcome the temptations to break their marital vows.

The reality of marriage is shot through with the Spirit of Christ. Hence marriage is a way of living one's relationship with Christ in the Church, and that flows from one's baptismal consecration. The basis of indissolubility³ in Christian marriage is rooted in one's baptism. It is rooted in one's baptism in the sense that it only applies to the 'valid and licit' marriage of two baptized individuals. Furthermore, Christian marriage should depict the marriage of Christ to his Church (cf. Eph. 5:21-33). Marriage is a covenant reality and baptism is the real and concrete bond in Christian marriage, hence the expression "marriage in the Lord".

3. The 'indissolubility of marriage' is the official teaching of the Catholic Church. However, not all Catholics accept this doctrine as is evidenced by a number of divorced Catholics. Some Protestants do not accept this teaching. Indissolubility is the ideal of marriage (cf. Mat. 19:9; Mk 10: 11-12; Lk 16:18) but we sometimes witness the contrary. We see some couples separate.

This new way of existing and relating as a Christian is in itself a sacrament.

Gaudium et Spes 48 remarks:

Christ the Lord has bestowed abundant blessings on this many-faceted love, which springs from the divine fount of charity, and is formed after the model of His own union with the Church. For just as of old God went out to meet His People in a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Saviour of men [women] and the Spouse of the Church comes to meet the Christian spouses in the sacrament of matrimony. And He remains with them in order that, just as He Himself loved the Church and gave Himself up for her (cf. Eph. 5:25), so the spouses also may, in mutual self-surrender, love one another with perpetual fidelity. Authentic married love is taken up into divine love and is ruled and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ and the salvific action of the Church, so that the spouses may be effectively led to God and given help and courage in their sublime function as father and mother. That is why Christian spouses are strengthened and as it were consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state by a special sacrament. When with the help of the sacrament they fulfil the duties of marriage and family life - animated by the Spirit of Christ which imbues their whole life with faith, hope and charity - they gradually realise their personal perfection and mutual sanctification, and thus jointly contribute to God's glorification (Flannery 1981: 950-951).

The Catholic Church decreed that matrimony is one of the seven sacraments as early as 1274 in the Second General Council of Lyons (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 19). The General Council of Florence confirmed this teaching.

The seventh is the sacrament of matrimony which is the sign of the union of Christ and the Church according to the saying of the apostle: "This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32). The efficient cause of matrimony is the mutual consent duly expressed in words relating to the present (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 526-527).

Pope Leo XII gave a refined teaching on the sacramentality of marriage in his encyclical letter *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* (1880):

Christ the Lord raised matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament and at the same time provided that the spouses, sheltered and strengthened by the grace which His merits have won, should attain sanctification in marriage itself; and in it, marvellously modelled on the pattern of His mystical marriage with the Church, He has both perfected the love proper to human nature and by the bond of divine love strengthened the naturally indissoluble partnership of man and woman (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 530).

Further he says in the same encyclical letter that

... matrimony is a sacrament because it is a sacred and efficient sign of grace and the image of the mystical marriage of Christ with the Church. This image and figure are expressed by the bond of most intimate union by which man and woman bind themselves together, which bond is nothing other than matrimony itself. Hence it is clear that every valid marriage between Christians is, in and of itself, the sacrament; and nothing is further from the truth than to say that the sacrament is a sort of ornament superadded, or an extrinsic property that can be dissociated and separated from the contract by the will of men [women] (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 531).

It is against the background of this teaching, *viz.* the origin of marriage from God and that it is a sacrament, that we understand the unitive aspect of marriage and that it is indissoluble. It is also against the background of this teaching that the Catholic Church teaches against premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. Extra-marital and premarital sexual relations dishonour and taint the sanctity of matrimony.

3.1.1 The problem of divorce

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is sacred and sacramental. She furthermore teaches that it is unitive and indissoluble. On the other hand we witness many marital relationships of Catholics breaking down. Could it be that the teaching of the Church is impractical, or have the morals of the people eroded? There is a gap between what the Church teaches and what some people practice. This gap is most evident in the area of sexuality.

The teaching of the Church may be impractical for some in the sense that it is out of reach for them. On the other hand the morals of some people may have eroded in the sense that they fail to adhere to the teaching of the Church. The Department of Home Affairs (The Births, Marriages and Deaths registration) estimates that about 42% of all marriages in South Africa end in divorce and those who work in Catholic marriage guidance and in marriage tribunals suggest that divorce among Catholics reflects divorce in society as a whole. I cannot say whether this is true or false. In the three parishes that I have served as a pastor I have had the experience of counselling only one divorced couple. This happened in the present parish where in ten years (1984-1994) there have been 43 marriages and only one divorce. These three parishes I am quoting are in the rural area and about 98% Black. This points to another fact that amongst rural Black Catholics, divorce seldom takes place. In the meetings and seminars about marriage we have had in our Diocese (Mariannhill), we have discovered that the rate of divorce (in our Diocese) is less than 8%. This may be because our Diocese is about 90% rural and about 95% Black. The fact that few of these people get divorced may not mean, however, that these marriages exhibit faithfulness and companionship. We know that extra-marital relations are rife.

Yet the fact remains; there are divorces within the Catholic Church. Could we say it is because the teaching of Catholic Church is impractical for other Catholics when she teaches that marriage is indissoluble? In our Diocese the overwhelming majority do remain married. Even in those Catholic dioceses where the overall rate of divorce is high (42%), many still continue in their marriages.

These statistics on divorce do not depict the marital breakdowns that do not end in divorce. The percentage of divorces indicated by statistics is only referring to marriages that have ended with the decree of divorce. But marital breakdown is much more complex than an actual legal divorce. For the purpose of this dissertation, this subsection tackles only the problem of legal divorce.

The Church has a duty and obligation to teach and to explain the teaching of Christ. In other words the Church has to point out to us the way by her teaching and explanations of Jesus' teaching. We are human beings and, therefore, frail and weak. But the fact that we fall and fail to obey the teaching of Christ through the Church does not mean that the teaching is wrong and should be changed or made easy for us. That would be compromising the gospel of Christ. On the other hand it does not mean that we are wicked. This teaching rather challenges us to follow in the way of Christ.

Those who have difficulties in their marriages should try by all means to resolve these and continue in their marriages. I do realize that there are certain instances where this would be impossible, for example, where the life of the other partner is in danger or his or her faith is in jeopardy. It would be irresponsible for me to advise that person to continue in her or his marriage. On the other hand, it would be negligent for me, as a Catholic Priest, to advise that person to opt out of the marriage. My duty would be to present to him or her the teaching of the Church and leave the decision with him or her.

Seán Wales says: "The issue of divorce is part of wider questions about the place of marriage and family life in our society today" (*Catholics and Divorce*: 7). Wales goes on to suggest that the Church has to do two things in the face of this high rate of divorce:

1. Present the Christian vision of the Sacrament of Matrimony and the meaning of Christian family life;
2. Reach out in compassion to those who have been hurt by love, who know the pain of failure in marriage (*Catholics and Divorce*: 7-8).

All people have to experience the love of God through the Church, especially those who have been hurt. The Church should then show the divorcees that God still loves and cares for them.

One other important issue under this subsection is remarriage of the divorcees. The Church categorically says that there should be no remarriage after the divorce. She has reiterated this teaching in the letter written to all the Catholic Bishops on 14 September 1994 and firmly rejected what is termed the 'pastoral solution' by those who favour the remarriage of the divorced Catholics under certain circumstances. I must be frank here and say that in my whole experience as a Priest I have never met people with this problem, therefore, it is a hypothetical issue for me. Nonetheless there are Catholic divorcees who have remarried. What about them?

The annulment procedure has to be employed in such cases to determine whether their previous marriage was or was not null and void from the beginning. Annulment is not a dissolution of a valid marriage. Three areas of marriage are examined in this procedure to determine whether there are any grounds for the annulment. These areas are consent, which is both internal and external agreement between the marrying parties, form (technicalities) and diriment impediments, which are moral impediments in the eyes of the Church. After careful investigation by the

competent authority (in the form of a Marriage Tribunal), such a marriage will be declared null and void or valid.⁴ If it is declared null and void then the parties are free to remarry, but if it is declared valid then the parties are not free to remarry. In the latter case they cannot continue in their second marriage without jeopardizing their relationship with God. For these unfortunate people there are two options. Both options are the recommendation of St Paul (1 Cor. 7:11a): "but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband". Besides these options, we can only put our hope on God's love and mercy.

3.2 PREMARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS

Premarital sexual relations could mean a variety of interpersonal heterosexual contacts that stretch from simple signs of friendship right up to full sexual intercourse. This sexual relation could include a one-night-stand, or a relationship of a more enduring nature, like trial marriage and 'shacking up'. Thus it is not merely adolescents who engage in premarital sexual relations but also adults who are unmarried.

Premarital sexual relations could also mean relations that are not of a heterosexual nature, e.g. homosexuality. For the purpose of this dissertation I shall confine myself to premarital sexual relations of a heterosexual nature between two individuals who have knowingly and intentionally engaged in such an act, thus deliberately excluding homosexuality, sodomy, rape, incest and bestiality.

4. The official Roman Catholic view rejects the *porneia* clause of Mt. 19:9 on a number of grounds. Firstly, most Catholic scholars agree that the exceptive clause does not belong to the original saying of Jesus. It was introduced into the text by the later disciples of Matthew. Secondly, Catholic commentators are of the opinion that Matthew is adapting the prohibition of divorce to circumstances in his own church where there were Christians who had contracted incestuous marriages forbidden by Leviticus 18:1-17. Thirdly, the fact that it is only Matthew, amongst the evangelists, who included this clause, weakens its authenticity.

Worth noting under this section is premarital petting. Though this does not include coitus, indulgence in it can lead to coitus. Petting can mean anything from simple hand shaking to deep heavy fondling, necking, feeling and kissing. Actually simple signs of affection, like hugging and embracing, are harmless especially between people who care about each other. All people in all walks of life have a need for human warmth and affection which is supportive. The moral difficulty arises when such innocent gestures might be taken to mean 'going further' or have already sexually aroused an individual. The fact that one is sexually aroused is in itself not a fault, but to deliberately indulge in this and to want to prolong and deepen it would be bordering on the immoral.

Absolute frankness in communication is essential in these relationships. If one partner senses too much sensual excitement and involvement, they should be able to freely express this and then both help each other to control it. Obvious moments and movements that are bound to lead to sensual stimulation ought to be avoided and not allowed to develop. These include nudity or tantalizing dress, fondling of the genitals and other erogenous parts of the human body. To deliberately indulge in sexual arousal only builds up the desire for more. A wish for more sexual experience which in turn leads to sexual obsession can only be overcome with much heroism. If this is lacking, an unending round of experiences can easily end up in sexual promiscuity.

I have indicated above that I will confine myself to premarital sexual relations of a heterosexual nature. Kosnik (1977: 158) lists five current approaches to the morality of premarital sexuality.

1. All directly voluntary sexual pleasure outside wedlock is grievously sinful [...]
2. Every genital act outside the context of marriage is immoral [...]

3. Premarital intercourse is wrong but preceremonial intercourse may be moral [...]
4. Sexual intimacy may be an appropriate expression of the quality and depth of a relationship, whether marriage is intended or not [...]
5. Sexual experience including intercourse is a natural human function which serves functions other than procreation or expression of intimacy.

Kosnik totally rejects the first and the fifth approaches as these "simply do not do justice to the rich and profound meaning of human sexuality" (1977: 164). He is not happy with the second approach because this "seems too extrinsic and legal to serve as a moral norm for an expression that is primarily, though not exclusively, internal and personal" (1977: 165). He is also not happy with the fourth approach as this "does not show sufficient concern for the vagaries of human interrelationships, nor does it value sufficiently the importance of fidelity as an indispensable quality for a caring relationship" (1977: 165).

The third approach is acceptable to Kosnik. He says this about it:

The third approach that calls for a serious and growing commitment of partners toward each other as a condition for justifying sexual intimacy seems to be most consistent with the vision of human sexuality expressed in this study. The characteristic values advanced therein for gauging wholesome human sexuality can provide more specific guidelines toward balancing individual and societal interests for those unmarried individuals who are seeking to discern what is appropriate sexual behaviour in their lives (1977: 165).

By accepting the third approach Kosnik is implicitly divorcing preceremonial intercourse from premarital intercourse as if the former is not part of the latter. He, nevertheless, suggests the cases where preceremonial intercourse may be moral.

This would be especially true regarding couples engaged to be married or those who, although mature enough to marry and desiring to do so, are prevented from marrying because of external reasons, such as prolonged courses of study, need to care for one's family, or financial considerations (1977: 161).

The acceptance of this approach overshadows the importance and meaning of marriage. The intention to marry is implicitly equalled to the marriage itself by the proponents of this approach and this leads to the blurring of the importance of betrothal period of the engaged parties. This approach also creates a loophole for indulgence in premarital sex because one may legitimately claim that intention to marry is not only manifested by engagement. Engagement is a 'publicly made known' intention to marry and not a guarantee to marry. I know of many people who were once engaged, but never married.

Catholic moral theology has consistently refused to treat human sexuality as trivial, and sexual behaviour as unimportant. This is profoundly true in its discussion of premarital coitus. The clear, constant and official teaching of the Catholic Church is that every act of sexual intercourse between unmarried persons is gravely disordered and objectively immoral. This is expressed in the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's declaration, *De persona Humana*, 7:

However firm the intention of those who practice such premature sexual relations may be, the fact remains that these relations cannot ensure, in sincerity and fidelity, the interpersonal relationship between a man and a woman, nor especially can they protect this relationship from whims and caprices.

Experience teaches us that love must find its safeguard in the stability of marriage, if sexual intercourse is truly to respond to the requirements of its own finality and to those of human dignity. These requirements call for a conjugal contract sanctioned and guaranteed by society - a contract which establishes a state of life of capital importance both for the exclusive union of man and woman and for the good of their

family and of the human community. Most often, in fact, premarital relations exclude the possibility of children. What is represented to be conjugal love is not able to develop into paternal and maternal love. Or, if it does happen to do so, this will be to the detriment of the children, who will be deprived of the stable environment in which they ought to develop in order to find in it the ways and means of their insertion into society as a whole (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 674-675).

This statement of the Sacred Congregation emphasizes that every genital act must be within the framework of marriage. Fornication is the technical traditional term given to such sexual behaviour outside of the marital relationship.

The New Testament explicitly rejects all premarital sexual acts as being in opposition to the will of God and to the morality of the kingdom of God (cf. Mt 15:19f; Mark 7:21-23). Paul definitely rules out any sexual promiscuity for a Christian. Such behaviour is unbecoming and uncalled for among Christians who ought to respect their very bodies as members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. There are innumerable texts in Paul that single out fornication as something that should not be done by a Christian (1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9, 12-20; 7:2; 10:8; 1 Thes. 4:3-4; Gal. 5:19-20; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4).

Subjectively speaking, each case of premarital sexual intercourse must be examined according to its circumstances and these in turn will determine the gravity of the offence in question. Crucial questions have to be faced; who are the persons in question, what is their actual relationship, what are they seeking to communicate and why, and how does their sexual expression harmonize with all of this? It is worthwhile noting two major factors which exert influence on couples today to engage in premarital sexual intercourse. These factors do not in any way excuse guilt in this whole intricate area of sexual promiscuity.

There are, firstly, external pressures that influence people to engage in premarital sexual acts. Because of a general loosening up of moral sanctions, it is commonly and widely accepted today that couples have intercourse even before marriage. Many indulge in these acts because for them it is entertainment. The mass media, the advertising industry, Gallup polls, public opinion (which may amount, in my view, to pornography) and erudite scientific studies imply that 'everyone is doing it' and suggest that all should conform to this pattern. These pressures only lead to confusion and perplexity among ordinary people. Some people are so sure of having sexual intercourse that they prepare themselves for the act well in advance. The act does not take place in the heat of the moment any more, but is planned. In some instances men will demand sexual intercourse and pregnancy before marriage to make sure that their wives-to-be can conceive. This is not a sound reason because such an examination could, to a certain extent, be done by the medical profession.

Secondly, there are internal pressures that influence people to engage in premarital sexual acts. Couples have to cope very often with their own personal problems of sexual growth, teachings, identity, maturity, integration, attraction and pleasure. The fact that the youth experiment with their sexuality is understandable, yet this is by no means necessary (or beneficial) for their maturity or personal morality.

A crucial question which is the core of the discussion under this sub-topic is: "Why should a couple wait until marriage to have and enjoy sexual intercourse?" Surely a marriage certificate does not make sexual intercourse moral? It must be admitted that many married people do engage in coital acts that are certainly unloving, selfish, impersonal and downright inhuman. But this does not mean that sexual intercourse can be blithely pursued outside of marriage. Traditionally, the arguments against premarital intercourse have been of a theological and pre-eminently practical nature. These are discussed in turn below.

A theological argument states that it is against the express will of God as understood and explained by the Catholic Church. Peschke (1985: 420-422) discusses the arguments that support premarital continence and reject premarital sexual intercourse. He notes:

Two of the arguments in defence of premarital continence are derived from the nature and purpose of sexual love. Premarital intercourse contradicts the very purpose of sexuality. Therefore it cannot be accepted as meaningful and proper. A third argument argues *a posteriori*. It shows that only a lasting marriage bond provides the conditions for a sexual relationship which is truly happy (p.420).

Perhaps many today will not worry about this sin dimension of sexual promiscuity, it appears to be the last thing on their mind. Some would argue that God does not enter into one's private life and would even reject the notion of shame or guilt as purely neurotic and old-fashioned.

The pragmatic reasons include the loss of virginity where it is socially prized, the fear of pregnancy and the possibility of contracting venereal diseases. This second line of argument has been weakened today by new medical technology which includes contraceptive advances and drugs to combat venereal diseases. While fear is not a good argument for love or morality, nevertheless the facts alone can bring some people to their senses.

Moralists today are sincerely trying to evaluate the morality of premarital sexual relations from the point of view of the nature and the meaning of conjugal sexual intercourse and love. The act of sexual intercourse is ideally meant to be an act of total personal giving and receiving. It ought to be an expression of total self-donation that is exclusive and permanent. This presupposes a deep, trusting and lasting relationship.

Sexual intercourse is the culminating sign of a relationship; it does not cause it. Premature sexual intercourse short-circuits the whole long process of developing responsible personal love. Ideally speaking, sexual intercourse is the climaxing and ongoing reaffirmation of a total interpersonal relationship of love. Genuine love includes the qualities of acceptance, respect, responsibility, care, faithfulness, trust, gentleness, personal sharing, self-sacrifice and permanence. An act of sexual intercourse presupposes all of these qualities otherwise it is a lie, a betrayal of the genuine meaning of sexuality. Furthermore, many couples involved in such behaviour have no intention of allowing the act to be procreative. To clutch at the immediate pleasure of intercourse while being unwilling to accept its responsibilities and consequences, such as conjugal life, love and children, distorts the whole meaning, purpose and nature of sexual intercourse.

Looked at from the angle of love, one could have many reservations about premarital sexual intercourse. Some would argue that it enhances their love-relationship. I doubt if that is guaranteed because in some instances it may only retard it. Love is more than the physical act, but it is true that the physical act is the easiest to come by while the others take time and patience to grow and develop. There is every reason, then, to delay the physical aspects until the emotional, intellectual, psychological, cultural and spiritual aspects are explored and developed.

All too often premarital sexual relations are due to an exploitation of one's partner's weaknesses in which he or she is used. Real love involves encouraging and defending the weaker party, and not taking advantage of his or her particular weakness. Respect means acceptance of the other's right to full integrity, including bodily integrity. Most men would like to think that they are privileged to be the first to have sexual intercourse with their wives, but they rarely think of that when it may

be another man's woman in question. Why should a woman have to be a virgin when her man is already 'sleeping around'?

There is also the risk of insincerity and deception in indulging in premarital sexual intercourse. How is one going to know for sure that this person is going to be one's partner for the rest of one's life when they have, as yet, no real commitment to each other? How can one be sure that their love is going to grow and last, because of these sexual intimacies? Sexual union is such a powerful total human act that if used irresponsibly and casually it can actually lead to cynicism, frigidity, insensitivity to human and emotional values, and ultimately could lead to complete inability to love and, therefore, subsequent unhappiness in life. Casual sex is a dreadful offence against human dignity. Such acts only lead to mistrust, frustrations, disappointment, fear, guilt and anxiety. An unsatisfactory premarital sexual experience, all too often permanently affects a couple's appreciation of sexual intercourse later on in marriage.

Another aspect of premarital sexual intercourse is its relationship to fidelity. A couple who indulge in sex before marriage may well wish to remain faithful to each other, however, this is no guarantee since they are still uncommitted. Besides, the chances are that either party may not remain faithful even in marriage. A man who goes to bed rather easily before marriage is more likely to go to bed with someone else other than his wife after marriage, and *vice versa*. The period before marriage is meant to be one of preparation towards fidelity and compatibility, a period in which marital values are tested. The question arises: "If he is like this now when we are unmarried, what will he be like later on when we are actually married?"

Nevertheless, it is imperative to add that in all the sexual behaviour of a genital nature before marriage there is a tremendous risk of sheer selfishness (quick pleasure, 'instant kicks') without any consideration for the other person. Even when

both are in agreement, they are still self-centred and make no allowances for the consequences of their affair upon society. Chastity is required before and during marriage. It is an acquired respect for the meaning of sexuality in all our actions. Modesty, as the promoter of chastity, is a disposition or attitude which calls us to respect and treat human sexuality as an expression of the person in their uniqueness and as the mediation of social relationships between people. Self-control is an important aspect of mature self-functioning.

In my opinion, premarital sexual intercourse is against God's will and intention for human sexuality and, therefore, not moral. Circumstances, such as being engaged and the existence of mutual love, may be mitigating circumstances but not licence for premarital sex. Mitigating circumstances do not acquit the offender but lessen the guilt and, therefore, the punishment.

3.3 EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Marriage is a partnership or communion of life and love. Therefore it demands from the partners full commitment and unreserved attention and love. The Bishops at the Vatican Council highlighted this truth when they proclaimed that "the intimate union of marriage, as a mutual giving of two persons, and the good of the children demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable unity between them" (Flannery 1981: 950). Adultery, therefore, contradicts this teaching.

Peschke (1985: 427) defines adultery as "sexual intercourse between two partners of a different sex, of whom at least one is married. Besides the sin against chastity, adultery is also an offence against justice and fidelity".

The Scriptures explicitly condemn this practice. God ordered his people in the wilderness: "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14), and in verse 17 of the same

chapter He says: "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, [...]". Jesus reiterates this command and goes further (Mt 5:27-28). For him the mind plays an important part in the actual sinning. For St Paul, adultery is such a serious sin that it excludes a person from the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9).

To confirm the seriousness of adultery there were very heavy penalties for the offenders. "If a man commits adultery with another's wife, adulterating with the wife of his neighbour, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death" (Lev. 20:10; cf. Also Sirach 23: 18-27; Deut. 22:22). It was because of this heavy penalty that adultery was considered a deadly sin. Jesus acknowledges this penalty, but for him forgiveness plays an important role for whoever has sinned and in whatever sin (Jn. 8:3-11). For Jesus, 'forgiveness' and 'sinning no more' are integral elements of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Extra-marital sexual relations directly and viciously violate the integrity of marriage.

Keane (1980: 104) maintains:

The trust, openness, and self-giving to one's spouse that marriage calls for seems clearly to exclude acts of intercourse outside the marriage, since such acts indicate a division of the deep, personal self-giving that belongs in marriage.

The argumentation against premarital sexual intercourse in section 3.2 can again be used here against extra-marital sexual relations as both of these practices, especially extra-marital relations, stain the sacredness and sanctity of matrimony. Besides these, Peschke (1985: 427) lists three other reasons for the sinfulness of adultery. Firstly, because of the adulterous union, there is a possibility that children who will not be properly looked after may be brought into the world. For the man, if he is the one who is married, he will have another child to rear who is outside his family, thus increasing his financial strains and responsibility. If it is the woman who

is married, then the matter will be even more complicated because, though the child will be born into a family, an

injustice is done to the husband and to the legitimate children, insofar as the husband will be obliged to rear another man's child and the legitimate children be forced to share their inheritance with a stranger (Peschke 1985: 427).

This child also runs the risk of being unaccepted by this family if a slight suspicion arises that she or he is not the legitimate child of the husband.

The second reason which also, directly or indirectly, follows from the first is that:

Adultery involves destructive consequences for the love, harmony and stability in the family of the married partners. The love of the partners who commit adultery will usually be divided. They will be drawn away from their first partners and families, which inevitably will weaken the stability of the original bonds. Further damage to love and harmony will be done if the innocent partners discover the unfaithfulness of their marriage mates (Peschke 1985: 427).

A third reason is that adultery is a violation of marital fidelity:

Finally adultery violates the fidelity promised by the marriage partners to each other, and among Catholics it furthermore offends against the sacramental consecration of the matrimonial union (Peschke 1985: 427-428).

The reasons that push people to engage in extra-marital sexual relations are manifold and complex. Besides the causes set out in Chapter One, other causes such as insensitivity of one partner to the other, the taking for granted of the other partner, and sexual inadequacy also give rise to extra-marital sexual relations.

The practice of adultery can be minimized or even prevented by valuing the other partner and making him or her feel wanted and appreciated. Nonetheless, the golden rule here is a proper education in marriage without which people take

marriage for granted and even marry for wrong and selfish reasons. The knowledge that marriage is the institution of God and is, therefore, sacred, that the other partner is very important in this relationship and is to be treated accordingly, and that the partners are no longer two but one, makes the roots of marriage firm.

Peschke concludes:

The foundation for sexual happiness or misery is laid not in the bedroom but at the dining-table. A marriage which is solely founded on sexual gratification cannot be lasting. Sexuality grants happiness and fulfilment only where it is the expression of a sincere, personal love. Husband and wife must be true companions of life for each other, allies, helpers and friends. "If both partners are willing to sacrifice their individual egos and give up the luxury of infidelity, they should find true happiness in marriage" (1985: 428-429).

3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Marriage is sacred in the sense that it originates in God. Catholic theology maintains that marriage is a sacrament of God in that it is a sign that makes a reality present. Because marriage is a sacrament of God it is, therefore, indissoluble. I realize the fact that certain marriages do break down because of a variety of valid and invalid reasons. I also realize the fact that certain people do all in their power to save their marriages, but in vain. Divorce is a sin but God forgives every sin because God understands our human frailty.

Premarital sexual intercourse contradicts the theology of marriage. Some may say that premarital sex is wicked while others may claim that in certain circumstances, for example, preceremonial intercourse, it may be allowed. The acceptance of preceremonial intercourse overshadows the importance and meaning of marriage because in this case the betrothal period is equal to marriage itself. I would

personally maintain that premarital sex is always wrong, whatever the circumstances, because it contradicts the theology of marriage.

Extra-marital sexual intercourse breaks the fidelity and the unity of the couple. Ultimately it causes marital breakdown. I cannot think of any circumstances that could justify this practice. When it causes marital breakdown it may bring to some people untold suffering, for example, the innocent party, the children, the families and other interested parties. In my opinion extra-marital sexual intercourse is always wrong as it taints the sacredness and sacramentality of marriage.

Customs and education, for the most part, dictate how single and courting couples behave in their sexual relationships. Actually courtship ought to be a period of mutual enjoyment and enrichment, an important step in growth towards heterosexual love and eventual marriage. Mutual respect demands care, affection and protection, but above all people must be introduced, through moral education, to the notion of self-control which includes self-denial.

By not following the Church's teaching, people end up with their relationships in a mess. The Church is the guide and leader of her members. Even in the area of sexuality, the Church still guides us. It is, therefore, by acting in accordance with the Church's guidance that we put our lives in order. The problems encountered by some modern Zulus in the area of sexuality (discussed in Chapter One) can be alleviated by embracing the Church's teaching and looking to her for guidance. In the light of this perspective the following chapter will look into some possible solutions to these problems.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT CAN BE DONE? SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF INCREASED PREMARITAL AND EXTRA-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONS AMONGST SOME MODERN ZULUS

It is not sufficient to state the problem and not suggest some means that can be employed to alleviate or solve it. With this in mind I will suggest, in this chapter, some possible solutions to the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst some modern Zulus.

The causes and results of the rise in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations have been enumerated and explained in Chapter One. The causes include the perpetual childhood of women, the South African political and socio-economic setting, science and technology, the state of instability and shortcomings in existing marriages and the attitude of the Church towards sexuality. Among the results are teenage pregnancies, overpopulation, sexually transmitted diseases and marital breakdown. It is against the background of the understanding of these causes and the acknowledgement of the fact that they have a detrimental effect on society as a whole that I set out to propose these possible solutions.

The elucidation and analysis of Zulu traditional behaviour in premarital and extra-marital sexual intercourse (Chapter Two), and the analysis of the Catholic teaching with respect to these relations (Chapter Three), actually demand that some solution be proposed. Where do we go from here? It is true that we have to look closely at the causes of these relations and see whether we can change them for the good of society or discard them all together. Therefore, in what way can this problem of the increase in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations be dealt with?

4.1 CHANGE THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURES OF OUR COUNTRY

The destructive structuring of black political and socio-economic affairs which was based on the policy of Apartheid has been the main cause of immeasurable suffering and immorality in our country. This evil structure largely destroyed the family which in Zulu traditional practice was a source of strength and security for the individual. It is therefore imperative to remove, change and modify these structures in order that they can serve each person and bring back the dignity of the individual which is the vehicle of his or her prudent and ethical behaviour.

This change will enable the empowerment of people in many spheres, especially in the socio-economic and political sphere in relation to which many people feel powerless. Therefore, changes in political and socio-economic structures are necessary. In what follows I propose that restructuring is needed in four areas: availing employment opportunities and restructuring the migrant labour system; education; housing; and the unity and togetherness of the family members. Who should be responsible to effect these changes? This is an issue that affects the whole of society, therefore, it is the duty of society to effect these changes. This includes the government (national and local), the Church, non-governmental bodies and the relevant communities. This can be done through appropriate legislation, welfare structures, conscientizing people (through workshops and seminars), local and international investments and job creation.

4.1.1 Availing employment opportunities and restructuring the migrant labour system

It has been argued in 1.1.2 (the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa) that changes in patterns of traditional Zulu family life, together with unemployment

and illiteracy, housing problems and migrant labour have created openings for sexual indulgence by all members of the family.

How do we close these undesirable openings? I propose that these openings can be closed by, firstly, making employment opportunities available to people who are jobless which will enable them to shape their life-styles by earning wages and salaries; and secondly, by restructuring the present migrant labour system in a way that does not disturb the unity and togetherness of the family.

The government has a duty towards job creation in our country, especially in poverty-stricken areas. It has to do this, not necessarily by erecting companies and firms (which is not easy for it to do), but by creating a climate for free economic activity which will lure international investors as well as local investors. Besides assuring investors of free economic activity, the country should be free of any political violence or civil wars. These often frighten investors away because they see little security for their investments. Wilson and Ramphela note:

There are some who would argue that the state should play no meaningful role in the provision of jobs. Let the market do the work, they say, otherwise the jobs that are created will not be self-sustaining and will simply increase the burden on the state, and ultimately on the tax-payer, until one day it becomes too heavy to bear and everything collapses. Certainly, there is a danger of the state creating a bloated bureaucracy of people whose jobs are essentially unproductive and whose salary cheques from the government amount to little more than a welfare payment. The argument contains an important truth that should serve as a warning, a salutary reminder, that there are dangers inherent in any state-employment policy. Nevertheless, we would argue that, under the conditions now pertaining in South Africa, with the level of unemployment already high and projected to rise still further, the state has a major role to play in the creation of employment (1989: 317).

Besides creating the favourable climate for the economy of our country, the government still has to create structures which can be exploited to alleviate the poverty of our people. This it did in the 1930s and "it was widely accepted amongst the ruling class that the state had a responsibility to do what it could to create jobs for the unemployed poor - at least those of them who were white" (Wilson and Ramphela 1989: 317).

The state can do the same today for the poorest of the poor. I am not advocating here the reverse of what the government has been doing under the Apartheid administration, but I am advocating the idea of the option for the poor - all poor and not some of the poor as the government did in the 1930s. The idea of the option for the poor is an inclusive one; all the poor of our country should benefit from whatever structures the state is creating to redress poverty. What can the government possibly do as there are more than 7 million people unemployed of which more than 50% are in dire poverty? The truth is that the government has done something in the past and it is not impossible for it to do something now.

In 1932, a year which combined great drought with general economic depression, the number of whites employed in subsidized works increased by 99 per cent whilst those employed in unsubsidised relief schemes trebled. By 1933 a total of 59 000 poor whites were employed by various state relief measures. By 1939, well over half (59 per cent) of central government (white) employment 98 000 consisted of relief work. The authors conclude that 'it was the introduction of a systematic and elaborate works creation programme which saw the rapid elimination of white poverty and not the extensive legislative assistance given to whites' (PCC 10: 22. [...]).

It is also worth noting that the programme, highly effective as it seems to have been, was financed more by reallocation of funds within the public budget than by increasing the government's share in the economy as a whole, although during the war years - when virtually the last of the poor whites were absorbed (often as soldiers into the army) - government expenditure as a proportion of the gross domestic product leapt

from approximately 15 per cent in the five years before 1939 to approximately 25 per cent during the next five years (Wilson and Ramphela 1989: 318).

One may argue that the government was dealing with a small number then; thousands compared to millions of destitute persons today. But we should remember that the economy has grown since then and this presents the government with greater opportunities to combat the prevailing destitution. The cooperation between the government and the various financial institutions in this regard can produce the desired results.

One disturbing element in our society is the system of migrant labour which totally divides the family and exposes it to serious difficulties and problems. Moral problems are amongst the many problems created by migrant labour (cf. 1.1.2). Therefore the restructuring of this system is necessary if we hope to solve the many ethical problems especially those of a sexual nature which stem from it. The restructuring should be based on the principle of 'family unity'. Mines, firms and factories, should look into housing systems that can accommodate the whole family, and not just employees. Compounds and hostels should be restructured into accommodating this system.

Wilson and Ramphela note that this migrant labour system negatively affects the whole family. They describe the pain caused by this system thus:

Fathers talk of the pain of seeing their children growing up as strangers. Sons tell of their shock upon going to town. 'We find our fathers with concubines yet our mothers are starving. Besides, the sweethearts are as young as father's children. We get fed up and cannot communicate with our fathers' (5: 21). And wives point out: 'For our husbands we are just their old-age home or their hospitals. They really come back to us when they are too old to work or when they are sick.' (66: 5). And the men themselves lament: 'We stay a full year without our wives. That makes us go beyond the bounds of the law and become

adulterers'. The conclusion, as one of them expressed it, 'is that in the towns we are spilt just like water on the ground' (5: 22) (1989: 199).

It is clear, therefore, that such a system deprives the family of its values, disturbs the unity of the family, creates problems and difficulties in its life and creates openings for sexual impropriety. Because it does this it should be done away with or reconstructed in a way that favours the family.

4.1.2 Education

Today people talk about free and compulsory basic education for all. The sound of this is sweet to me because education is one important ingredient of empowerment. Other types of empowerment become difficult if people are uneducated. The majority of our people are illiterate, therefore, the empowerment of people by education is the first and important step of development. To keep people illiterate was one of the weapons used by the capitalists and colonists because they wanted cheap labour and did not want to pay high wages to skilled, qualified and educated natives. That is why it is very important to redress the situation by starting with education towards empowerment. This will help people to take the full responsibility for the course of their own life. It will also help them to be productive and self-sufficient.

The type of education (Bantu Education) that has been offered to the Black majority for more than 30 years in South Africa has not served a purpose of making people productive and self-sufficient, but rather served the purpose of a white minority to oppress people and provide the mines and industries with labour. This makes it difficult to inculcate in people a culture of education. When this destructive system (Bantu Education) disappears (as the new Government of National Unity promises in the White Paper on Education), then it will be meaningful and proper to

encourage everyone to prepare for the future by giving serious attention to schooling and seeking to acquire proper skills for empowerment.

For more than a century the Church has been offering good education to people, especially Blacks. It has done this despite the minimal subsidy received from the government. From its own meagre resources it has given innumerable bursaries and scholarships to needy students. This has been the sign that the education of the underprivileged matters to the Church. Other non-governmental bodies have helped a lot in this regard by providing bursaries and scholarships. The onus rests, however, on the government which has to provide education and resources to help acquire it, with students who should go to school, as well as with parents who should motivate their children to go to school.

One other form of education under this sub-section is sex education. If we hope to solve the problem of premarital and extra-marital relations, education in sexual matters for people, especially the young, is imperative (cf. 2.2 for the traditional Zulu practice in this matter). Dominian notes in this regard:

Parents, teachers and the Church have a basic responsibility to educate the pre-pubertal child to its sexual gender and role potentiality; the neglect in the past of such education constitutes a grave defect in Christian education. This means that every home must have a plan of gradually training their children positively in the unfolding of their sexual potential, paving the way for puberty. This is an obligation which the universal Christian community has and there can be no excuse for the absence of a positive atmosphere within the home, the school and the Church towards such a sexual education and the provision of suitable material and discussion forums for the parents. Every boy and girl must reach puberty with their bodies, minds and hearts ready to be invaded by the hormonal changes which set the secondary sexual characteristics in motion (Dominian 1977: 78).

The community and, in particular, the Church have the duty and obligation to instruct young people who are courting in sexual matters, in preparation for marriage. It is incumbent upon pastors and leaders of the community to emphasize the importance of this instruction and to encourage young people to attend.

I suggest that the instruction in sexual matters should begin in the Sunday School classes where children should be gradually introduced into the whole area of human sexuality. The school syllabus should also include something of sex education. It is important to note that it is not only the Church that is worried about current promiscuity, but also the society at large. I maintain that the publicity of love affairs in the Zulu traditional way can still play a vital role in curbing the current promiscuity. One other element from the Zulu traditional way which could be employed would be the involvement (probably now to a lesser degree) of the senior girls and boys. These practices, which in my opinion do not clash with the Christian practice, can be revived, including the '*qoma*' ceremony. For the Christians, the '*ukusoma*' practice would come under the discussions of premarital sex. I maintain in 3.2 that it is always wrong because it contradicts the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage.

I would like to quote at length the All-Africa Seminar on the Christian Home and Family Life which addressed, amongst other important issues, the task of the Christian Councils. One part of this task is to:

... devise a system of education and preparation for home and family life which will meet, at their respective levels, the needs of all from the infant to parents and grandparents in their own homes, and those who live unmarried throughout adult life. The education of the young will include sex instruction - clear and honest, given with sensitivity and understanding - but it will go far beyond that. Particular care will be given to the preparation of those who are about to marry. Ideally such preparation should be a long one, a formation of two mature, fully-Christian persons for their entry into a Christian union; and it should

include help to their families also, who themselves are to be united by the marriage of their children. Education is inseparable from pastoral care; so the care of the Church and its pastor will extend into the marriage itself, especially in its early years and when children come (All-Africa Seminar, 17 February-20 April 1963: 37-38).

It is clear from this text that sex education is part of premarriage instruction. This instruction in sexual matters for young people (which is the duty of the Church, the school, the community and the family) should be included in the preparation for marriage itself.

Goodsell notes that much progress has been forthcoming in the area of education and yet "little effort has been put forth to make young people more intelligent regarding the problems of the marriage relation and wise nurture and guidance of the young" (1936: 134). Sex education ought to be positive and prudent, pointing out both negative and positive areas of concern, values and vices. Pat answers, especially of a negative nature, do not help but rather hinder both the growth and development of a person's sexuality. The ideal ought to be clarified and the power of God and the assistance of the community called upon through the sacramental life and the social structures. There is also a need for the proper understanding and practice of courtship.

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith's Declaration *De Persona Humana* notes:

Parents, in the first place, and also teachers of the young, must endeavour to lead their children and their pupils by way of a complete education, to the psychological, emotional and moral maturity befitting their age. They will therefore prudently give them information suited to their age; and they will assiduously form their wills in accordance with Christian morals, not only by advice but above all by the example of their own lives, relying on God's help, which they will obtain in prayer. They will

likewise protect the young from many dangers of which they are quite unaware (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 676).

Education in general, and sex education in particular, will help an individual to see and acknowledge his or her own worth. This positive attitude towards oneself will minimize the possibility of falling into the trap of being lured into bed easily, thus alleviating the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations.

Most Christian marriage traditions encourage sex education especially in emphasizing premarriage and post-marriage instruction. The African way of doing this, namely initiation, has not been without criticism. The primary criticism has related to the non-sanitary procedure by which these rites are carried out. In a recent incident young men in the Eastern Cape had to be hospitalized and died, apparently as a result of being operated on with unsterilized instruments which caused infection. Unfortunately, no medical assistance was immediately available to them in that rural area. Seeing the moral and social value of the practice, should we not then strive to modernize the methods of operation and add some sanitary elements into the custom?

4.1.3 Housing

Coupled with the problems of education and employment is the problem of housing. People are moving to the cities and towns because this is where they have the opportunity of being employed. This practice has caused much congestion in the cities, towns and surrounding areas through the erection of shacks in informal settlements. Besides the possibilities of a health epidemic, because of the congestion and lack of proper infrastructure, people have no privacy in these shacks which makes them vulnerable to criminal offenses and rape. Many of these people having nothing to do, but to roam the streets and, therefore, they are open to a number of vices, not excluding sexual indulgence and impropriety.

We have heard a number of political parties promising people decent housing. With the corporate effort of the masses themselves, the government and other interested parties (financial institutions included) this promise of decent housing can become a reality. If people could own decent houses then the criminal rate, violence and other immoral acts, including sexual indulgence, would decrease. Once a person is treated with the dignity befitting his/her humanity, then he/she becomes prepared to act in the same way in relation to the other person. If a person is given an opportunity to have a decent place in which to live then that person may gain recognition as a person and be treated accordingly.

4.1.4 The unity and togetherness of the family members

What has been called the 'great family' or African extended family, with its closely related network of persons descended from the same grandfather or great-grandfather often residing in the same locality or even in the same household has disappeared. This has weakened the strong links that couples used to have with other couples, or children with other children, thus exposing them to a range of problems which make them more vulnerable to sexual desire and, eventually, to unfaithfulness.

Nearly sixty years ago, Goodsell testified to this fact, and little seems to have changed:

Living in impersonal apartment houses, ignorant of the individuals living next door, men and women, youths and maidens go their own ways, serenely assured that their 'neighbours' will neither know nor care what social standards they disregard as long as their conduct is not too brazenly flagrant. This easy, urban indifference to those living in one's vicinity has played an important role in furthering family instability and the breakdown of traditional morals (1936: 133-134; cf. also 125).

All this has led to an individualism which has created problems in the family. Because of this individualism, people have found it very difficult to abandon their own convictions or to accept advice or instruction from others. This leads to attitudes which say; "Whatever I do is my own choice and concern", "I do not need your opinion or advice", and "Who are you to tell me what to do?"

I am not here advocating a total reversion to the old Zulu family traditions. This would be impossible because of the contemporary lifestyle that many people have accepted. But I must be honest that if it was possible to go back to the old Zulu family traditions, I would encourage it because I am convinced that some of the contemporary sexual problems and difficulties might be solved.

What is necessary is the creation and strengthening of the unity and togetherness of the family members, such as grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren. Where it is feasible, for example, in some remote areas of KwaZulu-Natal, the re-introduction of the extended family might be considered and implemented.

I must note that the family is the first and foremost place in which we come to appreciate and live the community life, the life of charity and of solidarity in all its many forms. In the family, we learn attentiveness, openness and respect for others, who must always be able to find their proper places. Life in common is also an invitation to a sharing which helps us to rise above our selfishness. In learning to share and to give, we discover the immense joy which comes from the communion of goods. With great tact, parents should strive by word and example to awaken a sense of solidarity in their children. From childhood, everyone is called to mortification and fasting in order to grow in character and self-discipline, overcoming the desire to possess everything for oneself alone. What we learn in the family stays with us throughout life.

To make this unity and togetherness possible in our families we have to take care of them by especially being attentive to the sufferings and poverty they experience. Many families have in fact crossed the threshold of poverty, and no longer have the bare essentials to feed themselves and their children, or to provide their children with normal physical and psychological opportunities of growth and the chance to attend school on a regular basis. Some families do not have the means to find decent housing. Unemployment is becoming more widespread and is increasing the poverty of an entire sector of the population. Women are left to provide for the needs of the children and for their education, which often leads young people to roam the streets, to seek refuge in drugs, alcohol abuse, sex and violence.

More and more couples and families are experiencing psychological and relational troubles. Social problems contribute at times to the breakup of the family. In certain countries very young children are forced to live in inhuman conditions or are shamefully exploited. Others are compelled to join the army and fight civil wars. The aged and handicapped, because they are not financially productive, are left completely on their own and made to feel useless. Some families, because they are from other races, cultures or religions, encounter rejection in countries where they have settled.

Faced with these grave problems, which have reached global proportions, we may not keep silent or remain passive because they are destroying the family, which is the basic unit of society and of the Church. We are called to take the situation in hand. Christians and all people of good will have a duty to help families in difficulty, providing them with the spiritual and material help needed to overcome the often tragic situations of which I have spoken in this dissertation. This will help to restore the dignity of the family and enhance the unity and togetherness in the family.

4.2 THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

One of the tools that can be used to curb the increase in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations is the equal treatment of each and every person. Everyone deserves the treatment that is appropriate to him or her as a human person. Much attention should be given to those who have been shown little respect in the past. This attitude should not be exclusive but inclusive, in the sense that those who have been 'nothing' should be made 'something', and those who have been 'something' should remain 'something'. In other words all people should be regarded as equal human beings in the eyes of God and in their standing in the world.

The empowerment of women, as with the empowerment of all who are oppressed, should not be confused with co-option, as co-option is not empowerment but further oppression of people. Wilson and Ramphela note:

It is important to recognize ill-conceived strategies by independent organizations. These can be used (not least by the state) to further a process of co-option whereby those who are poor are rendered even more dependent and powerless, and must be rejected (1989: 261).

Everybody, irrespective of who they are, should be accorded their God-given rights. By doing this we would be respecting God in whose image and likeness every person is created. The Bishops of IMBISA (Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa) note:

Every human being that is born is, by the fact of creation by God, endowed with certain basic and fundamental rights. These rights are not bestowed by any worldly authority but are given by God alone and are inseparable from the existence of the human being. They are necessary for the person to live a fully human life in this world and to fulfil his/her destiny in the life hereafter (SACBC: Justice and Peace in Southern Africa, September 1988: 3).

Women have not been given the treatment that befits them as human beings. In short, they have been denied some of their rights as human beings, both in Church and society (cf. 1.1.1). Within the context of the early church:

Long-standing cultural customs of male domination, however, seemed to stifle the call to equality, and in the Pastoral Epistles we note a movement away from shared leadership toward leadership based on age, sex and social status (see 1 Tim. 5). In the Apocryphal books and other works written about the same time as the Epistles, we discover a trend toward male control of the Church, with women being allowed only to teach one another, give hospitality, and nurture other women and children (Umtata Women's Theology Bible Study Series, Book 3: 29).

Longenecker notes in this regard:

Though it is unpleasant to confess, it must in all honesty be said that there exists among Christians today an attitude toward women which is for the most part, a put-down. It is an attitude expressed directly in words, indirectly through tonal inflections, and by a variety of practices. It is particularly evident in the roles assigned to women in society. Often Paul is blamed for this put-down. But while Paul did not resolve the question of male-female relations, he went a good deal further in proposing a solution than we usually recognize (Longenecker 1984: 92).

A number of churches are steering away from this traditional tendency and practice. They are opening opportunities for women in their leadership, especially in their 'presbuterion' that were not opened before. They are doing this because, firstly, there are no valid theological or practical reasons to prevent women from exercising these ministries in their particular churches and, secondly, women are demanding that these rights to be accorded them. It is the Roman Catholic Church which, notably, has not yet allowed women into their 'presbuterion' or even into the diaconate. In my view, there is no valid theological reason that prevents woman's ordination to priesthood. The reasons that are put forward in denying women

ordination are, firstly, that it is the tradition of the Church. In the history of the Catholic Church there has never been a woman Priest. The *Magisterium* (teaching office of the Church) argues that because Christ himself did not choose any of his staunch woman followers as his apostles, and the Holy Spirit has not moved the Church in her 2000 year history into ordaining women, therefore, it would be a questionable decision for them to allow it now. Surely the Holy Spirit cannot be tied down by time or history or tradition. He can still lead the Church to right decisions if she allows him to.

The second reason for denying ordination to women is to safeguard the sacramental seal (cf. Canon Law: Canons 983, 984, 1388). It is claimed that women, by nature, are weak in keeping secrets or confidentialities. Surely not all women fail in this area, in the same way that not all men can keep secrets. An arrangement, different from the present one, could be provided to screen the candidates to the priesthood if women were amongst them.

On the side of culture, especially Zulu culture, women have been made to completely depend on their husbands. This has even had psychological effects on educated Zulu women. They cannot get over the notion that they must bear children, raise them, maintain the house, cook and do laundry. In the meantime their husbands are engaged in reading newspapers, watching television, attending political meetings, enjoying themselves in bars or beer halls and having extra-marital affairs. In my opinion this is unfair and is doing injustice to oneself and to one's partner. Life is a shared experience in all respects, even at home.

One may ask: "How is the empowerment of women in all respects, both in Church and culture, able to assist in the alleviation of the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations?" This is possible because, first of all if women are empowered, men will concern themselves with matters of the family as a priority,

together with their wives as **equals**. They will respect their wives and thus not disregard and disrespect them by having sexual relations with other women. One is prompted to treat one's partner with respect if one regards one's partner as an equal. This will, in turn, encourage women to respect their husbands as well and refrain from unbecoming 'revenge' sexual behaviour.

Secondly, this is possible because through the woman's empowerment, the couple together will devise ways and means to teach their children, boys and girls, about their sexuality. This task will belong to them jointly and neither partner will be excused from it on the grounds of being male or female, superior or inferior. These instructions will point out explicitly the dangers and implications of premarital sexual intercourse and pregnancy to the young people.

Thirdly, it is possible to help solve sexual problems through women's empowerment because the family in which the partners respect each other as equals can more easily achieve unity and togetherness. This unity will not be based on subjugation of the other partner but on mutual endeavours to achieve it. This unity will serve as an example and an ideal life-style to other couples thus curbing extra-marital and premarital sexual relations.

I have to mention, however, that some men are not emotionally and psychologically ready to accept women's empowerment with the result that many husbands and fathers fail to take full moral responsibility for their family obligations. Many are physically or emotionally 'absent' from their families, and may also feel threatened by the notion of the empowerment of women. Thus, some form of 'male empowerment' is also necessary so that men will learn to use their authority and power wisely and for the benefit of their marriages and families.

Many black men in South Africa have been severely damaged psychologically by Apartheid. Those who have grown up without fathers or with a negative example of fatherhood will find it difficult to be good fathers or husbands. Thus the healing and transformation of the male psyche is as important as the liberation and empowerment of women.

It is important to note that "everyone, whether male or female, who is Christ's disciple and who walks according to the Spirit is the child and heir of God (Umtata Women's Theology Bible Study Series, Book 1: 36).

I would like to conclude this sub-section with the words of Pope Paul VI in this regard:

In many countries a charter for women which would put an end to an actual discrimination and would establish relationships of equality in rights and of respect for their dignity is the object of study and at times of lively demands. We do not have in mind that false equality which would deny the distinction laid down by the Creator Himself and which would be in contradiction with woman's proper role [as fully human], which is of such capital importance, at the heart of the family as well as within the society. Developments in legislation should on the contrary be directed to protecting her proper vocation [as a human being] and at the same time recognizing her independence as a person, and her equal rights to participate in cultural, economic, social and political life (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 640).

4.3 INCULTURATION

I have indicated in Chapter Two that premarital and extra-marital sexual relations were not common in traditional Zulu practice because of the way people lived. The togetherness of the people strengthened each other, especially in difficult times and in sexual temptations. The customary regulations were meant to unite the tribe thus protecting it from external and internal pressures and foes.

Inculturation is an attempt to bring together two or more cultures that are different. The values of each culture are taken and merged into one new practice or custom. The Western culture, including some Christian forms within it, has failed in South Africa, particularly in Natal, to lead the people to modesty and continence. The upsurge of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations has been promoted in the name of 'civilization', modernism and the twentieth century, that is, in the name of Western culture. People have been encouraged or compelled by this Western culture to abandon their own culture with its values. Even in the area of sexuality, those who still hold onto the traditional Zulu practices are regarded as conservative, not moving with the stream and not 'civilized'.

Actually, it is impossible and absurd in the midst of all the new inventions, innovations, science and technology, to go back to the old ways of living. That would be stifling progress. What is meant by inculturation is, therefore, going back to the old traditions to seek and utilize the values that can be of use today when put together with the values that Western culture has brought to us. What should be borne in mind is that not all supposed values in Western culture are of value for African culture, and *vice versa*. What does this mean? It means that qualified and well versed people in both African customs and Western culture should come together and look into the matter of inculturation. A person who is not an expert in either of the traditions would have problems in attempting to reconcile and put together values that are compatible from both traditions.

Both traditions have common values that can be exploited in trying to alleviate the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. I am thinking here of items such as sex education for teenagers, premarital and post-marital instruction, reciprocal respect in the family and the permanence of marriage. Elements of traditional Zulu moral practices, such as the closeness of the family members, the publicity of love affairs, the involvement of the members of the two families in the

love affairs of their young people, careful and monitored premarital sexual relations, are indispensable in this suggested inculturation.

I strongly believe that the use of these traditions in inculturation can have positive results in alleviating the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations.

4.4 A POSITIVE PASTORAL ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS SEXUALITY

A positive pastoral attitude of the Church is imperative in sexual matters. The Catholic Church adopted a very negative attitude towards sexuality from the fourth century onwards which has resulted in sexuality being regarded as taboo. There have been two reactions to this attitude. Firstly, sexuality was shunned because it was seen as a wild animal ready to devour people or throw them into hell. Secondly, people went out of their way to indulge their sexuality as an enjoyable part of life in defiance of the Church's standards. These are the two extreme reactions which do not solve the problem created by the Church's negative attitude to sex. I see the solution as lying between these two extremes in which the Church adopts a positive pastoral attitude towards sexuality. This middle position should be a prudent, ethical, mature, sound and caring attitude.

In the changing attitude of the Church, personalism, which is a more integrated stance in sexuality, should be discernible. This stance involves two approaches to human sexuality: the intrapersonal (sexuality as found in the individual) and the interpersonal (sexuality as expressed between individuals). In this stance 'person' is defined as an *ens amans*, that is a loving being, and the emphasis is put on the model relationship of the 'I - Thou'. In this perspective a holistic and realistic view is taken of a person as a sexual being. A person is seen as the being at the centre of creation; it is he/she who under God gives meaning and value to all in the world.

The human person is of supreme value. A person, as a person, is conscious of himself/herself as a unique original subject who is open to other similar subjects. Human existence is essentially a co-existence and this encounter takes place through human bodies or incarnate spirits. All of this happens in a time-space sequence with people living within history. Theologically, this involves viewing people as having an eternal destiny with a calling to be loving images of God in all their relationships.

In the contemporary teaching of the Church about sexuality, this stance should be highlighted and it would be a sign that the Church has moved away from her negative attitude towards sexuality. She has already done so with regard to marriage as is shown by the Second Vatican Council where marriage is seen, firstly, as "the partnership of life and love" (Flannery 1981: 950). This is a movement away from the traditional teaching of seeing marriage, firstly, as "the begetting of children and their education" (Neuner and Dupuis 1983: 527). She can do the same with the whole of sexuality and see it as a normal way of life (which God endorses) which, nonetheless, should be lived under the guiding hand of God. The Church, as the mouth of God, should point out those areas that should be avoided because they contradict the express will of God in sexual matters. In doing this she should remember that people are weak and fallible.

Bearing this in mind she should be sympathetic (not compromising) in her teaching and attitude. She should portray the Jesus who forgives each and every person who comes to him for forgiveness. Jesus is the only person who understands our weaknesses, hence he is ready to forgive, heal and transform our lives.

4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The rate of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations has risen in the communities of modern Zulus. This has had some undesirable results. What can be done to alleviate this problem? I suggest a few possible solutions.

Firstly, the political and socio-economic structures of our country need to be restructured and changed where necessary. Ways of achieving this include: making available employment opportunities and restructuring the migrant labour system, education, housing and the promotion of the unity and togetherness of the family. Who should effect these changes? This issue affects the whole society, therefore the whole society should be involved, including the national and local governments, the Church, the non-governmental organizations and the relevant communities. This change can be effected through appropriate legislation, welfare structures, conscientizing people (through workshops and seminars), local and international investments, and job creation.

Secondly, the empowerment of women is necessary if we hope to alleviate the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. All people should be regarded and treated as equal human beings in the eyes of God and in their standing in the world. This should begin in the Church's structures, the government structures and the community structures. Then the family should instil this equality in the home and pass it on to the children and grandchildren.

Thirdly, inculturation is also imperative. What is meant by inculturation, in this context, is the taking of certain values from the Western culture and merging them with certain values of the traditional Zulu culture. I am thinking here of sex education for the teenagers, premarital and post-marital instruction, reciprocal respect in the family, the permanence of marriage, closeness of the family

members, the publicity of love affairs, involvement of the members of the two families in love affairs of their young people, and carefully monitored love relations. Who should do this merging? I suggest that only the people who are qualified and well versed in both African customs and Western culture should come together and look into the matter of inculturation. This is not elitist in the sense that 'well versed people' could be ordinary people who never went to school but know and practice their culture, probably through tradition.

Fourthly, a positive pastoral attitude of the Church is imperative in sexual matters. In the changing attitude of the Church, personalism, which is a more integrated stance in sexuality, should be discernable. The Church should understand the weakness and fallibility of the members and therefore, be sympathetic in her attitude. This does not mean compromising the Gospel of Christ. It means that it should portray the merciful and forgiving Christ.

CONCLUSION

In Chapter One of this dissertation it was argued that there is undoubtedly a rise in premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst some modern Zulus. This rise is a result of a multiplicity of factors influencing people in their sexual and marital lives, the most notable factor being the breakdown of traditional Zulu practices in sexual matters and relations. There are other causes of this rise such as: the perpetual childhood of women in society, especially in Zulu culture; the political and socio-economic setting in South Africa; science and technology; the instability of some marriages and the unsatisfactory state of many marriages and the negative attitude of the Church, in particular the Catholic Church, towards sexuality.

Premarital and extra-marital sexual relations have undesirable consequences for the individuals who engage in them and for society as a whole. These results include teenage pregnancies, overpopulation (which threatens the economic and natural resources of our country), sexually transmitted diseases and marital breakdowns. Also, because of this rise, people lose interest in marriage, hence marital life loses its popularity and permanence.

Chapter Two argued that the traditional Zulu practices and taboos concerning the premarital and extra-marital sexual relations disciplined young men and women in these relations. Every act was public, beginning from the time of proposal. Even sexual intimacy (which was not coital but ephemeral or intercrural) was public in the sense that some people such as the elder sisters and brothers would know when the intimacy was about to take place. Publicity curbed the 'sleeping around' of the boys and girls. Virginity was highly valued in the traditional Zulu sexual practice. This was the pride of each and every girl, and to lose it was to lose self-esteem.

Extra-marital sexual intercourse in a socially unacceptable form was not prevalent in traditional Zulu culture, although in certain circumstances it was commonly practiced by men, for example, in the levirate system. Extra-marital sexual intercourse was not prevalent because, firstly, it was a scandal that was to be avoided at all costs; and the premarriage training of a woman explicitly shunned this practice. Secondly, the close relationship that the members of the family had, made it very difficult for married women to engage in extra-marital relationships. Thirdly, the long distances between various kraals made the practice difficult. Fourthly, the severe punishment for the offenders frightened people away from the practice.

The traditional teaching about moral behaviour in premarital and post-marital relations broke down because of the change in the life-style of the people which was brought about by Western culture, Christianity and political and socio-economic changes in South Africa.

In Chapter Three it was argued that marriage is sacred because it has its origin in God. The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament of God in that it is a sign that makes a reality present. In the words of Kasper, marriage is "a form by means of which God's eternal love and faithfulness, revealed in Jesus Christ, are made historically present" (1989: 30). Because marriage is sacred, an institution of God and a sacrament, therefore, premarital and extra-marital sexual relations are incompatible with it as these directly and viciously violate its integrity.

In Chapter Four the solutions to the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations were discussed. I suggested four possible solutions.

(1) *Change the political and socio-economic structures of our country.* Four issues under this point were expressly discussed. Firstly, it was suggested that it is important to make available opportunities of employment for everyone and at the same time restructure the system of migrant labour. It was argued in 1.1.2 that some people were denied opportunities of employment. Consequently, many people became unemployed. Because there was no work for them they were idle at home most of the time. Unbecoming activities such as robbery, sexual promiscuity and alcohol abuse were difficult to avoid. It was also argued that the migrant labour system is one of the causes of sexual promiscuity. This system has turned some men into polygamists. It is against this background that I suggest the provision of employment opportunities and the restructuring of migrant labour system as one of the possible solutions to the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations.

Secondly, it was suggested that education is the most effective tool in alleviating sexual promiscuity. I am referring here to both normal school education and to sex education. It was also argued in 1.1.2 that the majority of the people were denied the opportunity of education. This led to seeing many of our youth roaming the streets and engaged in criminal activities, including rape and other immoral acts. With respect to sex education, it is important that our children should be exposed to such education at a young age. This was the case with the traditional Zulu practices. Many people were involved in this education and we can still involve many people in such education including, parents, teachers, the Church, the community and the government. The same people can also help with post-marital instruction. I am convinced that with such education the rate of sexual promiscuity would decrease.

Thirdly, it was suggested that proper housing is important. Squatter camps and other inhuman settlements sometimes increase the rate of sexual promiscuity (cf. 1.1.2). Proper housing accords people their dignity and can therefore, help in alleviating sexual promiscuity.

Fourthly, the importance of the unity of the family members was discussed. The moral support of other members is important, but it is very difficult to get such support if there is no unity amongst the members of the family. It was argued in 2.1.2 that one of the main factors that discouraged extra-marital sexual relations in the Zulu traditional practice was the close relationship and the close physical proximity that the members of the family had. This can still help today. The Church can encourage this in her mission by, for example, making family Sundays more appealing to the community, especially the youth.

- (2) I also indicated that *the empowerment of women* in society and Church is imperative if we hope to alleviate the problem of premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. This should begin in the Church's structures, government structures and society's structures. The married couple in the family should also be the example of this empowerment to other couples and to their own children and grand-children.
- (3) *Inculturation* is the third possible solution to premarital and extra-marital sexual relations that I proposed in Chapter Four. I have in mind two cultures that we can attempt to merge in KwaZulu-Natal. That is the Western culture and the traditional Zulu culture. There are values in both cultures that are important for society at large in the area of sexuality, such as sex education for the teenagers, premarital and post-marital instruction, reciprocal respect in the family, the permanence of marriage,

closeness of the family members, the publicity of love affairs, the involvement of the members of the two families in the love affairs of their young people and carefully monitored premarital love relations. People who are qualified and well versed in both cultures can successfully do this job.

- (4) It was suggested that the *positive pastoral attitude of the Church* is significant in sexual matters. Personalism, which is a more integrated stance in sexuality, should be discernible in the changing attitude of the Church. The Church should understand that people are weak and fallible. In understanding this truth she should be sympathetic, but not compromising, in her attitude. This means that she should portray the merciful and forgiving Christ as well as the moral norm of the sanctity of marriage.

Different people might suggest different solutions. After having explained the causes and results of this problem, the traditional Zulu practices, and the Christian teaching in these matters, I am convinced that the solutions I have suggested can have a notable impact in solving this problem.

These changes can be effected through appropriate legislation, welfare structures, conscientizing people (through workshops and seminars), local and international investments and job creation. The corporate efforts of the Church, the community, the government, the school, the family, the youth, and other interested parties, can have positive results in terms of reducing premarital and extra-marital sexual relations amongst modern Zulus. In this way the individual, family and social morality of the Zulu people can be advanced under the auspices of the Church.

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