THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AS FAMILY: IMPLEMENTING THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD (1994) IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MASVINGO

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I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to all members of the Catholic Church in Masvingo Diocese who are working to promote the ideal of the mission of the Church as family as well as to the academic discipline of Missiology.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the mission of the 'Church as family' and to explore its implications in terms of levels of inclusion and participation of church members in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo. The background of the study is the 1994 African Synod that suggests the ecclesiology of the mission of the 'Church as family.' The study helps the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo to evaluate the implementation of the ideal of the mission of the 'Church as family' and draw implications for nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended families within the church. The study explores Shorter's culture model to examine how cultural practices, symbols, values and belief systems can be used as an analytic framework for the human dimension of the church. A qualitative research methodology that involves 36 participants in semi-structured interviews, three focus group discussions in urban, semi-urban and rural parishes and participant observation was used to collect data from parishioners, priests and religious of the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo. The study reveals that each family type contributes to Evangelisation as proclamation of the Good News and inculturation differently thereby enriching the ideal of the mission of the 'Church as family.' Furthermore, the study shows that guilds, associations and commissions help to strengthen families through spiritual, psychological, social and economic support. Findings also indicate that the Trinity is the theological foundation of the family and it finds acceptance in African communal setup. Family types in Masvingo Diocese are analysed using the notion of the Trinity to show that dignity, equality and respect among family types can be used to strengthen the ideal of the mission of the 'Church as family.' At pastoral level, economic, social and cultural obstacles to family ministry stand as a challenge to the full implementation and realisation of the ideal of the mission of the 'Church as family'. In the light of the research, recommendations for mission strategies were suggested at different levels that involve Diocesan administration, priests, religious, catechists and parish leaders. Recommendations for further researches were also suggested for areas that seem to be important yet outside the scope of this study. The theological, pastoral, and cultural issues raised in this study combine to help the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo to become an authentic expression of the mission of the 'Church as family' of God.

Keywords: Mission; Church as Family; Ecclesiology; African Synod (1994); Catholic Diocese of Masvingo; culture; family types; evangelisation; Trinity; family ministry.

LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

AM	*Africae Munus*
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CLC	Christian Living Community
COMITHEO	Theological Commission
CYA	Catholic Youth Association
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EA	*Ecclesia in Africa*
EAAT	Ecumenical Association of African Theologians
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
EMA	Environmental Management Agency
EN	*Evangelii Nuntiandi*
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV and AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
GS	*Gaudium et Spes*
LM	*Lumen Gentium*
NADC	National Association of Diocesan Clergy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMCS	National Movement of Catholic Students
RM	*Redemptoris Missio*
SAC	*Société Africaine de Culture*
SCC	Small Christian Community
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
SOCCOM	Social Communications
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
YCS	Young Christian Students
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference

LIST OF TRANSLATIONS OF SHONA EXPRESSIONS

Shona	**English**
Baba	father
Bira	all-night ritual
Chema	tokens of condolences
Chisi	weekly day of rest
Chivi	sin
Damarakanaka	Good News
Kuchaya mapoto	co-habiting
Kugara nhaka	wife inheritance
kupereka	handing over the bride
Kuripa	appeasement fee
Kuripiswa ngozi	appeasing avenging spirits
Kuroodzwa	forced child marriage
Kurova guva	coming home ceremony
Kurova makuva	coming home ceremonies
Magadziro	cleansing ceremony
Mahakurimwi	days of mourning which prohibit agricultural activities
Mahumbwe	child game involving imitation of parental roles
Marwei	what have you fought for?
Masvikiro	spirit mediums
Mbanje	marijuana
Mbuya	grandmother
Mhondoro	clan spirit mediums
Mishonga	medicines
Muchaneta	you will get tired

Mukwerera	rain making ceremony
Munamato	prayer
Musha mukadzi	a woman gives value to a home
Mwari	God
Mweni haapedzi dura	a visitor does not finish the granary
N'anga	traditional healer
Ndakaitei	what wrong have I done
Nhamoinesu	poverty is among us
Nhimbe	working together as a community
Nyasha	blessings
Roora / lobola	bride price
Rudo ibofu	love is blind
Sekuru	grandfather / uncle
Svikiro	spirit medium
Tadiwanashe	God loves us
Tatenda	we thank you
Tichaona	we shall see
Tinashe	God is with us
Tinozivaishe	we know God
Ukama	relationships
Vadzimu	ancestors
Vatete	aunt

Latin expressions

Latin	**English**
Ad extra	To the outside
Ad intra	To the inside
Et al	and others

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops met in Rome and deliberated on the central theme of Evangelization from April 10 to May 8, 1994 (EA 63)[1]. In its deliberations, the Special Assembly took its guiding ideal for the Evangelization of Africa from the theme: "Church as God's Family." The Post Synodal Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa,* articulated the position of the Synodal Fathers on the Church as God's family, acknowledging it as an image of the Church that was appropriate for Africa and expressed the desire that it be explored (EA 62).

The aim of this thesis is to develop the mission of the Church as family in relationship to the ever changing African understanding of the family. I intend to examine both the strengths and limitations of "Church as family" in our present day Africa and ascertain its suitability (or otherwise) as a blueprint for evangelisation. In the light of the myriad problems facing families today, this thesis explores the vision of the African Synod that humanity should be an intimate community of life and love, living as the image of the God who is love. Accordingly every human family has the "mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride" (*Familiaris Consortio* (1981 no. 17). The Church is the family of God sharing life in love.

This family of God exists to be an evangelizing community: "She proclaims the word received from God and witnesses to its truth by lives of faith, hope and love even to the point of martyrdom" (EA 55). Further justifying the mission of the Church as family, *Lumen Gentium* no.6 states that the Church is the house of God (1 Tim 3:15)[2] in which dwells his

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[1] *Ecclesia in Africa* is the official document on the deliberations of the 1994 African Synod and the implementation of its resolutions. It emphasises the evangelization of the Church as God's family and proposes this as the image of the Church most appropriate for Africa.

[2] *Lumen Gentium* is a Vatican II document on the Church and the evangelization of peoples, which stresses that every member has the responsibility for missionary work. In the Old Testament the revelation of the Kingdom is often made under the forms of symbol. In similar fashion the inner nature of the Church is now made known to us in various images. These can be defined as the dwelling place of God among men (Apoc.21:3); and, especially, the holy temple. This temple symbolized in places of worship built out of stone, is praised by the

family. This means the church should be seen in its totality according to what is common to all Christians. In *Familiaris Consortio* (1981 no.15), John Paul II describes the family as a domestic Church, which emphasizes intimate sharing and concern.[3] In *Christifideles Laici* (1988 no.62), the family ideal is implicitly expressed. It is in *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993), the working document prior to the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops that the family of God is given special attention. The family is the hope in which humanity legitimately places all trust and livelihood.[4] It is in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) that I find the recent magisterial document which speaks specifically on the Church as the family of God. John Paul II also points out that, this ideal of the Church as family emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, and dialogue and trust (EA 15). Msafiri (2002) concurs with John Paul ll (1995) that these values also reflect the traditional African concept of the extended family which complies with the missionary dimension that is permeated with the universal love of Christ. The emphasis on community living resonates well with the traditional African families.

Considering the strengths of the church as family, Msafiri (2002:17) states that the Church as family has the following positive elements: it is theocentric and Trinitarian because it highlights the tripartite relationship and intercommunication between three Persons of the Blessed Trinity which resonate in interpersonal ties and relationships enjoyed in the families in Africa.[5] It is Eucharistic or communitarian in that Christ founded and empowered a

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Fathers and, not without reason, is compared in the Liturgy to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem (cf. the hymn *Urbs Jerusalem beata* in the monastic breviary and the hymn *Coelestis Urbs Jerusalem* in the Roman Breviary.

[3] In 1981, Pope John Paul II wrote *Familiaris Consortio* which can be considered a Catholic manifesto on the family. The same Pope established an international conference every three years on the family. The Christian family is the Church, what Vatican II called "the domestic Church." And parents have a role which John Paul II, echoing Thomas Aquinas, says is similar to the role of a pastor of a parish. The family must participate in the sacramental, social, and apostolic life of the parish, but faith, prayer, catechesis, charity and evangelization must all take place first and foremost in the context of the home.

[4] *Instrumentum Laboris* was the preparatory document for the African Synod. It emphasises that the family is the hope in which humanity legitimately places all trust and livelihood. A Christian home should be an oasis of refreshment for guests who are weary of the increasing fragmentation and radical individualism of modern culture. People who love God and love one another, who share meals together and actually listen and speak to one another, and do so joyfully is an attractive signpost pointing to Christ and his Church.

[5] When the SECAM Bishops addressed the horrific situation of war, violence and massacre in the Great Lakes region they chose to use this imagery as a conscious application of the Synodal discussions. "Let us all remember that in Jesus Christ we have become children of a family which embraces everybody, slave as well as freeman, African and non-African, friend as well as enemy. The weapon he has given us to fight evil, to which there can be no defense, is Love. And that love is invincible"Archbishop Gabriel Gonsum Ganaka of Jos, Nigeria, President of SECAM, Message of the SECAM Bishops to the Churches of the Nigerian Nation.

perpetual Eucharistic community of blood, life and love. It is Christological and Sacramental in that it articulates Christ as the head of the Church and the Church as the visible expression of Christ's grace and redemption.

Finally, the centrality of the mission of the Church is the mission of Jesus Christ. The ideal of Church as family transcends ethnic ties and particular concerns such as blood relations and kinship. Instead, the vision of Church as family encourages dialogue and reconciliation among different ethnic groups by seeking unity in Christ. Furthermore, the ideal entails sharing spiritual and material resources among particular churches (EA 63). It seeks to promote evangelisation for the people of God.

Evangelisation means bringing the good news of Jesus everywhere, how he lived, died and rose again for the love of humanity, how he teaches humanity a new way to love and to live in peace, justice and reconciliation. The Synod Fathers insisted that "evangelization essentially consists in bearing witness to Christ in the power of the Spirit by one's life, then by one's words in a Spirit of openness and respectful dialogue with others while holding fast to the values of the Gospel" (AM 163). This is what is referred to as new evangelization. The new evangelization therefore calls all Christians to participate in the task of evangelisation. This new evangelization based on family experience and effort results in the transforming encounter with the living person of Christ which is "an overwhelming and exciting experience of Jesus Christ" (EA 57). When I consider the deliberations of the African Synod then my choice is not accidental. It is rather a reflection that sees the family here in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo as the basis on which to build a strong Church community.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

The motivation for this research derives from the fact that the Church in Africa has reached the stage of self-evangelization. In the same vein, Ryan (1993:3) notes that, for Christianity, "Africa is the fastest growing region." With over a century of growth in faith, the Church in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, has before her the challenge to continue on her way, consistently proclaiming Christ. According to Dachs and Rea (1979:13), "Catholicism first came to Zimbabwe over four hundred years ago when the fervent tide of the Counter Reformation flowed along the East African coast, came up to Zambezi, and just touched the

north-eastern corner of the present Zimbabwe." After the missionaries were forced out of the Zimbabwean plateau around 1693, it was not until 1879 that the Catholic missionaries made a re-entry into the country (:15). From then on, Catholicism grew considerably throughout the length and breadth of Zimbabwe.

The major element that facilitated this growth was that around 1904 the missionaries fostered the aspect of communality as they gathered the local Christians into Christian villages. According to Loubiere (1904:369), the Jesuits were the advocates of this system of separating newly converted Christians and it worked as it moulded people into staunch Christians. This saw the local Christians being kept on mission land, settled there, employed there and married to fellow Christians and sending their children to mission schools (Dachs and Rea 1979:6). Currently in Zimbabwe, remnants of early Christian villages are found at some mission stations such as Chishawasha, Kutama, Driefontein, Gokomere, Hama and Triashill (Zvobgo 1996:14). However, the practice of Christian villages slowly began to disappear in the 1920s due to urbanisation, modernity and the establishment of new stations by missionaries. This necessitates the formation of small Christian communities in the local church.

The formation of Christian communities was strongly supported by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, as indicated in its catechetical report of 1976:

> The major pastoral policy of the local Church in Rhodesia is to make her *self-ministering*, *self-supporting* and *self-propagating*. In order to attain that goal one of the first pastoral targets is the building of *basic Christian Communities*. The community spirit, nourished by the word of God and the holy Eucharist should be the chief characteristics of *basic Christian community*. In consequence they are planned as: communities of prayers, communities of faith, communities of services and communities of dialogue and consultation in all matters affecting the Church in the area (Dachs and Rea1 979:1).

It is against this background that I am also motivated to explore and evaluate how the Catholic Church in Masvingo has implemented the ecclesiogical vision and ideal of the Church as family. In this context I find it appropriate to assess how the Church in Masvingo has inculcated solidarity, for example managing to care for others, establishing human relationships, opening itself to others and accepting each other, succeeding in promoting reconciliation, communion and community as underscored by the African Synod. This thesis

explores and does not merely confirm the ideal and bonds of family in our society and in the Church.

The idea of family in the African perspective evokes concrete associations in relation to blood relationships, community, ancestral cults, the relationship of the living and the dead. The adoption of the ideal of the church as family is assumed by the centrality of family in the African thought and life style. Cardinal Thiandoum (1994) emphasised that "This ideal, so often evoked in the responses to the *lineamenta,* has deep roots in our African culture. It also expresses the profound Christian and African values of communion, fraternity, solidarity and peace: For in a truly African family, joys, difficulties and trials are shared in a trusting dialogue." The Synod Fathers had the image of the traditional African family structure at the back of their mind when they made this proclamation of the Church as family. To overcome contemporary social challenges, the African family must reconstruct important elements and values contained in indigenous culture such as love and responsibility (AFJN 1996:46). Thus how the African Synod adopted the ideal of the Church as family of God in Africa. The declaration of the Church as the family of God is the most significant contribution of the Synod.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTION

Zimbabwe has its own story to tell regarding the implementation of the Church as family of God in its own context. I, therefore, want to contribute to Post African Synod research, by focusing on the mission of the Church as family of God, evaluating the ways in which the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo in Zimbabwe has implemented this ideal and at the same time highlighting the impediments which constantly hinder her from achieving that goal. I hope that this research is not only an instrument for further developments in the Church in Zimbabwe, but can be used as an image and instrument of analysis for analogous situations in other parts of the world.

The research question also fulfils the wish of John Paul II's call upon "theologians in Africa to work out the theology of the Church as family with its riches contained in this concept" (EA 21). In addition Oborji (2006:2) reiterates that "the image of the Church as family is a concept which Africans can easily appreciate and identify with because of its African value of the extended family, bound together by ancestral blood and community life." This means that the communitarian accentuation of the family makes this ideal a real African reading of the Vatican II concept of the church as communion or as the people of God. However, the

image of the Church as people of God espoused by Vatican II emphasized the universal dimension of the Christian community but did not explicitly address the cultural and ethnic challenges that the local Church is experiencing. That gap was filled by the African Synod deliberations.

Given the above background, I seek to answer one important question: How has the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo in Zimbabwe implemented the mission of the Church as family of God as formulated by the African Synod (1994).

1.3.1 Research sub-questions

In order to address the above research question I have formulated the following sub-questions. These particular questions reflect the issues that pertain to the mission of the Church as family and its implementation.

1. What is the mission of the Church as family in the teaching of the African Synod?

2. What are the values, customs and practices that are inherent to the families in Masvingo Diocese?

3. What evidence is there that the mission of the church as family is being realised in The Catholic diocese of Masvingo?

4. What are theological reflections that can be drawn from the understanding of the mission of the church as family?

5. What ministry structures has the Catholic diocese of Masvingo put in place to implement the mission of the church as family?

As I indicate in 1.10, each of these sub-questions generates a chapter in the overall structure of the thesis.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the close of the Synod of 1994, a lot of literature has been written about the Church as family of God, some of which have hinted at the challenges that surround this ideal. It can be suggested that such literature has enormously widened the cognitive perspective regarding the Church as family, but is still far from being exhaustive. In this section, I reviewed some of the relevant literature on this ecclesiological motif of the Church as family. Firstly, I examined church documents, such as Papal Encyclicals, exhortations and literature on

Church history from the 1994 African Synod to date. Secondly, I reviewed literature that focuses on culture and cultural models and determine the extent to which they contribute to the study. Thirdly, I critically analysed the literature on family and how it relates to family types in Masvingo Diocese.

1.4.1 Review of Church documents

The study begins by an analysis of *Lineamenta* (1990) *and Instrumentum Laboris* (1993) documents that were used to prepare for the 1994 African Synod. *Lineamenta* outlined the topic of evangelisation in the African context by surveying the Catholic Church in Africa from the early century up to 1990. The document outlined the missionary tasks which are: proclamation of the good news; inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communication. *Instrumentum Laboris* is a compilation of views gathered from different episcopates in Africa. Both documents contained the five themes that formed the framework of the Synod discussions. The study draws all the themes outlined by both documents as they apply to Masvingo Diocese. While the documents were used to set the framework for preparing and discussing the 1994 African Synod, this study has gone beyond these two documents by focusing on how the themes outlined in the documents can be implemented in Masvingo Diocese.

John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Africa* expresses that the word 'family' expresses the nature and mission of the Church (EA 11). Thus, he declares 'family' as the guiding ideal in the evangelization of Africa. *Ecclesia in Africa* provided a theological foundation of the church as family ideal to the study. The study relates to the themes that are contained in the document. However, the study complemented the document through an analysis of the themes contained in the light of family types in Masvingo Diocese.

Expressing the same sentiments, the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) Pastoral Department gives a good exposition on the deliberations of the African Synod of 1994 as it "emphasizes the need of walking together as God's family bringing elements of bishops, priests, religious, laymen and women, youths and children living a life of unity and love" (AMECEA 1995)[6]. This shows that this vision of the church as

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[6] General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops *Lineamenta* and Questions. The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission Towards the year 2000 "You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:8). First published 1990, by the Vatican *Polyglot* Press, Reproduced as a double issue of African Ecclesial Review *AMECEA Gaba* Publications (February 1991).

family is not only confined to the laity but is a task that includes all people of God. The emphasis of AMECEA is on the unity of the church, equal dignity of all people regardless of all forms of backgrounds and forgiveness and these themes are drawn by the study for application in Masvingo Diocese. Despite the fact that AMECEA is a pastoral association document meant for East Africa, its themes are still relevant to the context of Masvingo Diocese.

1.4.2 Review of Critical Studies on the notion of Church as family

Tracing the notion of the Church as family back to the start of Christian communities in the form of communities, Uzukwu points out that it mirrors "the image of the Trinitarian family" and that "we are the family of God: this is the Good News! The same blood flows in our veins, and it is the blood of Jesus Christ" (1996:47). In the same vein, the Synod Fathers mentioned that the mystery of the love of the Triune God finds suitable expression for Africa in the vision of the Church as family. Unity and dialogue are found in the Trinity. Uzukwu suggests that consulting and listening to be the guiding principles that ensure the realization of the Church a family, which both the Second Vatican Council and African Synod envisaged. Thus, he states, the Church needs to be a 'listening' Church. Uzukwu, However, noticed from the Synod message the tendency to link "the notion of family with spiritual paternity of priests" (1996:89). In the light of this, he says that the notion of the Church as family has to be stripped of all characteristics of patriarchal dominance, which he feels the Synod failed to give sufficient critique. He analysed the African reality and African theology on traditional institutions of Africa especially on the issue of power and authority.

Orobator (2000:24) also gives a conceptual analysis of the Church as family identifying the examining practical options of particular relevance to the Church in Africa. He states that the social context of the African family is important if the Church in Africa is to understand itself as family. In this way, the Church as family embodies a community of solidarity in the service of life. The riches contained in the ideal of the Church as family help us to understand life, solidarity and service. These characteristics enable me to explore ways in which the Church as family of God may challenge the traditional customs and practices that are contrary to gospel values.

1.4.3   Review of Literature on Culture

Gelfand (1965:21) looks at the traditional culture of the Shona speaking people. He describes in detail the traditional family system. Gelfand examines the intensity of the loyalties, obligations and anxieties within the Shona family and argues that these bring cohesion, solidarity and togetherness. He also highlights duties in the Shona traditional family which show that there is a clear division of tasks between males and females. In this study I examined the roles played by each member in the family as well as in the Church in the context of Shorter's culture model. Gelfand's analysis is limited to the Shona but my study also embraces other cultures within the Diocese such as Venda, Shangani and Ndebele.

Bourdillon (1998:23-31) gives a detailed analysis of Shona communities, saying that they are closely knit families. The Shona kinship system is fundamentally patrilineal meaning that kinship through males is emphasized over kinship through females. He gives a good analysis of the Shona traditional society emphasizing kinship, traditional religion and the family. This helps me to expound the limitations of the family system. The Shona occupy the greater part of Masvingo Diocese but other cultural groupings found in the Southern part of the Diocese as mentioned earlier on. The study seeks to overcome the exclusive focus on the Shona by Bourdillon since Masvingo Diocese has diverse cultures that have common beliefs and practices within the Catholic Church.

In addition to that, Bujo (1998:15) states that Sub Saharan Africa is in a process of change, since modern technology has influenced the Africans in a way that has caused a breakdown of traditional values such as solidarity, responsibility and unity. He also highlights the ethical dimension of community, focusing on the dialogue between Christianity and African traditional religion. Bujo's work contributes to the study by emphasising the importance of dialogue as one of the themes in the African Synod. Bujo identifies modern technology as the major cause of breakdown of traditional values yet this study considers other factors such as economic hardships, breakdown of the extended family system and migration to greener pastures.

Furthermore, Bujo and Maya (2006:10) speak on Bantu religion. In this vein they talk of the positive and negative aspects of family solidarity, law of blood community and the issues of inculturation and ancestor veneration. I also consider these values in this study as they are reflected in the African family. My study differs from Bujo and Maya in the sense that

instead of focusing on Bantu religion, my study examines values in the context of Catholic faith.

1.4.4   Review of Literature on Family

Bevans (1992:10) emphasizes how we can understand theology only in terms of a particular context. He stresses that reality is mediated by meaning. He says there are factors that suggest why theology should be contextual, external factors which are historical events, intellectual currents, cultural shifts and political forces. Then there are internal factors: these are forces within Christian faith itself like the incarnational nature of Christianity, the sacramental nature of reality and divine revelation. Even though Bevans wrote before the 1994 Synod, his ideas are useful for this study since he provides a foundation for contextualising theology through historical, cultural, political and social variables. This helps me to analyse the Church as family in the context of Masvingo Diocese using the same variables.

It is evident that there are many different theological views on the Church as family, each having its own thrust, but with areas of convergence. Basically, these theological views concentrate on crafting the ecclesiology of the Church as family. Little is known about the success or failures in the implementation of this vision for the Church. However, these views are strong enough to be a spring-board for this research as I examine the ways in which the Catholic Church in Masvingo has implemented the vision of the Church as family of God.

Okoth (1994:22) argues that the Church as family should emulate the Trinity in all its dimensions. The relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a relationship of reciprocity each one is in the service of the other. He argues that taking the Trinity as the model will help to solve the problems posed by the family as it is applied to the Church. In addition to that, he reflects on African Synod raising issues on challenges of evangelization, inculturation, communication and religious life after the African Synod. Moreover, he values community life by analysing the roles of fatherhood and motherhood in the African family. The study draws the relational aspect from Okoth to analyse family types in Masvingo Diocese. However, beyond Okoth, I concentrate on both the ideal of Church as family and the natural family as it exists in the world of daily experience.

New people media centre (1996:3) also gives an analysis of the Church in Africa, while Magesa (1996:8) reflects on the future of the synod. He stresses that the Church is in the process of becoming more and more the people of God. It is the Church that should transform

society. He makes suggestions that are important to the understanding of family life. To complement Magesa's views I have realised that the transformation of the church should start at family level through a critical analysis of family values as expressed in Chapter 3 (section 3.3).

Kalilombe (1999:101) describes the structure and effectiveness of the Small Christian Communities, basing his description on his pastoral experience in the Catholic Church in Malawi. He starts his argument for the existence of Small Christian Communities that they make the self-supporting Church possible. The Preamble to the Guidelines state that Christian communities in both rural and urban areas can work together to build Church life. There must be a close link between communities and Church life so that the daily existential circumstances of life and work become significant in building inter-personal relationships and communal belonging. The sense of belonging must first and foremost be experienced in the natural social environment. The sense of community as Christ's body can be achieved through collaboration and co-ordination of different communities as parts belonging to a whole (1999:101). If communities are made authentic through social ties, then it will be easier to build a community in the sense of the Church as Christ's body. The study borrows the concept of Small Christian Communities from Kalilombe. However, the context of analysis is Masvingo Diocese.

Onwubiko (2001:36) adds to the challenges derived from the Church as family by highlighting the issue of rapid changes affecting the traditional African family life. The extended family is the foundation of African socialism that is summarised by the philosophy of *ujamaa.* Ujamaa is a multi-faceted indigenous African philosophy consisting of three key dimensions that include a socio-political ideal, a flexible mental attitude and a socio-cultural principle. These three aspects enable African to care for one another in the community. Individuals get recognition through the community. The community provides safety nets to individuals thereby making ujamaa applicable to the community (Onwubiko, 2001:36). Without losing personal identity and rights, individuals participate in the community. The community is therefore ontologically prior to the individual.

Onwubiko (2001:37) discusses one aspect of family life that is the sense of community. In addition to that, he relates this to the philosophy of *Ujamaa* which emphasises solidarity and community life. He views the Church as an extended family. Furthermore, he argues that the

traditional concept of family has limitations when applied to the Church, which should place greater emphasis on wider communion. The family deals with blood relationship. If you are not a member you will be considered a foreigner whereas in Church circles one becomes part of the family by virtue of baptism. The study is grounded in community as it analyses family life related values of solidarity and togetherness. However, the study transcended political, cultural and social threads that hold communities together by placing emphasis on theological ties that bind the Catholics in Masvingo Diocese as one family.

According to Ruwaichi (2002:24), the vision has been implied in past models, for instance, that of Church as communion and people of God. For him, the articulation of models should not be considered as being merely repetitive, but rather a clear indication of an attempt to blend biblical tradition with African culture. On the other hand, he mentions that this symbol is very dear to the African psyche. Ruwaichi finds the ideal fundamental in the sense that it points to three aspects: firstly, Holy Spirit, the basis and source of Church; secondly, Christological character of the Church; lastly, unity in diversity that enhances the Church.

Ruwaichi tabulates the challenge deriving from the Church as family, which he puts into two categories, namely, *mission ad intra* (to the inside) and *mission ad extra* (to the outside). Under *mission ad intra* comes: Catechesis which is a means of interiorizing the faith; inculcating sense of belonging; sanctioning people to action; forming Christian families; empowerment to face up to the challenges of secularism, consumerism, indifference, greed, selfishness; empowerment to cultivate good values; fostering solidarity; promoting the variety of gifts within the Church. The *mission ad extra* contains proclamation of the Gospel to unbelievers; showing compassion to youth, refugees, women, the less privileged and the disoriented; being instruments of peace and unity; fighting the anti-values of modern culture; sensitivity and care for the created order. The study draws from both inward and outward dimensions of family in the cultivation of family values.

Oborji (2005:15) states that the family is fundamental to society but that there are problems in families. They are not perfect; in fact, ethnic factors sometimes cause of African family that emphasizes African concept of life as central to Christianity and the African traditional religion. He goes further to analyse traditional family pattern characteristics. Oborji gives the characteristics of the African family and singles out values which can go above language and ethnic diversities. In this context the focus is on traditional family in Africa. The study uses the nuclear family as the basis of analysis as shown by Oborji. However, the study also

examines other family types to accommodate the realities that cause the breakdown of the nuclear family resulting in other family types that include the single parent, reconstituted and child headed families.

Flynn (2007:13) states that Small Christian Communities are related to the renewal of the Church as expressed in Vatican II. He argues that the Small Christian Communities relationships are liberating and seek to witness the Gospel by transforming the people for community and service. They reflect co-responsibility and empowerment. The renewal of the Church through community transformation is an ongoing exercise that informs this study. However, the contextualisation of community transformation was not done from a general Catholic perspective but specifically in Masvingo Diocese.

Mugambi (2007:7) states that the description of the Church as family of God is not the innovation of the African Synod. For him, it has biblical foundations. He admits that nowhere in the Bible the word "Family" is used, but there are clearly family terms "such as bridegroom and bride (2 Cor 11:2); body of Christ (Eph 1:22-24); house of God (Heb 3:4-6); children of God (Gal 4:4-6); brothers (Acts 1:15) and sisters (Rom 16:1); sharing meals (Acts 2:42-46)." He also points out that the "image of family applied to the Church acquires Christian relevance and validity only when it is seen and used within the context of that mission today" (Mugambi, 2013:7). For him, the Church as family is a universal communion in which humanity fully common to all human beings is the basic and most important element. He sees the difference between family as human institution and Church as family based on solidarity, unity and communion, which are aspects distinctive of Church as family. While Mugambi analyses the Biblical perspective of the concept of family, my focus is on critically analysing the concept of family within African culture.

Tumi (2008:139) stresses the vitality of the family in society. He stresses that the family is a place where individualism is fought, a place which is an authentic community of love. Then he gives an exposition on the situation of the family in Africa, which for him is far from being idealistic. It is composed of threats due to socio- economic pressures. Trading between villages and cities is forcing families to separate. There is a rural exodus. Some family members are separated because of working in other countries. Parents are losing control of their children. Tumi concludes that we need to reconstitute traditional African family values to enable the family to be an effective tool of evangelization. While transcending individualism is the goal of the Church, the need for family values of unity, solidarity and

togetherness was examined by the study. The study differs from Tumi's continental approach by focusing on family values as expressed in Masvingo Diocese.

Edeh has edited works of different theologians, giving a different theological view of the Church as family (2009:321). He reflects on the Church as family being salt of the earth and light of the world. He states that the Church as salt and light can only be at the service to reconciliation, justice and peace. He goes on to stress the need for conflict resolution. The Church as family of God should have a cosmos-communitarian, vision, which is the relationship between humans and the world and humans and the community. The images of the salt and light in the context of evangelisation find their space in family settings. While the images of light and salt are applicable to the church in general as found in Edeh's writings, the study analysed the images as they apply to Masvingo Diocese in particular.

Semakala (2011:18) gives another dimension of problems that beset the family. His orientation is towards healing the families. He highlights that families are beset by problems in living suffering which is attributed to evil spirits, witchcraft, suffering and unhealthy relationships. He says these cause family bondage. Semakala spells out the realities of the African family that involve evil and suffering. The study acknowledges these sufferings and attempts to provide healing through the images of church as family through an analysis of the values of human love, dignity and respect.

Healey (2012:76) highlights the contribution of Small Christian Communities to the pastoral and missionary activities of the Church as family of God in Africa. He argues that Small Christian Communities embody the values of inclusiveness, sharing, unity and solidarity that form the contemporary family of God.[7] He says the first Small Christian Community is the Trinity, the other one is the Holy Family. Our Small Christian Communities imitate the life of the Trinity and Holy Family in their Evangelisation. Evangelisation is centred on sharing. That is what the Small Christian Communities do. Drawing from Healey, the study analyses the values of inclusiveness, sharing, unity and solidarity as they apply to family settings in the Diocese of Masvingo.

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[7] Healey *a fifth Gospel* especially Chapter 4, 98-153, Healey "Basic Christian Communities in Africa (1984) 222-232, Healey "An analysis of References to Small Christian Communities in the *Instrumentum Laboris (Working Paper)* of the 1994 African Synod" (1993) 192-195, Shorter and Waliggo "Our Five year Journey of Small Christian Communities From Dec 1991 to October 1996: the Evolving Sociology of Church As Family In East Africa" (1997) 287-311.

In the same vein Wirba states that "the Church as family is a guiding model of evangelization" (2012). She stands for witness. Wirba takes life evangelization to include women. Women are seeking their identity in evangelization. The African bishops also highlighted the need of constructing the life and work of the Church in Small Christian Communities as a means of localization of the African Church as family of God. Wirba (2012:179) states that the lay faithful participate in the mission of the Church as family through Small Christian Communities. Within these communities, individual members, especially women, participate in Church activities, support each other and share both spiritual and material resources. The sharing allows members to overcome divisions that are brought by ethnicity, racism and individualism (Wirba, 2012:180). The emphasis of women is important for this study because they not only constitute the largest percentage of Catholics in the Diocese of Masvingo but they are also influential in building family structures in the inculcation of value systems.

Igboanyika (2002:45) also makes an important observation on men's involvement in Church. He indicates the crucial need for neighbourhood pastoral care in the Catholic parishes of Zimbabwe and introduces a programme of Small Christian Communities which enhances effective evangelization. While the idea of having Small Christian Communities is already in the pastoral plan of the Diocese, what is lacking is the academic study of Small Christian Communities and the implementation of these small Christian Communities to support this ideal of the church as family.

In addition, each person has some sense of values and there is no society without some value system (Idang 2007: 4). It is in the family where family members learn and practise the culture of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation. The family needs to be protected and defended by parents. Idang's point is that family life is the foundation of values where children are taught to love, care and forgive. These values are significant in this study especially in understanding the family life in Masvingo Diocese.

1.5   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant to the discipline of Missiology by contributing the extent to which evangelisation in Masvingo Diocese draws from the 1994 African Synod theme of the notion of the church as family. While there is existing literature on the 1994 African Synod and Catholic evangelisation in Africa in general, this study examines the post synod theme of

evangelisation. The findings of the study inform scholars and academics within the African missiological context in general and the Zimbabwean context in particular.

On a practical level, the significance of the study lies in its potential contribution to the formulation of pastoral plans in the context of evangelisation. The pastoral plans go a long way in implementing the ideal of the mission of the church as family (section 5.3). Evangelisation involves five aspects of proclamation of the good news of salvation, inculturation, inter-religious dialogue, justice and peace and means of social communications. The findings and recommendations of this research inform the missiological strategies upon which the local Church understood as family of God could both rediscover and nurture itself as a true African Church.

The thrust of the study is to bring out the practical aspects of evangelisation to the discipline of missiology. It also demonstrates how missiology interrelates aspects of God, community and the world showing how evangelisation should ultimately lead to the realisation of the church as family.

1.6   SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study falls into the area of missiology and develops from the theory, history and practice of the discipline. Since Missiology is a discipline that relies on other fields of study for more specific issues, the study draws from Sociology for theoretical and conceptual issues on family and family types. Anthropology also supplies concepts on culture and cultural models. Ethics provides an understanding of norms and values in the context of right and wrong within the study. The study also borrows from Biblical Studies to provide evidence of the application of scripture on issues to do with evangelisation. The scope of the study is therefore missiological yet it blends with ideas and concepts from other fields of study.

The scope of the research is limited to the diocese of Masvingo. I am also aware of the fact that the exhortation was written primarily for the Church in Africa in order to give pastors the same orientation when shepherding the flock. This exhortation is mainly based on the geographical area and does not take into consideration the complexity of African cultures. It should be noted that Africa as a continent has lots of cultural differences, which should not be ignored or taken for granted. Owing to this, I examined the vision of the Church as family with particular reference to the Catholic Church in Masvingo diocese. The diocese is going to serve as reference point for the research, with a particular focus on rural, semi-urban and urban parishes. I focused on the mission of the Church as family as enunciated by the African Synod and its aftermath. This research covered the period between 1994 and 2020. It has taken into consideration the challenges of the vision of the Church as family of God, with particular stress on the evaluation of the Church in regard to its implementation in Masvingo diocese and the recommendations that were made by the African Synod (1994).

While focusing on the implementation of the African Synod in the diocese of Masvingo I did not operate with an ideal vision of "the African family" but with real families as they exist in the diocese. For that reason I consulted sociological research to identify five different family types in the Zimbabwean context, namely nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended families. There are two family types that I have not included, namely polygamous and same-sex families, firstly because they were not addressed by the African Synod or mentioned in *Ecclesia in Africa* and the theological reflection concerning them would have taken me beyond my stated aim of exploring the implementation of the vision of the African Synod. In addition, same-sex relationships are prohibited by law in Zimbabwe and interviewing people involved in such relationships would therefore have been difficult.

Finally, no special emphasis was placed on polygamous families, since they were subsumed under extended families, not because all extended families are polygamous in nature but because all polygamous marriages fall in the category of extended families.

1.7   METATHEORETICAL STANCE

A reflection on the research questions raised indicate that I have to look at the philosophical roots of the research methodology that I am adopting which are ontological, epistemological and teleological. Mouton (2001:22) and Creswell (2003:54) share the same view about these philosophical roots of research. The analysis makes use of these three interdependent dimensions of activity in my research.

The ontological dimension indicates the domains of reality that constitute the research field (Thani and Wessels, 2009: 84). In my case the ontological dimension relates to the area of reality which I consider to be my field or domain of research that is the mission of the church as family. However, this domain has to be considered not from a position of objectivism, which means a reality independent or external to social actors, but from a position of constructivism which means the meanings and social reality are being produced continually by social actors. Human meanings are therefore viewed as "constructed frameworks rather than direct reflections of the real" (Raskin 2008:16). This means that I take a constructivist stance. The experiences are constructed from the perceptions and actions of social actors. In a way mission is in a state of continuous change. It can only be captured through constant interaction and dialogue. The research is carried out within an interpretive community not only in the mind of the scholar but in the community of Masvingo diocese.

Natural science epistemology construes that reality is fixed and truth can be discovered (Bryman 2014:45). In that case the epistemological dimension gives the criteria for reliable or accurate knowledge about the research reality, that is, criteria for good research. In my case I prefer a constructivist epistemology which states that human reality is created by interpretation and dialogical processes through which people are bound and influenced by the context of their lives. These contexts form, maintain and modify meanings (Gordon 2009:39). However, an unqualified constructivism is as one sided and misleading as an unqualified objectivism.

In this research I therefore opt for a qualified form of constructivism in my epistemology, which is often called "critical realism." Critical realism recognizes that new developments

emerge in the process of research and introduces changes that can transform the status quo. Critical realism as an epistemological approach affirms that knowledge is constructed but it avoids relativism (which involves an infinite number of opinions but no truth that is shared between people). Critical realism avoids both objectivism and subjectivism (or relativism), by affirming that reality (also the reality of God) can be known, but never totally or exhaustively (Kritzinger 2017:80-89). It acknowledges the centrality of metaphors in all knowledge and therefore gives room to intuition and imagination in scientific endeavours. Knowledge of reality is therefore inter subjective, which means that all knowledge claims must be submitted to wide critical examination in order to achieve the best understanding (Cohen and Crabtree 2006:3). According to Wright (1992:35), the term "critical" in critical realism therefore does not mean "criticising;" it means "always open to criticism," always in process of negotiation within a community of interpretation. By employing such an epistemology, I would be able to find truth in many discourses within the community of Masvingo diocese. Also through a critical realist epistemology I reflected on my power position as a bishop, in the diocese and on the people who inform my research.

The teleological dimension has to do with the goal of the research. My goals are twofold: academic and strategic. The academic goals of this research is to inform the academic missiological community about the values of the African family, especially of the extended family system which the diocese cherishes, for a missiological understanding of the Church in Africa. I trust that this research contributes to the future of the discipline of Missiology through taking this theoretical approach more seriously.

The strategic goals of my thesis are to help in the integration of family values in church life, which have to do with the prayer life, unity and apostolicity of a Catholic diocese. I hope thereby to promote new strategies for a better implementation of the mission of the church as family.

1.8 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

1.8.1 The cycle of mission praxis

The pastoral cycle has many roots in contemporary practical theology. It is made up of four dimensions or "moments": insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral

planning (Holland and Henriot 1983:7)[8]. The pastoral cycle has also found its impetus in Missiology. In order to heal the rift between theology and life I adopted the cycle of mission praxis of Madge Karecki (1999:14). It consists of five elements: identification, context analysis, theological reflection and strategies for mission and Karecki's inclusion of spirituality as the motivational force is of paramount importance in this research.

Figure 1: Cycle of Mission Praxis
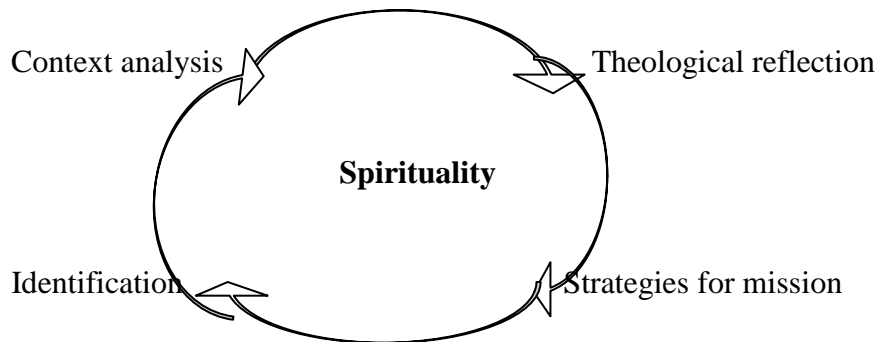
Luzbetak (1988:215) defines identification as "being in communion and in communication with the local community." Identification, in other words is naming the experience. According to Holland and Henriot (1983:8), this first stage is known as insertion in their pastoral cycle. This is an experience of a social issue. In this thesis, the experience is the mission of the church as family. It presupposes active participation in the community's life so that a sense of solidarity is built up among members. This enabled me to see mission as a theological enterprise that is rooted in the Catholic Church in Masvingo rather than something that happens in another place with other people.

Context analysis is the second element in mission praxis. This consists of what has happened in terms of the mission of the church as family in the diocese. It includes what the church feels about the mission; the challenges faced by the church in the mission; what has stimulated and what has disturbed the mission. This is the stage of critical reflection where I begin to relate social, economic, cultural and political issues at work. Context analysis helps to facilitate change of perspectives and action, as espoused by Mezirow (1991:167) who contends that the ability to achieve a more inclusive and integral perspective is made possible

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[8] The four- step process developed by Peter Henriot and Joseph Holland offers a framework for helping people apply their faith to social issues. The process begins with insertion- our experience with an issue/injustice, moves to social analysis and theological reflection on the issue/ injustice, and culminates in action- working for social change and serving those in need (Cf, Joseph Holland and Peter Henriot 1980, Social Analysis- Linking Faith and Justice).

through perspective transformation that allows critical awareness reasons why our assumptions limit our understanding and attitudes about the world.

The third element in mission praxis is theological reflection. At this stage I dialogue with the theological traditions asking critical questions, historical, sociological, economic and political. I have reassessed the relationship between faith and life and how theology supports a deeper form of reflection that either validates faith or challenges it.

In the cycle of mission praxis, analysis and critical reflection lead to the development of strategies for mission, which is the fourth element of the cycle of mission praxis. This is a pastoral response praxis which is purposeful and reflective action initiated through engagement with social situations. It is the process that enabled me to be a "socially responsible, clear thinking decision maker" (Mezirow 2003:8). This helps to identify the needs of the Catholic diocese of Masvingo and the view-points of members of the community. In this the focus is on evaluating the implementation of the mission of the church as family as espoused by the African Synod.

At the centre of the cycle of mission praxis is spirituality. "Spirituality is at the heart of our knowledge: of self, of the world, of others, of God" (Karecki 1999:165). It permeates every stage of the cycle. Kritzinger upholds the importance of spirituality in the pastoral cycle as "the inner heart of the whole enterprise" (2002:168). I agree with Kritzinger that the aspect of spirituality is important in understanding the mission. This shows the importance of the Holy Spirit in mission as espoused by John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* that "the Holy Spirit is the agent of mission"[9] (no.11). On the other hand, through infused grace the authenticity of the mission is guaranteed so that it remains *missio Dei*.

My choice of Karecki's cycle of mission praxis is influenced by the way in which Kritzinger (2002:149) explains that "praxis" is not simply a synonym for practice or action. It refers to action that is collective and transformative, and that integrates thinking and acting, praying and working. I concur with Kritznger (:151) that we need to avoid reductionist short cuts (such as political activism, ivory tower intellectualism, missionary activism, conversionism) if we want to develop a meaningful praxis of mission. The use of a cycle of mission praxis in

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[9] The Holy Spirit, the Principal Agent of Mission, examines the role of the Church's life and its mission. John Paul II's reaffirmation of these basics of Church teaching continually links mission and faith: Mission is an issue of faith. It is only in faith that the Church's mission can be understood and only in faith that it finds its basis (Cf, RM no. 11).

this research provides an effective way of examining the Church as family because I am inserted into a particular context in which the people have an almost common understanding of the family. In this respect, I analysed their situation in relationship to God, thereby giving a theological interpretation of the situation. It becomes easier to plan and answer to the pastoral needs of the people and cultivate a certain spirituality imbued with cultural and religious traits, which in a way helps the people to live their faith and yet are open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who guides the Church in its mission.

1.8.2 Shorter's Culture model

Implementation of the vision of the Church as family requires a deeper understanding of family life. The diocese has the following family types: nuclear, single, reconstituted, child headed and extended. I adopt Shorter's culture model to have that deeper understanding of family types in the diocese. In his book, Toward a Theology of Inculturation (Shorter 1988:35-36), gives an analysis of four levels of culture: phenomenological, domestic technical, values and worldview. These levels of culture helped me to analyse the values, customs and practices that are inherent in different family types in the diocese. This analysis of different family types has also helped me to come up with the strategies of implementing the ideal of the Church as family (section 6.6). In this thesis, I have opted not to use the term "model" for "the Church as family," as found in the documents of the African Synod, even though some Catholic theologians have done so. Wirba (2012), for example, has written that "the Church as family is a guiding model of evangelization." This approach is in line with my commitment to critical realism, it is also important to say that "models" approach acknowledges that one model can never exhaust (or do justice to) the reality of a complex idea or phenomenon like the Church. There is always the danger that unfair and unwise generalisations can be made in constructing types or models. There is also a danger that models can become hardened into fixed and exclusive positions, over against other models, and that an unhealthy power struggle develops between them.

In studying the Synod documents in the Zimbabwean context, I have come to the realisation that "Church as family" is more fundamental than a mere "model" for the life of the African Church. I have therefore preferred to use terms like vision, ideal, and notion for the "Church as family" in the synodal documents.

1.9   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Locating oneself as a researcher, particularly within a critical realist framework, is important. My approach is shaped by my experiences as a Catholic pastor for 43 years. As a Catholic priest, I worked in various parishes in Gweru and Masvingo dioceses, especially in rural areas where family values are strong. Then as a bishop I worked in Gokwe, Gweru and Masvingo particular churches. Also as a bishop I was one of the delegates to the African Synod in 1994. I have drawn a lot of pastoral experiences from these engagements. In addition, my Masters' thesis in Missiology was on challenges of evangelizing the African Christian families in Gokwe diocese in the light of "*Familiaris Consortio*." It was informed by the family systems and values in that area. All these elements have made me acutely aware of the importance of understanding the mission of the church as family and where possible delineate the parameters of its implementation in the local church. It is from this perspective that I engage myself in this research. Furthermore, the proper implementation of this ideal helps to transform the lives of the faithful and make them live according to the principles and values of the gospel as well as cherishing one's own culture.

 In this section, I explain my position in relation to the research naturalistic setting, the participants in the research and the data generation and analysis. This concurs with what Johann Mouton said "Most of our lives are spent in World 1 the ordinary social and physical reality in which we exist" (2001:7). I consider my role in ethnographic research, specifically my position as being an insider to the culture being studied.

The methodology of a research project follows from its ontological, epistemological and teleological dimensions. In this case, I adopt a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative conceptualisation and operationalisation of self-control would set out to understand the various life situations and contexts in which people conceptualize the mission of the church as family. I have collected many meanings of this phenomenon so as to understand how different people allow the vision to function in their daily lives. From this it becomes evident that qualitative operationalization entails the collection and clarification of nuances of meanings.

In order to study the mission of the church as family and project its possible implementation in Masvingo diocese, I need data which I can generate and process into scientific knowledge. I used the following methods: participant observation and interviews grounded in the ethnographic approach.

1.9.1 Participant observation

According to Mouton (2001:148), participant observation studies are qualitative in nature. They aim to provide an in-depth description of a group of people or community. Such descriptions are embedded in the life-worlds of the actors being studied and produce insider perspectives of the actors and their practices. In participant observation I have been simultaneously a member of the group subject to study. Taking the role of group member will enable me to experience what the group members' experience. According to Keller (1993:126) participant observation has the following advantages:

- It forces the observer to familiarize himself or herself with the subject.
- It allows previously unnoticed or ignored aspects to be seen.
- People's actions are often more telling than their verbal accounts and observing these are valuable.
- It is unobtrusive and when obtrusive, the effect wears off in reasonable time.

I have attended worship services, weddings, funerals, and special celebrations in various parishes of the diocese of Masvingo to pursue this participant observation dimension of my data generation. I kept detailed field notes of my observations as I attempted to ascertain the various ways in which the Church as family manifested itself in the day-today activities of the diocese. Furthermore, I selected the following 6 parishes for participant observation: St. Joseph's Beitbridge, St. Don Bosco, St. Joseph's Nemanwa, St. Barbra Bangala, St. Peter-Maregedze area and Ss Peter and Paul Cathedral (as shown in appendix 7). These were chosen in such a way as to ensure that there is a representative group of urban, semi- urban and rural parishes.

Three main limitations of participant observation can be identified. First, being observed may alter behaviour since a participant who feels that his or her performance is being evaluated may change usual work habits to suit acceptable behaviour. Secondly, the researcher will have to take down notes in private in order not to attract any attention from the participants. The third limitation is that participant observation may rely on memory or interpretation of the researcher which may just be their opinion and not agreed with anybody else. To overcome the limitations of participant observation, I draw from multiple methods such as focus group discussions, structured and semi-structured interviews.

1.9.2 Interviewing

The sampling of participants in this research was based on a "quota sampling" procedure. The aim is to produce a sample that reflects a population in terms of the references of people in different group such as gender, age and region of residence (Bryman 2014:45). Mouton (2001:168) asserts that quota sampling helps to address the issue of representativeness in a field research project, since the sampling of individuals is not carried out randomly but with the deliberate intention to ensure that the sample is representative of important categories of participants. By using this type of non-probability sampling I was able to ensure representivity regarding demography, gender and ecclesial status. For the interviews I selected 36 participants, 12 each from urban, semi-urban and rural parishes respectively, to ensure wide demographic representation (see Appendix 5). To ensure fair gender representation, 18 interview participants (50%) were women. To avoid clerical overrepresentation, 12 (33%) of the participant were laity, 12 were religious sisters (33%) and 12 were priests (33%). The same participants were interviewed twice, first in June 2020 (for Chapter 4) and again in October 2020 (for Chapter 5). An interview took an average of 45-60 minutes to complete. During the interviews, I constantly reminded the participants (and myself) that the goal of the research is to seek deeper understanding, to raise new questions, and to be sensitive to new insights, not to confirm existing answers.

I also organised six focus group discussions (FGDs), three in June 2020 (for Chapter 4) and the other three in October 2020 (for Chapter 5), with the same participants. The three focus groups held in June 2020 and in October 2020 were held in urban, semi-urban and rural contexts respectively (see Appendix 6). Each group consisted of 12 participants, with an equal number of laity, religious sisters and priests (4 each). The discussion questions posed to the focus groups are contained in Appendix 4 and the discussion took an average of two hours. The dates and venues of the FGDs are given in Appendix 6.

To ensure the ethical integrity of my research I received ethical clearance from the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology at Unisa (see Appendix 1). I also got permission from the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Masvingo to conduct this empirical research in the diocese (see Appendix 2). I consistently observed the protocols of ethical research conduct in my participant observation and interviewing, as well as in conducting the focus groups discussions. All the participants in the interviews and the focus groups were given the authorisation letter written by my

supervisor, Professor JNJ Kritzinger (Appendix 11), and requested to fill in and sign the informed consent form (Appendix 11).

A critical voice in this thesis is that of the laity. I employed both focus group discussions and interviews to gather views from the laity concerning proclamation of the Good News and inculturation within family types found in Masvingo Diocese. Lay participants were also chosen from urban, semi-urban and rural parishes while targeting catechists, teachers and sociologists. The reason for the choice of these participants was the fact that they work with different family types on a daily basis so it is prudent to tap from their experience. Due to my position of authority as bishop of the diocese I decided that it would not be wise to interview members of the laity myself, since the difference in social status between interviewer and participant in such interviews makes the trustworthiness of the generated data less credible. To overcome this limitation, I involved a few sociologists as research assistants to interview the laity. The dates and venues of all the interviews are listed in Appendix 5. The names of the participants and field workers are not divulged to ensure confidentiality.

Interviews are useful to generate data on people's experiences, attitudes and behaviour. Interviews vary from highly structured to completely unstructured. In qualitative interviewing the whole focus is on the participant's point of view. I used semi-structured and unstructured interviews and analysed the results by means of content analysis.

In the semi-structured interviews, I used a list of questions on specific topics to be covered but the participant had room on how to reply (see Appendix 3). The questions did not always follow the exact order outlined in the schedule and their wording was sometimes changed. Questions that were not included in the schedule were sometimes asked in response to a view expressed by a participant. The interview process was therefore flexible. The emphasis was on how best to frame the questions and understand the issues, events, patterns and forms of phenomenon.

In the unstructured interviews I posed general questions that opened up a conversation, allowing participants to respond freely. In both I used the reflective techniques such as paraphrasing, summarising and clarifying to encourage participants to elaborate on their perspectives, experiences, thoughts and feelings. As a bishop, I personally interviewed my co-workers who are the clergy, particularly parish priests and religious nuns. Taking into consideration that these parish priests are in touch with their faithful is an aided advantage. I

made observation notes directly after an interview on anything that may have influenced the research process such as interruptions as well as personal notes on the participant experience.

I then analysed the interview data by using content analysis. Content analysis determines the individual units about which or whom the descriptive and explanatory statements are to be made. Content analysis is a coding operation that means material is clarified according to a conceptual framework. The specific framework of analysis that I chose for this study is that of Krueger (1994:1-16), since it facilitates comparison of data, determines depth of content, estimates the breadth of views and enables logical connectedness of issues that are raised by participants. These criteria include: frequency (the number of times an item is mentioned by participants); extensiveness (how an issue under discussion cuts across, gender, age, focus groups, priests and religious on one hand and the laity on the other hand); intensity (the extent to which an issue raised the emotion of participants); specificity (the extent to which participants felt free to provide details); internal consistency (absence of contradictions in an individual participant's views); point of importance (identification of an innovative concept that can be used to improve the existing situation). This framework was used in chapters 4 and 5 for data interpretation.

1.10   AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This study is divided into six chapters concerning the mission of the Church as family adopted by the African Synod and its implementation in Masvingo diocese. It defines the mission in terms of the context of the African Synod, providing a justification for the use of the family and clarifies the intention that this study contributes to the academic community and the church at large. This research was carried out qualitatively, being influenced by the epistemology premise of constructivist epistemology. The theoretical framework adopted is the cycle of mission praxis of Karecki (1999:15).

Chapter 1:   Introduction

It is not necessary to summarise the present chapter here but it should be pointed out that in terms of the macro structure of the study, which is shaped by the cycle of mission praxis (1.8.1), it fulfils the function of "identification" (or insertion), since it clarifies my personal stance towards the topic and the nature of my involvement in it.

Chapter 2:   The deliberations and reflections of the African Synod

This chapter examines the issues that were raised in the African Synod on evangelization which are: proclamation, inculturation, justice and peace, dialogue and means of social communications. Firstly, it deals with the rationale of having the African Synod. Secondly, it looks at the pertinent issues discussed at the Synod. This is done against the background of the preparations that were done before Synod took place. Thirdly, attention is given to the role of the family in understanding and determining these issues. The chapter explores the first sub question of this study: "What is the mission of the Church as family in the teaching of the African Synod?" (section 1.3.1). In terms of the cycle of mission praxis, which shapes the macro structure of the thesis (section 1.8.1), this chapter deals with theological reflection.

Chapter 3:   Family types in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo

This chapter analyses family types in Masvingo diocese using Shorter's levels of culture. These family types include extended, nuclear, single parent, reconstituted and child-headed. Each family type is analysed using Shorter's culture levels (section 1.8.2). The phenomenological level focuses on practical and symbolic aspects such as marriage customs and birth rituals respectively. At the domestic technical level, focus is on duties and responsibilities for parents and children. The dimension of values consists of ethical ideals such as love, unity, sharing, kindness and respect that keep the family together. The worldview is made up of spiritual beliefs in God and ancestors. These beliefs are also supported by a sense of meaning and purpose of life. This chapter explores the second research sub question of the thesis: "What are the values, customs and practices that are inherent to the families in Masvingo diocese?" (section 1.3.1). In terms of the cycle of mission praxis, which shapes the macro structure of the thesis (section 1.8.1), this chapter deals with context analysis.

Chapter 4:   Findings on evangelisation as proclamation of the good news and inculturation in families of the Masvingo diocese

The fourth chapter anlyses the findings on the proclamation of the good news and inculturation in families of the Masvingo diocese. The methodological aspect used here is informed by qualitative methods of data generation which are participant observation and interviews (sections 1.9.1 and 1.9.2). It has given me an overview of the roles played by different family types in the proclamation of the good news and inculturation. This chapter explores the third research sub-question of the thesis: "What evidence is there that the mission of the Church as family is being realised in the Catholic diocese of Masvingo?"

(section 1.3.1). In terms of the cycle of mission praxis, which shapes the macro structure of the thesis (see 1.8.1), this chapter deals with context analysis.

Chapter 5:   Theological reflection on the mission of the Church as family in relation to family types in Masvingo Diocese

This fifth chapter is based on the theological reflection on the mission of the church as family in relation to family types in Masvingo Diocese. This theological reflection is drawn from the participants' pastoral experiences which include, theological issues arising from each type of family, ministry structures and ministry challenges of each family type. It also gives an assessment of the achievements of the mission of the Church as family in Masvingo diocese in terms of its implementation, featuring the current strengths and shortfalls which in turn lead to pastoral recommendations and effective pastoral plan. Here I analysed the contributions of my research to the academic community and the church at large. To the academic community my contribution is on the unity in diversity of these different family types in the fulfilment of the vision of the church as family. To the church the contribution will be on the integration of family values to church life such as prayer, unity and love. This chapter explores the fourth and fifth research sub-questions of the thesis: "What are theological reflections that can be drawn from the understanding of the mission of the church as family?" and "what ministry structures the Catholic diocese of Masvingo put in place to implement the mission of the church as family?" (section 1.3.1). In terms of the cycle of mission praxis, which shapes the macro structure of the thesis (1.8.1), this chapter deals with "strategies for mission" (pastoral planning).

Chapter 6:   Conclusion

The concluding chapter first reflects on whether the objectives of the study have been achieved, by assessing whether the research question regarding the Church as family and the five sub-questions were adequately explored and answered by the 5 preceding chapters. It then provides recommendations and guidelines for the ongoing implementation of this vision by the Masvingo diocese. Finally it offers some suggestions for future research that were stimulated by the writing of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DELIBERATIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD ON THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AS FAMILY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I am going to discuss the deliberations of the African Synod on the teaching of the mission of the church as family. "Church as family" emerged as the dominant and most relevant ecclesiological vision to express the Church reality in Africa (Baur 1990: 510-511; Orobator 1995: 33-55; Onwubiko 2001: 1-472; Oborji 2006:10-17). This ideal is not ascribed as derived from a part or parts of Africa but from the whole of Africa, as the Synod Fathers contended and well reflected in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: "The Church in Africa" of John Paul II (EA 1995). The vision of Church as Family was vaguely present in the pre-synodal preparations, but became more explicit in the small group discussions, the plenary reports, the Synod General Secretariat recordings and in the sequential post-synodal Papal exhortation. However, it should be pointed out that the exact moment when the Synod Fathers, in unison, adopted the motif as the ecclesiological expression they want for Africa remains debatable (Oborji 1998: 191).[10] Nevertheless, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) mentioned in its response to the *Lineamenta* that they wanted 'Family' to be put on the Synod agenda (AFJN 1996: 45–48).

The ecclesiological vision of Church as Family is not an exhaustive presentation or expression of the Church in Africa, but it has found many affirming expressions from practical African contexts as shall be seen in the subsections below. Again I should hasten to say this ecclesiological vision is not a self-righteous pontification of the Church in Africa on the basis of the African worldview, simply because the reality of family in Africa has its negative as well as its positive aspects (Healey and Sybertz 1996: 197; Magesa 1997: 168;

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[10] Here I quote Oborji, "The model of the 'Church-as-Family' did not feature as such in *the Lineamenta and the Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod; and at the beginning of the Synod it did not appear often in the individual interventions of the African Bishops. This is because many of them came with prepared papers as recommended by the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops, Rome. However, during the study sessions of *the circuli minors*, there was dialogue among the delegates to put more emphasis on the model of the 'Church as family' as an appropriate ecclesiology for Africa. At the end, the Bishops recommended it as a suitable image for the Church." (Oborji 1998: 191). It has also been reported in some quarters that some Africa theologians, some of whom have been involved in the preparations for the African Council and were not even *periti* in the Synod itself, were meeting at the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) Generalate observing the progress of the Synod. When they realised the ecclesiological gap, they passed on their observations to *the periti* in the Synod so that they could bring this to the attention of the Synod Fathers.

Waliggo 1996: 208; Orobator 2005: 36–38). However, it is the positive wealth that the Church in Africa proposes to share with and contribute to the entire world, Christian and non-Christian. The negative side of the family in Africa remains as flashing indicator for Africa to stop and engage positively in an exercise of self-introspection that may lead to a bold and prophetic reconstruction (Orobator 2000:36-38).

To appreciate the deliberations of the African Synod on Church as Family I first need to explain the historical background to the Synod (2.2). That background was a crucial stage in the development of the Church in Africa and its quest for an ecclesiological identity. I then discuss the preparations for the Synod (2.3) and the *Lineamenta* (2.4), looking at the five areas (or tasks) of evangelization, as some theologians have put it (Ukpong 1996:32). In 2.5, I describe the deliberations of the Synod itself and in 2.6 I focus on the content of the synodal document *Ecclesia in Africa*, focusing on each of the five areas addressed by it.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE AFRICAN SYNOD: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS OF AFRICAN THEOLOGY AND THE CALL FOR AN AFRICAN COUNCIL

The history of the African Synod starts as far back as 1945 with the emergence of 'Négritude.'[11] This was a consciousness development among West African intellectuals to promote African values and identity. This consciousness led to the emergence of *Societe Africaine de Culture* (SAC) in Francophone Africa and Pan-Africanism in Anglophone Africa. The Pan-Africanism in Anglophone Africa was also known as the 'Africa Personality Movement'. It is imperative to note that Négritude conceived no dichotomies between culture, religion and politics. It was a holistic approach to the promotion and exposition of the African worldview and its concrete realities. In this sense it would be correct to view Négritude consciousness as the cradle of stronger and more focused African literary art, African theology and African nationalism across Africa (Mveng and Lipawing 1996: 20-31; Kato 2008; 40-52; Baur 1990: 430-431, 508-509). Years later Négritude developed a passionate interest in Egyptology.[12]

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[11] Négritude is a critique of colonialism and racism that seeks to reclaim the value of blackness and African culture.

[12] Egyptology is a study of ancient Egyptian civilisation through ancient texts and archaeology. African Egyptologists try to convince the world that Ancient Egypt was actually black. Cf. Diop, A. C. 1987. *Pre – Colonial Africa: A Comperative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa from Antiquity to the Formation of Modern States*.Wesport, Lawrence Hill & Co.; Diop, A. C. 1991. Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology, New York, Lawrence Hill Books.

The Négritude consciousness was in tandem with the earlier developments across the Atlantic Ocean. In the United States of America and the Caribbean were the likes of Marcus Garvey (1966:32), Malcom X (1965:17), and later Martin Luther King Jr (1968:3). Latin America was starting to develop liberation theology (Abraham 1990:23; Boff, 1985:7; Gibellin 1994:5; Torres & Fabella 1978:13).

It is worthwhile to mention here some of the notable names involved in the Négritude consciousness. Aimé Césaire (2000:29-78), Léon Coultran Damas (1956:1-14) and Leopold S. Senghor (1991:1-15) were the founding fathers. Then there was Keita Fodeba (1956:1-6) who opened 'western eyes' to African art and music. Négritude was not an isolated phenomenon. It was part of the broad anti-colonial movement across the continent, pioneered by political leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta (1965:1-367), Julius Nyerere (1973:1-8), and Kenneth Kaunda (1987:5-15), who started publishing works with clear political inclinations (Baur 2001: 430).

The above mentioned Négritude protagonists were not the only ones active in that movement. Within their body were Churchmen across denominations who started discussions and publications on religious matters and theology from an African worldview perspective. Some of these figures included Ngindu Mushete (1979:26-30), Tharcisse Tshibangu (1979:73-79), Vincent Mulago (1991:119-134) and Engelbert Mveng (1994:154-165). The attempts of these early African theologians were bolstered by some missionaries' research and publications like *Bamtu Philosophy* by Placide Tempels which "shocked" the contemporary Western understanding of Africa, especially in Church missionary circles and the academic world (Baur 2001: 430 – 431).

In 1959, *Présence Africaine* organized a second academic congress for African writers and artists in Rome, where the participants even had an audience with John XXIII (1961). The congress had two wide themes: (1) 'The Unity of Black African Cultures' and (2) 'The Responsibility of Men of Culture.' The topics were aimed to express the oneness of the African world as well as to urge Africans into action about that oneness. During the audience with John XXIII, the idea of an African Council of Bishops was mentioned and proposed.

In 1961, *Présence Africaine* organized yet another symposium, this time in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on "Religions as Values of Civilization". They later (1963) published '*African Personality and Catholicism*'. The thought development was already geared towards an African Council and more and more boldness was being expressed as terminologies began to

change from 'African art and culture' to 'African theology'. Alongside these developments, the Catholic University in Kinshasa, the Lovanium, started a programme of hosting weeks of symposia on 'African Theology and Renewals of the Church and New Churches' (Mveng 1988: 23). Such symposia were held in 1954, 1965, 1966, 1968 and 1969 (Mveng 1988: 23).

That process of African soul searching was (and remains) a milestone in the development of the African Church in the fact that when it started, "this was nearly ten (10) years before the Vatican II, twelve (12) years before the Conference of Latin-American Bishops at Medellin in 1968 and, twenty-three (23) years before Puebla Conference in 1979 (Mveng1988:22). In other words, Africa was one of the first continents to seek a distinct theological identity and its own contextual ecclesiology. How much these developments in Africa contributed to the outcome of Vatican II is still a subject that needs to be studied. However, the audience with Pope John XXIII mentioned above remains significant. It should also be mentioned that in April 1962, another symposium (the 7th) was held in Fribourg by African students and they reiterated the call for an African episcopal assembly in the sense of a Council. The hard pressing '*African Society of Culture*' (SAC) expressed to Pope Paul VI, through Alioune Diop and Georges Ngango, the burning desire for African participation in the Second Vatican Council and made proposals of their vision for the future of the Church in Africa (Mveng 1994:24).

In 1969 Paul VI visited Africa. He made bold pastoral declarations, and encouraged Africa to develop its own relevant Christianity. He responded directly to the precious and original contribution of Négritude, saying: "You may and you must, have an African Christianity" (McGarry 1995: 18). Paul VI in his closing address to the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) cardinals and bishops and to the entire Church in Africa reiterated that Africans should be missionaries to themselves.[13] It is worth noting that earlier on in the opening address to the first plenary session of the SECAM Assembly on the 28th of July 1969 in Kampala, Uganda, the first president of SECAM, Cardinal Paul Zoungrana, (in McGarry, 1995:18) addressed Africa thus:

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[13] Cf. Paul VI addressed the AMECEA cardinals and bishops in the cathedral of Kampala, Uganda, on the 31st of July, 1969. The Pope's address and encouragement to Africa is widely quoted by all and sundry who venture into writing about African Christianity or about the Church in Africa.

> Our very being must not be conferred upon us from outside, the Gospel is a germ of life and the Church of Africa must develop itself and build itself up according to its own apostolic priorities.[14]

The papal visit to Africa, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) Assembly and the above mentioned AMECEA address emboldened the quest for an African Christian identity and the relevant theological expression. The call for an African council became louder. Alioune Diop proposed to SECAM in 1972 that a Council should be organized to discuss 'Black Civilization and the Catholic Church' (McGarry 1995: 18). It is evident that Diop, being one of the eminent figures in the Négritude movement, had behind him the weight of many African intellectuals. During the October 1974 Synod of Bishops in Rome, the African bishops presented a declaration 'Promoting evangelization as shared Responsibility' and 'Replacing the Theology of Adaptation with the Theology of Incarnation.' That declaration resonated well with what Cardinal Paul Zoungrana had said in his address to SECAM in 1969 in Kampala, Uganda (Mveng 1994: 21).

In 1977, Diop managed to organize a colloquium on the topic he had earlier proposed to SECAM, "Black civilization and the Catholic Church". The Colloquium was held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast under the auspices African Society of Culture. In this Colloquium, Fabien Eboussi Boulaga, a Jesuit priest, officially proposed a motion on the holding of an African Council. The motion was adopted and so the idea of the African Council was officially launched. In the same year, 1977, an Ecumenical Association of African Theologians (EAAT) was launched as an autonomous body within the wide Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). The EAAT launched itself with the call for an African Council (Mveng 1988: 22; 1996: 21). In 1980, the Zairean Bishops' Conference expressed to Pope John Paul II the African desire for an African Council during his visit to Zaire. In addition 1981 marked the beginning of a programme of sending African emissaries to Europe to give lectures and canvas support for an African Council. This was done under the aegis of the *African Society of Culture* (ASC) and SECAM. Included among these emissaries were Abbé Bimwenyi (then General Secretary of the Zairean Bishops' Conference), Meinrad Hebga and Nicholas Ossama (Mveng 1994: 21).

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[14] Cf. Cardinal Paul Zoungrana's "Opening address at the first plenary Assembly of SECAM" at Gaba, Kampala, July 28th, 1969, Documentation Catholique, 1969, No 1548, p.860.

In 1983, Cardinal Malula, on behalf of the Zairean Bishops, during their *Ad Limina* visit, once more expressed to John Paul II the desire for an African Council. In April the same year, John Paul II responded positively to the idea. SECAM swiftly responded by establishing a theological commission (COMITHEOL) to spearhead the Council preparations (Mveng 1994: 21-22). Already in 1984 COMITHEOL tabled its first report. COMITHEOL was headed by Engelbert Mveng and Mushete Ngundu from Francophone Africa and Eugine E. Uzukwu, Mutiso-Mbinda and Prof. Brookman-Amissah from the Anglophone region (Mveng 1994: 25). SECAM, through COMITHEOL and EAAT, mounted a spirited consultation programme all over Africa between 1983 and 1986. John Paul II was very supportive of the idea and the whole preparation process (Mveng 1990, EA 5).

The COMITHEOL and EAAT presented yet another report of the African Council preparations at the Kinshasa consultation on the 23rd of February 1986. The preparations had advanced to a stage where SECAM had to decide on the venue for the council, the participants, the budget, the secretariat and other major logistical issues like dates. In other words, SECAM was on the brink of convoking an African Council (Mveng 1994).

However, the Kinshasa consultation opened a Pandora's box and difficulties started emerging. SECAM started grappling with the Canon Law provisions surrounding the council (cf Can. 439-446 in the new code of Canon Law). SECAM realized that as a symposium, it had no legal status to convoke a council. Whilst the Francophone theologians largely remained resolute and in favour of holding an African Council, some Anglophone bishops began to lose interest and began to question the purpose of the council. The role of the laity as regards the council became an issue as well. The apparent dominance of the "Francophone Church and its theologians" became yet another issue which made Anglophone bishops uncomfortable. Hence the term "problematic theologians" started appearing. At the end there was no SECAM consensus on holding an African Council and eventually the item was removed from the SECAM agenda (Mveng 1994:24).

Observing the lack of consensus in SECAM, the Vatican took over the initiative and called its own independent consultation. The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples concluded that Africa was not yet ready for a Council. On the basis of the recommendations of a further consultation with the SECAM leadership in Rome on the 6th of December 1988, Pope John Paul II decided to convene a Synod for Africa (McGarry 1995, Mveng 1994). On the 6th of January, 1989, John Paul II announced the convocation of a Special Assembly for

Africa for the Synod of Bishops with the theme: "The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission towards the Year 2000: 'You shall be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8)."

2.3 PRIMARY AFRICAN SYNOD PREPARATIONS

The preparation procedure for a Synod of Bishops has always been the same even up to today. Generally, there is a *Lineamenta*, sometimes called an 'Outline' which is sent out with a specific questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire lead to the compilation of the *Instrumentum Laboris*, sometimes called the 'Working Document' which guides the deliberations of the Synod. This level of preparation should involve all the local Churches, especially at grassroots level where the Church is lived in practical realities. This process was done for the first African Synod in modern history.

A series of regular meetings in various places in Africa, both in Francophone and Anglophone regions, were held to carry the synod preparation through its process. It should be noted that every part of Africa, as regards ecclesiastical regions, geographically, was represented in the Ante-Preparatory Commission and the Council of the General Secretariat. John Paul II was interested and supported the preparations for a possible African Council (EA 1-26, McGarry 1995: 20-26).

2.4 BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE *LINEAMENTA*

I have discussed the historical background to the African Synod in the last section. This included the preparations for an envisioned African Council, the switch over to an African Synod, and its preparations. In the preparation for the African Synod, two documents, the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum Laboris* were produced. These documents shaped and directed the actual deliberations of the synod. However, it should be noted that the Synod Fathers were still free to introduce any new item of interest outside the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum Laboris*. In this section I want to briefly discuss these documents, but mainly the *Lineamenta*, as indicators of the actual deliberations of the Synod.

The *Lineamenta* focused on five distinct areas: Proclamation of the Good News of Salvation, Inculturation, Inter-religious Dialogue, Justice and Peace; and Means of Social Communications. These areas of focus have been understood as tasks of evangelization in Africa (Ukpong 1996: 32).

2.4.1   Proclamation of the Good News of Salvation

The *Lineamenta* gave an outline of the history of evangelization in Africa, starting from early Christianity's development in today's North Africa to the current millennium. The early Christian developments are celebrated as a vigorous Church that gave shape to much of what the Universal Church is today. It celebrates and reminds Africa and the world of early North African Church that had its direct roots in the Apostles. It is celebrated as a Church of saints, martyrs, Church fathers that contributed significantly to the development of spirituality, Christian history and orthodox theology. Names associated with this vibrant Church include Origen, Athanasius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, Paul the Apostle, Antony, Pachomius, Frumentius, Perpetua, Felicistas, Monica, Thecla, Melchiades, Victor 1 and Gelasius 1. These early times also produced the Coptic Church of Egypt and Ethiopia as well as the Patriachate of Alexandria (EA 30-31, AT 3-4).[15] This glorious period was disturbed by the fall of the Roman Empire and eventually overrun by the Islamic expansion in the 7th century.

History places the second phase of evangelization in Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries. This refers mostly to some parts of Western, Southern and Eastern Africa. The period produced a vibrant Church in the Congo-Angola region and the South Eastern - territories of Africa (Baur 1990). From this period the Christian Church witnessed its first black African clergymen and martyrs (EA 32). The Church did not flourish well in this period because of various reasons, some mainly from cultural differences, prejudice, commerce, adventurism and slavery. It suffices to mention that the missionary activities had a sudden disappearance after this period.

The third phase, which began in the end of the 18th Century, still has a lasting presence. It is this period that gave the Church the Martyrs of Uganda (EA 33-34). The Christian Church experienced a phenomenal growth because of the multifaceted missionary enterprise. It was no longer only a Catholic endeavor, since the Protestant denominations had joined the fray. The improved means of travel, the continued trade, discovery adventures and the colonial ambition all contributed to the missionary evangelization success. Nevertheless, evangelization of Africa in this phase had serious problems emanating from the plurality of denominations in the field and entanglement with the colonial enterprise.

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[15] AT here refers to Paul VI's *Africae Terrarum* of 1967.

2.4.2   Inculturation

The *Lineamenta*'s second focus area was that of inculturation. The document focused on asking whether there was any need for inculturation, the inculturation experiments done until then in the African Church and in what areas, the people's response to those experiments, how those experiments had impacted on the local and universal Church and possible abuses within the process. Inculturation was not a new method of evangelizing at that time, it was rather an idea around which all plans for evangelization must turn.

The Synodal fathers observed that Africa is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities which it can offer to the Churches and to humanity as a whole. The African Synod pointed out some of the great traditional values in the life of the African peoples which should also be part of Christian life. Africans have a deep religious sense that acknowledges and respects the existence of God and the spiritual world. The religious foundation provides respect for life that is expressed through family love. In Africa, there is love for children through the understanding that children are gifts of God. Life is respected at three different levels, the yet to be born, the living and the living-dead (EA 42-43).

In spite of these great traditional values, the main challenge of inculturation in Africa consists in ensuring that the followers of Christ understand the Gospel message, while remaining faithful to all authentic African values. According to John Paul II, inculturation is the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures (RM 94). He treats inculturation in his encyclical letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, on the permanent validity of the church's missionary mandate. It should be emphasized here that inculturation does not subside in compartments: theological, liturgical, catechetical, moral, pastoral and so forth, but rather it is a holistic process in evangelization (EA 57).

The church is one, but the church has to express itself in various cultures. The church's emphasis on culture and inculturation reflects the work of Vatican II Council. In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes* (G.S 1965), the Council focused on various aspects of culture and its relationship to the church (G.S 53-62). The word 'culture', it said, refers "to all those things which go to the refining and developing of man's diverse mental and physical endowments" (:53). Then the constitution speaks of the diversity of cultures, observing that "culture necessarily has historical and social overtones, and the

word 'culture' often carries with it sociological and ethnological connotations; in this sense one can speak about a plurality of cultures'' (:53).

John Paul II connects inculturation with the incarnation of the Gospel: "Through inculturation the church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community" (RM 52). He adds that the church transmits to the different cultures her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. He says, "Through inculturation the church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission" (:52).

The incarnation of the Word of God is at the base of inculturation. The gospel of John says "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). In preaching and liturgy, the Word became flesh for all cultures. In this context, Jesus is the model of inculturation. When he became a human being he took the culture of his Jewish people. Jesus challenged his culture where it was wrong and unjust. In the same way as a grain of wheat has to die to bear much fruit, some parts of our cultures have to die to come to new life (EA 60). Every translation of the Scriptures is an example of inculturation. It can be described as a translation from one culture to another. When St. Paul went to Athens, he spoke before the Athenian Council called the Areopagus. Doing so, he gave a great example of what today is called 'inculturation.' He began his speech with these words:

> You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God'. What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you (Acts 17:22-23).

Paul spoke the Gospel from the inside of the culture of Athens. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached to all nations, and the liturgy must be celebrated in each culture. Culture affects every aspect of the church, including evangelisation, catechesis, and liturgy and prayer life, even the language used in various regions of the globe. This model of inculturation is seen in the four Gospels. In each Gospel, an evangelist spoke to a specific social situation and a specific culture. For example, Mark communicated the Gospel of Jesus to communities who were mostly gentile by birth but quite close to their Jewish cultural roots. That is why many times he gave the traditional Hebrew or Aramaic of Jesus' words, for example the word "Abba!" but then also translated those Semitic expressions into Greek. One such example is, "Abba, Father" Mk 14:36.

In the process of inculturation, the baseline should always be that Christian faith influences and challenges culture from within and culture responds by influencing the reinterpretation of faith and its expression (Ukpong 1996: 35). This is the responsibility of the whole believing community. In fact, if pastors and theologians, for the most, organize pastoral work and theological reflection, the gestures, attitudes, expressions, prayers and songs, along with musical instruments and rhythms will spring from the spiritual depths of the faithful people (IL 61). In the event where there are controversial issues, it is the obligation of the bishop to make a decision. Explanations should be given before trying to put into action.

2.4.3 Dialogue

The *Lineamenta* offers as many as thirty-nine dialogue questions to Africa for the Synod discussions. Dialogue here is presented as both interreligious and ecumenical. The *Lineamenta* acknowledges that, without dialogue the Church cannot proclaim the Good News (Ukpong 1996: 36-38, *Lineamenta* 55). In fact, dialogue is a means used by the Church to evangelise the world through various stages and levels. The text presentation does not explicitly connect dialogue with the other two previously mentioned areas of focus. Dialogue is presented as a stand-alone activity of the Church institution vis-à-vis other religions and the Catholic Church vis-à-vis other Christian denominations. Probably this emerges as a visible problem because, as, Ukpong observes, the *Lineamenta* does not give a definition of dialogue (Ukpong 1996: 36). The tone of the presentation is that of the Church attempting to correct the other religions or other denominations. In Africa, the definition or the presentation of dialogue will have to take into consideration the socio-anthropological context of the communities. The institution to institution approach to dialogue might not be very meaningful in the African Context, but rather intra-personal (as an individual) and person to person or, better still, people to people, as Ukpong implies in his critical review of the *Lineamenta* (Ukpong 1996: 37-38). In the same sense the *Lineamenta* is apparently blind to the need of intra-ecclesial dialogue where within the Catholic Church itself, dialogue should happen within its structures and levels (Ukpong, 1996: 37).

In Africa, the emphasis should be more an ecumenical dialogue than interreligious dialogue. The other religions notable in Africa would be Islam and African Traditional Religion, whose presence vary from region to region. What would be interesting is the question: 'When an African Christian dialogues with African Traditional Religion (ATR), who or what is he/she dialoguing with in essence?' The complication manifests itself even more in the intra-

personal dialogue of an African Christian in the context of Christianity- ATR dialogue. Is the person dialoguing with his/her other religion or with his/her own African worldview? On the other hand, in the context of person to person dialogue, where an African Christian lives in the same family, village or community with others who belong to different Christian denominations, what particular dialogue happens here? The *Lineamenta* could have helped more by exposing some of these possible complications and concrete realities of dialogue to the Synod discussions.

2.4.4   Justice and Peace

The area of justice and peace is a perennial problem in Africa. The *Lineamenta* affirms that justice and peace are intrinsically part of the evangelising mission of the church in human promotion. It is part of the mission spelled out by Jesus himself (Lk 4: 16-22). This activity that promotes justice and peace is not just a social activity, but it is a theological activity with a firm biblical foundation. By the fact that it is an activity aimed at human dignity, it is also an anthropological activity. The justice and peace mission is participation in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, thus it is a mission that finds its rightful place in the incarnation (Ukpong 1996: 35). The *Lineamenta* should have categorically stated that mission for justice and peace is the mission of the Church, mission of Jesus Christ and mission of the Father (*Missio Dei*). African theologians suggest that the mission of justice and peace is a call to 'prophetic ecclesiology' that asks the Synod to work for justice and peace within the Church itself first and then outwards into society (McGarry 1995: 118, Ukpong 1996:39; Orobator 2000).

2.4.5   The Means of Social Communications
Communication is essential to social existence. For a society to be able to receive and understand what is communicated to it, in this case, the gospel message, it must be a communicating society itself. This entails that the society should be able to communicate back to the one who has done the initial communication. In other words, communication is always dialogical (McGarry 1995: 147 – 161; Ukpong 1996: 41).

The *Lineamenta* discussion focuses only on Gospel communication and the means (instruments) of this Gospel communication. The document points to the urgent need of the Church in Africa to embrace and utilize available modern means of social communication. As regards these means, the document concentrates on radio communication, videos, television

and cinema. The traditional means of social communication are lightly mentioned (Ukpong 1996: 40). The document apparently focuses on a top to bottom channel of communication (Ukpong 1996: 41, AFJN 1996: 61 - 67).

The way the *Lineamenta* presents the discussion indicates that communication is very important for evangelization and it is therefore an area that needs constant and systematic attention. The Africa of today certainly faces a dilemma as to where the emphasis should be between traditional and modern means. Traditional methods of social communication are more and more veiled by the paraphernalia of modern methods and the memory loss of generations. In this case, Africa would have to embark on a patient research programme if the traditional methods of communication are to re-emerge and be useful in this modern age. The area of language as a medium of communication is an area that needs attention both in its verbal and non-verbal forms. Is the African Christian able to utilize the language present to grasp and to transmit the meanings pregnant in the evangelization mission of the Church? (McGarry 1995: 147 – 161; Ukpong 1996: 41, Uzukwu 1996; Uzukwu 1997).

2.5   THE AFRICAN SYNOD'S DELIBERATIONS ON CHURCH AS FAMILY

In the above sections, I have set out the historical background to the African Synod. The major part of the background discussion was actually dedicated more to the build up towards an envisioned African Council but, as I have explained, that did not materialize. In its place the first African Synod in modern times was held in Rome in 1994. Still as part of the background to the Synod, I briefly discussed the *Lineamenta* presentations as areas of focus (tasks of evangelization in Africa) for discussions in the Synod itself. I discussed the presentations in a review manner as a way of factoring in, in a general sense, the concerns and expectations of SECAM, COMITHEOL and the EAAT. The responses to the *Lineamenta* questionnaire were compiled into the *Instrumentum Laboris,* which captured the same areas of focus (tasks of evangelization) for the actual Synod deliberations. Only a few areas from the *Lineamenta* were left out in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, for example the area of marriage and polygamy (McGarry 1995: 149).

2.5.1 The opening of the Synod: An expression of a quest to be heard and listened to

The African Synod took place from the 10th of April to the 8th of May, 1994 in Rome. The synod opened with a colourful liturgy of the opening Mass. The inculturated liturgy led by

the local Church of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC) on behalf of all Africa, was a statement enough. It was an expression of a quest by the African Church to be heard and listened to. The African characteristic of abundant joy and celebration of life, even in difficult circumstances, expressed in the liturgy became the hallmark of the Synod itself (EA 6).

The vitality during the celebration became an announcement that Africa was still alive, albeit battered, like the innocent man in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:29-37, EA 13, 41, Message 2). The music and dance became an expression of communication. The opening liturgy not only led the Synod participants into prayer, but converted the skeptics, the suspicious and the critics to join Africa in prayer, to join Africa in its moment of hope and resurrection, its kairos and moment of grace (EA 6, 9, 12-14, Waliggo 1996: 206, McGarry 1995: 183-184). A further reflection shows that the opening liturgy was packed with all the areas of focus or tasks of evangelization to be discussed in the synod itself: proclamation of the Good News of salvation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communication. Above all, the fact that representatives from the whole of Africa, gathered in St. Peter's in Rome, could identify with and respond to the rhythm of the liturgy was an affirmation for the need of an African Synod.

2.6   THE CHURCH AS A FAMILY OF GOD

The Synod deliberations produced sixty-four (64) propositions that the synod fathers wished to be presented to John Paul II, together with other Synodal documents, for his consideration for the publication of his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: "The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission towards the year 2000, 'You shall be my Witnesses' (Acts 1:8)" (AFJN 1996; 87).[16] When studying the propositions, it appears that the synod fathers spoke about 'Church as family' or simply about family only in propositions 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 22, 26, 29 and 39. This is echoed in the Post-Synodal Exhortation text (EA 6, 23, 43, 50, 63, 65, 80, 85, 89, 92 and 105). However, in the Synod message document, the Synod Fathers actually said that all their discussions related to the family in Africa, to the family of God in Africa, and that all the deliberations were done "as a family" (Message 2, 7), with a family spirit. John Paul II himself stressed that he observed that the Synod Fathers approached their work as a

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[16] The other Synodal documents referred to are the *Lineamenta, Instrumentum Laboris,* the Report of the General Secretary, the *Relatio ante disceptationem,* the *Relatio post disceptationem,* the Reports of the *Circuli Minores* and their discussions.

family and that they wanted to confront and dialogue with their problems in Africa as a family (EA 9, 23, 63). The fact that this was a Synod, true to its name, the Synod Fathers walked together as a family and invited all sons and daughters to join and live the Synod as a family in Africa (Lwaminda 1999: 249-270, Waliggo 1996: 208, Sarpong 1996: 224-225). It is in this holistic sense that I approach the deliberations of the African Synod.

The Synod Fathers embraced the Church as Family ecclesiological vision not only on the basis of their own African understanding and experience of family, but also from their theological understanding of the Trinity (the Triune God or the *De Deo Uno*), their understanding and observation of the tradition of the early Christian communities and their understanding of Vatican II and of the world today. Trust, dialogue, acceptance, warmth of relations and solidarity are values that are expressed through this image. The theology of the Church as family finds uniqueness and richness in Africa given the indigenous foundations of family within the continent. This enables the development of an African ecclesiology that is based on Church as Family (prop 8).

2.6.1 The Church as Family in Evangelisation

The Church's mission is the evangelization of the world and its peoples through the proclamation of the good news of salvation. It is a mission of salvation. The Church understands and accepts this as a specific mandate and commission from Jesus Christ himself, who is risen. The Church accepts it as an obligation to be fulfilled even in the peril (martyrdom) of its agents of evangelization (Mk 16: 15-20, 1Cor. 9: 16, EA 55, EN 14). She contends that the mission of evangelization is carried out through proclamation and practical life witnessing in service to the Church-Family and by the Church-Family (Waliggo 1996: 208; EA 55-56).

Whilst Christianity has been present in Africa for 2000 years (Baur 1994), there are still sections of the African population that are not yet evangelized. There are those touched by the Gospel but who still need catechesis for full initiation; there are those initiated but who still need post-initiation catechesis and pastoral accompaniment; and there are those once fully fledged African Christians who have since lapsed and need re-evangelisation or new evangelization. The Synod Fathers were fully aware of their African reality and affirmed together, as one family, that evangelization in Africa is still urgent (Prop. 2, EA 74). Because of the ever changing local contexts of the African society, evangelization remains at the top

of the agenda of the Church in Africa. Each local context informs the process of evangelization relevant to that particular context without compromising the absoluteness of the Gospel itself.

The Synod Fathers confirmed that the African person is already fertile soil for evangelization. This 'fertility' is because of African Traditional Religion (ATR) background and the African traditional life itself (African *Weltanschauung*). Africans are therefore capable of receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ and living it, just like any other continent or any other peoples. But more, Africa is capable of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a holistic way (Prop. 3-4).

The Bible, the Word of God, remains the primary vehicle for passing on the Gospel of Christ. Since the Bible (Holy Scriptures) contain the Divine Revelation, it is imperative that the Bible be made available in understandable languages to the Church-Family in Africa (Prop. 6-7). In highlighting and emphasizing the primacy of the Bible, the Synod declared the primacy and centrality of Christ and proclaimed him as the saviour in the evangelization of Africa and in the world. It is a Christ who comes to live and act in the concrete life and context of every person. That is the content of the proclamation (EA 57-58). Below is a declaration that summarises the content of evangelization to which the Synod Fathers committed themselves to. I quote the declaration in its entirety:

> To the local Churches, the Church-as-Family Churches of Africa, the People of God in assembly throughout the world, it is primarily to you that we proclaim Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23) and it is from you that we wish to have re-echoed that He was put to death but is alive, that He gave his life for the world and that He gave it in abundance. The Synod has highlighted that you are the Family of God. It is for the Church-as-Family that the father has taken the initiative in the creation of Adam. It is the Church-as-Family which Christ, the New Adam and Heir to the nations, founded by the gift of His body. It is the Church-as-Family which manifests to the world the Spirit which the Son sent from the Father so that there should be communion among all. Jesus Christ, the only begotten and beloved Son, has come to save every people and every individual human being. He has come to meet each person in the cultural path inherited from the ancestors. He travels with each person to throw light on his traditions and customs and to reveal to him that these are a prefiguration, distant but certain, of Him, the New Adam, the Elder of the Multitude of Brothers which we are (Message 24).

2.6.1.1   The Context of Evangelisation in Africa

The Synod Fathers noted that Africa is full of scars (Uzukwu 1991: 101-102, Mveng 1994: 154-165; Message 25, 31-44, EA 39-41, Uzukwu 1996: 27-29). Practically all African

theologians do their reflections from this 'scars' reality of Africa.[17] The tragedy of the slave trade and colonialism remains a permanent scar on the African face. Through this tragedy, African humanity was put into danger of annihilation and anthropological poverty (Davidson 1961: 205-265, Chinweizu 1978, Mveng 1994: 154-165, Uzukwu 1996: 3, 20-26). The tragedy of slavery was not just a transplantation or translocation of the African human person from Africa to the Americas, Europe and Asia (the Arab world and India). It was a transfer of African civilization, human resources, skills and means of living, structures of governance, family and social value systems and African religion. Now, the question is how to evangelize Africa in such a context. What means are there for effective evangelization in such a dis-membered Africa? Noting that even missionaries were involved in this inhuman debacle, John Paul II (a Polish Pope) made a courageous option of apologizing to Africa for the slave trade on behalf of the Catholic Church.[18] What would this gesture mean for the evangelization of Africa?

Whilst I will discuss the dialogue with African Indigenous Religions under the heading of inculturation, I need to mention here a few bigger problems that have since reared their appalling heads: missionary and militant Islam, the proliferation of local religious sects and the external evangelical sects where monies are splashed to lure converts, capitalizing on African poverty, which is anthropological, political, economic, social and religious. This is the context of evangelization in Africa for the Church as Family.[19] The question remains: How is evangelization done effectively in this African context? This concern of the Synod Fathers' is loud and clear in *Ecclesia in Africa* (44).

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[17] I only mention here a few of the African theologians: Mbiti John, Nyamiti Charles,Uzukwu Elochukwu Eugine, Mveng Engelbert, Orobator A. E, Kanyandago, Ela Jean-Marc, Mugambi J. N. K, Majesa L, Majawa C, Bujo B, Thlagale B, Tutu D, Buthelezi M, Ngindu-Mushete, Tharcisse Tshibangu, Mulago Vincent, Ukpong J, Oboji F. A, Waliggo J. M, Oduyoye M. A, Onwubiko A. O, Lwaminda P, Ilunga B, Ilunga J. There are also some Missionary theologians who after their experiences in Africa wrote practical theology reflecting the 'scars' of Africa, e.g, Tempels P, Shorter A., Healey J. G, Sybertz D, Baur J, McGarry C, Hillman E, Daneel L, Bate S. C, Achermann E, Ryan P, Vanneste A, Waldenfels H, , Hastings A, Bühlmann W, Häring B, Villa-Vicencio C, Nolan A, Henriot P. J, Hulsen C, Holland J, Gifford P, Gibellini R.

[18] John Paul II apologised to Africa on the 9th of August 1993. There were some indications that on the 14th of August 1985, he also hinted at apologising about the slave trade.

[19] I left here the discussion on geo-political realities which may be overlooked yet Africa is still under heavy influences of the phenomenon and the economic-commercial field is the playground.

2.6.1.2   Church as Family as Agents of Evangelisation

The Synod Fathers proposed what they immediately recognized as *agents* of evangelization. The primary recognition is that every baptized individual is an agent of evangelization (Prop. 11). Evangelization needs agents (Rm. 10: 14-15). The agents list from the individual laity through to the bishops and diocesan structures as means (EA 88). The overall agent is always cited as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses the individuals, the Church and its structures and means. In other words "it is the Holy Spirit who is responsible for mission and the Synod as above all the work of the Holy Spirit" (LG 5, RM 11).

The Synod recognizes the following agents of evangelization: Small Christian Communities, sometimes called 'Vital Christian Communities' (Prop. 9, EA 89), the laity (Prop. 12, EA 90), the catechists (Prop. 13, EA 91), the family (Prop. 14, EA 92-93), permanent deacons (Prop. 17, EA 96), seminarians and formators (Prop. 18, 19, EA 95), priests (Prop. 20, EA 97), and bishops (Prop. 21-22, EA 98). It is important to reiterate here that the Synod Fathers emphasised that all these agents exercise their evangelization mission in a Church-Family perspective.

2.6.1.2 (a)   Small Christian Communities (SCC)

These are sometimes called Vital Christian Communities and 'Living Ecclesial Communities'[20] The bishops in Africa, mostly in the AMECEA region, had already by 1961 opted for a pastoral application of the Small Christian Communities as a way of becoming Church and a more important way than known mission structures of buildings and institutions like schools and hospitals. Already by this time, the bishops started realizing that this way of being Church made the Church more African and brought it closer to the people (Healey 2012:13, Baur 1994:8). It has been thought in some circles that the idea of SCCs as imported into Africa from Latin America is very important (Baur 1994:14). The SCCs were established in Latin America responding to that region's particular circumstances and contexts just like in

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[20] The Small Christian Communities have been known by so many different names wherever they are used. Joseph Healey notes that "Small Christian Communities" (SCC) is a general term used…........and is a common expression for this new way of being Church in…......Africa. Different terms are used on the continent of Africa. BCC means Basic Christian Community and BEC means Basic Ecclesial Community. A background paper for the "International Consultation on Rediscovering Community" at Notre Dame, Indiana in the USA in December, 1991 compiled over 3 500 different names, titles, terms and expressions for SCCs/BCCs worldwide. What is important is the best name for the local situation, the local context" (Healey 2012: 3).

Africa and they have their own particular identities (Healey and Sybertz 1996: 137-138). History notes that the African Independent Churches (AICs) also had a considerable influence in the origins of the SCCs (Baur 1994:17).

Nevertheless, basically, the SCCs evolved as a genuine Church response to socio-economic-political threats to the Christian community. The threat here is not only to the Church but to the society as a whole. It is in this sense that the SCCs origin is actually a Church-Family response. The strength of the response is always in the anthropological-theological foundation within the Church. The Zaïrean response after the Catholic Church confrontation with Mobutu Seseseko in 1971-2 is a glaring example of the SCCs' evolvement across Africa. Bernard Ugeux and Pierre Lefebvre (1995:9) report that as early as 1975, Burkina Faso had already started creating SCCs on the Church as Family vision (Ugeux and Lefebvre 1995: 9). It is generally viewed that the 1974 and 1977 Synods of Bishops in Rome brought the Small Christian Communities phenomenon into the center of attention (Prop. 9).

When the African Synod Fathers highlighted the SCCs as agents of evangelization in Africa, they were reiterating history and affirming the desire that the Church should grow in Africa with a conscious African identity. In Message 28, the Synod Fathers state that Small Christian Communities are basic ecclesial communities that express the notion of Church as family. In such communities, one experiences brotherly and sisterly love. Members work together in solidarity to achieve common goals. Each member is moved to participate in the Family of God. Such communities fight against ethnicity, racism and discrimination.

So, for effective evangelization and pastoral care, the SCCs have to be established in all Church contexts, as instruments of transformation and healing. It is within the SCCs that self-evangelisation takes place (evangelization *ad intra*). It is from the SCCs that the Gospel is brought out to others (evangelization *ad extra*). It is in the SCCs that communal prayer and the Word is lived and shared. Community (Church-Family) responsibilities, just like in any family, are nurtured, encouraged, recognized and respected. The SCCs are a school of life where real life problems and joys are dealt with in accordance with the love of Christ. Noting that biological blood relations could be stronger than spiritual bonds of baptism (blood can be thicker than the waters of baptism), the Synod Fathers exhorted that:

> …these SCCs should be permeated by the universal love of Christ who
> breaks down the barriers and natural alliances of clan, tribe, or other interest

groups. It is in such communities that Jesus Christ is known, loved and served in a personal and communal way (Prop. 9).

Uzukwu (1996:112) comments that the African Synod Fathers were totally in unison that the Small Christian Communities offers the best pattern for the renewal of ecclesiology in the African Church. Concurring with Sanon, he says the Synod emphasizes that the SCCs are ways of living the tradition of Church communion, Church family and Church fraternity thus they are a practical model of renewing the Church-Family from the grassroots (Uzukwu 1996: 112-113, Lwaminda 2001: 265). It is left to each diocese and the Episcopal Conferences to put this vision into effect in a way they see effective in their particular circumstances in Africa.

2.6.1.2 (b)   The Laity

The Synod pointed out that the laity has a crucial role to play in evangelization. The laity were mentioned as many as thirty times in the Synod deliberations. It recognized that the laity are central to the process of evangelization, which strengthens the sense of communion in the mission of evangelization. The Church has developed so much that the laity are now aware of their role in the Church as baptized members. They too have a mission to proclaim Jesus Christ and the salvation he brought about. The laity are a fundamental pillar of the Church as family. Because of their vantage point of living in the lay society, they practically live and interact daily with real life situations, politically, economically and socially. It is therefore necessary to avail to them capacities they can use through formation programs in the social teachings of the Church, biblical, catechetical and pastoral apostolates. The Synod Fathers recommend that schools or centers of formation be established wherever necessary and wherever possible (Prop. 12, EA 90, Lwaminda 2001: 265-267).[21]

2.6.1.2 (c)   Catechists

In Proposition 13 the Synod Fathers briefly deliberated on catechists as agents of evangelization within the Church as Family. Catechists, voluntary or permanent, are essential agents in the establishment and growth of the Church in Africa. Care should always be taken to make sure that catechists receive a sound initial training as well as on-going catechetical

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[21] *Ecclesia in Africa* also makes reference to John Paul II's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (30 December 1988), 45-46: *AAS* 81 1989), 481-506. John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 71-74: *AAS* 83 (1991), 318-322.

and doctrinal formation to equip them adequately for their mission. The Synod took note of the practical need for catechists to meet regularly, as catechists, to share amongst themselves the various experiences of their work and to discuss how they can possibly improve it. In their work, the catechists should be respected and provided for (Prop. 13, EA 91).[22]

2.6.1.2 (d)   Family

The Synod Fathers identify the family as another key agent of evangelization. I should note here that the Synod focuses only on the 'Christian family'. The Christian family, modeled on the Holy Family of Nazareth, is the domestic Church and the primal cell of the Small Christian Community. As such, this domestic Church exercises fully the kingly, priestly and prophetic mission of Christ. This puts the Christian family into a serious regulatory responsibility in the Church as well as in the society at large. Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz in their book 'Towards an African Narrative' (1996) make an extensive research on the African family almost exhaustively presenting this serious regulatory responsibility in the society. The qualities and characteristics of an authentic African family shall be treated in chapter five, when I will reflect on the theology of the Church as Family.

Some may argue that what makes the family a fertile agent of evangelization in Africa is contained in the 'now always quoted' saying by the Nigerian Bishop Albert Obeifuna (1997) that "the blood of family and tribe was thicker than the waters of baptism." This entails then that once the family cell is thoroughly evangelized, it becomes easier for the Small Christian Community to be thoroughly evangelized, since in Africa, the SCCs are normally a compound of closely related family cells. These two basic cells of evangelization easily influence the development of all other agents of evangelization. It is in this sense that Aylward Shorter (1998) speaks of 'the family as a model for social reconstruction.'

2.6.2   The Church as Family in inculturation

The second task of evangelization, according to the focus areas identified by the Synod is inculturation. The Synod Fathers deliberated on inculturation and summarized the discussions

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[22] It has However, been observed that in many parts of Africa, the role of catechists has been diminishing and their number has been dwindling. The reasons mostly cited are lack of interest in the apostolate by some members of the laity, and the lack of material support that goes with the work. A lot of dioceses in Africa are struggling to materially support their priests, so the little resources available cannot stretch to cater for catechists as well.

for the Pope in propositions 28-37. This was well captured in the Post - Synodal Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* 48, 55-62, 64, 78, 87 and 127. However, the focus area remains inter-related with other synodal focus areas. The Synod Fathers were not so much concerned about the definition or description of inculturation; they were more concerned with the urgent practical application of inculturation in the pastoral field (EA 59 and Prop. 29). In the first place, the Synod Fathers appreciated inculturation as a pertinent and serious problem or a difficulty that needs urgent attention in Africa. They proposed a true and balanced process of inculturation. This true and balanced process assures authenticity and avoids the confusion that is currently experienced in Africa (EA 48). In the same vein, John Paul II appreciated this concern and reminded the Synod of the challenge he had earlier presented to Africa that:

> I put before you today a challenge – a challenge to reject a way of living which does not correspond to the best of your traditions, and your Christian faith. Many people in Africa look beyond Africa for the so-called freedom of modern way of life. Today I urge you to look inside yourselves. Look to the riches of your own traditions, look to the faith we are celebrating in this assembly. Here you will find genuine freedom – here you will find Christ who will lead you to the truth (EA 48).[23]

It should be noted that this was not the first time that the doors for inculturation in Africa were wide opened by a Roman Pontiff. Paul VI in 1969 exhorted Africa passionately to have its own African Christianity, as we have already seen above in our discussion on the *Lineamenta* (EA 56, Okure and van Thiel 1990:19). So why is Africa stalling the process? Despite the efforts of inculturation in all the Sub-Saharan Africa, notably in the Congo, Cameroonian/Nigerian and some East African regions, inculturation remains an urgent problem (Prop 29). What is blocking Africa to go all the way in the process of inculturation? African theologians, including some missionaries and missiologists, have written a lot of research work but the practical application in the pastoral field remains a concern. Could the 'Church as Family' ecclesiological motif be the unlocking element in this difficulty?

The Synod Fathers acknowledged that the area of inculturation is very wide and touches African Christianity in practically all its tenets – holistic (Carreño, 2018). The inculturation dimensions are theological, liturgical, catechetical, pastoral, juridical, political, anthropological and communal. All these dimensions are practically interpreted in

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[23] The Papal exhortation to true and balanced inculturation is referred to by Rutechura in his CUEA presentation "from the first African Synod of Bishops to the Second Synod" in CUEA (2008: 29-30). Rutechura sees inculturation as a healing process. But he also remains worried about whether the inculturation experiments done in Africa so far have effected any internal transformation through the Gospel Values to African Christians.

availability of the Bible in Africa languages, personal and communal study of the Bible in *'Lectio Divina'*. This is translated into liturgical and sacramental inculturation where the well understood meaning of the Gospel is celebrated in African expressions (Message 18). The sacramental dimension has practical implications in the African pertinent areas of poverty, health (illness and healing), marriage and its vast social implications, not forgetting servant leadership both political and ecclesial.

2.6.2.1   Theological basis of inculturation

The Synodal deliberations converge in pointing out that the ultimate reference of inculturation is in Jesus Christ himself. The Incarnation itself is the principle and model of inculturation (Prop. 28, Message 16). The whole life of Jesus Christ, God and Man, his ministry, his paschal mystery all of which flows from the Trinity is given to humanity from the Scriptures as the living example and reality of inculturation. The Gospel values are then a road-map that gives directions to the process of inculturation (Prop. 28). The incarnation of Christ is through the Holy Spirit, who accompanies Jesus Christ through his ministry and mission, the mission of the Church commissioned by Christ himself is accompanied and directed by the same Holy Spirit who reveals all truth. In this understanding, the Church as family declares that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of inculturation (Prop 28-30, EA 60-61). In whatever case, 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' For this Word to grow, it has to find nutrition from the reality in which it dwells just like any seed, for it to grow, it has to find nutrition from the soil in which it finds itself (Orobator 1995: 33)

2.6.2.2 Criteria and Areas of inculturation

The Synodal deliberations on inculturation reiterated that because of the dynamic contextual realities of Africa, the process of inculturation remains on-going so that evangelization and the Church itself remain relevant to the people. The key word here is 'process.' Inculturation is a process towards full evangelization (EA 62). To avoid a random process of inculturation experimentation, the Synod Fathers saw it fit to identify some criteria and indicate areas that need urgent attention in inculturation:

> The Synod emphasizes that the project of inculturation will respect the two following Criteria: a) Compatibly with the Christian message, and, b) Communion with the Universal Church…. In all cases care should be taken to avoid syncretism. (Prop 31, EA 62).

I have already mentioned above that the inculturation process touches all the domains of African life and its institutions – it is an integral and holistic process. It touches all levels personal, economic, cultural, social, political and educational (EA 62). And here the Synod Fathers took care to mention that the process of inculturation is also urgently needed in the structures of the Church, in its theology, liturgy, spirituality and general Church life. (Prop 32, EA 62). Carreño points out that the Synod Fathers did not introduce anything new in this area; rather they continued with satisfaction what has already been laid down by the Magisterium so as to preserve the unity and communion without which the Church cannot exist (Carreño, 2018). The second criterion was seen as something that could bring in some ecclesiological problem, especially for those who might consider "uniformity' as the intention of the criteria here. However, the Synod Fathers' intention in reiterating this criterion was to make Africa take up the challenge, embrace the process of inculturation and make it its own.

Probably the understanding here is that inculturation always has to affirm and purify the culture of a people. There are those cultural traits that characterize the culture of a people and remain important to their identity. Care should be taken not to destroy this identity in the name of Inculturation or even in the name of 'Christianising.' There should rather be a gradual process of evolvement. This is so because once the core identity is destroyed, there is no longer any process of Inculturation worth talking about. There will not be any reference point to dialogue with. It is when this core identity is destroyed that anthropological poverty settles in and there is no positive human presence to work with. It is therefore important to reiterate that inculturation 'feeds' on dialogue and uses dialogue as its vehicle.

2.6.2.3   Agents of inculturation

The Synod Fathers reiterated that all agents of evangelization are agents of inculturation, the Holy Spirit being the head. Family remains the nucleus for Inculturation. Small Christian Communities remain the springboard for Inculturation process and projects to bear fruit. The parish structures and lay guilds play a very important role in driving the enthusiasm for inculturation among the parishioners and the society. Deanery and diocesan structures/boards are also vehicles for inculturation (Prop. 33). All religious formation houses are seen as agents of inculturation, including all academic institutions.

2.6.2.4   Difficulties in inculturation

The Synod Fathers were not oblivious to the difficulties facing the process of inculturation moves against. John Paul II himself admitted that, inculturation is a very slow process, a journey that accompanies the whole missionary life of the Christian faithful (RM 52, *Instrumentum Laboris* 65). It is not surprising to meet negative attitudes towards inculturation within the African Church itself. This attitude can be found across the board, among laity, clergy, religious and bishops. There is also cultural diversity that can easily defuse enthusiasm for inculturation. Modernity and urbanization are some of the factors that can also 'trivialise' the process of inculturation. As regards knowledgeable personnel, Carreño (1995:66) writes that in most countries there is a lack of trained personnel and adequate facilities to undertake the project. Sometimes, too, expatriates claim undue authority in the matter of local traditions and go beyond their competence with unfortunate results.

2.6.3   Dialogue

The third area of focus deliberated by the Synod Fathers was 'dialogue'. Generally, dialogue here is discussed as interreligious dialogue, ecumenism, and dialogue in the process of inculturation, social communications and justice and peace issues. In other words, dialogue is the indispensable tool (vehicle) for evangelization. The way the Synod Fathers deliberated on 'dialogue' was integral and resonating very well with John Paul II's Assisi teachings and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue's 'Dialogue and Proclamation' (McGarry - Ryan 2002: 28-43). Dialogue needs openness and frankness (truth) without compromising peoples' natural traditions as well as the Gospel values. This has been mentioned earlier on in the *Lineamenta* discussion. Here again the '*ad intra*' and the '*ad extra*' principle or understanding is employed. If EA 65 is understood well, this is a world issue, traversing the African geographical as well as religious boundaries. Openness to dialogue is considered 'the Christian attitude' and it is an attitude that has to be shown to all believers and non-believers (Prop. 38). The Synod Fathers highlight that

> dialogue is to be practiced first of all within the family of the Church at all levels: between Bishops, Episcopal Conferences or Hierarchical Assemblies and the Apostolic See, between Conferences or Episcopal Assemblies of the different nations of the same continent and those of the other continents, and within each particular Church between the Bishop, the presbyterate,

consecrated persons, pastoral workers and the lay faithful and between rites within the same Church.(EA 65, cf. Prop. 39, cf. Message 20).

Ecumenical dialogue can be facilitated by conscious joint initiatives like ecumenical Bible translations, Bible study, theological reflection and sharing, praying together, ecumenical witnessing as regards human rights, justice and peace issues. It is in this sense that, when dialogue is sincerely practised with full respect for each other, the Church-Family will be effective in its mission of evangelisation. John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Exhortation is very explicit that continental, national and diocesan structures should be set up to cater for ecumenism (EA 65, Prop. 40).

Interreligious Dialogue in Africa is limited to mainly two realities: Islam and African Traditional Religion. Here there is a very real practical problem: in some parts of Africa, Islam has become part and parcel of people's culture and way of life. As regards African Traditional Religion, very few people remain participants for those who still practise ATR, there is a lot of syncretism where some Christian elements are infused with elements of ATR. The difference could be simply academic rather than a reality on the ground. Nevertheless, the dialogue between parties should take care to avoid fundamentalist presentations (fundamentalism) on both sides, but rather should interface with mutual respect as well as respect for religious freedom. (EA 66, Prop. 41).

The Synod is exhorted to approach ATR with 'a serene and prudent dialogue' and an openness to accommodate positive elements found within it. Because ATR contains '*semina verbi*' it is a stepping stone towards the embrace of the Gospel. Therefore, all those who follow ATR should be shown respect and esteem and a kind language should be used in dialogue. Orobator rhetorically poses a question: What connection is there between the Church-as-family and the notion of dialogue? He practically answers himself as he writes that dialogue finds a place in the African extended family. Members reach a consensus through dialogue even though they belong to different religions or faith. As a matter of fact, many African Christians belong to extended families that are characterised by many religious confessions (Orobator 1995:45).

I have discussed elsewhere above about the peculiar dialogue reality in the African family set up. Yes, the family is a poised platform for authentic dialogue because that is where the African palaver has its home. But questions remain: Does belonging to different Christian

denominations or religions affect the actual and real family life and family dialogue in Africa? What is that force of cohesion that pulls family members together when it comes to family matters even if they belong to different denominations or to different religions? The palaver phenomenon remains so strong even in this era of communication technological gadgets. Here is a chance to learn authentic dialogue, its meaning and its execution for the Church-Family the world over. Orobator makes a further interesting observation that is more technical and of capital importance.

> Once dialogue is situated within the family, it can no longer be conceived purely in terms of exchange between systems, structures or beliefs. It is an exchange between 'persons,' openness towards, a willingness to listen to and welcome the other co-members of the family in an atmosphere of mutual reciprocity, acceptance and tolerance, and a common search for the life-giving truth (Orobator 1995: 45-46).

When dialogue in the family is reflected in the Small Christian Community, then in the Church structures, in the various Christian formations (ecumenism), and in other religions like Islam and ATR (interreligious), and in the relationship between the Church and State, then it becomes yeast and a pivot for greater unity. When the Church-Family engages, as it should, in dialogue *ad intra* and *ad extra*, it is indeed embarking on a ministry of Unity.

2.6.4   The Church as Family in the Ministry of Justice and Peace

The fourth area of attention is that of Justice and Peace. The Synod Fathers in their deliberations on justice and peace are quite clear that this is an urgent service in Africa. It is a service that seeks to build the Kingdom of God, as practically realised in justice and peace. The service is a ministry that expresses the 'Prophetic Role' of the Church. The African continent is 'bleeding' because of lack of justice and peace. All the negative portrayals of Africa by the media, especially international media, hang on peace and justice issues. Whilst the international media, might exaggerate in most cases, the truth on the ground remains solid that Africa as a whole suffers from lack of peace and justice. Despite the cultural, socio-economic and political problems of the continent during these critical and crucial years, the Synod reiterated that our hope of liberation lies in the Redeemer of Mankind who gave his Spirit in order that we might resolutely assume our responsibilities (Message 31).

Analysing the loaded Message 31, the Synod Fathers are acknowledging that there is lack of justice and peace in the cultural set up, in the social sphere, on the economic front and on the political platform. However, they do not explicitly mention the religious sphere. I can only

assume that the cultural and social spheres also cover the religious aspect. There are also these upheavals, convulsions, chaos and uncertainty in the religious fraternity. The Synod Fathers accept that as Church-Family, they have a responsibility, and indeed all persons, Christian and non-Christian, have a responsibility, to ensure that justice and peace prevail in Africa. Further analysis of the areas mentioned indicates that there is an internal hand as well as external hand as regards justice and peace issues. Thus the responsibility to make sure that justice and peace prevails in Africa lies not only in the hands of Africans themselves, but also in the hands of the international community. This is explicitly expressed in Message 32 when the Synod Fathers demand greater justice between North and South. Then the Synod Fathers teach that whilst we have to do our part as Church-Family members, it is Jesus Christ himself, the giver of true peace and the righteous judge to whom we should ultimately turn. In teaching this, the ministry of justice and peace is given a theological as well as an anthropological foundation. The ministry of justice and peace is theological as well as social.

Responding well to the Synod Fathers, John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Africa* amplifies the ministry of justice and peace in terms of 'building the Kingdom of God.' Chapter VI of *Ecclesia in Africa* dedicates itself to the building of the visible Kingdom of God on earth. EA 105 sets the scene from the Beatitudes as almost the ministry's practical pastoral plan for justice and peace. The Kingdom of God is a state where every person and the rest of creation is raised to a state of full grace. The Church-Family proclaims for this Kingdom cause. *Ecclesia* in Africa (EA 106) states clearly that justice and peace have to start within the Church structures themselves (justice and peace *ad intra*) before ministering to others (justice and peace *ad extra*).

The Synod Fathers reiterate that for this ministry to be effective, justice and peace structures should be established from the Small Christian Community level to the diocesan level, then the conference, regional and continental level. The common sentence found in Proposition 46 and EA 106 is that these will awaken Christian communities to their evangelical responsibilities in the defence of human rights.

Formation programmes within the ambit of the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church should be designed for the laity, the religious and clergy, including formation houses. This formation will equip agents of the ministry of justice and peace to be effective as salt of the earth and light of the world (EA 108).

The ministry of justice and peace aims at holistic or integral development of the human person and the rest of creation. Thus it involves gender issues, especially the plight of women (EA 121, Prop. 58, and Message 65). It deals with the arms trade, which has been the cause of so many deaths in Africa (Message 40, Prop. 49, and EA 117-118). The ministry touches the uneven field of commercial trade and resource exploitation which leaves Africa always disadvantaged and increasingly poor. The poverty created by this unbalanced commercial trade produces displacement of peoples and economic refugees (Message 37, EA 119, and Prop. 53). The ministry of justice and peace deals also with health issues (EA 116, Prop. 50-51, and Message 38). Africa is not only portrayed as a continent of diseases, but it is actually so, on the ground. Yes, the causes are natural as well as human made, internally as well as externally caused. One area that is usually neglected and rarely mentioned in this regard is the environment. This area is usually brought to the fore by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government departments such as 'Environmental Management Boards' (EMA) but only as a reaction to emergency situations. This only means the Church-Family has a responsibility to draw from its Social Teachings and design community formation programmes for environmental awareness (Prop. 55).

The most visible area that the ministry of justice and peace is seen to be engaged in is apparently the political and public (civil) administration sphere. Most people see and understand the justice and peace ministry in this light. One phrase that sticks out in this regard is 'Democracy, Good Governance, Rule of Law and Accountability.' (Prop. 56, EA 110-113). The Synod prayed and hoped for holy politicians who are faithful to nation building. It is a nation built well that creates healthy international relations. Healthy international relations in turn help to ease the burden of debt (EA 114, EA 120, Message 41, and Prop. 49).

2.6.5 The Church as family and Social Communications

The fifth area of focus in the mission of evangelisation in Africa is Social Communications. This area is vast and is intrinsically connected to dialogue. Social Communications here is understood as 'communicating the Good News.' The Synod Fathers give the theological foundation of social communications as Christ himself who is the 'Communicator *par excellence*" as we learn from EA 122. Jesus Christ is the face of God who communicates. By the act of creation, God communicates himself to both animate and inanimate beings. God communicates through various means both human and non-human. He communicated

through the prophets. He communicates through the word of the scriptures. But ultimately he communicates through His Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. By the fact that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, God continuously communicates humanity and the rest of creation. In other words, God is always communicating, dialoguing with his creation. The incarnation and the entire economy of salvation is actually a story of communication: restoration of communication, both vertically and horizontally (EA 71). The Synod Fathers here are aware of the need for communication *ad intra* and *ad extra*. (EA 122, Prop. 57). Proposition 57, laying out the foundational platform, needs to be quoted in full.

In faithfulness to Christ, who is the Communicator par excellence, the Church is aware of her duty of fostering social communications *ad intra et ad extra*.

a) The Church should promote communications from within through a better diffusion of information among her members.

b) The Church ought to use the full range of traditional and modern techniques of social communications so as to fulfil efficaciously her evangelizing mission.

c) Episcopal Conferences and dioceses should develop pastoral plans of communications as part of their total pastoral planning.

d) She ought to give particular attention to traditional forms of the media which are less costly and more accessible. (Prop. 57, EA 122-123).

The Synod understands social communication as a service rendered to the people for their social education, in other words, information to be used for the well-being of the society as well as entertainment. The Synod urges the Church-Family to put maximum effort in ensuring that all peoples have access to the media (Prop. 58). The interaction of African traditional means of social communication with the modern means enriches all means of social communication today. In this way, social communication is a vital means of evangelisation in this modern world (Prop. 59, EA 125, and Message 48). The Synod Fathers in their Message 47, call the media as the 'first Areopagus of the modern age.' It is imperative that all Christians enter into this modern culture and civilisation of social communications so as to make maximum use of social communications for the sake of spreading the Gospel (EA 71).

Yet before put into effective use, social communications itself today needs to be evangelised first. It is only an evangelised means of social communications that can safeguard the society

from harmful misuse of information, pornography, incitement to violence, criminal stratagems, 'profitism' and 'consumerism', glorification of sport at the expense of religion and anti-religious propaganda. Morally upright Christian media practitioners can be effective catalysts in evangelising the media world and safeguard the moral content of the media. It is such people that can assist the media in the correct portrayal of Africa in the world (EA 124, Prop. 61).

Responding warmly to the Synod Fathers' Message and Propositions, John Paul II in the exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* urges closer cooperation and coordination (solidarity) in the mass media at all levels of the Church structures: diocesan, conference or national, regional, continental and worldwide. This solidarity is a platform where those technologically advanced can help those who are still in need (EA 126).

It is interesting to note that the Synod Fathers devoted two Propositions (57 to 63) exclusively to social communications. This shows the importance the Synod attached to the topic. Whilst they urged the establishment of social communications structures at all Church levels, the Synod Fathers also recommended that there should be formation programmes on social communications in the Church's educational institutions, including formation houses and seminaries (Prop. 59, EA 71).

Acknowledging the importance of the spoken word in the oral culture in Africa, the Synod projects a vision of setting up radio stations at local levels that should have an effective collaboration with Vatican radio. In the same way they envisaged a continental radio station connected to a satellite as a vehicle for evangelisation (Prop. 60, EA 71). However, the Fathers urged the setting up of libraries for both reading and audiovisual materials. This would mean books, tapes, compact and digital video discs. But this also entails electronic (digital) equipment for use at all Church structural levels (McGarry 1995: 147-161). This certainly is a bold proposal which needs a lot of capital investment in terms of human, financial and structural capital.

2.7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have given a composite presentation of the deliberations of the Synod Fathers on Church-Family: their deliberations on Church as family, hence Church-Family. I

started by situating the "Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops: The Church in Africa and her Evangelising Mission towards the Year 2000. 'You shall be my Witnesses' (Acts 1:8)," in its historical context. It is important that African Christians of today and posterity know the history behind the African Synod. I acknowledge that the anterior history of this first and watershed African Synod in modern history has not received much attention by scholars and researchers alike. While I have discussed all five the themes of the 1994 African Synod in this section, the focus of the rest of this study is on two of those themes, namely evangelisation as proclamation and evangelisation as inculturation.

The tendency by scholars is simply to start from the *Lineamenta* onwards. If this part of history is not highlighted, it can easily be lost in the layers of time. I therefore took joy and patience to deliberate on this early phase of theological developments in Africa. I did so because the African Synod is a direct result of this initial quest for an African theological, particularly ecclesiological, identity. The quest aimed at having an African Council as a stepping stone for further ecclesial and theological developments in Africa. It was unfortunate that some of the African theologians of this particular era of historical developments did not participate in the actual deliberations of the African Synod. However, their seed has grown and will continue to grow in the Synod for posterity. There are some African theologians who still feel the African Synod itself has become a stepping stone for an African Council sometime in the future.

I later discussed the *Lineamenta* as the primary preparations for the Synod itself. This I did consciously so that we expose what Africa proposed as material for Synod deliberations. I should hasten to mention here that it is not the intention of this present work to evaluate whether what has been proposed in the *Lineamenta* (and the *Instrumentum Laboris*) was discussed in the actual deliberations of the Synod. We did not put much emphasis on the *Instrumentum Laboris* because, in the overview, its content is practically a carry-over from the *Lineamenta*.

I then went into discussing the deliberations in the actual Synod event guided by the Synod Propositions, the Message and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* by John Paul II. What is evident in the actual Synod deliberations is the Synod Fathers' experience of being Church and Family. Their discussions, whether in small groups or plenary, were contextualised to Africa, so that the sense of being family was always present

and even overwhelming. It is in this experience that the Synod Fathers could call to their brothers and sisters in Africa that 'we are a family of God in Africa,' hence Church-Family! I should repeat here that is it from the Synod discussion that the Church-as-Family theme evolved. At the end of the Synod discussion, it became quite clear that the Synod Fathers wanted the Church in Africa to express itself as Church as family. The ecclesiological quest of the early African theologians who had worked so hard for an African Council was answered, even though there is still a need for further theological developments in the future. Having looked at the message of the African Synod in this chapter, I broaden the platform into the next chapter by analysing family types in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo in the context of Shorter's culture model.

CHAPTER THREE

FAMILY TYPES IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MASVINGO
IN THE CONTEXT OF SHORTER'S CULTURE MODEL

3.1   INTRODUCTION

After exploring the deliberations of the African Synod on the mission of the church as family in the previous chapter, this chapter analyses family types found in Masvingo Diocese. The analysis of family types is done in the framework of a culture model because the families under study are rooted within a cultural system. The cultural context is further explored using cultural dimensions that unpack techniques, symbols, values and worldviews of social groupings. Since these values, customs and practices are firmly rooted in culture, it is important to adopt a culture model to elaborate the values which the church could adopt to fulfil its mission as the family of God. The significance of culture is profound although is often taken for granted. Culture touches every aspect of who and what we are. Certain cultural attitudes are ingrained in family members and they continue to affect their thinking, feeling, judging and acting.

The contribution of this chapter is the application of Aylward Shorter's culture model (Shorter 1988) to family types in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo. While there is a lot of literature on family types in general and the Church as family in particular, there is little literature that applies Shorter's Culture Model to Masvingo Diocese.

This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section explores different types of culture models that can be used as frameworks to understand cultural dimensions. The second section analyses family types in Masvingo Diocese by using Shorter's culture model, which involves four levels of culture. The family types include nuclear, single-parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended families.

3.2   CULTURE MODELS

3.2.1   Overview of models

In this section, I begin by defining the concept of culture by focusing on etymological and working definitions. I then critically analyse definitions of culture and proceed to examine

types of culture models. Lastly, I will give a brief justification of the choice of Shorter's culture model.

The Latin word *cultura* is a derivative of the verb *colo* meaning "to cultivate" and was mainly applied in ancient times to cultivating the soil (Baecker, 1997:37). However, another object with which the verb *colo* was used is *animus* ("soul" or "character"), in which case the expression referred to the cultivation of the human character. The Latin noun *cultura* can therefore be associated with the education and refinement of individuals.

Different scholars have defined culture by identifying a variety of cultural elements. As early as 1871, the British anthropologist, E.B. Tyler (quoted in Avruch 1998:6) defined culture as that "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Tyler's definition appears to be comprehensive but it is too broad. Later definitions of culture attempt to be more specific and to avoid putting together too many aspects, as shown by Mead (1953:45) who defines culture as "the total shared, learned behaviour of a society or a subgroup." While Mead's definition may be credited for specificity in terms of psychological focus, the definition may be too broad since what constitutes 'learned behaviour' remains unclear. Furthermore, learned behaviour may include non-cultural elements since learning is both formal and informal. Kroeber and Parsons (1958:583) try to improve on Mead as they define culture as: "transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behaviour." Kroeber and Parsons (1958:583) see inter-generational transmission as an important element of culture, although Matsumoto (1996:16) views Kroeber and Parsons' definition as too narrow and he defines culture as:

> "a set of ideas, rules and meanings common to a certain group of people, which functions as a system of interpretation of the world and ensures understanding within this group of people, supplying them with basic models for self-conceptualization, ready-to-use cognitive and emotional frames and scripts of behaviour and interpretation."

A critical analysis of the aforementioned definitions shows that these definitions are normative, insofar as they can be used to guide research. A focus on artefacts might orient research towards manufactured objects and institutions, a focus on behaviour might promote exploration of human activities, a focus on symbols might take language as a principal subject of study, a materialist orientation might shift attention toward ecology, and a focus on

mental states might encourage psychological testing. I argue that a definition of culture that overcomes reductionism must be able to combine key elements of culture. Reflecting on the scholarly definitions discussed before, I advance a working definition of culture as: the sum total of ideas, values, customs and techniques passed from one generation to the next within a social group.

Having constructed a working definition of culture, it is important to define a culture model, before analysing different types of culture models. Caws (1974:1) views a culture model as an explanatory scheme that is used to analyse cultural experiences and to solve problems about the relationships existing between reality and representation. Winschiers-Theophilus (2009:247-268) defines a culture model as a set of cultural determinants or variables which can describe and distinguish different societies. Ogan and Lane (2010:5) define a culture model as a representation of a culture which is designed to pick out key factors that define culture. The key word is representation, given that cultural dimensions are identified and arranged within a culture model. Boga and Efeoglu (2015:1103) provide a similar definition as they state that a culture model is a tool to compare different cultures through identifying cultural dimensions. From the given definitions, it can be inferred that a culture model is a framework for analysing, comparing and contrasting cultures for the purpose of understanding experiences and problems. This opens space for different types of culture models in the next paragraphs.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961:1-2) identify six cultural dimensions in their model. The first dimension analyses the nature of people in terms of moral qualities about the self and others, in terms of good and bad. A good person is seen as socially oriented while a bad person is seen as selfish. The second dimension consists of relationship with nature, whereby people think that we should live in harmony with nature, preserving and supporting it. The third dimension is made up of duty towards others by focusing on responsibilities towards others in contrast with individual freedom. The fourth dimension is concerned with mode of activity where there can be focus on being (who you *are* is more important than what you *do*), which points to ascribed status or deriving status from what has been achieved. The fifth dimension is made up of privacy of space where there is a contrast between individual space and privacy or open ownership, where people can meet in public without restrictions. The last dimension is time orientation, whereby one society focuses on the past and tradition, while another society focuses on the present, and another is future oriented.

Edward Hall (1976:10) propounds a model that makes a distinction between low-context and high-context cultures. The two contexts differ in communication styles. In high context culture, the listener is expected to read between the lines and understand the unsaid and in low context culture meanings are explicitly stated through language which is direct and open. High and low context cultures fall on a continuum that describes how a person communicates with others through their range of communication abilities: utilizing gestures, relations, body language, verbal messages, or non-verbal messages (Warner-Soderholm, 2013:28). As Hall (1976) was concerned with patterns of communication, he emphasized that a group sharing the same culture is mindful of the same things and thus culture shapes the selectivity with which they see and analyse reality. Hall's model is one of the dominant theoretical frameworks for interpreting intercultural communication. Shorter's culture model distinguishes four levels of culture, namely: phenomenological, domestic technical, values and the worldview (Shorter 1988:35-37).   Figure 2: Shorter's Culture Model
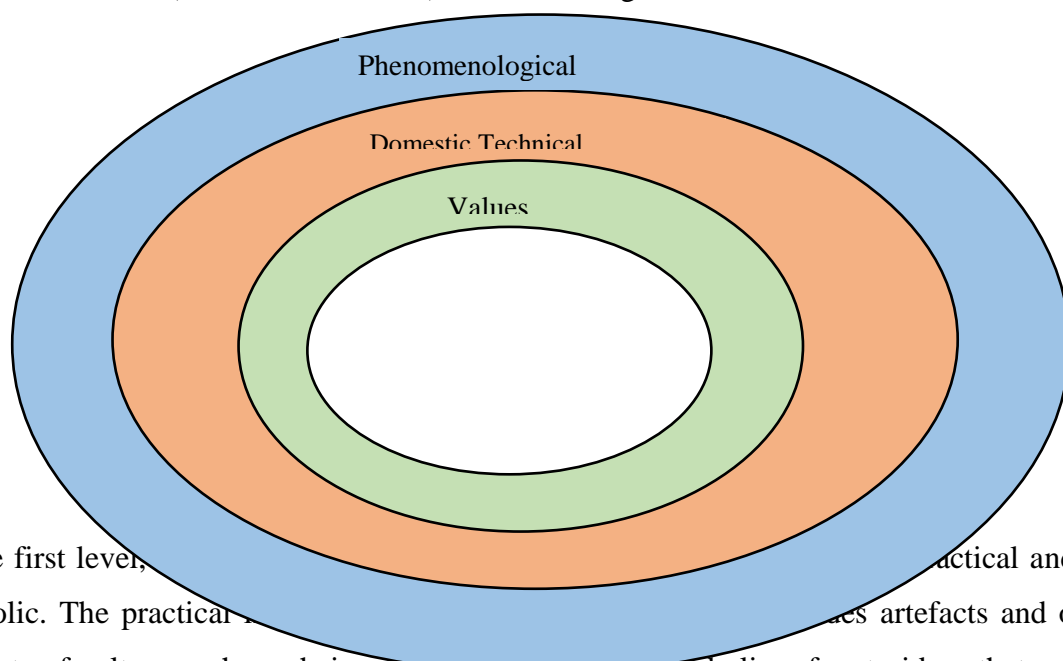
At the first level, ... actical and the symbolic. The practical .... artefacts and other products of culture such as chairs and tables, while the symbolic refers to ideas that govern the practical order. For example, the idea of what a good family or house should be. The second level is the domestic technical which refers to the culture of home and of leisure pursuits (Shorter, 1988:33). This is the culture of family conventions and etiquette. It involves things like cooking, sharing, dressing, love and procreation. The third cultural level is that of values. Cultures possess their own typical values, for example, the value of honour and prestige. These values are instilled into members through cultural education. The fourth level of culture is the worldview, which is the underlying way of understanding reality and experience.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997:5) propose a seven-dimension culture model. The first dimension consists of a contrast between universalism and particularism. Universalist societies place a high importance on laws, rules, and values while drawing principles of justice out of these rules. Particularistic societies believe that each circumstance and relationship determines the rules that they live by and responses to situations that change. The second dimension compares individualism versus communitarianism where individualistic societies believe in personal freedom and achievement in terms of decision making and taking care of oneself. In communitarian societies, the group is more important than the individual since the group provides help and safety in exchange for loyalty. The third dimension is made up of specific versus diffuse orientations. Specific societies tend to keep work and personal life separate. In diffuse societies, there is an overlap between work and personal life where good relationships are seen as important in meeting work objectives. The fourth dimension looks at neutral versus emotional tendencies where neutrality involves great effort in controlling emotions using reason. In emotional societies expression of sentiments is acceptable even in work environments. The fifth dimension consists of achievement versus ascription. Under achievement, society values performance while ascription values people according to what they are in terms of power and title. The sixth dimension is made up of sequential versus synchronous time. Sequential societies value order of events and see the need for planning and punctuality. Synchronous societies see the past present and future as interwoven periods and view plans and commitments as flexible. The last dimension consists of internal versus outer direction. Internally directed societies believe that they can control nature and their environment to achieve goals while outer directed societies believe that nature and their environment controls them and they must work with their environment to achieve goals.

Hofstede (2001:27) identifies six dimensions (or continuums) in his culture model. The first dimension is a "power distance" index which is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2001:29). In this dimension, inequality and power is perceived from the followers, or the lower strata. A higher degree on the index indicates that hierarchy is clearly established and executed in society. A lower degree on the index signifies that people question authority and attempt to distribute power. The second dimension is a continuum of individualism versus collectivism. This dimension explores the "extent to which people in a society are integrated into groups." (Hofstede, 2001:29).

Individualistic societies have weak relations that often only relate an individual to his/her immediate family. They emphasize the 'I' over and above the 'we' when a conflict arises within the group. The third dimension is uncertainty avoidance, defined as "a society's tolerance for ambiguity," (Hofstede, 2001:29) or the ease with which people embrace different opinions. Authoritarian societies opt for strict codes of behaviour, guidelines, laws, and generally rely on absolute truth, or the belief that a single truth dictates everything and that people know what it is. Free societies accept differing thoughts or ideas and tend to impose fewer regulations.

The fourth dimension consists of masculinity versus femininity, where masculinity is defined as "a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success" (Hofstede, 2001:30). Its counterpart represents "a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life" (Hofstede, 2001:30). Women in the respective societies tend to display different values. In feminine societies, they share modest and caring views equally with men. In more masculine societies, women are somewhat assertive and competitive, but notably less than men. The fifth dimension is long-term orientation vis-a-vis short-term orientation: This dimension associates the connection of the past with the current and future actions or challenges. A poor society that is short-term oriented usually has little to no economic development, while long-term oriented societies continue to develop for the betterment of the society. The last dimension is made up of indulgence versus restraint. This dimension refers to the degree of freedom that societal norms give to citizens in fulfilling their human desires. Indulgence is defined as "a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires" (Hofstede, 2001:31). Its counterpart is defined as a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

Lewis' culture model (2006:13) is divided into three categories based on behaviour. These three categories are linear-active, multi-active and reactive. Linear active individuals are those who plan, arrange, organize, do one thing at a time and follow action chains. Their work and personal life is based on logic rather than emotions. They are able to separate social-private and professional life. Multi-active people are able to do many things at once, planning their priorities not according to a time schedule, but according to the relative thrill or importance that each appointment brings with it. They feel uncomfortable in silence. Reactive people listen quietly; react calmly and carefully to the other side's proposals.

Having explored a number of different models of culture, it is now important to briefly assess the culture models and identify the most applicable culture model for this thesis.

3.2.2   Justification of using Shorter's culture model

The model by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961:1-2) focuses exclusively on values and ignores other dimensions of culture such as customs and beliefs. For Hall (1976:10) classification of high and low context cultures is based on intercultural communication. Hall's model is based on the assumption that individuals stand on an unequal footing since they can fit either into high or low context cultures thereby making it inappropriate for this study. The model by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997:5) gives a dichotomised view of each of the seven cultural dimensions where individuals are seen as preferring one side of the dichotomy over another. This framework fails to capture concrete situations where individuals may tend to combine both sides of the dichotomy. Hofstede's model (2001:31) is limited to societal values and it leaves out cultural aspects such as beliefs, customs, practices and the worldview informing these aspects. Lewis' model (2006:13) categorises individuals based on behaviour. The behavioural approach to culture draws from psychology and it leaves out other important dimensions of culture such as customs, values and worldviews. Shorter's model includes practical and symbolic aspects, domestic technical, values and worldview and these are jointly applicable to the same community or individual. Shorter's model is most suitable for this thesis because it gives a comprehensive approach to culture, which enables me to develop a clear understanding of family types in the Masvingo Diocese.

3.3   APPLICATION OF SHORTER'S CULTURE MODEL

The culture model of Shorter (1988:33-34) will be considered here as a blueprint that elaborates the values, customs and practices found in the different types of families that will be examined. These values, customs and practices are all embedded in a culture, which manifests itself in different ways of being a family. An exploration of how the four levels of culture manifest in different family types found in Masvingo, and the importance attached to them, enables an in-depth understanding of the context.

3.3.1   Defining family

3.3.1.1   Generic definitions

Before analysing family types with the help of Shorter's culture model, it is important to define the concept of family. Murdock (1949:3) defines the family as a universal institution characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. While Murdock's definition is helpful, it leaves out important elements such as social values and norms. Stephens (1963:22) defines the family as a social arrangement based on marriage, which includes the recognition of rights and duties of parenthood, common residence for husband, wife and children, as well as reciprocal economic obligations between husband and wife. Stephens' definition is too narrow for the purpose of this chapter since it ignores child-headed and single parent families. Leslie (1967:4) maintains family is a social unit wherein two or more individuals of different age groups and characteristic traits decide to stay together under one roof, in a hierarchical set-up, sharing rights and responsibilities. Leslie's definition recognises the social aspect of the family as a key attribute but it fails to go beyond the nuclear family. According to the United States Census Bureau (2007:7), a family refers to "two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption, who reside together." While the US Census definition of family is operational for census purposes, residing together may be a necessary element but it is insufficient in defining a family for the purposes of this study.

Having observed the strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned definitions, I construct the following as a working definition: A family is a social unit, where two or more people related by marriage, birth or adoption reside together for sharing common values and goals. The definitions of family discussed apply to any family type across the globe. However, African families have unique features that are examined in the section that follows.

3.3.2   Features of African families

In an indigenous African family there are variations in the make-up of the family based on the type of marriage. Marriage may be monogamous (one husband and one wife) or polygamous (Bourdillon 1993:8, Nyathi 2005:15; Mawere and Mawere 2010:224; Gwirayi 2017:25). In a traditional polygamous marriage, a man marries a number of wives, who live and work together in the fields to produce food and enhance the family's wealth. New types of polygamous marriage are at present, uncommon in Masvingo Diocese, due to economic factors such as poverty and unemployment. Traditionally, family organisation was based on descent groups and these groups became related by a series of marriage exchanges.

Individuals are born in families, and their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter are met within the family.

Children are educated informally and formally, so that they may become useful individuals in society. Under the patrilineal system, the lines of descent and authority are traced through fathers, a man and his brothers; their children and their sons are counted as members of the same family due to common descent (Weinrich 1977:34; Nyathi 2005:16). Under this system, men own and control the land and other means of production.

However, due to various political, economic and social factors, family types in Masvingo Diocese have developed different characteristics in terms of their customs, values and worldview as shown in the next section.

3.4   FAMILY TYPES IN MASVINGO DIOCESE

There are five types of family in Masvingo Diocese namely: nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended family. In my presentation of family types, I started with the strongest and the most intact family type, which is the nuclear family. Historically, the traditional African family was the extended family and all other family types were less pronounced. The extended family absorbed all the challenges that led to the formation of the current child-headed and single parent families. Some of the extended family practices that avoided single parent families such as wife inheritance are now unacceptable owing to human rights discourse and the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. However, the African extended family now exists with weak ties due to its disturbance by forces of globalization, modernization and urbanization. As a result of the shift, the nuclear family is now the centre of both culture and faith (sections 4.2 and 5.2) thereby justifying its first position in the presentation of family types. Although the extended family tends to show fairly uniform customs and values, religious beliefs are often diversified.

When the nuclear family loses one parent, due to reasons outlined in 3.4.2, then the single parent family emerges. If the nuclear family loses both parents due to causes discussed in 3.4.3, a child headed family emerges. Since the single and child-headed families are offshoots of the nuclear family, I found it reasonable to start with the nuclear family in my presentation. Furthermore, the reconstituted family is sometimes made up of members of previous nuclear

families[24] while the extended family is made up of a number of nuclear families thereby making the nuclear family central.

In the next section, I consider these types of families in the light of the culture model developed by Shorter.

3.4.1   The Nuclear Families

According to Gwirayi (2010:49), "a nuclear family is a unity consisting of a husband, wife and children sharing a common residence." In such a family structure, the father's role includes providing for the family, protecting it, and being the family's disciplinary role model. A mother's role consists of household work, raising the children, and taking care of the family. However, these gender-based roles are increasingly becoming interchangeable due to the equal rights discourse (*Zimbabwe's Constitution*, 2013 section 13) that involve the wife being away at work as a breadwinner and the husband being at home taking care of domestic chores such as cooking and washing clothes. The nuclear family under discussion in this chapter is one that was created by modernity and urbanisation but was completely unknown in traditional Shona society, even though it is not identical to a nuclear family in Europe or the United States of America, since it is firmly embedded in a broader "extended" family. The kind of nuclear family that exists in Masvingo Diocese today lies midway between the nuclear family in the strict sense and the extended family. It is a semi-independent family that links with the extended family even in making decisions.

3.4.1.1   Level 1: Practical and symbolic dimensions

Following Shorter's culture model I start at the phenomenological level, which looks for the practical and symbolic aspects such as rituals. Family rituals may be defined as behaviour or activities involving most (or all) members of the nuclear family, which occur episodically and have a symbolic meaning for all the members, and are valued to such an extent by the participants that they would like the activity to be carried on in the future (Imber-Black, *et al.*, 1988:33; Hlatswayo, 2017:31).

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[24] Sometimes one of the parents within the reconstituted family has no history of marriage.

According to Shorter (1988:34), the practical aspect of culture centres on human needs, human dignity and human life. Marriage, for example, involves an intimate relationship and it enables the family (and the species) to be procreated. The relationship satisfies human emotional needs and drives, including the need for love, protection, self-esteem and security.

Furthermore, Zimbabwean law recognizes both civil and customary marriages. Civil marriages are monogamous unions that can be ended by death or divorce. Customary marriages are unions that are guided by cultural practices and can usually only be ended by death. In a traditional African family marriage is more than the coming together of two individuals. It involves the union of two families (Weinrich 1983). When the couple marries, *roora* (bride price) is paid by the man to the woman's family.[25] As a result, the woman joins the man's family and the couple traditionally lives in the vicinity of the paternal relatives. The wife takes the husband's name upon marriage. Traditionally, *roora* was paid in cattle, a valued commodity in many African cultures, but today many modern couples pay *roora* in cash (Chireshe and Chireshe 2010:211; Mangena and Ndlovu 2013:472).

In addition, children raised in a family with married, heterosexual parents during their growing years have a higher likelihood of having stability in their current and future relationships and emotional bonding (Mugumbate and Chereni, 2019:27). Through observing their parents and by following the examples set by them, children learn how to help in the building of the family. The family also facilitates learning. It imbibes the ethical values of the society. It explores the history of the clan. It also teaches the children to till the land, to build, to be brave and to herd the cattle.

Furthermore, there is a child naming ritual, where the infant receives gifts, and the father expresses his gratitude by giving the midwife a goat. When the young mother finally returns to her marital home, she is welcomed back with honour. She receives congratulatory gifts. Behind all this happiness is the fact that the young mother has fulfilled her womanhood role; the family lineage is revived, especially if the baby is a boy, and the paternal name lives on (Makondo, 2013:11). A woman in the family plays a unique, decisive and irreplaceable role as a giver of life. A woman's status is thus obtained not by the simple fact of being a woman,

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[25] The word *roora* is often used to refer to bride wealth payments in Zimbabwe. … customarily reserved for the marriage of the sons (Bourdillon, 1987). It is only after having paid *roora* that the marriage is legitimised.

but by her ability to bring forth life. A woman's identity is not deduced fundamentally from her "being" or ontology, but rather from "becoming" through motherhood (May, 1983:23).

3.4.1.2 Level 2: Domestic technical dimensions

At the domestic technical level, children usually get far more extensive training in life skills. For instance, mothers usually teach their children relationship and emotional response skills (Mafa and Makuba, 2013:38). Fathers also teach their children handiwork and sports skills such as fixing things around the house as well as how to deal with the world outside. Children are also taught how to welcome and serve visitors. According to Gelfand (1985:44), the nuclear family attends to the basic needs of the growing children, that is, feeding, clothing, providing shelter, health and education. Games and stories play an important role in the family. Some games are played by boys and others by girls. Games help to build the child's character, and sense of discipline, by letting them practise fairness, trustworthiness and self-reliance (Nyota and Mapara, 2008:190). Games and songs are taught to children for various reasons, such as training memory, teaching cleanliness and obedience in carrying out a duty. The authority of parents minimise conflicts among children. The nuclear family places a high premium on decency, especially in dress code. Gelfand gives some avoidance rules on the correct way of living:

> Promoting living in the correct way
> Ensuring successful pregnancy
> Ensuring the avoidance of danger
> Ensuring good behaviour
> Ensuring healthy living
> Conveying religious teachings (Gelfand 1979:138).

In a nuclear family there are also some avoidance rules, for example, children are not permitted to sit on a hearth stone. They are taught that, if they did, their future marriage partner would die. Sexual intercourse with a blood relation is forbidden, lest the couple and their children have physical and mental problems (Gelfand, 1979:138). These avoidance rules in a nuclear family are enforced, and some of the threatened consequences of breaking them are believed by everyone, but others are empty threats, employed in an attempt to discipline the children.

3.4.1.3 Level 3: Dimension of values

According to Shorter (1988:36) values are instilled into the members of society through their cultural education or enculturation, and they stem from a deeper, underlying cultural level. Values are a set of norms and regulations that society expects its members to adhere to (Chimhundu, 1980:39; Gelfand, 1981:17). These values include: cooperation, sharing, charity, respect for human life, respect for others, human dignity, compassion, courtesy, consideration, solidarity, devotion to family and reciprocity (Ramose, 2005:52; Hapanyengwi and Shizha, 2012:23). All these values are intended to assist in building a solid family.

In a nuclear family, child(ren) are of prime importance. Families tend to become child-centred, focused on the growth and development of their children (Mugambi and Magesa 1998: 57-84). The children's welfare is regarded as a priority, frequently involving parents in more financial concerns and sacrifices. Within the family, children are trained in life skills, social patterns, so the family is the first school of life.[26] Children have roles to play such as being sent to perform certain duties and obliging to instructions. As grown-ups, children have a reciprocal role of looking after their parents and the elderly of the community (Samkange and Samkange, 1980:23). Furthermore, relationships within the nuclear families are strong and respect is accorded to the elder members like parents, brothers and sisters. Children show respect for the elders by greeting them first.

3.4.1.4 Level 4: Worldview dimension

The worldview of a nuclear family provides a context from which couples can view marriage and parenting as an important institution that deserves their attention. In the nuclear family there is faith in intimacy and loyalty. This loyalty is marked by a transitional ritual, the wedding ceremony, which begins a particularly important event in most families. Marriage is an obligation (Bourdillon 1998:315, Mbiti 1991:104, Beller 2001:64). Witnesses are invited from relatives of both the bride and bridegroom to endorse the transition and to express support of the couple. In this way, the wedding ritual signifies the change in status of the bride and groom and the beginning of a new family unit. The wedding clearly demarcates the boundary between the old and new status of the young couple.

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[26] Family is the first school, not only in terms of socialization and citizenship but also in terms of general education. A positive family environment will give children examples they can follow in order to better relate with others when they leave this environment. In a family children learn to trust. They learn to communicate effectively and with courtesy. Conversely, if a child is exposed to harsh conditions and unproductive or abusive manners in which to address problems, there is a strong chance that this is how they will react to such situations (*cf, https://www.enotes.com › Homework Help › Social Sciences, retrieved on 07 May 2018*).

The transition from the wedding ceremony to child birth is marked by *Masungiro* or *kusungira* ritual. *Masungiro* or *kusungira* is a practice/ceremony where a newly married woman who has become pregnant for the first time, is taken back to her parents to live with them from six months of pregnancy to the time she gives birth (Muroro, 2014). The ritual is aimed at formally informing the family of the daughter-in-law of her pregnancy as well as prompting them to appeal to their ancestors to protect their daughter during her period of pregnancy. The ritual also "spiritually binds the two families and their ancestors to the couple's marriage" (Hlatywayo, 2017:144). The purpose is directed at the mother-in-law who should confirm to her ancestors that she is happy and appeal to them to guide her daughter in giving birth safely. The daughter remains behind to give birth so that if there are any complications, her mother is right there to assist and appeal to her ancestors to intervene. She will give her daughter *masuo* (administration of herbal medicine to the pregnant woman) during this period for protection against evil forces. This further explains that in the nuclear family worldview, one can never think of a situation where one is separated from one's ancestors.

Soon after birth, the mother and the infant are kept in seclusion (usually in a hut) for about a week, or until the umbilical cord drops. This is aimed at protecting the infant from evil spirits. During this period the midwife gives the infant different medicines to strengthen him or her against evil forces, when it finally comes out of seclusion (Mutambirwa, 1985:275). The infant's bath water is secretly thrown away, or a pit is dug near the door into which the bath water is thrown and covered to protect the infant from witchcraft. When the umbilical cord drops, a special medicine is smeared to treat the child. The cord is tied around the child's waist during the seclusion period, before it is buried (Nkomo, 2002:8).

Another aspect of the worldview dimension is the use of totems. Totems have been defined by Brown (1986:9) as "a set of customs and beliefs by which there is a set-up of a special system between the society and the plants, animals and other natural objects that are important in the social life." In Gelfand's view (1973), these conservation strategies are based on "…the principle of exogamy" where one group or family among the Shona communities, depending on patrilineal identity, is prohibited from eating certain animals, birds, and fish species as a way of regulating the human consumption of such animals. According to Chigwedere (1985:2780), the whole Shona demography can easily be identified through the totem system. In the nuclear family set up, a husband or wife is usually called by the name of

his or her totem when they do great things for the family. Totem names are used when appreciating someone who has been victorious or has achieved something in life (Makamure and Chimininge, 2015:7). A wife can demonstrate respect to her husband by calling him with his totem. During meal times, family members can also use totems to appreciate the person who cooked or brought food on the table. Hence, the use of totems gives unity and identity among members of the nuclear family.

Within the nuclear family worldview, the couple's spiritual bond is believed to continue long after the death of one of the spouses. In some cases, the spirit/ghost of a wronged deceased partner can linger around and bring misfortune if the surviving partner breaches the sacred bond before or after death. There are some houses that are haunted by ghosts and spirits of deceased spouses who, when they died, were angry about some aspect of their relationship or disposal of their belongings. Cleansing ceremonies may be needed to make such houses habitable again. Thus, marriage is accorded great respect because it is sacred and central to the well-being of the members of a community and sustains the patrilineage as couples reproduce.

However, technological advancement has removed numerous factors that nurture the "bonding factor" in the nuclear family. Various forms of technology impact negatively on the nuclear family system. With the advent of the internet, the world has increasingly become a global village. In fact, technological advancement has become a way of life and the order of progress (Ocholla-Ayaya 1997:13). Nuclear families in Masvingo have also been affected by modernity and focus more on economic life as opposed to the social life that mediated relationships between members. Family members now spend less time with each other, due to watching television or communicating on social media, so that the traditional process of socialization between family members has been weakened.

The nuclear family has also undergone major changes due to increasing rates of divorce, which has led to an increase in single-parent families. Some are choosing to create this kind of family without getting married. In Zimbabwean law, it is called cohabiting (*kuchaya mapoto*). "Small house" cohabitation is an emerging form of extra marital union where there is an involvement of "outside" or "secret" wives (Museka and Machingura, 2014:127; Mutseta 2016:17). Socio-economic and psychological factors have contributed to the rise of this phenomenon, as individuals have various motives for engaging in it. It is also a catalyst

for the proliferation of single parent families, when one spouse within the nuclear family dies or divorces, a single parent family emerges, which is discussed in the next section.

3.4.2   The Single Parent Families

A single parent family is a family unit in which children live with only one parent. Causes of single parenthood are as follows: the death of one spouse, divorce, separation or desertion by one partner, deliberate choice (Haralambos and Holborn 2013; Mupfumira, 2017:110), and pregnancy outside marriage (Chirozva, Mubaya and Mukamuri 2012:31). Chirozva *et al.* (2012:31) view single parenthood as a reflection of new trends that attempt to adapt to secular changes in educational status, employment and occupational mobility. These constitute single male or female adults with their children only. Knowing that they cannot do every routine task that needs to be done, single parents are good at delegating household responsibilities to children, who gain self-esteem from contributing to the family by, being of significant family use. In some rural areas, many forced marriages, especially in polygamous unions, result in single parenting arrangements in which the wife usually a teenager takes up the active role of providing for the family (Kurebwa and Kurebwa, 2018:30). The inexperienced young wife becomes an implied head of the family. On the other hand, the most abused is the girl child. In some case, they are forced into early marriages because of their situation, trying to escape from poverty. At times this happens because surviving relatives want to get rid of them.

3.4.2.1   Level 1: Practical and symbolic dimensions

On Shorter's phenomenological level, the symbolic aspect of the single parent family plays an essential role in the transmission of values and knowledge to the children.   On   the practical aspect the single parent family is no different from other families. A parent is a symbol of a biological and emotional connection to a child. Child behaviour depends on child rearing practices. Single parents provide for their children financial and emotional support and day to day care. They usually have to deal with discipline problems on their own. Today social media tops the list of daily activities of children (Zebron et al, 2013:34). The children, using modern electronic gadgets such as laptops and smart phones stay busy browsing, playing games, watching movies, listening to music and communicating with their friends. This phenomenon is largely common in urban areas although rural areas are now showing a similar trend (Zebron, Sigauke and Musingafi, 2013:34).

3.4.2.2   *Level 2: Domestic Technical Dimension*

In line with Shorter's domestic technical level, women in single parent families make a great contribution to the family, to society and to the Church by their many talents and unique gifts. They are responsible for all the housework and child care, such as cooking, book-keeping, and catering for the children. The mother usually engages in teaching the children how to sit, eat, speak and even walk. It is the mother who initiates the child to the community where it begins to perceive a sense of belonging. The role of the mother is thus fundamental for the biological, psychological, moral, social, religious and physical maturation of the child (Gaidzanwa, 1992:274; Ncube, 1997; Moyo and Kawewe, 2009:161; Wirba, 2012:5; Mupfumira, 2017:114). This role is taught to girls at a very tender age, mainly in villages, where young ones begin to carry their younger siblings on their backs.

However, these responsibilities are weighed down by lack of financial security, work overload, indiscipline from children and loneliness. From a psychological point of view, both boys and girls who lack direct experience of appropriate male-father relationship may exhibit abnormal behaviour, for example, boy interacting aggressively with their mothers and teachers (Mupfumira, 2017:110). Life in a single parent household can be quite stressful for the adult and the children. The single parent may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for the children, maintaining a job and keeping up with the bills and household chores.

Girls are trained in domestic duties that may be classified under kitchen duties, caring of infants, caring of the sick and hospitality. Domestic duties are seen as protecting the girl because there is relative safety at home. Kitchen duties prepare the girl in good cooking, and they give the girl an opportunity to train herself hard work, cleanliness and sanitation. Heavier duties such as fetching water, fetching fire wood and pounding provide the girl with feminine techniques and skills and they provide the much needed physical exercises that help to keep the girl fit. Washing of clothes and cleaning the house trains the girl in smartness. Boys, on the other hand, are trained in more physically demanding duties such as ploughing, gardening, hunting and herding cattle. Boys are also taught how to manage the home through building, maintaining and repairing structures.

3.4.2.3   *Level 3: Dimension of Values*

A single parent family, like other family types, regards family values as important. Because there is no marriage partner in the home, single parents focus a lot of attention on the child(ren), on the quality of that relationship, and on what values matter most to keep the family functioning well. These values are: honesty, obedience, kindness, respect, hard work, self-discipline, humility and fear of God (Gombe, 1995:207). When family values are well defined and reinforced at home they help a family to work together toward common goals. Parents in a single parent family are the natural role models of values to their children.

Single parents depend more heavily on the voluntary cooperation of their child or children. Single parents encourage cooperation by holding family meetings where children are involved directly in making decisions and solving problems. When children are thus involved, they are more likely to help carry out the decisions. They focus on being the best possible single parent, which often means putting the needs of the child first. They genuinely like and enjoy children, sacrificing time, money, and energy for the sake of the children. They try to be supportive and patient and help children cope (Chimuka, 2001:23; Mangena, 2012:1). Like other effective parents, they are consistent and not highly punitive. This discipline style gives children choices, uses natural and logical consequences, and provides structure.

3.4.2.4   Level 4: Worldview Dimension

The single parent worldview is characterised by deep religious commitment or spiritual dryness depending on the causes of the state of singularity and ability to cope with life situations. At the loss of a spouse, a new chapter in life is beginning for each family member as well as for the family system. Deep religious commitment is shown in a single parent family when there is need for help in the upbringing of the child(ren). In a single parent family, there may be lack of a firm authoritarian voice from a father figure or motherly care. Absent from these families are the marital bond and the presence of either a mother or father. This type of family presents special problems, for example, fathers raising daughters in the area of adolescence. Children may lack adequate role models of a particular sex. An absent parent can never be replaced fully and that gap will always haunt children for life. This creates the need to seek help from the church for the moral and spiritual upbringing of the child(ren). Churches support single parents spiritually and psychologically (Muzvidziwa, 2001:73; Zaroba 2012) through prayers and counselling respectively. As a result, single

parents tend to attend services more frequently and being more involved in church spiritual activities so that they expose both themselves and their children to the religious teachings. Because of this they may internalize these teachings and use them in their parenting (Petts, 2011; Petts 2012). The religious institutions also help to provide a sense of community for children (Sullivan 2008). Other benefits single parents seek in church include passing down beliefs from one generation to the next and teaching children how to cope with stress.

In contrast to deep religious commitment, other single parents exhibit signs of spiritual dryness. According to Zaroba (2012) the biggest challenge facing widows and widowers is loneliness which may last beyond the normal mourning period. A loss of identity also accompanies the loss of role as wife or husband and meaning in life is questioned after the loss of a spouse with whom one has lived for a given period of time. There are also emotional and social implications of the change in status from married man or woman to widow or widower respectively. For Mushangwe (2015), the death of a spouse is not only an emotional loss but also a social loss and often entails major changes in role performance. The change in role performance results in too many domestic responsibilities that may lead to decreased religious participation.

As family members watch their loved one's dying and mourn him or her, they stretch their worldview to include the reality of death and grief (Currier et al., 2009:181), which includes individual feelings of sorrow, guilt, and relief, and reaching out to other family members for support. In a single parent setup, belief in life after death is associated with the view that the surviving spouse should take care of the child(ren) for the sake of the departed husband or wife who is believed to continue to exist within the family. Rituals such as keeping pictures of the departed spouse and frequent visits to the grave to put flowers help to keep the family intact as it reflects a shared meaning of communion and continuing the relationship with the departed husband or wife. In the absence of both parents, due to a number of factors, a child-headed family emerges as shown in the next section.

3.4.3 Child-headed families

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990 article 1) defines a child as a person up to the age of 18 years. The Child Protection and Adoption Act (1996) of Zimbabwe defines a child as a person under the age of sixteen years. The Constitution of

Zimbabwe defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years, and has the right to claim any rights accorded to all children under the law (The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe Amendment 2013 Section 81). For the purpose of consistency in the definition of a child, the Child Protection and Adoption Act has to be aligned with both the provisions of UNCRC and the Constitution of Zimbabwe. When both parents are permanently absent, the eldest child becomes the "head" of the family and takes up the responsibilities of providing leadership, decision making, daily running, feeding and maintenance of his or her younger siblings. On the same note United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2005) holds that a child-headed household is when a child or children take over as the head of their household and fend for themselves without any adult supervision. The occurrence of such households shows that the traditional family structure, which used to include parents and their children in the same household, is slowly diminishing.

Child-headed families in Masvingo are a result of challenges such as divorce, domestic violence, parental deaths due to HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2000; Chitando, 2007:5; Mazuru and Grand 2013:171), death of a single mother, death or sickness of a relative (Robson, 2004:227; Maushe and Mugumbate, 2015:33), children's preferences, dying wish of a parent, inheritance of residence by surviving children (Foster *et al*, 1997:155; Lee *et al*, 2002:459), and the failure of the extended family or relatives to assume parental duties due to economic strains (Foster, *et al*, 1996:389).

Other forms of child-headed families are caused by child marriages as a result of early school dropout, cultural practices such as *kugara nhaka* (wife inheritance), *kuroodzwa* (forced child marriage) and *kuripiswa ngozi* (appeasing avenging spirits), commercialisation of young girls caused by economic depressions with families, widespread use of uncensored pornographic material on internet and social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, making girls prone to ideas and information that is not befitting for their age.[27] Pressure to get mobile phones, resulting in girls being vulnerable to sell their bodies to own the gadgets.

The death of a parent brings radical change, both in material and social life. Orphaned children constitute the majority of child-headed families in Masvingo, while some versions of child family heads are created by early marriages. According to an empirical study carried

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[27] While Information and Computer Technologies (ICTs) are the wave of a new age, information on management, use and vast opportunities associated with technology has not been properly disseminated in Masvingo Diocese.

out by Tag a Life International (2016), peer pressure can also cause early marriages due to the influence of friends: "For instance, the need to find a 'blesser' because of pressure, experimentation and economic benefits resulted in child marriages" (Higherlife Foundation, 2016: 6). Due to the 'respect' placed upon marriage in Zimbabwean cultures, it is difficult for girls to make sound choices when one becomes pregnant since the young girl is expected to stay with the person responsible for the pregnancy as a wife, regardless of her age. Being married young also means sexual indulgence before one matures thereby hindering them from making sound choices about their bodies and what they want as well as being unable to come out of abusive relationships, which are prevalent in such settings. In addition, payment of *lobola* to the girl's family allows the husband to legitimize the marriage. Children and adults relate to each other based on motivation they receive from peers and role models. When young boys and girls lack exposure and minimal positive influence, the result is early marriages. Boys and girls are often brought up surrounded by good role models, mentors of men and women who are themselves empowered and uplift each other to create a possible freedom for manhood and womanhood. Collective responsibility is usually thoroughly exercised from the family and community in order to protect children and uphold their rights. The responsibility of caring for orphans has become a major problem due to poverty, which is undermining the extended family's capacity to care adequately for orphans (Mupedziswa and Gumbo 1996:22; Foster *et al*, 1997:156; Gomba 2018:31).

A study by Ayieko (2003:1) revealed that children in such conditions are deprived of their childhood and the opportunity to go to school. Economic hardships lead them to look for means of subsistence that increase their vulnerability to HIV infection, substance abuse, child labour, sex work and delinquency. Economic and social conditions are changing many aspects of family life, including traditions favouring life-long co-residence of parents and children as a basic means of ensuring support for young and old.

3.4.3.1   *Level 1: Practical and Symbolic Dimensions*

At Shorter's phenomenological level, the practical or material aspect of culture in a child-headed family includes; homes, schools, means of production, goods, products and so forth. All of these material aspects of a culture help to define the behaviour and perceptions of the child-headed family members. During rainy seasons child heads are also expected to provide labour in the morning before going to school and in the evening after school. They lack educational opportunities due to lack of funds for school fees, uniforms, books and a variety

of other school necessities (Gubwe et al, 2015:293; Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016:37; Magwa and Magwa, 2016:19). In addition, the reality is that these children have to seek employment in order to financially support their siblings. To improve their livelihood there is need for immediate material assistance and developing clear strategies that independently address the practical and strategic needs of these households. These material aspects are linked with the symbolical aspect of culture.

When considering the symbolic aspect of culture in a child-headed family, a parent's love is inestimable. The pains of parental death remain fresh in the minds of many children who live in child-headed families. The death of a father deprives children of male authority, a status symbol in many communities, and the death of a mother further deprives the children of crucial emotional and mental security as well. The relationship between children and parents remains of the utmost importance in children's lives. Parents provide a secure zone in which children feel protected. Children learn ways of coping with stress and anxiety from their parents, since parental behaviour in times of stress forms an example.

In addition, a family without an adult caregiver does not provide children with the chance to learn many of the skills essential to their development. The natural bond between a child and its parents or main caregivers is established during early childhood. This bond is believed to provide the foundation for relationships in later life. According to Rutter (1982:723), children model themselves on their parents in other behaviour as well, either by precept (children are told by parents what they should and should not do) or by percept (child observe and copy their parents' behaviour). Parents teach their children moral standards, encourage positive behaviour and discourage unwanted behaviour displayed by a child. However, children in child-headed households are usually confronted with more difficulties than other vulnerable groups because they lack adult protection and support. Furthermore, growing up without parental care and adult role models might lead to irresponsible behaviour and related behavioural problems (Maclellan, 2005:7). Adult care and love, security and a sense of belonging are the main psycho-social needs of children.

3.4.3.2 *Level 2: Domestic Technical Dimension*

On the domestic technical level, a child-headed family has to provide for itself and take on adult responsibilities and they have no relatives to take care of them. This can include duties such as cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, paying bills, and managing the household

budget, getting dispensing medications or imposing discipline on younger children. Economic insecurity is the prime concern for them and they also face tremendous psychological (emotional) and social challenges as they live with the constant memory of their deceased parents. Most of these households have nowhere to turn for emotional and social support to help them cope with the problems they face. Research studies conducted by United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2012) in Zimbabwe indicate that children actually work in order to raise money for school fees, uniforms, and food for themselves. Vending can also be a source of income for child-headed families (Mutisi and Bourdillon, 2000:75). Child-headed families lack opportunities to learn life skills or have access to the cultural knowledge which usually comes from the parents and family. However, children who are left parentless take on new roles and responsibilities in keeping the family on its feet (Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016:37; Magwa and Magwa, 2016:19). These responsibilities include sweeping, cooking, washing (for girls) and gardening, cattle herding and ploughing (for boys). However, the home circumstances of girls are unconducive to learning because girls spend much time on domestic chores in comparison to boys (Chinyoka and Naidu, 2014:223). Many of the heads of these families do not have the skills or knowledge to ensure that they are living healthy lives and protect themselves from exploitation and abuse. This is a common phenomenon in rural areas where teenagers get into parenting, either accidentally, or by making premature decisions and somehow reflecting a lack of proper upbringing.

3.4.3.3 Level 3: Dimension of Values

Values give meaning and direction to child-headed family members. Given that child-headed families are without the guidance of adults, it is important that these families develop important values that will enable them to cope with the problems of life like shortage of basic necessities such as food, clothing, school fees and medical care (Kapesa, 2015; Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016:37). These values include, among others, love, respect, unity, forgiveness (Chimuka, 2001:24; Mawere, 2013:443; Mahere, 2014:347). Love enables the children to take care of each other by sharing food and clothes. Without the bond of love, the child-headed family may face disintegration as the children may open opportunities for adult relatives to take them away to separate homes. The value of respect among the children is also important in child-headed families since it enables them to work together as a team in undertaking domestic chores such as cooking, washing and sweeping (Magwa and Magwa,

2016:20). The child head commands the respect of the younger siblings so that he or she controls them and delegates tasks where necessary. The child-headed family is often united on the basis of blood relations and this unity keeps them together[28]. To cultivate unity, the child-headed family exercises sympathy and empathy towards each other. Moreover unity among siblings is an indication of faith, confidence and trust in each other (Naidoo, 2007:7; Moyo, 2015:52). Within the child-headed family where mistakes are frequent, forgiveness is a key value so that the family tolerates each other. The child-head exercises patience and shows the younger ones the importance of forgiveness in cases where mistakes have been made. While I have just examined key values in the child-headed family, these values are jointly necessary to keep the child-headed family together.

3.4.3.4　　　　　*Level 4: Worldview Dimension*

The worldview of child-headed families shows three tendencies. First, the loss of parents or guardians may give a heightened sense of religious participation as the child(ren) seek attachment in spiritual beings to compensate for the loss. Spirituality is deepened as children believe that they should be spiritually upright for the sake of pleasing the departed parents (Drew, et al, 1996:79). This worldview includes taking faith in God or other religio-cultural or spiritual entities as compensatory attachment figures (Aschwanden, 1987:13-22; Petts, 2009:552). Religious conviction within the child-headed family can provide confidence that events, good or bad, do not just happen by "chance" or "fortune" but are controlled or willed by God (Kay et al, 2010:37). Thus, when protective sources of personal control are lowered and the world seems perilously random and uncertain, beliefs in the existence of a controlling God may be a particularly attractive mode of coping. This argument implies that threats to personal control should increase religious conviction and belief in the existence of a controlling God, which should, in turn, relieve the anxious uncertainty. Such faith helps them cope with the challenges of growing adultless homes (Moyo, 2015:3). The belief in life after death also strengthens religious participation since there is belief in possible reunion with the departed parents in the next world. The expected reunion should not therefore be negated by unspiritual approaches to life such as drug and alcohol abuse. In the light of spiritual grounding based on religio-cultural beliefs such as existence of *vadzimu*, there is a spiritual-

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[28] In some cases, the child-headed family does not include blood relations, as in the case of a family of street kids where members come from different home backgrounds.

based meaning and purpose of life despite the loss of parents. Religious beliefs therefore give a sense of hope.

The second tendency among child-headed families is a negated worldview where there is loss of spiritual guidance as a result of an adult figure. As far as the worldview is concerned, the beliefs of children in a child-headed family implies that the extended family system has collapsed and primary relations are no longer important, contrary to traditional African expectations that allowed care and support to be extended to these children. A spiritual worldview is replaced by a materialistic worldview that is focused on secular aspects of life such as material possessions and pleasure seeking tendencies. Children who exhibit this worldview are often involved in drug and alcohol abuse. The spiritual dryness results in loss of meaning and purpose in life. Hopelessness becomes dominant and this may cause suicidal tendencies among the children. Children in child-headed households experience a significant amount of fear about the future (Walker, 2002:19). Their fears are based on losing their house, living in poverty for the rest of their lives and were afraid that life would become increasingly difficult. Some feared that they would become ill. Street kids have developed a substructure society with its own values and norms which now seem to challenge the functional flavour of the traditional religion and culture in modern society (Kanjanda and Chiparange, 2015:301). In today's urban societies, street children represent a lot of child-headed families mostly caused by abusive parents or guardians. Such street families though may not be composed of biological siblings but a group of young children and even infants who realise their common disadvantage and come together to take care of each other. The leader is usually the eldest and life is all about survival. The experience and thought of being abused eventually creates very bitter youngsters who easily turn into criminals (Jesuits Zimbabwe Mozambique, 2019). They are also likely to suffer from many emotional problems including low self-esteem, helplessness, anger, aggression and problems relating to peers and family members (Moyo, 2015:31).

The third tendency is a mixture of elements from the aforementioned extreme worldviews. While there may be lack of deep religious commitment, there is no spiritual dryness but the tendency lies somewhere between the extreme positions. In this worldview, children may sometimes seek spiritual guidance but they may also develop a sense of hopelessness (Walker, 2003:44; Chigwenya, et al, 2008:264). The meaning and purpose of life is also periodically gained and sometimes it is lost. Peers may influence what may need to be done at a particular point of time without some religious principle to guide.

3.4.4 Reconstituted Families

A reconstituted family is one that contains a step parent. It is also called a blended or compound family. It is usually the result of remarriage after a divorce or the death of one of the spouses (Gwirayi 2010). In addition, Maphosa and Maphosa (2014:601) identify social, cultural and economic causes of remarriage in a rural district in Zimbabwe[29]. Social causes include peer pressure from relatives and friends, desire for children and need for companionship (Duri et al, 2013:15). Inheritance customs and the desire for a helper to take care of children are some of the cultural causes of remarriage (Nkomo, 2014:2). Economically, the loss of a breadwinner and economic hardships are seen as causes of remarriage (Mutangadura, 2000:33). In a reconstituted family, members try to avoid conflict and achieve harmony owing to differences in backgrounds and experiences about parenting especially when the new family does not function as the previous one. Some children or one of the spouses may resist change concerning lifestyle and discipline. In addition, one step parent may have never been a parent before and may lack experience of the different stages children go through. Children may find it difficult to accept a step parent if they spent a long time in a single parent family (Segal and Robinson, 2019).

3.4.4.1   *Level 1: Practical and Symbolic Dimensions*

From a phenomenological point of view, merging two families can relieve the stress of one or both parents. Single parents who are recovering from divorce or spousal death understand the difficulties of parenting alone and can take comfort in having a new partner (Brown, 2015:353). When parents remarry, their combined resources can provide a sense of security for the family. They may not have much couple time, but they can draw strength from each other.

3.4.4.2   *Level 2: Domestic Technical Dimension*

On the domestic technical level a reconstituted family provides children with more loving, responsible adults in their lives. The main function of the family is to integrate internal and external resources to foster the growth of its members. The new partners have to think of recoupling and parenting. They can also provide a network of support to nurture and teach the

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[29] The authors do not name the Zimbabwean District under study, for the purpose of confidentiality.

children. Grandparents can tell stories and share experiences. More family members also means more love, which is a huge advantage for any child. Children raised in blended families learn to be more flexible and resolve conflicts. They can adapt to new people and situations due to their new living arrangement. These children often develop good problem-solving skills

3.4.4.3   Level 3: Dimension of Values

From Shorter's culture model (1988:35) on values, a reconstituted family has the following values: A continuity of care, which means that the training and socialization of children continues and meeting of economic needs continues for example paying of school fees. The family still provides the bridge between the individual and society (Shorter, 1998:36). Social accountability involves both parents and they teach their children to respect others. Key to this would be acceptance of the concept of togetherness as a core value within the reconstituted family (Kambarami, 2006). Family members learn to accept that their own welfare is dependent upon others. Equally important would be the belief that each individual is a member of the reconstituted family and that membership comes with obligations and responsibilities, but no one, regardless of any past or present transgressions, would be isolated or shunned from the family.

3.4.4.4   Level 4: Worldview Dimension

The worldview of the reconstituted family presents three possible scenarios that result due to different spiritual convictions between the parties. First, there is a likelihood of a conflict of convictions between the parties involved regarding spiritual beliefs that can be used to interpret experiences and solve the problems of life such as poverty, illness and death, among others. In the event that a Shona marries a Tsonga, for example, the clash arises between differing indigenous religions (Mushwana and Chauke, 2015:441). While the Tsonga worldview believes in initiation ceremonies for boys and girls as they are spiritually prepared for adult life, Shona belief systems do not have the ceremonies. Other points of conflict may arise regarding to the nature and extent to which belief in *vadzimu* (ancestors), consultation of *n'angas* (traditional healers) and death rituals such as *kurova guva* (coming home ceremony) may be used to guide and protect the reconstituted family (Makaudze and Gudhlanga, 2014:88; Mwandayi, 2017:25). The deep rooted differences in worldview may be passed on to the child(ren) within the reconstituted family. The child(ren) usually follow the convictions

of their biological parent and not that of the step parent. Such differences may be seen in rituals that are carried out when investigating the supernatural causes of illness, for example, consulting the traditional healer and brewing beer to appease the ancestors (Chavhunduka, 2009:2).

The second scenario is that of mutual respect of the worldview of both parties. This involves mutual understanding of worldview backgrounds and spouses give each other space and freedom of worldview convictions. The respect is rooted in different convictions regarding God, religion, *vadzimu* (ancestors), meaning of life and death, among other worldview elements. The couple will allow each other to follow their spiritual convictions so that the marriage is freed from possible conflicts. The respect that prevails between the couple is allowed to be passed on to the child(ren) who may be allowed to choose what they want to follow. Sibanda (2012:60) gives an example of a child who became a Rastafarian[30] as a result of space granted by parents of a reconstituted family despite the fact that Rastafarianism is associated with smoking *mbanje* and dreadlocks.

The third scenario consists of a worldview compromise by one of the parties within the reconstituted family. This compromise may be negotiated before the marriage or may take place gradually afterwards to avoid conflict that may break the marriage. In cases where the husband reconstitutes the family with a much younger wife, the husband's worldview is usually followed and the wife often submits to the belief system. In the event that the wife is older than the husband, the wife's worldview is usually followed by the reconstituted family. The compromise is seen in matters to do with birth rituals for the spiritual protection of the baby (Mureyi et al, 2012:164), belief in *vadzimu* (ancestors) as a source of protection and guidance of the family (Chavhunduka, 2009). Furthermore, the compromise involves consultation of indigenous healers to protect the homestead from evil spirits and witchcraft, meaning of life in the face of poverty and joblessness and death rituals such as *magadziro* (cleansing ceremony). The child(ren) of the reconstituted family often follow the negotiated worldview to avoid conflict within the family. For example, if parents believe that the child(ren) should be protected from evil forces through *kupira vadzimu* (ancestrial veneration), the child will have no option but to follow what the parents believe in.

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[30] Rastafari people follow a number of spiritual prescriptions related to the body, including smoking, meditating, growing matted hair, eating an Afrocentric vegan diet and drumming/chanting. However, a person does not have to follow all of these practices to be a Rastafari; rather they are means to achieve specific spiritual objectives (Waldstein, 2016).

3.4.5   The Extended Families

The extended family covers the parents of the couple and their children, the brothers and sisters of the parents, the brothers and sisters of the couple and the grand and great grandchildren of the couple (Gwirayi 2010). The relationships within an extended family are based on kinship (biological or putative blood relationship) and affinity (relationship between blood relationships of one marriage partner and those of the other marriage partner). The first noticeable feature of the Masvingo family is its extended nature. Such a family would include adopted and fostered children. Family members can stay far apart but are always 'visible' to each other. In other words, family members know where the other members are.

3.4.5.1   Level 1: Practical and Symbolic Dimensions

From Shorter's phenomenological level the symbolic aspect of the extended family reflects family traditions. Extended families practice traditions that symbolically represent their families and that connect them to previous generations. Members of the extended family participate in crucial decision making on family matters which concern relationship with the living dead, ancestors and other spiritual matters, like sickness, death and marriage, to mention a few. Rituals are important and useful ways of assisting individuals and families in dealing with transitions and losses, bringing about healing and transmitting values from generation to generation.

The naming of children is therefore an important occasion, which is often marked by ceremonies. Some names mark the occasion of the child's birth. For example, if the birth occurs during the rain the child would be given a name which means "rain" or water; if the mother is on a journey at the time, the child might be called "traveller", "road" or "wanderer." Most families emphasize naming of the father's relative appropriately. And where such rules are strictly applied, it is not uncommon to find all children in a family named after the fathers' relatives. Across different cultures, the naming of children and places has been the result of religious, political, ideological and other concerns. In Masvingo, names have been highly contested and they reflect political and religious history. For example, the name *Zvaitwanashe* ("It has been done by God") has a religious connotation. Mashiri (2009: 66) rightly notes that "among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, names given to children…not only serve as useful labels in the family, community and society at large, they function as indirect communicative vehicles in situations where direct comment is not feasible."

Therefore, in the light of conflict that characterizes human relations, names given to animals such as dogs can assist in expressing this conflict via suggestive and hate-laden names. For Mashiri (2009:66), Shona pet naming makes use of sublime names in order to express ill-feelings, hostilities and unhappiness that arise from one's relations with others in the community. Some names describe the personality of an individual, his character, or some key events in his life.

The practical aspect of the extended family is the material co-operation among family members in all aspects of life. This collective action brings about positive reciprocity, which is important in maintaining equilibrium in the institution. Relatives cooperate in family community issues and accept mutual responsibility across generations. To express this mutual responsibility, family members frequently gather at chosen times and specific elder family members' homes to make collective family decisions, make family ritual celebrations and even to socialize (Shorter 1998: 84). Among people of Masvingo, a number of extended families live together in a village community. The village set or structure implies relationships between neighbours, related or non-related (Mugambi and Magesa 1998). In the traditional set-up, the village wealth, fields, domesticated animals, and wild animals belonged to everyone, and each person had a responsibility to promote the common good and use it profitably for the whole village. If someone did not have cattle to use in farming, some beasts of burden were always made available to that poor family. By the same token, children were considered to belong to the community and to be everyone's responsibility.

Members of an extended family also have symbolic ways of expressing welcome. Hospitality supersedes poverty, hence it can be described as readiness to welcome and help every person.[31] In traditional African culture, whenever there is food to be eaten, everyone present is invited to participate, even if the food was prepared for a smaller number of people, without anticipating the arrival of visitors. It would be the height of incredibly bad manners for one to eat something, However small, without sharing it with anyone else present, or at least expressing the intention to do so (Okafor, 1974: 21).

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[31] Hospitality in Africa is more than just entertaining a guest. It is a deeply ingrained value in the African worldview, practised in every social, economic, political, and religious structure of a community. Hospitality gives the community its identity (cf. Chinchen, 2000). It is an ethical duty, a way of life. A hospitable person is known to be full of integrity, reliability, honesty, kindness, and knowledge of his or her cultural practices. One's social position and leadership ability are rated by it (*cf, https://missionexus.org/the-art-of-hospitality-african-style-accessesd June 02, 2018*).

3.4.5.2 Level 2: Domestic Technical Dimension

At the domestic technical level, the extended family emphasizes the roles of members in the family. Within the extended family, the roles and functions are played according to gender, age, position and status within the family (Kambarami, 2006:19). The extended family always has a head that is respected and listened to by the rest of the family members. This head normally makes decisions for the family but always in consultation with other family elders. The centre of all the roles in an African family is preservation and propagation of life (Uzukwu 1996, EA, 1995:43; Beller 2001:63). The visible practical role performance starts quite early in life with the '*mahumbwe*' child game involving imitation of parental roles; slowly their later roles in adult life are shaped. Children have a spiritual role in their infancy. Together with the very old in the society, they are considered to be very near to the ancestors, guardian spirits and eventually near to God (Mbiti 1991:13). In the Masvingo context, men are normally considered as the head of the family, with women helping them in taking care of the family. Children are expected to learn life from their parents and other elders of the community. However, this does not mean that women are regarded as inferior to their men, in traditional society; there is a pertinent saying: "*Musha mukadzi*" which means a responsible woman takes care of the homestead. For a home and family to exist and function properly for its purpose, the woman in the home is very important and central.

With deeper analysis I have realized that in the rural areas, women are mostly the tillers in the fields, hence taking the role of family providers. It does not come as a surprise in today's families that women are increasingly taking a leading role as family bread-winners. In the wedding ceremony the parents "give away" the bride to the groom, symbolizing their "letting go" of the daughter from the family of origin. These days, it is not important that people of the same totem, clan or tribe only gather together to perform these functions but friends who are not necessarily relatives are invited at these ceremonies, though they would not participate in the actual decision making. For example, at one's birthday party there might be few relatives invited but surprisingly there could be a huge turnout of workmates and friends. The element of choice in carrying on traditions allows family members to express their values and beliefs about the event and how it will be celebrated.

3.4.5.3   Level 3: Dimension of Values

In Masvingo Diocese, extended families' attributes like hospitality, caring and support (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2005:2155) solidarity and provision of security are still visible. In an extended family the value of hospitality is manifested in the economic life; and this involves communal willingness to assist each other. In rural areas people displayed their hospitality by co-operating in works such as agricultural work, the building and repair of houses, land cultivation and clearance of bushy areas, hunting, and fishing, among others. A hospitable person is one who is generous in providing food and shelter for the needy and services for whoever needs help. Hospitality as a value is captured as a proverb (Hamutyinei and Plangger, 1987:44; MaAdoo and Rukuni, 1993:48). Hence there is a Shona saying: *Mweni haapedzi dura*, which literally means "The visitor does not finish food in the granery." Thus family members are reminded that extending such hospitality will not deplete their food reserves; after all, a visitor consumes only a little food. This is an important aspect of Shona social philosophy. It captures the crucial idea of African hospitality (Nyathi 2005). People are encouraged to extend hospitality, in the form of food to their visitors. The value of caring and support has prompted individuals to call upon other family members in times of need such as helping the disabled members of the community (Muderedzi, 2006) at times of sickness and death. Most relatives visit and offer help during such times. For instance, children grow up in an extended family that includes grandparents, uncles and aunts, parents, brothers and sisters. When a man dies his responsibilities for the family are taken over by the next eldest brother or cousin (Agere, 1990:31). Family care for elderly relatives is still a valued feature but again the extent of care to elderly parents is limited. It may take the form of support in buying food and paying medical bills but in urban areas these elderly will rarely reside with their children's families.

The extended family plays an important role in raising and caring for children, especially in rural areas. This emphasizes the collectivistic nature of the culture and the approach to parenting. A person's behaviour is seen as the community's responsibility, as well as their responsibility to the community.

The relationship between men and women affects the element of care and support in family relationships. Despite much sensitization from women that males should participate more actively in domestic work, traditional socio-economic values did not place emphasis on male doing domestic work. Indeed most communities objected outright to such participation by

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men. In certain families, some men try to help out their wives but do so secretly, and they feel embarrassed or demoralized when found at such activities by other men.

In an extended family life signifies a concrete experience of sharing, belonging, celebration and participation. Solidarity implies "active participation in the communal life in all its dimensions" (Wirba 2012:171). The bonds of relationship transcend the visible world to embrace the living dead and those still to come. The concept challenges the human family to cultivate the feeling of belonging. It empowers individuals to challenge the many situations of inequality, poverty, and injustice because they distort the sense of '*ukama*' a Shona word that means being related or belonging to the same family (Murove 2007:179). This term expresses the value of solidarity. The Shona ethic of *ukama* puts emphasis on the immortality of values through the solidarity of the past and the present. This immortality of values is embedded in the idea of the kinship or relatedness of all that exists. Attempting to isolate oneself from this existential bondedness is nothing else but an illusion, which is primarily aimed at exempting oneself from facing one's responsibilities. It should be noted that some ideologies seek to emphasize variables such as ethnicity, class, race, gender, HIV status and other factors that deepen divisive pluralism. Solidarity, on the other hand, recognizes that we are all members of one human family. This value is best illustrated by the common experience in Shona traditional communities. For instance, when a child has done something that the community considered to be bad, any adult member of the community felt responsible for the behaviour of the child and often punished such a child, even though that child was not his or her own child (Kileff and Kileff, 1992). The value of solidarity is very important in the neighbourhood and in the community. It is a practical way of showing love for others. It promotes human rights and community building among the Masvingo people.

On the other hand, the value of solidarity is constantly threatened by the insatiable hunger for economic profit, political power and the struggle for survival. Socio-economic, political and cultural changes have isolated individuals and fragmented communities. Corruption ripples throughout society. It makes access harder for the poor in financial terms because it erodes the trust that a society needs to function effectively.

The extended family is also a place where security resides. Security is an important value in the family. The family as a unit promotes interdependence of household members and is obliged to develop resilient qualities in order to achieve a minimal level of security despite the insecurity of food, nutrition, and all other factors that facilitates a quality life (Samkange

and Samkange, 1980:13). Therefore, a collaborative effort of individual members and extended families can be of great benefit to the nation in achieving security. Most extended family systems are patriarchal, thus authority is traced from the male descendants. After marriage, residence becomes patri-local since the wife resides at her husband's residence (Kaseke, et al, 1997). However, visits to the male's home are encouraged and lineage tracing still continues broadly to be done from the male side. Moreover, provision of a safe environment with adequate food, economic, financial, education, health, and job security will enhance family livelihood in Masvingo. All these elements are to ensure the security of family members.

3.4.5.4 Level 4: Worldview Dimension

The worldview of the extended family is grounded in the spiritual world. The extended family is considered as an entity that has existed before one was born and will exist after one has died (Mufamadi, 2009:24). Within the extended family, members strongly believe that when people die, their souls continue to live in the ancestral world in the form of spirits (Gombe, 1986; Cox, 1994; Bourdillon 1998). These spirits can manifest themselves through possessing human beings and express themselves through them as their mediums. This is what Mbiti (1991) has referred to as the "living dead" as already mentioned above. The term "living dead" is based on the belief that death is just the separation of the body and soul, hence, life continues even after death. Within the community of the living dead, there is a hierarchy which starts with the clan spirits or *mhondoro* at the top followed by family spirits or *vadzimu.*

The *Mhondoro* are understood as tribal and territorial or national guardians (Mudhenge, 1988; Harbitz, 1996:669; Bourdillon, 1998). These guardians are also considered to be rain guardians. Appeal to the rain guardians is done through rainmaking ceremonies called *mukwerera* (Ngara et al, 2014: 81; Madavo, 2019:141). God gives rain to the nation through them. They have their special mediums whom the living consult from time to time especially in cases of disasters, calamities and prolonged droughts. The importance of the *mhondoro* in the extended family worldview lies in their position as intermediaries between *Mwari* (God) and the people, especially in the sphere of rain, which is regarded as their particular responsibility (Auret, 2007:173). The *Mhondoro* are regarded as being very close to *Mwari*, and thus communication with them is done by members of the extended family indirectly

through *vadzimu*. Given the intermediary role of the *Mhondoro*, the extended family believes and bestows a great value on them.

Within the extended family, it is believed that God does not communicate with the living directly or the living with God directly but through the ancestors (Banana, 1991; Shoko, 2011:501; Mtapuri and Mazengwa, 2013:1; Tatira 2014:106). Members of the extended family thank their creator for the life they have through their ancestors. This means that members of the extended family believe in God in which everything begins and ends. This God is known and called by various names, according to his attributes such as *Mwari* and *Musikavanhu* (Gelfand, 1970; Bourdillon 1998). One of the major roles of the ancestors is to plead to God for protection against evil spirits on behalf of their descendants (Murove, 2007:180; Mwandayi, 2017:2). If this protection is lacking, there may be some sickness of a supernatural cause.

Sickness and other problems within extended families are seen primarily as spiritual problems. The perceived causes of illness include curses and witchcraft. When a person is taken ill a traditional healer is consulted to find out the cause of the illness (Shoko, 2007:501; Masaka and Chingombe, 2009:189). Appropriate medicine is prescribed, which is believed to overcome the spiritual forces causing the illness, so that the person recovers. If the forces causing the illness are stronger than those being used for healing, the person will not recover and may even die. The traditional family believes that sickness is either natural or induced. Bourdillon (1998:149) lists natural illnesses such as coughs, common colds, influenza, fevers, headaches or stomach pains that could have been caused by what someone could have eaten. Illness can also be caused by simple incidents. Such sicknesses can easily be healed or cured by easily available herbs and medicines. There are certain elders in the communities who know which herb cures which ailment. Such knowledgeable people are not considered as diviners or even as medicine people. These are people who are just rendering a service to the community. Shona medical beliefs hold that serious illness is caused by the spirits or by witchcraft or sorcery (Bourdillon, 1987; Nyabwari, 2014:9; Tatira 2014:107). It is believed that if the spirits are discontented with their descendants' behaviour, may cause one of them to fall ill. According to Chavunduka (1978:14), witches are conceived by the Shona as people who have the ability "to harm others through some inherent power, or through the use of charms and medicines." The witches cause illness by planting poison or poisonous objects on a path or in a place that someone frequents, and contact with it causes them to become sick.

A supernatural cause of sickness is always attributed to a serious violation of a taboo, a clash with evil spirits or with ancestors (Chemhuru and Masaka, 2010:121). However, the worst fear is that the sick person has been bewitched. In that case, the remedy lies in going to consult a traditional healer who will then diagnose the sickness and its cause and identify the medicine or procedure to bring relief. However, procedures by the traditional healer to heal the patient may be unsuccessful, leading to death. Within the extended family worldview, there are rituals that are linked to the death of a relative.

On hearing the message of death, members of the extended family feel it is a sacred duty to go and express loving sympathy and condolences with other family members and friends of the deceased (Mwandayi, 2011). Failure to show grief and sympathy may result in witchcraft suspicion of having bewitched the deceased. The loss of a loved one often prompts mourners to ask existential questions about the why of suffering and death and the purpose of life. Mourners are expected to bring along *chema* (tokens of condolonces) in the form of mealie meal, bread, vegetables, firewood or money to assist in feeding the mourners. *Chema* signifies solidarity with other family members during the time of mourning.

Death rituals and mourning practices of extended families are varied because of the existence of so many religious and cultural practices (Koenig 2004:546). Within the extended family, there is a strong relationship between the living members of a clan and their ancestors. Members of the extended family believe in living close to the burial sites of their departed relatives in order to look after the graves. As a result, relocation to other areas is equated with abandoning their dead relatives, which is seen as a taboo (Mwandayi 2011). When one dies, one either becomes a wandering spirit or an ancestor. A wandering spirit is seen as a dangerous being that can cause extreme harm to the living community in the manner of avenging a wrong done (Bourdillon 1998; Beller 2001:64; Magezi and Myambo, 2011:161). To avoid danger from such a spirit, a process of appeasement is done. The wandering spirits can either be family spirits but mostly they are alien spirits and that is why they are considered dangerous.

The family will wait approximately a year after the deceased's death to hold a special ceremony to accept and welcome his or her wandering spirit back to the family (Kazembe, 2009:53; Machingura, 2012:85). By the time this "coming home" ceremony (*kurova guva*) occurs, a descendant of the deceased will have been chosen as the *svikiro* or spirit medium.[32]

In some families the oldest son is normally the spirit medium (Chirikadzi, 1997:12; Kumbirai, 1977:128). However, in other situations the spirit may choose its own spirit medium. The spirit chooses its own medium by causing the medium-to-be to experience an incurable illness that can only be diagnosed and treated by an African doctor or *n'anga* (Mabvurira, 2016). The *n'anga* then instructs the family to complete a ceremony that designates the sick person as the spirit medium of the deceased, and he or she will no longer be ill. Once that ritual has been performed, the living can freely invoke and associate with the new ancestral spirit. To recognise the new ancestral spirit, "beer can be brewed in honour of the spirit and whenever other family ancestors are honoured (*bira*) the name of this spirit is also invoked" (Gundani 1994:126). Beer serves to send a message to the ancestors and the intended returning spirit that he or she is welcome back into the family.

3.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined different culture models which reveal a range of dimensions that can be used to understand families. I critically analysed these culture models and selected Shorter's model as the most appropriate for this thesis because of its applicability to family types in Masvingo Diocese. I distinguished and analysed five family types, namely: nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended families and then used Shorter's culture model, by applying the four levels of culture that he distinguishes (phenomenological, domestic technical, values and worldview) to these family types. While there are similarities among the family types in terms of Shorter's four levels, there are also differences. The common ground shared by the family types in Masvingo Diocese is that it is within the family set-up where culture is expressed and implemented. It is within the family where values such as solidarity, love, unity and trust are found. These family types also differ in their interpretation of the meaning and purpose of life which includes religion, illness and death. Having discussed Masvingo Diocese family types in the context of Shorter's culture levels, the next chapter focuses on findings of the mission of the church as family. The logical connection between this particular chapter and the next one is that the family types discussed provide a cultural setting of faith that is expressed through proclamation of the Good News and inculturation as shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS ON EVANGELISATION AS PROCLAMATION OF THE
GOOD NEWS AND INCULTURATION
IN MASVINGO DIOCESE FAMILIES

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Having analysed family types in Masvingo Diocese by means of Shorter's culture model in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on two dimensions of the mission of Church as Family: proclamation of the Good News and Inculturation. I focus on these two aspects of evangelization from the five aspects of the message of the African Synod that I analysed in Chapter 2 because the Gospel always finds expression in a specific culture and it is in the family where culture is manifested. Focusing on these two dimensions enables an in depth study of the mission of the church as family without necessarily sidelining the other three aspects. Those three aspects: social communications, dialogue, justice and peace are implicitly present in proclamation of the Good News and Inculturation, as will become clear in the rest of this chapter.

This chapter presents findings from focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, as explained in the section on research methodology (Chapter 1.9). I gave the information on the size and composition of the sample for the semi-structured interviews (Chapter 1.9.2) and the questions used in the interviews (Appendix 3). Each interview took an average of 45-60 minutes. Sub-themes emerging from the findings include the role played by families in the proclamation of the Good News, challenges facing families and how to address those challenges. Under inculturation, sub-themes that emerged from the findings include shaping of Church life, gospel as a challenge and areas where the Church should improve.

Six focus group discussions (FGDs), consisting of laity, the religious and priests were also conducted. The size, composition and venues of the focus groups can be found in Chapter 1.9.2 and Appendix 6. Each focus group discussion was done separately, taking an average of two hours each. All the responses were recorded and written down, based on the participants'

understanding, experience, meaning and interpretation of both proclamation of the Good News and inculturation.

As a participant observer, I attended confirmations, ordinations, family days, blessing of grottos and churches and took down notes (see attached pastoral programme in Appendix 7). These activities were held at both parish and Diocesan levels. At parish level, participation is largely involving members of a specific parish although a few representatives from other parishes may also take part in the event. At Diocesan level, participation involves the convergence of all parishioners within the Diocese at a particular point where the event is held.

Drawing from the presentation of the message of the African Synod in Chapter 2 (sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2), I interviewed the participants on these two themes: evangelisation as proclamation of the Good News and Inculturation. In presenting each theme of the findings, I begin by capturing views of the respondents by way of both direct and indirect quotations. Direct quotations are used to express individual participants' views from interviews while indirect quotations capture views from focus group discussions. Direct quotations were selected on the basis of appropriateness of the response in relation to the demands of the interview question; clarity of expression, coherence of the responses, familiarity with the interview questions and objectivity of the responses.

Within the interpretation stage, I used Krueger's framework (1994:1-16) as indicated in section 1.9. The findings are also related to the African Synod Document, Shorter's levels of culture and other ancillary documents. When relating findings gathered from interviews to existing literature, there are three possible scenarios which can be observed. The first one is that findings can confirm what is found in literature in form of similarities. The second possibility is that literature provides something that is missed by the findings. In this context, findings omit certain details or take things for granted without a clear expression. The third possibility is that findings provide innovative details that capture something new, which is completely outside literature. I have also related the findings from participants to the three aspects mentioned above.

4.2   EVANGELISATION AS PROCLAMATION

This section focuses on evangelisation as proclamation in the context of the five family types in Masvingo Diocese. These family types include nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended. These family types present different circumstances under which the Gospel is proclaimed. For each family type, I provide views of participants concerning the role in proclamation of the Good News, challenges faced, addressing those challenges and interpretation that relates to the African Synod Document and other ancillary works (section 4.2.1.4).

4.2.1   Nuclear Families

As previously examined in chapter 3 (section 3.4.1.3) nuclear family values such as cooperation, sharing, respect for human life, compassion and solidarity are the foundation of propagation of faith at nuclear family level. Faith and fidelity in marriage are seen (section 3.4.1.4) as elements of the nuclear family worldview that keep the family together as a unit. These previous findings that provide the cultural basis of planting faith at nuclear family level have been reinforced by interview and focus group participants as shown in the section that follows.

Participants' views on the role of the nuclear family in the proclamation of the Good News include, introducing faith, praying and sharing the Bible, imparting Christian values and promoting vocations. Challenges highlighted by participants on the role of the nuclear family in the proclamation of the Good News are as follows: mixed marriages that result in different religious doctrine, inadequate family prayer time; individualism that is associated with selfishness and greed, and failure to give adequate support to children joining priestly and religious life. Solutions to the challenges according to the participants include use of Catholic faith, prioritising family prayer time, promoting the spirit of sharing and respecting children's choices in terms of vocations. Interpretation done shows that the views gathered from participants relate to the African Synod document and other critical works.

In response to the question 'what is the role played by the nuclear family in the proclamation of the Good News?' participants observed parents have a critical role to play in laying, sustaining and monitoring the foundations of faith. Participant 1 (5 June 2020) argues that "*the family is the first university where children are introduced to the concept of God and the importance of faith. Parents by word and example are first heralds of faith with regard to their children.*" The choice of the word 'university' by the participant is a wrong understanding of the role of a university, even though the importance of education conveyed shows the importance of the content taught for the planting of faith. The function of tertiary level of education is not so much to plant and confirm but to question reality for innovation. The family does not quite do that as it stresses conformity more than innovation. According to participant 20 (13 June 2020), *"Within the family, children are taught how to sing church hymns, read the Bible and pray together as a family. The singing and preaching talents you see in church today were first manifested in the family."* As children are encouraged to sing and preach within the family, they gain confidence for the larger audience in public gatherings. Apart from private prayers, participant 8 (5 June 2020) observes that public prayers are also taught at the nuclear family level, *"The Catholic Church has other teachings derived from sacred tradition such as praying the rosary, the Trinity, the creed, devotion to saints and liturgical rubrics."* These doctrines are introduced and explained to children at family level. Furthermore, these doctrines are important as children can use them to defend their faith.

Regarding the role of the family in imparting religious and moral values, participant 33 (20 June 2020) maintains that, "*The family is a place where Christian values are taught."* These values include sharing, solidarity, love, and unity. These values resemble the relationship of the Trinity. They also help children to be good Christians and good citizens as well. After proper introduction and sustaining of faith, vocations can be realized in the nuclear family. Participant 3 (5 June 2020) asserts that, *"The nuclear family is an important seedbed for promoting vocations to priesthood, religious life and marriage."* The role of parents or guardians is to help children to make informed decisions. It is also the obligation of parents or guardians to support the choices made by their children. However, participants also noted challenges as shown in the next paragraph.

Each of the proclamation roles discussed above has a corresponding challenge raised by the participants. The smooth introduction of faith to children can be affected negatively by mixed marriages. According to participant 18 (13 June 2020), "*in cases where one parent is non-Catholic, it is difficult to teach a consistently Catholic faith since influence from other denominations may be brought into the family.*" The result is that children end up with different belief systems, thereby failing to distinguish what is Catholic and Non-Catholic. Besides the challenge noted in the introduction of faith, participant 4 (5 June 2020) indicated that, "*family prayer time is affected by less time for family meetings since prayer time is largely confined to evening prayers.*" The observation by the participant is representative of a consistent pattern across nuclear families in urban, semi-urban and rural parishes since day time prayer is affected by farming activities, professional work commitments and schooling.

Furthermore, the catechetical role in the nuclear family faces the challenge of lack of teaching skills among some of the parents in imparting a Catholic ethos to the children. For participant 2 (5 June 2020) *"the skills of simplifying religious doctrine and relating that to the child's life are some of the important skills that some parents may lack."* The values of sharing, unity and love are difficult to sustain under individualistic tendencies in some of the nuclear families. In view of this challenge, participant 6 (5 June 2020) asserts that, *"selfishness and greed erode the values of sharing and love among nuclear family members."* Priestly and religious vocations are negatively influenced by lack of spiritual and moral support from parents. In the light of this challenge, participant 14 (13 June 2020) notes that, "*While some parents pray for priestly and religious vocations, they are unwilling to provide spiritual and moral support to their own children.*" Despite the challenges discussed, participants also provided solutions, as shown in the next section.

4.2.1.3   Addressing Challenges

The problem of mixed religious belief systems among children can be solved by imparting the Catholic faith among family members. Noting this problem, participant 36 (20 June 2020) states that "in case of a mixed marriage, the Catholic parent has an obligation to raise child(ren) in the Catholic faith." To solve the problem of inadequate prayer time within the family, participant 34 (20 June 2020) insists, *"families have to prioritise and strictly observe*

prayer time." The challenge of inadequate teaching skills among some of the parents may be solved by training through catechetical workshops. In line with this challenge, participant 30 (20 June 2020) observes: *"I had problems in teaching catechesis to my own children but I got the necessary skills from a workshop I attended at Gokomere Mission."* The problem of selfishness can be addressed by inculcating the spirit of sharing among family members. *"Children should be taught the spirit of sharing by sharing meals and gifts within the family"* (Participant 25, 20 June 2020). Parents should be educated about the importance of priestly and religious vocations through workshops. Participant 13 (13 June 2020) insists, *"The respect of children's choices regarding priestly and religious vocations is taught through vocations workshops targeting parents."* These solutions are important for effective proclamation of the Good News among nuclear family members.

4.2.1.4   Interpretation

The most frequent aspect mentioned in both interviews and focus group discussions is introduction of faith to children. The reason is that participants saw introducing faith as the first parental obligation of a Catholic parent. These views are also expressed in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) where family is regarded as the centre of evangelisation. The nuclear family is the centre of evangelisation because it is the foundation of the church community as well as the society. Since the nuclear family plays an active role in evangelising, the 1994 Synod considered evangelisation of the African family as a major priority.

Sustaining of faith is an evangelisation role within the nuclear family that cut across priests, religious and lay participants. Most respondents saw sustaining faith as important because it is a progression from the step of planting faith. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), highlighted the mutual relationship between the family and the church at large for the purpose of sustaining faith:

> The family receives its life from the Church and in turn mirrors the life of the larger Church. This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates (EN, 71).

Parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangeliser of many other families, and of the neighbourhood of which it forms part. Parents

not only have a moral obligation to raise children in faith, but they are also the most important formators of faith for their children.

Besides showing the role of the family in propagating faith, participants also indicated challenges associated with the nuclear family. The erosion of values among nuclear family members due to individualism, consumerism and greed was an issue that raised emotions. The reason for the emotive nature of the issue is that participants saw it as selfish and inconsistent with Catholic values. These selfish tendencies contradict the family spirit expressed in *Familiaris Consortio* (1981, 50) where the family seen as 'a Church in miniature' participating in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly mission of Jesus Christ. In addition, the individualism, consumerism and greed mentioned by participants oppose the values expressed by Shorter (1988:33-36) (section 3.4.1.3). The findings indicate these three dimensions summarising the role played by nuclear family members in fulfilling the mission of the church as family. First, the prophetic role involves proclaiming the Good News through engaging in catechesis and Bible sharing. Secondly, by dialoguing with God (Priestly role), the home is a sanctuary and marriage is an act of worship and the source of the members' sanctification. Family prayer is so important, especially on the occasion of significant family events such as praying the rosary. Thirdly, the kingly role helps them to discover the image of God in each brother and sister by extending love especially to the weak with a sense of justice.

A point of importance raised by all the focus group discussions is the need to respect and support children's choices, especially in the context of priestly and religious vocations. This point was raised because participants noted that some parents had a tendency to discourage their own children from pursuing these vocations. There are several reasons for discouraging children to join priestly and religious vocations. In the African worldview, marriage and parenthood bestow on a person a higher status than those who are single and have no offspring. African male children are expected to serve their families by ensuring that their blood line lives on. Failure to procreate is seen as negating the family lineage.

The first born son is expected to marry and have children for the continuity of the family in generations to come. In addition, parents expect the first born son to take care of siblings by educating, feeding and clothing them. He is also expected to look after the elderly by paying

medical and funeral expenses. The last born son is entitled to take over the homestead and take over domestic duties from elderly parents. While African culture has defined roles for the first and last born sons, other male siblings are also expected to help the family in the same way.

Different reasons were given to discourage daughters from joining religious life. The daughter is expected to get married so that the family gets bride price usually in form of cattle that are taken as a symbol of wealth in African context. Moreso, the parents expect grand children from the daughter to enhance the status of the parents as *sekuru* (grandfather) *mbuya* (grandmother). Marriage of the daughter also perpetuates the extended family as new relationships are formed with *vakuwasha* (sons-in-law) and their families. The conclusion that can be drawn from the findings is that the nuclear family provides religious education to children that leaves a long lasting impact on the children through promotion of faith. Parents play the most important role in shaping the lives of children in faith formation.

4.2.2   Single Parent Families

In chapter 3 (section 3.4.2.3) reference was made to the importance of values such as honesty, obedience, hard work and self-discipline to the single parent family. These values are also useful in the proclamation of the Good News. These values shape the single parent worldview which is characterised by deep religious commitment. Deep religious commitment by most of the single parent families (section 3.4.2.4) facilitates active participation in church activities. Both values and worldview elements are the cultural foundation that can be used to proclaim the Good News in the context of the single parent family as shown in the next paragraph.

Endurance, commitment to church activities and sacrifice characterise the role of the single parent family in proclamation of the Good News. Challenges faced in proclaiming the Good News under the single family include transition from nuclear family to single parent state, stress, depression, and stigmatisation, limited financial and material resources. According to participants solutions to these problems include counselling services, guidance from extended family members, and entrepreneurship skills. An analysis of participants' views shows that endurance was the most dominant aspect while discrimination of single parents by other congregants came up as the most emotional aspect. The African Synod document and other ancillary documents were used to relate to the findings. I now focus on the findings on the single parent family in detail.

4.2.2.1   Role in the proclamation of the Good News

Participant 30 (20 June 2020) asserts that, "*Single parents proclaim the Good News in a way that shows endurance and perseverance through hardships.*" In the absence of a spouse, a single parent takes up all the responsibilities and challenges alone. In focus group 1 (8 June 2020) participants agreed that single parents demonstrate a greater commitment to church activities because they share problems with other church members in the same situation. Furthermore, single parents proclaim the Good News through sacrifice as shown by participant 23 (13 June 2020) who spoke from personal experience, "*in 2008 when Zimbabwe was facing hyperinflation, I had to go to South Africa to work as a maid, despite the fact that I am a qualified teacher, to ensure that my children got school fees and groceries.*" The view from the participant is representative of a common pattern of sacrifice that is seen in Zimbabweans taking up unskilled jobs in the diaspora.

4.2.2.2   Challenges

In focus group 3 (23 June 2020), participants observed that the greatest challenge in most of the single parent families is the transition from nuclear to single parent state. Psychological challenges such as stress and depression are often associated with this kind of transition that has a negative impact on the proclamation of the Good News. "*Economic problems result in limited resources within the single parent family and this has a negative effect on the capacity to raise subscriptions, tithe and participation in pilgrimages*" (participant 11, 5 June 2020). Focus group 2 (17 June 2020) indicated that most single parents fail to raise their own children in the way that is expected by the church. This problem is caused by the absence of either a motherly or fatherly figure. On the sociological side, all the three focus groups indicated that single parents suffer stigmatisation from fellow congregants who view that their state is a result of failure to uphold the sacrament of marriage.

The sources of stigma are related to morality, lack of parental skills and victimisation. In the African context, there are evaluative standards that categorise women into good or bad women. Single mothers are often seen as having been involved in either pre-marital sex or promiscuity resulting divorce. Both factors are considered as violation of the vows associated with the sacrament of marriage. For single mothers, there is a belief that they cannot raise a son with adequate masculine qualities due to poor parenting skills. On the other hand, are thought to be incapable of raising a daughter with adequate feminine identification.

Victimisation of single mothers is done by blaming them for their situations such as premarital sex, divorce and accusation of causing the death of the husband.

4.2.2.3   Addressing Challenges

Psychological problems associated with the transition from nuclear to single parenthood can be addressed through counselling services provided by spiritual advisors. Participant 5 (5 June 2020) argued that, "*effective counselling has to be holistic enough to address the psychological, social, economic and spiritual needs of the single parent.*" To solve economic problems, the single parent may use entrepreneurship skills. Participant 12 (5 June 2020) maintained that, "*income can never be adequate but one should be involved in poultry, horticulture, vending and related activities to raise income for the family.*" The capacity to raise children in the Catholic way can be addressed through seeking guidance from the priests and religious. Focus group 1 (8 June 2020) agreed that the Church spiritual advisors (uncles and aunts) should also take the responsibility of guiding children in the Catholic way. This collaboration among priests, religious and spiritual advisors (uncles and aunts) is necessary for the formation of the children in the Catholic faith.

4.2.2.5   Interpretation

The most frequent issue that participants pointed out is that single parents have the capacity to proclaim the Good News under difficult economic, social and psychological circumstances. This can be explained by the fact that most of the single parents who participated in the study are females who are able to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their children. Reflecting on the suffering of the African people, *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995, 143), highlighted difficulties, crises and conflicts which bring about misery on the continent. Due to this suffering, most single parents are sometimes tempted to think that the Lord has abandoned them.

As a participant observer (See attached pastoral programme appendix 6, Good Shepherd Parish-Chiredzi, 15 September 2020), I noted that the level of commitment exemplified by single parents in educating their children through Catholic schools is very high and this shows their desire for the cultivation of Catholic values among their children. My observation was also expressed by all the focus groups to show that Catholic values among children are seen as a cross-cutting issue within the age groups of participants. Reflecting on account of

the many difficulties, crises and conflicts which bring about so much suffering and misery on the Continent, some Africans are at times tempted to think that the Lord has abandoned them.

The most emotional aspect that came out through interviews and focus group discussions was religious discrimination against single parents in church activities. These emotions were triggered by the fact that home visits within sections often avoided single parents' homes due to failure to understand the causes of being single. In terms of gender, the three focus groups unanimously observed that most single parents are female because male single parents often remarry to avoid domestic duties. In discussing the causes of being single, most single parents' participants were uncomfortable with giving much detail. This can be explained by the fact that these single parents felt that such discussions raised their emotions. Single parents were emotional in discussing the causes of their status probably because they are already stigmatised, so they felt uncomfortable with further stigmatisation in focus group discussions and interviews. They are probably made to feel guilty depending on the cause of their status such as divorce, infidelity and accusations of witchcraft.[33] Single parents may also find it difficult to share about their situation due to loneliness, helplessness and lack of confidence. In church circles, single parents may see themselves as failures in relation to the demands of the sacrament of matrimony.

Baloyi (2010:723-742) uses a different approach from participants and argues that it is important to begin by identifying the causes of the parent being single such as death of a spouse, previous hostile marriages, lack of interpersonal skills and fear of being hurt in relationships. These causes "will enable the church to minister effectively to different individuals according to individual needs and problems" (Baloyi, 2010:739). The approach used by Baloyi (2010:739) will facilitate proper counselling and enable full participation of single parents within the church.

A point of importance raised by participants is that the Church should seriously address stigmatisation of single parents and adopt pastoral strategies to address the concerns of this category of congregants. Consistency between participants' views and literature is found in

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[33] While African culture recognises and accepts mechanical causes of death, there is an appeal to supernatural powers in further explanations of causality. In the context of a spouse who dies, the surviving spouse, especially the wife may be accused of having killed the husband by members of the deceased's family. However, these accusations are often without proof or evidence.

Koons and Anthony[34] (1991:133) who advocate for specific programmes for single parent families such as support groups that will enrich their lives and strengthen them for meeting their unique challenges. The church must help by developing "recreational outings, seminars, widowed recovery programmes, small groups for counselling, job counselling, single parenting, retreats, classes and workshops are also possibilities" (Koons and Anthony, 1991:133). On the basis of these support groups, single parents can be involved in broader participation in church activities.

In the light of the above view, Reynolds[35] (2008) stresses the point that workshops are a platform for church leaders to teach other faithful about the need to respect single parents. This gesture will enable other congregants to accept the state of single parents and accommodate them within the church. This will boost confidence among single parents and enhance their participation in church activities.

On the same note, Wachege[36] (2003:369) reinforces the above sentiments as he states that single parents deserve "love, respect, support, mutual correction, benevolent dialogue, dignity and pastoral concern." He recommends the inclusion of single parents in key roles in church ministry and propagation of the Good News especially to their fellow single parents. Single parents should be embraced and incorporated and members of the church should have positive attitudes towards single parent families (Wachege, 2003:370). Negative perceptions from married men and women include viewing single-parents as a threat to their marriages and as bad role models to young people. To avoid negative perceptions, single parents should embrace the values of honour and purity (Shorter, 1988:36). What follows from the above

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[34] Koons and Athony (1991) write in the context of Michigan, the USA where they made an in-depth study of single families within Christian single parent families. While the American Christian church has cultural and geographical differences with the Christian church in Zimbabwe, the universal principles of Christianity that apply to single parenthood allow me to draw similarities between the American and the Zimbabwean Christian churches. These similarities are based on the role of single parents in initiating and sustaining faith.

[35] Using Feminist psychology, Reynolds (2008) investigates how women negotiate the stigmatised identity of singleness in United Kingdom. The causes of stigma between the United Kingdom and the Zimbabwean context differ. In the UK, single women are stigmatised on the basis of failure to make right choices, poor interpersonal skills and being difficult among other factors. In Zimbabwe stigma among single women is seen as a negation of cultural assumptions of marriage, family life and child bearing. However, there are striking similarities on how single women in both countries rely on Christianity to cope with stigma.

[36] Wachege (2003) draws his findings from the Agikuyu people in Kenya and applies Christian values of love, care and respect regarding the treatment of single parents. These Christian principles are also applicable to the Masvingo Diocese where single parents face stigmatisation. In both case studies, the Church transcends the shortcomings of culture to accommodate single parents.

scholars is that there is a mutual relationship between the values expected from single parents and the values accorded to the single parents by the community.

4.2.3   Child-headed Families

The cultural values of love, respect, patience and sympathy (section 3.4.3.3) help in promoting religious attachment, ability to cope with challenges and a sense of hope as worldview elements (section 3.4.3.4). These worldview elements are useful in the proclamation of the Good News by linking cultural elements to the Gospel. The connection between cultural elements and the Gospel is further expressed by interview and focus group participants as shown in the paragraph that follows.

Participants explained the role of child-headed families in the proclamation of the Good News in line with leadership skills, caring for siblings and self-reliance. However, participants indicated lack of parental guidance, absence of teamwork and disrespect for elders as challenges in the child-headed families. Solutions to these problems include, encouraging them to join guilds and associations, building networks of trust and respect and observing the cultural value of respecting elders. Leadership skills among the child-headed families featured as the most frequent item while disrespect for elders emerged as an item cutting across all age groups. Campbell (1986:33) notes that loss of parents is a highly emotional aspect among children. Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013:82) add to the views by suggesting that the extended family should take care of child-headed families.

4.2.3.1   Role in the proclamation of the Good News

Participant 7 (5 June 2020) considers child heads as "*capable of leading fellow children in guilds or associations on the basis of leadership skills already acquired from the home environment.*" These leadership skills include self-confidence, sense of responsibility, decision making and delegating duties to others. A participant from focus group 2 (17 June 2020) asserts that, "*most of the child headed families have a sense of caring for one another especially during the time of sickness.*" Besides the physical care that can be given during sickness, child-heads also care for each other spiritually, emotionally and socially. Participants in the three focus groups stressed the point that child heads learn to be self-reliant because of their situation. One participant from these focus groups emphasised that, "*child heads provide for themselves without being assisted by adults through projects such as*

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vegetable production, poultry and piggery." The concept of self-reliance manifested by child heads can be a motivating factor as well as a challenge to other church members at parish level in the context of being a self-reliant church.

4.2.3.2 Challenges

The key challenge that was raised by all the focus group discussions is lack of parental guidance leading to drug abuse and school dropout. Participant 30 (20 June 2020) from the focus group discussions had this to say, "*a child head whom I personally know does not only abuse drugs but teaches his peers how to use the drugs. His peers keep drugs at the child head's home.*" Participant 35 (20 June 2020) observes that "*sometimes, there is lack of team work among the children especially when they are of almost the same age or when the child head is a girl. Under these circumstances, the child head find it difficult to delegate duties to other children.*" This results in the child head being overburdened by responsibilities. All the three focus group discussions expressed concern over the tendency by children from child headed families to disrespect elders. The disrespect can be a result of the fact that child heads spend most of their time with fellow children and they may lack the necessary skills to interact with elders. This can also be a result of anger that they have been "left alone" or "abandoned" by their parents (or even by God). This situation can be summarised by hopelessness and lack of spiritual guidance.

4.2.3.3 Addressing Challenges

In view of lack of parental guidance, participant 34 (20 June 2020) pointed out the need to encourage these children to join guilds and associations so as to get guidance from adult spiritual advisors. These advisors consist of priests and religious on one hand and elders selected from the laity on the other hand. While priests and religious offer spiritual support and counselling services, lay elders give moral and material support to these children. Guilds and associations foster Christian values that give identity and a sense of belonging among members. To solve the problem of lack of team work, participants from focus group 1 (8 June 2020) indicated that the child head should build trust and respect within the family. The focus group added that the child head should also outline roles and responsibilities for each family member. Observance of the cultural value of respecting elders regardless of blood relations can solve the problem of disrespecting elders (participant 26, 20 June 2020).

4.2.3.4   Interpretation

The most highlighted point that came from all focus groups is the leadership skills evident among child headed families. The reason for such frequency is that participants agreed that child heads assume responsibilities at an early age. The most controversial issue from all the three focus groups was whether child headed families really existed. Some participants thought that extended families quickly absorb the child headed families while others thought that extended families no longer existed. As a participant observer (See the attached pastoral program, appendix 5), I concluded that the controversy that arose was as a result of assuming that there is only one factor causing child headed families. In reality, some child-headed families are a result of employment of parents in the diaspora or local towns and cities. Parents can inform members of the extended families to allow the children to be responsible for their daily lives in such situations. Apart from the positive elements discussed, an issue that cut across age groups of participants is that child headed families are characterised by numerous challenges. In view of challenges encountered by child-headed families, *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) states the need to help young people to overcome the obstacles thwarting their development: illiteracy, idleness, hunger, drugs (EA, 181). These challenges are widely seen in the child-headed family. Young people themselves should be called upon to become the evangelisers of their peers in order to meet these challenges. This peer education can be done through support groups.

Furthermore, Campbell[37] (1986:5) states that one of the most difficult issues to handle in pastoral care is the loss of parents because it is an emotional trauma. The emotional experience due to loss of parents is also implied by Shorter (1988:33-36) under section 3.4.3.4 of chapter 3. The affected children are often associated with fear of the loss of the parental figure. Grossoehme[38] (1999) notes that identification of fear and emotions help to shape and direct the practical dimensions of pastoral care. The fears of child-headed families are around economic, social, and educational and health related insecurity.

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[37] Campbell (1986) writes from London and he expresses the universal principles of pastoral care that are applicable globally. As a result, I find Campbell's study useful to this study.

[38] Grossoehme (1999) applies a psychological approach to pastoral care of children in the context of the United States of America to determine how emotions can be used for pastoral care among child-headed families. My study borrows the psychological dimension in the pastoral care of children basing on the fact that psychological methods of pastoral care apply universal principles (such as active listening, empathy and discerning) despite the geographical differences between the USA and Masvingo Diocese.

The protective social environment in which children could grow and develop is the extended family system (Mugumbate and Nyanguru, 2013:83). The role of the extended family in taking care of child-headed families is diminishing due to economic hardship, modernity and individualism. Zurheide[39] (1997:67) argues that empathy in the context of child-headed families demands the ministry of presence. Isolation from adult human contact provides the basis for the need for meaningful adult companionship among child-headed families. They need people who can bring a sense of hope in their lives. Adult companions should be able to understand the worldview of the child-headed families especially their difficult situations and to identify opportunities for problem management.

4.2.4   Reconstituted Families

The cultural values of acceptance, forgiveness and responsibility as noted in section 3.4.4.3 provides the foundation of religious freedom, a characteristic of the reconstituted family worldview that allows different belief systems between the spouses. The different belief systems accommodate religious respect and tolerance that are key features in proclamation of the Good News by reconstituted families. These key features are also expressed by participants of both interviews and focus groups as indicated in the next paragraph.

The role of the reconstituted family in the proclamation of the Good News, as shown by participants, is characterised by reconciliation and equal treatment of children. However, participants pointed out that threats to this role is seen in different religious systems, mistrust between the spouses and favouritism of children. Suggested solutions to the challenges include mixed marriages, openness, honest and transparency. Analysis of views gathered from respondents shows that acceptance as most frequent aspect while message of hope was most specific issue. Literature that relates to the findings include the African Synod Document and other critical works by Albert and Einstein (1986) who suggest that a good model is found in a cooperative family while Amato and Ochiltree (1987:75) see divorce and remarriage as constituting some challenges to children.

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[39] Zurheide (1997) focuses on the pastor's preparation to deal with personal and cosmic issues of suffering and injustice in the context of Minnesota in the USA. In cases where there are orphaned child headed families, Zurheide recommends a ministry of presence where the pastor visits the children for purpose of providing comfort and hope. The need for comfort and hope equally applies to orphaned children in Masvingo Diocese.

In reconstituted families, acceptance of one another between the spouses is an important way of accepting the Gospel message. Participant 32 (20 June 2020) argued that "*in reconstituted families, there is a rebuilding of family ties by accepting a new spouse and step children.*" This acceptance takes into account strengths and weaknesses of the spouse and it is even more difficult, though possible, to accept step children. All three focus groups agreed that forgiveness and reconciliation are the pillars of reconstituted families. Since the spouses are from different backgrounds, they forgive each other's previous mistakes and difficult experiences of the past. Forgiveness is the basis of reconciliation and it involves ironing out differences among members of the reconstituted family. For participant 23 (13 June 2020) "*the real test of the Gospel among parents of the reconstituted family is in the ability, especially by women, to treat children equally. This equal treatment is between one's biological children and step children.*" Equal treatment of children is a source of harmony within the reconstituted family since unequal treatment of children is a source of division between the spouses and among the children.

4.2.4.2 Challenges

The greatest challenge that threatens unity within reconstituted families is different religious belief systems. According to one participant in focus group 3, "*if spouses within the reconstituted family are of rival religious convictions, this can be a source of deep rooted and irreconcilable conflict that threatens to break the marriage apart*" (Focus group 3, 23 June 2020). Mistrust between the spouses is another problem that affects the reconstituted families. According to participant 8 (5 June 2020) "*if the reconstituted family is a result of previous failed marriages, the spouses always suspect each other and the marriage may be characterised by lack of trust.*" Failure to treat children equally results in favouritism that can also bring conflict and hatred among the children. In the view of one participant in focus group 3 (23 June 2020), "*While men may display very little tendencies of favouritism, women often give preferential treatment to their biological children by giving them more pocket money, buying more expensive clothes and providing better food and the husband may not even detect such favouritism.*" This view may reflect a consistent pattern in reconstituted families because in African culture domestic duties such as cooking and sharing food are carried out by mothers. In such responsibilities, the mother may take advantage and display

favouritism. The father's responsibility, on the other hand, is to provide food, shelter and clothing for the entire family. The father's domestic responsibilities such as gardening, building, repairing present little or no opportunity to display tendencies of favouritism among children.

4.2.4.3   Addressing Challenges

A possible solution to different religious belief systems that may cause divisions within the family is mixed marriages. In view of this observation, participant 6 (5 June 2020) observes, *"a mixed marriage enables each spouse to exercise religious freedom while respecting the religious system of the marriage partner."* To avoid mistrust between the spouses, participants in focus group 3 (23 June 2020) argued that spouses should open up to each other and relate their previous problems to avoid suspicion. In addition, for people marrying for the second time, counselling before marriage should be done to boost confidence between the partners. These counselling services can be provided by priests, religious and professional lay counsellors. The problem of favouritism can be solved by honesty and transparency in the treatment of children. According to participant 17 (13 June 2020) *"as someone who remarried, talking from experience, it is better to treat children equally than to display favouritism because equal treatment promotes harmony within the family."* Equal treatment of children within the reconstituted family is a way of living the Gospel message.

4.2.4.4   Interpretation

The issue of acceptance was frequently highlighted in both focus group discussions and interviews. The reason for the high frequency is that participants considered it as primary for building the relationship. These findings are authenticated in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) where a priority is given to "a fraternal harmony which bears living witness to the Gospel" (EA, 101). Despite their previous marital status the reconstituted family should live in harmony. This harmony has internal and external dimensions. Internal harmony involves good relations within the reconstituted family itself while external harmony focuses on good relationships with the wider community.

Forgiveness and reconciliation appeared as a cross-cutting point from lay, priests and religious participants. Participants raised this point because it connects well with the proclamation of the Good News. It becomes a way of living the Gospel. These values are also

seen in Shorter (1988:35) under section 3.4.4.3. The causes of the reconstituted family were discussed in an emotional way by participants since they were considered as unfortunate circumstances. The most intense specific details featured on the message of hope within the constituted family as a way of addressing past failures or unfortunate circumstances.

A point of importance that arose among participants stressed the need to ensure happiness of children within the reconstituted families. These views are validated by Albert and Einstein[40] (1986) who suggest that a good model for children is found in a happy and cooperative couple where good relationships are shown. The nurturing process involves instilling discipline among children. A challenge to discipline is that children find it difficult to place the biological parent and the step parent at the same level of respect. This limits the role of the step parent in enforcing discipline among step children. In order to gain a disciplining role among step children, the step parent should first develop a caring attitude towards these children. In addition, the couple should support each other and decide on household rules together for disciplinary measures. Amato and Ochiltree[41] (1987:76) suggest that divorce and remarriage present a transitional challenge to children. Oftenly, children find it difficult to accept the parent's choice to remarry and this creates an emotional gap between the children and the step parent. According to Visher and Visher[42] (1989:65) hostility between divorced parents make it difficult to arrange regular visits for the sake of children. The tension between the custodial and the non-custodial parent creates difficult circumstances for children.

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[40] Albert and Einstein (1986) write for American reconstituted families and they provide Christian approaches to strengthen reconstituted families. Emphasis is placed on good relationships between couples for the happiness of children within the reconstituted family. Equally, placing the needs and desires of children within reconstituted families in Masvingo Diocese is helpful for the happiness of the children.

[41] Amato and Ochiltree (1987) carried out an Australian study and concluded that children from reconstituted families faced problems in five measures of schooling competence that include reading ability, everyday life skills, self-esteem, social competence, and impulse control. Although a similar study has not been carried out in Masvingo Diocese, the Australian study can be generalised to some extent, and the bottom line is that a tension-filled home environment negatively affects schooling competence among children.

[42] Within a United States context, Visher and Visher (1985) emphasise the view that reconstituted families are different from biological families in that (1) they are born out of a loss due to death or divorce (2) the spouses are in different stages of their life (3) both step parents and children have different beliefs from the past. This contrast between step families and biological families allow pastors to get a deeper understanding of step family dynamics. Visher and Visher's analysis is applicable to Masvingo Diocese in all these three aspects observed and their study helps to strengthen my understanding of reconstituted families within the Diocese of Masvingo.

4.2.5 Extended Families

The extended family is not an alternative family type to the others already discussed but it cuts across other family types. The extended family is characterised by cultural values such as hospitality, caring, solidarity and sharing as mentioned in section 3.4.5.3. These cultural values provide a basis for linking with the spiritual world whose elements are life after death, belief in ancestors and home bringing ceremonies as examined in section 3.4.5.4. These worldview elements facilitate the practical application of the Gospel message through parenting orphans, taking care of the disabled and marriage counselling within the extended family. This practical dimension of the Gospel is shown by research participants in the following paragraph.

Participants argued that the role of the extended family in the proclamation of the Good News is characterised by unity within the extended family, taking care of orphans and the disabled and responsibility over marriage. Challenges that affect the extended family consist of competition among family members, resource limitation, and separation of members due to migration patterns and disturbance of counselling services. Solutions to the challenges are expressed in healthy relations, spirit of sharing and family visits. Analysis of views shows that family marriage counsellors emerged as the most controversial aspect, while disunity due to economic hardships featured as the most emotional subject discussed. *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) shows that solidarity is key to African extended families and this validates the findings. For Magezi (2018:4), pastoral care in the contemporary period should accommodate migratory patterns of families.

4.2.5.1   Role in the proclamation of the Good News

Family unity through good and bad times was considered as a significant way of proclaiming the Good News. In the light of this view, participant 31 (20 June 2020) argued that *"family unity is manifested through coming together in both happy moments and difficult times. Family solidarity is shown when members celebrate ordinations, weddings and graduations. Sickness and death are the sad moments that also bring families together."* Participants also argued that the extended family takes care of the vulnerable members such as orphans and the disabled. From focus group 3, it was indicated that blood relations are the basis of sympathy and empathy and it is difficult to see a relative suffering, hence the need to take care of disadvantaged relatives (focus group 3, 23 June 2020). The extended family also takes

responsibility of marriage issues. From the time marriage intentions are *lobola* announced, advisors such as aunts and uncles are involved. They also take part in payment of, wedding arrangements and ceremonies. *They also have the responsibility of keeping the marriage intact, hence they help to solve any problem that may arise within the marriage* (participant 11, 5 June 2020). The three aspects indicated have a common thread of harmony within the extended family.

4.2.5.2   Challenges

Competition among family members was identified as a challenge that threatens unity within the extended family. Participant 13 (13 June 2020) had this to say, *"Professionals within the family have a tendency of showing off their houses and cars to others and this may become a source of unhealthy competition among members."* While family members are often willing to help each other, resource limitation becomes a challenge especially in difficult economic circumstances. Participant 29 (20 June 2020) highlighted her own experience, "*when my elder sister died after a road accident, I took care of her daughter with all the commitment and love, However, economic constraints weighed me down because the daughter was diabetic and required a special diet. Eventually the daughter was adopted by my brother but this brought confusion to the young girl because she had to relocate to a new place."* The marriage counselling roles of aunts and uncles within the extended family has been severely affected by modernisation. The village set up that used to facilitate the counselling services has been disturbed by employment and education that keep members of the extended family away from each other. Participant 4 (5 June 2020) states *"All my three aunts are now working in the United Kingdom and I find it difficult to bother them with my own problems even through the phone. They seem to be disinterested with my problems as they focus on making money."* In addition to the geographical separation among family members, economic, social and cultural differences can further reduce these counselling services because family members will have different perspectives in handling issues.

4.2.5.3   Addressing Challenges

Competition that causes disunity may be addressed by promoting healthy relations within the extended family. Participant 21 (13 June 2020) insists that, *"in our extended family, we have a way of keeping the family united while promoting healthy competition. We have an exchange programme where I can educate my brother's son up to university level and he can*

also do the same to my son. Such programmes help to value the extended family and allow us to compete in a healthy manner." Lack of resources can be overcome by pulling resources together for a specific purpose. Participant 27 (20 June 2020) provided a solution on the basis of personal experience, *"in my own extended family, we set up a fund that members contribute monthly so that the fund may be used to help extended family members who are facing problems of school fees and medical bills."* From all focus groups, it was pointed out the role of the aunts and uncles as marriage advisors can be restored through family visits. One participant in focus group 1 (8 June 2020) responded, *"honestly, as an aunt, my brother's daughter cannot just remember me when her marriage is about to collapse…she should visit me regularly in happy moments so that if any problem arises, I will stand by her side as we solve the problem."* Family visits help to build ties and maintain healthy relations among family members.

4.2.5.4   Interpretation

The most frequently discussed issue that arose from the participants is the disintegration of the extended family. The frequency can be explained by the fact that most participants noted a significant decline in extended family unity due to the ever changing economic and social circumstances. Magezi[43] (2018:7) emphasises mitigatory pastoral care. Mitigation is about responding to emerging needs. This is carried out with individuals when they arrive in new environments, for instance, when individuals move to urban areas from rural areas. This entails providing practical assistance and support to new individuals in an area. This includes linking with service providers, accompaniment and providing a supportive environment. This challenges pastors to develop competencies and social networking skills that enables them to direct individuals to areas where they could be assisted. The needs of such people may vary from spiritual to physical. Some may require a place to worship while others may require practical assistance.

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[43] Magezi (2018) argues that the transition from rural to urban life places African families in a situation of tension. This tension results in emerging families that are characterised by a constant strain to meet individual needs and the expected needs of the extended family. Pastoral care should develop an analytic framework as well as a practical ministerial approach that responds to these family changing patterns. Magezi's focus is on the entire African continent and the observations he makes apply to the Masvingo Diocese in Zimbabwe which requires pastoral strategies to address emerging families in Masvingo city and towns such as Chiredzi, Triangle and Mashava. Emerging families are also found in Growth points within the Diocese of Masvingo such as Mupandawana, Nyika, Jerera, Chivi, Nemamwa and Neshuro.

What triggered the emotions of participants is a situation where beneficiaries of the extended family system fail to be grateful for the benefits obtained. If one is educated by an uncle, for instance, it is expected that the beneficiary should also educate the child(ren) of the uncle as a way of expressing gratitude. The issue raised emotions because there are increasing cases of members of the extended family who fail to reciprocate to good gestures. A point that was considered as of high importance is the need to promote solidarity by pulling resources together as extended family members and setting up a fund that helps in times of difficulties. Views gathered from participants concerning solidarity are expressed in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:5) that provides an analysis of African cultural values. African cultures have an acute sense of solidarity and community life. In Africa it is unthinkable to celebrate a feast without the participation of the extended family. Indeed, community life in African societies expresses the extended family. Earlier on, the values that apply to the extended family are examined by Shorter (1988) in section 3.4.5.3 on the dimension of values framework. These values promote the family spirit within the extended family.

Controversy arose on whether the aunts and uncles have an obligation to offer marriage counselling services. One view was that their services have been overtaken by events and they may worsen rather improve the situation. The other view was that these family marriage counsellors are still important since their advice is based on wisdom gained from experience. As a participant observer, I think the counselling services are important but they should be complemented by services of trained counsellors such as priests and the religious.

4.3   EVANGELISATION AS INCULTURATION

The section on evangelisation as inculturation examines the practices, values and rituals that are distinct to each family type to show how they can be inculturated. The relationship between culture and the Gospel is not only a demand of the Gospel but also of culture, because the Gospel is contextualised in culture. Culture needs to dialogue with the Gospel which it receives. Both culture and the Gospel need to dialogue and the goal of this dialogue must be the promotion of values, social and spiritual development that promote the proclamation of the Good News. The Gospel also presents challenges to culture; hence, the section also explores the extent to which the Gospel challenges culture by setting the standard within Church life.

4.3.1 Nuclear Families

In this section, I examine how cultural elements from the nuclear family can help to shape the Gospel message. Marriage and payment of bride price as noted in section 3.4.1.1 are practical aspects of culture that are associated with the symbolic elements of *kupereka* (handing over of the bride) and child naming as indicated in 3.4.1.1. The use of totems (section 3.4.1.3) is another aspect that provide the cultural elements that are also accepted in the Church. These issues are further discussed by interviewees as shown in the paragraph that follows.

Participants pointed out that naming of new born babies, the value of love and the ritual of *kupereka* (handing over of the bride) are ways in which culture can influence church life. The Gospel still challenges these cultural practices by suggesting naming that is consistent with Gospel values, the value of love that is unconditional and rituals that are time inclusive. Interpretation of the views gathered about the nuclear family shows naming as debatable in focus group discussions and love within the family as the most frequently discussed issue. Literature relating to these views gathered from participants include *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) on centrality of the family in receiving the Gospel and Trommsdorff (2006) on the critical role of culture within the family. I now turn to the inculturation aspects of the nuclear family in detail.

4.3.1.1   Shaping of Church Life

From all the three focus groups, it was emphasised that culture should continuously reflect on the Gospel and the Gospel should accommodate positive aspects of culture. According to participants from all the focus groups, the first meeting point between culture and the Gospel is the nuclear family where children are taught cultural values. Cultural values such as love, respect and hospitality shape Church life by building relationships among members. Focus group 3 (23 June 2020) pointed out that the naming ceremony in the nuclear family has strongly been inculturated. According to a participant in the focus group, *"There is now a tendency to use indigenous languages to give names to newly born babies within the Catholic Church. Names such as Tadiwanashe* (We are loved by God)*, Tinashe* (God is with us)*, Nyasha* (Grace)*, Munamato* (Prayer)*, Tatenda* (Thank you)*, Tinozivaishe* (We know God).* These names shape Church life through their use as baptism names. For participant 26 (20 June 2020) names such as *Marwei* (So what have you fought for?), *Nhamoinesu* (Poverty is among us), *Ndakaitei* (What wrong have I done?), *Muchaneta* (You will get tired) and

Tichaona (We shall see) indicate animosity and hate language which cannot be Christianised or Catholicised. The key value that is exhibited by the nuclear family is love. Participant 7 (5 June 2020) argued that while every culture has the value of love that binds the nuclear family, the African context has a unique element expressed in *rudo ibofu* (love is blind). This means that the cultural context of love focuses on what binds the couple together and puts aside shortcomings. Love within the family can shape Church life as it is transferred to love of neighbour and other members of the congregation. The cultural context of love is blind to weaknesses; hence the analogy of blindness. One ritual that is applicable to the nuclear family, according to participant 12 (5 June 2020), is *kupereka* (accompanying the bride to her in-laws). The ritual mutually binds the family of the bride and the in-laws together for the purpose of a good marriage.

4.3.1.2   Gospel as a challenge to Culture

The gospel continues to be a challenge to the naming practices in the sense that the cultural context may fail to meet the demands of the Gospel. Participant 17 (13 June 2020) insists that, *"While it is good to use indigenous languages to name our children, the names may fail to live up to the Gospel message since they may not tally with Biblical names."* In focus group 1 (8 June 2020), participants pointed out that inculturated names often fail to link to angels and saints. However, one participant in focus group 1 maintained that the naming can bring a harmony between culture and the gospel through a dualised naming strategy, for example, the child can be named John Tatenda. John is a Biblical name while Tatenda is an indigenous name expressing gratitude for the gift of the child. The gospel challenges the cultural context of love by demanding more inclusive love. *"Love should be unconditional within the family and beyond to live up to the Gospel message. There is always a limit to the cultural context of love but the Gospel requires a trans-cultural love"* (Participant 11, 5 June 2020). The ritual of *kupereka* is challenged by the Gospel on its link to the world of *vadzimu* (ancestors). The ritual excludes the month of November because of the belief that the *vadzimu* will be engaged in a meeting (Participant 21, 13 June 2020). This belief is challenged for its lack of veracity and for limiting time among believers. The gospel sees the cultural limit as problematic in the sense that God's love is boundless.

Cultural ceremonies such as *biras* (all night ritual), *kurova makuva* (coming home ceremony) are regarded as taboos during the month of November. Everything with links to the spiritual and ancestral world of Zimbabwean tradition is believed to temporarily cease to function

during this month. Spirits such as *masvikiro* (spirit mediums) and *vadzimu* (ancestors) are believed to rest during the month of November, and in the Shona cultural context, no such spirit is able to perform its obligatory function during the course of this period. During this period, the Spirits are believed to be taking a rest without having ceased to exist.

During the month of November, spirit mediums and traditional healers turn to their knowledge of herbs (*mishonga*), to prescribe healing potions. It must be noted that whoever transgresses this cultural belief, would have traditionally performed an abomination. An appeasement fee (*kuripa*) will then be required as a penalty for the transgression. Traditional and cultural events or rites performed during this period such as *kuroora* (marriage ceremony), *magadziro* (cleansing ceremony) and *bira* (all night ritual) are nullified and will have to be rescheduled.

This is the same principle which applies to other Shona cultural perspective called *chisi* (weekly day rest) where a village observes a certain day of the week for resting purposes. Chisi (weekly day of rest) is observed on a specific day of the week and in rural places[44] within Masvingo Diocese, Wednesday or Thursday are chosen as days of rest. The choice of Wednesday or Thursday depends on the choice of local chiefs or headmen / headwomen. *Chisi* is an internal societal regulation and communal management of time. Other duties and responsibilities such as thatching huts, visiting relatives, cleaning the homestead, sporting and fishing can be done on *Chisi* since time for such activities is normally unavailable during farming days. Chisi could also be used as free time to consult doctors and spirit mediums on matters to do with physical and spiritual illness respectively. Freeing time on *Chisi* could also assist workaholics to take a rest from farming activities.

The same principle of time management and regulation also applies to *Mahakurimwi* (days of mourning which prohibit agricultural activities). *Mahakurimwi* is a period of time set aside by the chief or headman /woman for the purpose of respecting and mourning a deceased member of the community. The mourning period varies from two days to a month depending on the status of the deceased within the community. For chiefs the mourning period takes up to one month and the rest of the community takes two to three days.

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[44] The concept of *chisi* is observed in rural areas which are the jurisdictions of chiefs and headmen / women. In urban areas, where there is a mixture of cultures, people are not obliged to observe *chisi*. Hence, normal business like teaching, nursing, banking and other professional activities continue undisturbed.

Anyone who performs a ritual during the month of November causes calamities such as droughts and poor harvests to the community. To the individual transgressor of November non-ritual month, a penalty in form of cattle or goats is imposed. This penalty also applies to individuals who violate the norms of *chisi* and *mahakurimwi.*

Despite prohibiting certain activities and rituals as shown above, regulation of time among the Shona also involve granting permission to perform rituals within given periods of time, for example, the month of August is important for the *kurova guva* (bringing home ceremony) for a number of factors. The month of August is characterised by dry weather conditions which are favourable for renovating graves and unveiling tomb stones. The dry weather conditions are also convenient for travel arrangements by relatives who attend the ceremony. The month of August comes soon after the harvesting of millet and sorghum which are used in brewing beer. The month of August is also chosen for the bringing home ceremony because it is free from farming activities.

4.3.1.3   *Church areas of improvement towards Nuclear Families*

The church should educate nuclear families on issues that affect them through couples' association. According to participant 22 (13 June 2020), "*Couples' association strengthens the relationship of the spouses as well as marriage vows through spiritual talks.*" Other participants indicated that a couples' association is a platform for sharing joys and sorrows experienced in marriage. Another area that requires the church's serious attention is marriage preparation to reduce cases of divorce within the church. A participant from focus group 2 (17 June 2020) highlighted that the lack of marriage preparation as one of the causes of single parent families. Furthermore, proper catechesis on marriage issues can reduce divorce cases. "*Priests should educate couples on the teaching of the church on the sacrament of marriage*" (Participant 28, 20 June 2020). The Catholic Church stresses on marriage vows that demand the spouses to stay as husband and wife in good or bad times, riches or poverty, sickness and health until death separates them.

4.3.1.3 Interpretation

The point which was seen as important is the constant interaction between culture and the Gospel. As culture continues to change, the Gospel has to be shaped simultaneously. The meeting point of the Gospel and culture within the family is expressed in *Ecclesia in Africa*

(1995). The future of the Gospel and culture passes through the family. In Africa in particular, the family is the foundation on which culture is built. If the family is to assume in its turn the role of active subject in view of the evangelisation of families through families then evangelisation becomes a major priority.

The most controversial point that participants debated in all the three focus groups is the use of indigenous languages in naming children. Some participants saw it fit to use names that are culturally relevant and understandable even to the children at a very young age. Other participants argued that the use of Biblical names presents less challenges by linking the names to great figures in the Bible. Biblical names such as Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot were seen as presenting challenges. However, what appeared as a solution is the use of dual Christian / indigenous names. Naming of children attracted a lot of debate on inculturation because it reflects current naming tendencies that slant more towards cultural names.

The most frequently discussed issue was the value of love in the nuclear family. The basis of the high frequency of divorce is the modern day threat to the value of love. Use of social media, diaspora settlements and economic crisis were considered as threats to the value of love in the nuclear family. These threats are a negation of values expressed in Shorter's framework of values in section 3.4.1. Trommsdorff[45] (2006) argues that Cultural values constitute an essential part of social development; they *organise* the developmental path of the child and influence the belief system and value orientation of those individuals interacting with the developing child. Child-rearing goals, beliefs, and practices, as well as the parent-child relationship, are especially important.

An issue that cut across gender within the participants is the use of antagonistic names. The gender factor came in as participants tried to identify the source of names such as *Marwei* and *Nhamoinesu*. Female participants accused the patriarchal African culture of granting males the unlimited opportunity to name children to the extent of failing to consult women. Male participants insisted that problematic names were a product of females who try to use children's names to capture their bad experiences or to fight verbal wars within their marriages. Among the Shona, procedures for naming a new born baby depend on the gender

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[45] Trommsdorff (2006) writing in the context of American societies, argues that culture is based on social interactions among the families. It is in the family where cultural values are taught. These cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next by a socialisation processes. Trommsdorff's analysis is based on universal attributes of culture that apply to the Masvingo Diocese population in the present research. These attributes include culture being socially transmitted, symbolic and dynamic.

of the child. The opportunity for naming a boy child is normally given to the eldest male within the family. If the eldest male declines the opportunity, the next younger person is granted that opportunity. The naming of the girl child takes a similar trend with females getting the naming opportunity. These naming opportunities are normally for the first born son or daughter. For other children after the first born, biological parents have the liberty to give the names to their children. It is when biological parents name the children that issues of experiences are passed on to the children.

While participants discussed the naming ritual, literature appears to point more on marriage rituals. For Maguraushe and Makuhlani (2014:41), *Kupereka* is the official send-off of the bride from her biological family and a handover to the bridegroom and his relatives. The *kupereka* ritual is normally done in the evening since this is the time when members of the host family are free to attend to the ritual. The bride is accompanied by her aunt and sisters to the new place as a sign of support and blessing of the marriage. The role of the aunt in the ritual is to facilitate dialogue between the bride and bridegroom in case there are differences in opinions relating to procedures. The *vatete* is the official representative for the bride's family in establishing and strengthening relationships. The *vatete* acts as the mediator between the bride and the bridegroom in the event of future conflicts. The bride's sisters are there as witnesses of the ritual process. The sisters also take the ritual as a learning opportunity regarding the *kupereka* ritual. The delegation of the *vatete* and the bride's sisters learn about the new family in the process of *kupereka*. In addition the delegation familiarises itself with the geographical location of their in laws' homestead in case the bride falls sick or dies. The bridegroom's relatives welcome the bride with gifts as a gesture of welcoming, accepting and celebrating the arrival of the bride. In the following morning, the bride and her sisters carry out domestic chores like sweeping, cooking and boiling bath water for the bridegroom's family members. These domestic chores are a sign that the bride is available to work for every member of the bridegroom's family without discrimination.

4.3.2   Single Parent Families

Single parent guidance and training of male and female domestic chores by the single parent as reflected in section 3.4.2.1 are cultural elements that can be used to shape church life. This kind of training that cuts across gender can be harnessed in shaping of church life by broadening participation irregardless of gender. The cultural contribution from single parent families is expressed by respondents who took part in the research as indicated below.

Within the single parent family, participants indicated that inculturation is expressed through responsibilities on the part of the parent; value of cooperation and ritual of visiting in-laws. Participants also highlighted that Gospel challenges to the above cultural traits is shown by insisting that taking care of children is a parental duty, stretching cooperation to meet the Gospel expectations requires an open and inclusive approach to teamwork. Friction between the parents of the departed spouse limits the visits. Workshops for single parents and counselling services are solutions to problems of loneliness and boost confidence.

4.3.2.1 Shaping of church life

The single parent family is characterised by double roles on the part of the parent. This means that the parent plays the motherly and fatherly roles simultaneously. According to participant 22 (13 June 2020) *"the single parent actually plays a double role within the family by assuming the role of mother or father."* The single parent can shape Church life by taking up responsibilities to work with the youth given their advantage in guiding boys and girls in the home environment. The value of cooperation keeps the single family united and harmonious in performing daily duties. From focus group 3 (23 June 2020) participants argued that within a single parent family, members are aware that there is a missing parent figure and they work together as a team to try and cover that gap. The team work approach shapes Church life in fund raising, charity works and section prayers. A ritual that is found in the single parent family is visiting in-laws to ensure that there are family ties between the children and their relatives. According to participant 27 (20 June 2020), "*the visits are considered ritualistic because they are done in honour of the dead. Failure to make the visits is seen as a form of disrespect for the dead."* However, other participants in focus group 3 (23 June 2020) pointed out that while the visits are necessary for the sake of the children, sometimes tension between the single parent and the in-laws complicate the situation. Single parents show commitment in visiting in-laws and such commitment is helpful in Church life by visiting the sick, elderly and orphans.

4.3.2.2 Gospel as a challenge

Due to the trans-cultural nature of the Gospel message, the parenting role played by the single parent is seen as a parental duty and no form of reward is expected for carrying out such duties. For participant 7 (5 June 2020), *"Single parents should shoulder the burden of parental care on their own, they should not expect anyone to take over their responsibility*

since it is a God-given responsibility to care for the children." The value of cooperation within the single parent family can be stretched outside the demands prescribed by the family members. Participant 5 (5 June 2020) argues that *"the Gospel continues to challenge the cooperation within the single parent family in the sense that single parent families often have a closed cooperation which fails to embrace relatives or neighbours."* While single parents may relate well with the relatives of the departed spouse, friction tends to limit their visits. This friction could be as a result of mistrust between the surviving spouse and the relatives of the departed spouse. In the case of death, the remaining spouse can be blamed for death of the spouse. The Gospel challenges single parents to be resilient in doing what is good despite negative comments from relatives concerned. In this way, Participant 9 (5 June 2020) suggested the following *''Dama rakanaka rinotidzidzisa kuti tisatsiva chivi nechivi (the Gospel teaches us not to take revenge).''* The participant shows that the Gospel demands single parents to be resilient, and not seeking revenge.

4.3.2.3   Church areas of improvement towards Single Parent Families

In the light of the above Gospel challenges, participants from focus groups advocate for workshops for single parents. A participant from focus group 2 (17 June 2020), highlighted the need for retreats, talks, seminars and workshops that could help single parents to raise children in a Catholic way, cope with loneliness, boost self-esteem, and help them recover emotionally and spiritually.

Participants from focus group 3 emphasised the need for the Church to offer counselling to single parent families. According to participant 10 (5 June 2020), *"Single parent families encounter problems including role overload, economic hardships, loneliness and grief issues."* As a result the Church needs priests trained in professional counselling in order to address issues pertaining to single parent families. Single parents also need to be encouraged to seek the services of these professional counsellors.

The church should encourage single parents to join guilds and associations for both material upkeep and spiritual nourishment. Participant 13 (13 June 2020) affirms that *"St. Monica is a role model for single parents because her trust in God, persistence in prayer and taking care of her children."* Although St. Monica is a role model for female single parents, male single parents have a lot to learn from her.

The most frequent item that came from all the focus group discussions was the burden of parental care. The reason for the frequency lies in the double role of motherly and fatherly duties. Visits by the single family to the former spouse's relatives came up as an emotional issue because of exchanges of harsh words often associated with such visits. A cross cutting issue across gender groups was the need for guilds and associations for single parents. The diocese has no association for single parent families. This was seen as a way of helping the single parents to address challenges that are associated with a period of denial, stigma and hopelessness. According to *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995:101), the whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelisation, each according to his or her specific role within the Church. For this reason the African Synod strongly emphasized the training of the agents of evangelisation in Africa. In this regard, single parents have a role to play in the church like other church members. Edgell (2006) argues that religious denominations should allow single parent families to have special time spent together and provide them with moral education for children. Religious involvement establishes family relationships and also builds relationships outside the family through social interaction with others who have similar values and shared beliefs. These beliefs are within Shorter's (1988) worldview dimension in section 3.4.2.4. In that way, single parents can develop social ties to individuals within the church who are similar to themselves.

A point of importance that was emphasised by all the focus group discussions was the need to take care of single parents at community level through the use of African cultural values such as hospitality, sympathy and care. This point is expressed by Fancy[46] (2019) who maintains that the aspect of loving and caring for the widowed single mothers and fathers should be preserved even within African culture. The dead husband's brothers and his family generally can take care of the widow and her children, although under Christianity, they can no longer cater for her sexual and procreative needs as it will be considered polygamy or adultery. She should remain a valued and respected member of the dead husband's family. If the family is unable or neglects and abuses her in anyway, the Church family which is the

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[46] Fancy (2019) writing in the context of Agikuyu people of Kenya maintains that widows or widowers are not clearly visible because members of the extended family take care of them financially, socially, emotionally and psychologically. There are striking similarities in taking care of widows and widowers between the Agikuyu people of Kenya on one hand and the Shona, Venda and Shangani of Zimbabwe on the other hand. These cultural similarities allow me to draw from Fancy's study.

"Family of God" should take up the role. In the event that a single parent is neglected by his or her extended family members, associations such as choir and Catholic Youth Association, can help the single parent spiritually, morally and financially. These associations can also choose a delegation to mediate between the single family and members of his or her extended family for the purpose of accommodating the single parent. The priests also help the single parent through counselling sessions, spirituals talks and homilies.

The same applies to other single parents who should be taken care of by their respective families and where neglect and suffering is detected the "Family of God" should come in handy. The elderly widowed fathers who may not remarry should be well taken care of by members of their extended families.

4.3.3 Child-headed Families

The deprivation of a male or female parental authority, ability to make decisions and taking care of other siblings (section 3.4.3.2) are cultural experiences of child-headed families that can be transferred to church duties and responsibilities. These experiences were also captured in the data gathering process during interviews and focus group discussions as indicated in the paragraph below.

Participants' views show that inculturation within the child-headed family is shaped by taking care of siblings, the value of sharing and the ritual of visiting graves of departed parents. The challenge by the Gospel, according to respondents, indicate that caring should take higher levels to become more inclusive; sharing should go deeper to involve sharing of spiritual nourishment and the reality of death should result in reflecting on how to improve present life. Areas that the church should improve include offering counselling services and holding Mass for the child-headed families. The section will provide an analysis of views from respondents and show that the value of sharing was the most frequently discussed item while the suggestion for holding Mass for child-headed families featured as the most significant point. Literature to be examined in this section include African Synod Document (1995) which advocates for the transformation of families in the light of contemporary economic, social and spiritual challenges. Bourdillon (2001) shows how children develop competitiveness out of responsibilities. More details are now provided on the child-headed families.

4.3.3.1   Shaping of church life

Child-headed families can shape church life through their bread winning responsibilities. Participant 15 (13 June 2020) indicates that, *"In African culture the first born child is expected to take care of siblings and this responsibility is stronger in the absence of parents."* This sense of responsibility enhances active participation in church activities, which promotes self-reliance among the youth. This helps the youth to raise funds for their guilds and associations without relying on the parish or parents. With limited resources in the child-headed family, the value of sharing is very important. According to participant 25 (20 June 2020), *"Within African culture, children learn to share by eating from the same plate."* The value of sharing promotes the spirit of sharing talents among congregants. These talents include singing, preaching, teaching and drumming. Although child-headed families may find many cultural rituals as complex, participants in focus group 1 (8 June 2020) indicated the need to visit the graves of departed parents and put on flowers. This ritual enables the children to remember and reconnect with their departed parents. In the context of shaping of church life, the ritual enables children to understand the doctrine that connects the living and the dead.

4.3.3.2   Gospel as a challenge

The sense of responsibility among child-headed families can still be challenged by the Gospel in the sense that the Gospel requires them to go beyond siblings and friends and include other parishioners as well. Participant 31 (20 June 2020) cites Galatians 6:2 *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* The Biblical verse cited by the participant encourages child-headed family members to accommodate their peers. Despite sharing material things, the Gospel requires children to share the word of God for spiritual nourishment. Furthermore, the Gospel gives hope of life after death to child-headed families as they reconnect with departed parents through grave visits. The belief in life after death also enables the child-headed family members to reflect on their present life in the light of life after death. For participant 13 (13 June 2020), *"while it is difficult for children to grasp the concept of life after death, visiting graves of departed parents helps children to cope with the reality of grief."* This gesture strengthens the relationship between the living and the dead.

4.3.3.3   Church areas of improvement towards Child-headed Families

Counselling services to child-headed families, through the church, should address how to cope with the loss of parents, acceptance of the new reality and provision of a message of hope. Participant 30 (20 June 2020) said: *"Professional counsellors, who include priests and the religious, should help child-headed families to cope with stress and depression caused by loss of parents."* The church should encourage guilds and associations to offer educational support to the child-headed families. Child-headed families require educational support especially at primary school level because they are still immature to look after themselves. Holding mass with child-headed families, by grouping them at section level, at least once per month helps the priest to address some of the challenges faced by child-headed families. Mass also enables the child-headed family members to share their problems with the priests and the religious. A sense of belonging is developed through this interaction with other members.

4.3.3.4   Interpretation

A frequency analysis shows that leadership skills are the cultural elements that emerge from child-headed families. The reason for such frequency is that the eldest child is involved in decision making, supervision and taking care of other siblings. The findings are consistent with observations made by Bourdillon (2001) especially in connection with leadership skills. Bourdillon (2001) asserts that African children develop competence to survive when in difficult circumstances. This competence is applicable to child-headed families because they make decisions, resolve conflict, allocate responsibilities to siblings and make rules to regulate behaviour among siblings. However, the eldest child can also work with others as a team. Findings are also validated by Magwa and Magwa (2016:23) who argue that the value of respect among child headed families helps the children to work together and attain specific goals within the home environment. Evidence of the value of respect is seen in child-headed families working as a team in undertaking domestic chores such as cooking, washing and sweeping (Magwa and Magwa, 2016:24). In African culture, children are taught to respect peers by elders. Respect for elders and authority is an important value in African culture. Within the hierarchical nature of African society for elders and those in authority is important both to the family and the community. Respect is given not only to family members but also to other members of the community. The value of respect can shape church life as it helps to

guide activities of guilds and associations. Members of guilds and associations are expected to respect each other despite differences based on gender, age and social background.

The idea of respect can be transferred from its cultural context to church life in several dimensions. *Sekuru* (grandfather) is a figure of respect on the basis of wisdom and ability to teach others in the Shona extended family. The term *Sekuru* is also applied to the Bishop in Church life as a figure of wisdom and authority. The powers of the Bishop are to teach, sanctify and govern within the whole Diocese as the Chief Shepherd. *Baba* (father) is the head of the family who protects and guides the family. The respect given to *Baba* (father) is also given to the priest as the head of the parish or mission by virtue of ordination. The powers of the priest are to teach, sanctify and govern the people of God within a parish or mission. *Sekuru* (uncle) is respected for teaching boys in matters of courtship and marriage. The term *sekuru*[47] applies to the spiritual advisor of Saint Peter guild for young boys by preparing them to be responsible future husbands. Culturally, *vatete* (aunt) gives advice to girls in preparation for marriage and family life. In church circles, the term *vatete* applies to the spiritual advisor for the Guild of Mary where her role is to advise girls in matters of religious vocations and marriage. *Mbuya* (grandmother) is responsible for narrating folktales to young children for the purpose of putting across a moral teaching. In church life *mbuya* (grandmother) teaches spiritual matters to young children through Biblical stories to enhance their faith. In addition, the spiritual advisor responsibilities of *sekuru* (uncle) and *vatete* (aunt) extend to the Catholic Youth Association (CYA) in matters to do with religious vocations and marriage.

In terms of extensiveness, the value of sharing was discussed in all the three focus group discussions, thereby cutting across urban, semi-urban and rural parishes. The reason why the value of sharing cut across the three focus groups lies in the potential to keep the child-headed family together in harmony as opposed to selfishness. The tension between modern values and cultural values is shown in the child-headed families who show evidence of contemporary trends. This tension is seen in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) where it is argued that, from a pastoral point of view, this is a real challenge, given the political, economic, social and cultural difficulties which African families must face as a result of the great changes which characterise contemporary society. Values in the child-headed families give a sense of

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[47] In Shona culture, the term *Sekuru* is applied to both grandfather and to uncle (as in the mother's male sibling). The grandfather context applies to the Bishop while the uncle reference applies to the Saint Peter Guild spiritual advisor.

purpose in life as reflected by Shorter (1988) in section 3.4.3.3 of chapter 3. While adopting the positive values of modernity, the African child-headed family must preserve its own essential values.

A point of importance that was raised by both interview participants and focus group participants is holding masses specifically for child-headed families. The reason for the masses is that sermons address the realities, challenges and aspirations for child-headed families. In terms of specificity, the greatest detail was given by participants in elaborating the responsibilities of child-headed families. The reason for much detail under child-headed family responsibilities is that participants felt challenged by some of the skills shown by child-heads. In some cases, participants pointed out that some child-heads were even more responsible than some adults.

What was emotional is that sharing limited resources is the most common issue that emerged on the shaping of church life by child headed families. The reason for this emotional nature lies in the fact that most child-headed families survive under poverty conditions.

4.3.4   Reconstituted Families

Conflict resolution, sharing of resources, ability to adapt to new situations and problem solving skills as evidenced by section 3.4.4.2 are the cultural elements of the reconstituted family that have potential to be used within the church. These elements are also expressed in interviews during the data gathering process thereby reinforcing findings of chapter 3 as indicated below.

Participants begin by showing that the use of totems, the value of forgiveness and ancestral veneration are important cultural elements that can be exploited in the church. The church demands further refinement of the cultural elements by suggesting embracing non-members in the use of totems, applying forgiveness beyond the level of family and praying for the dead instead of venerating them. The church should improve pastoral care for reconstituted families by educating parishioners against stigmatisation of these families and establishing support groups for the families. An analysis of the views gathered from participants shows that stigmatisation of reconstituted families was the most debatable issue while the need for support groups for these families emerged as a valuable point.

4.3.4.1   Shaping of church life

The use of totems is a practice that can be used to build relationships by members of the reconstituted family. According to participant 35 (20 June 2020), *"The use of totems establishes respectable relationships among families. These relationships can result in teamwork during happy and sad times."* The participants also pointed out the importance of totems in professions, ordinations and jubilee celebrations. In these occasions totems of the ordinates, professed religious or jubilarians are mentioned and their praise poems recited. In addition, totems can be used to welcome new priests and religious to parishes. Members of the priest or religious' totem take an active role in welcoming the priest through singing and dancing. Totems can shape church life in the sense that through the relationships built on totems, congregants can competitively raise funds for church activities on the basis of totems. Totems can also be used when appreciating someone or upholding someone who has been victorious or has achieved something within the Church.

In the reconstituted family, the value of forgiveness that is expressed in child adoption is very important for church life. Child adoption is considered with some limiting factors. In the event that both spouses bring children into the reconstituted family, only the biological children of the father's side are considered to belong to the same ancestry with the father's extended family. The biological children of the mother's side are considered as excluded from the clan of the father. A term that is used to describe a child who is brought along by the female spouse in the reconstituted marriage is *mubvandiripo* (the one I came with). Within the African culture, the concept of a child is understood to go beyond the biological child and include children of fellow villagers. Participant 32 (20 June 2020) spoke from experience, *"During the days of Cyclone Eline, some school children failed to cross Runde river on their way from school. Villagers on the side of the school took care of the affected children and provided food, shelter and clothing freely for almost two weeks."* Church life is shaped by extending love to include non-biological children.

The ritual of child protection from evil spirits through *vadzimu* is seen as a challenge in reconstituted families. Participants from focus group 3 argued that child protection from evil spirits is explained by a sense of insecurity that prevails within the reconstituted family (Focus group 3, 23 June 2020). The insecurity is based on the fact that *vadzimu* can only protect the biological children of the male spouse as they belong to the same clan. *Vadzimu* act as guardian spirits for the living members by watching over their daily lives. *Vadzimu* also

have the capacity to become angry and they can cause sickness and other misfortunes. *Vadzimu* can also punish the living when a certain ritual like failure to inform them about the reconstituted family is omitted. The children who are brought along by the female spouse are excluded from protection since they are of a different clan. These children from the mother's side are later taken back to their extended families when they are grown up for the sake of protection. Ancestors play a role in protecting the home and keeping harmony within the family. The ritual shapes church life by suggesting the use of sacramental such as the rosary, holy oil, holy water and incense among others.

4.3.4.2 Gospel as a challenge

The cultural context of totems can still be challenged by the Gospel in the sense that despite the good elements from totems, these totems are often constructed along ethnic lines and they may be closed and hostile for outsiders. The gospel challenges totems to embrace non-members and accommodate them as well. For participant 30 (20 June 2020) *"at my parish, only two of us belong to the same totem. Whenever fund raising is done on the basis of totems, the two of us feel insignificant since we are overshadowed by the dominant totems. We sometimes feel that the use of totems divides rather than uniting parishioners."* As a participant observer (pastoral program, Appendix 5), I concluded that parish councils should be careful in the use of totems to avoid both undermining minority totems and contradicting the Gospel.

The value of forgiveness expressed through child adoption is challenged by the Gospel to go beyond the level of family and village ties to accommodate strangers. For participant 9 (5 June 2020), *"The Gospel requires us to do good without limit, the moment we get to that level, our parishes will overcome many problems based on limited family or village ties."* Since the parish is made up of members from different political, economic, cultural and social backgrounds, working together will enable parish members to unite.

The church uses the Gospel to challenge the veneration of *vadzimu* (ancestors) by demanding the refinement of the ritual so that congregants continue to pray for the dead instead of venerating them. Within the Shona worldview, ancestors are believed to be intermediaries between people and God, guardians of the family's traditions and life, source of comfort to the living. The church continues to stress on the distinction between the departed who have been accepted into the Kingdom of Christ and those yet to be accepted. In the liturgical

calendar the Church celebrates the feasts of all saints and all souls day. On all saints day the Church celebrates this day in honouring those who have attained heaven. The Church remembers the departed on all souls day. On this particular day the Church offers prayers for the dead asking for God's mercy if they are not yet in heaven. These two events can also be combined (all saints and all souls day). In a way the gospel challenges the veneration of ancestors by giving particular importance to these two events. The saints have the power to intercede both the living and the dead.

4.3.4.3 *Church areas of improvement towards Reconstituted Families*

Reconstituted families are often stigmatised by congregants as they consider these families as less Christianised. According to participant 16 (13 June 2020) *"I was a family friend of one of the families in our section, when the wife died and the husband remarried, I found it difficult to associate with the reconstituted family."* The views of participant 16 are representative of other congregants who stigmatise reconstituted families. The church should educate parishioners about the need to fully accept these reconstituted families. Reconstituted families are often left out in church activities such as singing, taking readings, home visits and pilgrimages. For participant 14 (13 June 2020), *"reconstituted families are just excluded from many parish activities, there are no written down rules but one sees a clear exclusion pattern as parishioners are given roles by the parish leaders."* The church should educate congregants to view each reconstituted member as an image of God and be inclusive in working with these individuals. Furthermore, support groups that help reconstituted families to cope with grief, transition and new lifestyle are important for the church. Within these support groups, reconstituted families share common realities, problems and solutions related to step parenting.

4.3.4.4 *Interpretation*

What appeared as the most emotional point from participants was the exclusion of reconstituted family members from church activities. The reasons for the emotions are that such exclusion is based on prejudice rather than evidence and it is often exercised against the innocent who include children. The exclusion of children is inconsistent with African values expressed in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995, 43) where the role played by African culture in loving and adopting children is stressed. In African culture and tradition the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental. Similar views on the importance of values are seen in Shorter (1988) in section 3.4.4.3. Open to this sense of the family, of love and respect for life,

the African family loves children, who are joyfully welcomed as gifts of God. It is the love of life that binds reconstituted families in Africa.

A cross cutting point across gender is the stigmatisation of reconstituted families. As a participant observer, I noted that the stigma is often based on lack of theological education among parishioners. A valuable point that all the three focus groups stressed is the need to create support groups that can be used for sharing experiences by the reconstituted families. These support groups help to address most of the challenges faced by reconstituted families through counselling. Literature that relates to findings is also seen in Basson[48] (2007) whose emphasis is on Christ's model for counselling reconstituted families. Compassion, acceptance, worth, discernment, using the right words, giving hope, encouragement, peace of mind, inspiration and teaching are the foundations of Jesus' counselling. Right behaviour, encouraging people to accept responsibility for their actions, reshaping people's thinking and to help them focus on the authority of God's Word are the end results of helping people. The challenge to Christian counsellors is to magnify this behaviour and to emulate a warm, caring personality and the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit. It is this example that makes Christian counselling different from the secular sphere.

The element of forgiveness dominated discussions in interviews and focus group discussions. Most participants felt that forgiveness was significant in the foundation and sustenance of reconstituted families. Without the value of forgiveness the reconstituted families may break apart. Forgiveness also builds solidarity among reconstituted family members. Reconstituted families also face unique challenges with regard to issues of solidarity. Feelings of closeness and connection take time to develop due to the lack of a common family history, the loss of a previous parent-child bond, the geographical separation from a noncustodial parent, the addition of new children in the household, and the lack of an identifiable legal relationship with the step parent(s) (Cissna, Cox, & Bochner, [49] 1990:44:122). The creation of the reconstituted family can be overshadowed by the children's sense of loss over their parents'

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[48] Basson (2007) writing in a South African context, applies a Christological model to counselling in reconstituted families. The virtues of compassion, acceptance and hope are foundations of Jesus' counselling. Jesus' approach to counselling is transcultural and it applies equally to reconstituted families in Masvingo Diocese.

[49] Cissna, Cox and Bochner (1990) addressing the challenges of reconstituted families within an American empirical context, pointed out that the loss of a previous parent-child bond, geographical separation from a non-custodial parent and the addition of new children in the household affect the bonding of relationships within the reconstituted families. These challenges are also faced by reconstituted families in Masvingo Diocese.

marriage, contact with a non-custodial parent, and the old family form (Bray & Harvey, 1995:123). As a result of these challenges to reconstituted family members' feelings of solidarity, some researchers suggest that reconstituted families are less close or warm than continuously intact families (Bray & Hetherington, 1993:123). This may be particularly true for the relationship between the stepparent and stepchild (Bray & Hetherington, 1993:124). For example, researchers have found that parents in reconstituted families perceived their relationships with their own children to be closer than the relationship with their stepchildren. This problem can be addressed by equal treatment of children regardless of the children being step or biological.

4.3.5   Extended Families

The extended family is characterised by cooperation, hospitality and family rituals such as *kurova guva* (home coming ceremony) and *kuripa ngozi* (appeasing the avenging spirit) in its main cultural elements (see section 3.4.5.1) that form the basis of contextualising culture within the Gospel. The role of the extended family (as the custodian of cultural values) in the acceptance of the Gospel by culture is seen in evidence gathered from respondents in the empirical component of this study as indicated in the following paragraph.

According to participants, the extended family contributes to church activities through teamwork, solidarity and the bringing home ritual of *kurova guva.* These cultural elements fit well with the Gospel if race, gender and totems, among other factors, are transcended in teamwork within the church. Solidarity should ultimately seek unity through Christ and not earthly foundations. The bringing home ceremony is challenged by memorial services within the church. The church is expected to improve by engaging in further dialogue with culture on the home coming ceremony (*kurova guva).* An analysis of the views gathered reveals that *avenging* spirit (*ngozi)* was the most emotionally charged item in focus group discussions while *kurova guva* featured as a point that requires further research. Literature from the African Synod Document (1995), Kumbirai (1977) and Gundani (1994) help to validate some of the findings gathered from participants. A more detailed discussion on the extended family follows.

4.3.5.1   Shaping of church life

The practice of *nhimbe* (working together as a community) involves the extended family coming together to accomplish an agricultural task such as carrying manure to the fields, weeding, harvesting and shelling. Such cultural activities shape church life by facilitating cooperation and team work among parishioners. For respondent 19 (13 June 2020), *"if there are any repairs that need to be done at the parish, we just organise ourselves and come together and work over the task. We once did this form of nhimbe when the church roof was blown off by a storm."* While the participant made reference to repairs, any other task such as visiting the sick and attending funerals can still be done by parishioners using that approach. The value of solidarity gives mutual support among members of the extended families and this is practically shown in *kuripa ngozi* (appeasing the spirit). From all the three focus group discussions, solidarity shapes church life in the sense that parishioners come together to address a problem, to pool resources together and to celebrate success. The *kurova guva* is a way of bringing back the departed soul from the wilderness into the homestead. According to participant 17 (13 June 2020), *"the kurova guva ceremony is an important ritual, what are commonly considered to be black spots in road accidents are places where spirits of the dead are causing havoc. This can be avoided if relatives bring back these souls into their respective homes."* The *kurova guva* ceremony shapes church life in the sense that it facilitates dialogue between the church and indigenous beliefs.

4.3.5.2   Gospel as a challenge

Despite the positive elements which are found in the extended family, the Gospel continues to challenge the cultural component of working together as a family. The Gospel cuts across blood relationships, gender, race and totems and encourages unity in diversity. Focus group 1 (8 June 2020) emphasises collaborative ministry among the priests, religious and the laity in the proclamation of the Good News. Regarding solidarity, participant 23 (13 June 2020) quotes, " There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The Gospel challenges the *kurova guva* ritual by encouraging memorial services for the departed relatives. The memorial service teaches the three parts of the church that include the living, the dead and the communion of saints. These three parts reflect the unity of the church.

4.3.5.3   Church areas of improvement towards Extended Families

The church should reemphasise the importance of the value of solidarity in the extended family to promote collaborative ministry. According to participant 33 (20 June 2020) "*The value of working together as a team from a cultural point of view can be used in the church to promote collaboration in spreading the Gospel.*" *Kuripa ngozi* (appeasing the spirit) should be recognised in the church since this helps to better understand the sacrament of reconciliation. *The cultural rituals of kuripa ngozi are the basis of forgiveness and reconciliation between communities and this can be used to understand the sacrament of reconciliation within the church* (participant 9, 5 June 2020). Further investigations on the *kurova guva* ritual are required to come up with similarities and differences between Christian beliefs and *kurova guva*. For participant 21 (13 June 2020), *there is need for the church to involve the laity in coming up with the best approaches to how the bringing home ceremony can be further Christianised.* This participatory approach will enable the laity to fully understand the theological implications of the bringing home ceremony.

4.3.5.4   Interpretation

The most frequent aspect of the extended family discussed by participants was the value of solidarity. Most participants took interest in solidarity because it is an African expression of unity within the extended family. The unity binds the extended family in both happy and sad times. What happens in other family types has effect on the extended family. A good example is marriage where the new couple is accommodated in the entire extended family. Views from participants are consistent with literature as evidenced by *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) when he writes, "By its nature marriage, which has the special mission of perpetuating humanity, transcends the couple. In the same way, by its nature, the family extends beyond the individual household: it is oriented towards society" (EA, 85). The orientation towards society is best seen in the African extended family. The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and nourishes it continually through its role of service to life: it is from the family that citizens come to birth and it is within the family that they find the first school of the social virtues that are the animating principle of the existence and development of society itself.

Participants were emotional during discussions of the causes of *ngozi* (avenging spirit) and it was pointed out that some family members engaged in cases of murder caused havoc for other family members who are usually innocent. The ritual of *kurova guva* was perceived by participants as important because it links the living and the dead. If the ritual is not

performed, it is believed that the deceased has power to inflict harm on the living as a way of expressing anger to the family members for failure to integrate the deceased with the rest of the ancestral spirits. These views are also expressed by Kumbirai (1977) who argues that initial rituals that are performed immediately after death emphasise separation of the deceased from the community and aim to ensure that 'the spirit does not find its way back to the homestead to worry the living it has left behind'. The *kurova guva* ritual is found within Shorter's (1988:34) worldview dimension as explored in section 3.4.5.4. People cannot associate with it until such time as a ritual has been performed to welcome it into the family as a spirit elder, and to induct it into the community of the spirit ancestors.

In the same way, Gundani (1994:143) locates the historical context of *kurova guva* (coming home ceremony) as he writes that the indigenous diocesan clergy later became a force to reckon with in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, from 1972 when they formed the National Association of Diocesan Clergy (NADC). Changes that took place in the church when the Catholic Association, in conjunction with the NADC and other lay members in the church steered the theological discourse which culminated in the adoption of *kurova guva*. Gundani (1994:144) also investigates how the Vatican Council II teachings on liturgical development provided the matrix to the discourse. Gundani (1994:145) argues that *kurova guva* (coming home ceremony) represents a classic case of the dynamic interaction between the gospel and culture in Africa. He also argues that the process of change which resulted in the new liturgy was unique within 'historical churches' in the sense that it started from the bottom and not from the top. Furthermore, it is in the extended family where *Kurova guva* (coming home ceremony) ritual is performed. Mwandayi (2011:218) writes, "grief, desire, even other things that may have been obstacles between the living and the dead are supposed to be brought to an end by this feast." The *kurova guva* ceremony is therefore believed to bring harmonious relations between the living and the dead.

Ancestors are regarded as the guardians of the family. Thus ancestors are family spirits who are always benevolent when treated well (Bourdillon 1998, Beller 2001). They protect their descendants tenaciously against any harm from natural catastrophes, diseases and evil spirits. To appreciate the ancestors' role, the living, at given times, hold ritual ceremonies of remembrance and thanksgiving. One of the major roles of the ancestors is to plead to God on behalf of their descendants. God pours down his graces, blessings and protection through the ancestors. He also gives rain through the ancestors. In other words, in the traditional Shona

religion, God does not deal with the living directly or the living with God directly, but only through the ancestors. God is absolutely believed to be the creator of everything that exists. Therefore, the living are obliged to perform this ritual for fear of the negative consequences that arise from not performing the ritual. The aspect of *nhimbe* (working together) cuts across gender divisions as participants pointed out that working together can be done along gender based division of labour.

4.4   THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXTENDED FAMILY AND OTHER FAMILY TYPES

The extended family stands outside other family types and includes them all. It is a unifying family type or a 'family of families'. This means that the nuclear, single parent, child-headed and reconstituted families all participate in the extended family. There is a mutual relationship between the extended family and other family types because while the extended family supports other family types, it is also supported by them. The extended family transcends space and time as argued by Lugira (2009:11). In several African communities, family is not limited to space and time, thus, it cuts across generations, relatives living far and near, the living and those who have joined the ancestors, as well as the ancestors themselves who continue to play a role in the lives of the living (Lugira, 2009;12). The extended family also connects the living and the dead through rituals. It is the world of the living dead that is the foundation of the extended family hence the constant interaction between the living and the dead.

The extended family is an inclusive family system, which shapes the broader inclusive nature and other family types. Obligations of the extended family are seen during happy times of ordinations, graduations, anniversaries and weddings. During difficult times of sickness and death, the extended family also comes together in solidarity with the immediate family.

However, international migration has weakened Masvingo family ties especially where some members especially spouses migrate to Europe, the Middle East, and Americas and even in the Southern African region in search of better employment opportunities. There has been an increase in global diasporas over the years due to Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis. Like rural-urban migration, international migration is a double edged sword to families, furnishing potential economic benefits through remittances, but also breaking the bonds of

unity that sustain families (section 3.4). This exodus of family members into different parts of the world left a scar on all family types.

Despite the challenges faced by the extended family, modern technology helps families to continue to function across geographical spaces through the use of social networks such face book, whatsapp, twitter and instagram. Such networks help to promote relations between the extended family and other family types. However, these social networks are more applicable to younger generations while the elderly are mostly left out due to limited exposure to technological gadgets.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The chapter examined findings presented from interviews and focus group discussions on two Synod themes: Evangelisation as proclamation of the Good News and Inculturation in the context of family types. Proclamation of the Good News and inculturation are linked in the sense that the Gospel is expressed through culture and that culture contextualises the Gospel. The family is the focal meeting point of the Gospel and culture. The findings were interpreted using an analytical framework of frequency, extensiveness, intensity, consistency, specificity and participant perception of importance. The findings were also related to *Ecclesia in Africa* and other ancillary documents since the study is premised on the African Synod.

Participants gave evidence of challenges faced by each family type. These challenges were seen as spiritual, social, economic and psychological, among other factors. Solutions to these problems were also provided and these ranged from counselling services, economic empowerment and education of parishioners. Each family type contributes to inculturation through practices, values and rituals that shape church life. While these contributions are important in shaping the Gospel, there is a way in which the Gospel demands transcultural elements that help to improve cultural ways of expressing the Gospel. However, the findings revealed that there is mutual relationship between the Gospel and culture. Findings also indicated how the church should improve in terms of accommodating elements of African culture. The same analytical framework already mentioned was used to interpret the findings. Furthermore, both *Ecclesia in Africa* and critical works were related to the findings.

This chapter prepares a foundation for a theological reflection that is done in the next chapter. While the views gathered from participants are based on empirical investigations, the theological factor helps to assess how the church as family can be shaped in the context of

relating the theoretical framework of the Synod against pastoral experience of family types within the Diocese of Masvingo.

CHAPTER 5

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AS FAMILY IN RELATION TO FAMILY TYPES IN MASVINGO DIOCESE

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and analysed research findings on different family types as agents of mission in the proclamation of the Good News and inculturation in Masvingo Catholic Diocese families. This chapter continues with research findings with a focus on theological reflection on the mission of the Church as family in relation to family types within Masvingo Catholic Diocese. The data is drawn from the same focus groups of the previous chapter with additional questions on how the vision of the mission of the Church as family shapes different families in the diocese. This reflection is based on participants' pastoral experiences which include, theological issues arising from each family type in relation to pastoral experience, ministry structures and ministry challenges in working with various family types. Even though family types are examined individually the African communal setting views these as one family through the extended family. In the African relational setting, all other family types function within the extended family. The other family types such as nuclear, single parent, child-headed and reconstituted are considered as transitional families under the extended family. The concept of Church as family builds on the social foundations provided by African culture. The ecclesiological vision of the mission of the Church as family is not just an ecclesial ideal of participatory and mutual relationship with congregants, but also an ideal of the Church to have a richer understanding of different family types.

The contribution of the chapter is on reflecting the extent to which the ideal of the Trinity binds families together on the basis of love and unity. It explores how ministry structures strengthen family types and how this notion of the mission of the church as family faces challenges within the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section provides a reflection on the Trinity which forms the basis of the mission of the Church as family as drawn from the African Synod Document (section 2.6). It also gathers perceptions of participants: priests, religious and the laity on how Divine attributes can challenge and shape all family types. Each type of family can be shaped by the Trinity in a way that brings unity to the concept of Church as family within the diversity of family types. The second section is an analysis of

ministry structures taken by the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo in helping to support the family. These ministry structures include guilds, associations and commissions, which engage different family types. The last section draws participants' views on challenges that are faced in working with families in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo. These challenges involve: pastoral, economic, social and cultural impediments that hinder family ministry in pursuit of this notion of the Church as family.

5.2 THEOLOGICAL ISSUES ARISING IN FAMILY MINISTRY

The Synod on Africa adopted the notion "Church as Family as its guiding idea for the evangelization of Africa" (EA, no 63). This notion is based on anthropological and theological foundations. The anthropological aspect refers primarily to the African family values such as care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, dialogue and trust (EA 63). The theological foundation has its origin in the Trinity in which the activities of the three divine persons were developed. The infiltration and indwelling of the three divine persons reciprocally in one another, does not throw away the distinctiveness of persons in the Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons but consubstantial. The Father has distinct qualities, as the Son and the Holy Spirit. Their missions in the economy of salvation are also distinct, but still, it is the same one God who acts. The church as family reflects the community of the Triune God. Thus the anthropological foundation needs to be strengthened by the Trinity which is also a divine community. This notion of the church as family must be applied in the church through its members from different family types. These members from different family types also participate in different ministry structures.

The theological reflection component attempts to harmonise the ideal of the Trinity with cultural understanding of the family as enshrined in African culture. The Trinitarian foundation provides a vertical dimension of the Church as family which involves the relationship between family members and God. The relationship is that of dependence where God is the source and sustenance of life. The relationship of family members as brothers and sisters gives the horizontal aspect of family by employing African cultural values such as unity, respect and forgiveness to strengthen family relations. Blending the two dimensions strengthens the ideal of the Mission of the Church as family since there is a co-relationship between the attributes of the Trinity and cultural values. The Trinity is the foundation of the mission of the Church as family of God. Through baptism, members are incorporated into the

Church to form one family and one people of God. The foundation of the church's mission in the life of the Trinity is the basis for the church's understanding of its missionary activity and all the baptised have a part to play in the church's mission.

Each family type has distinct theological issues that arise in the attempt to fulfil the goals of the mission of the Church as family. These issues depend on several factors that include family structure, diversity, experience, level of maturity and geographical setting. A family approach should rather be informed by an understanding of a family that is embedded within the reality of community life. This requires a community focus and respect of diverse forms of families.

As indicated in chapter 2 (section 2.6) the concept of the Church as family is modelled along the Trinity. The use of the Trinity as an ideal of the family has five points of justification. Firstly, the Trinity provides a transcendental ideal that overcomes human weaknesses as seen in Biblical or historical models of the family. The love and unity as shown by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit offer an objective foundation of the family that can be used as a standard across all family types. Secondly, the Trinity goes above all family types and its applicability to all family types in Masvingo Diocese is appropriate. This approach enables a vertical participation of all family types within the Trinity. Thirdly, the Trinity provides a theological foundation from which Divine attributes can be harmonised with African cultural values to give distinct African family types. Fourthly, Trinitarian theology entails a social dimension which fits well with the African understanding of the person as social and relational. Lastly, Trinitarian theology can be used to challenge African cultural practices that are inconsistent with Catholic family values with the aim of improving African culture in strengthening families.

The African Synod (1994) provides a theological ideal of the family that blends two aspects. Firstly, it draws from the Holy Trinity to provide the attributes of love and unity within the family. Secondly, it borrows the cultural values that provide the human dimension of solidarity, care, trust and warmth. However, it should be noted that unlike the Trinity, the human side has both strengths and weaknesses. The cultural dimension is characterised by human weaknesses and the Trinity is the notion which can be used to overcome human weaknesses. In this section, I shall examine how each family type can be assessed in terms of theological implications that are drawn from both the Trinity and cultural aspects.

The extent to which the theological concept of Trinity blends with the cultural aspect of family values determines the extent to which a distinct African theological understanding of family can be obtained. The theological foundation of the family has its origin in the Trinity and finds cultural characteristics from the African family. African thought believes that members of the same family are bound by the same solidarity of faith to promote fraternity, service and common goals. Kritzinger (2008:772) considers theological reflection as (re)interpretation of the Bible and theological tradition in the light of agency, context analysis and ecclesial analysis. The unique message that arises out of the reflection facilitates the development of the concept of Church as family. The reflection further opens space for spirituality, practical projects and reflexivity (Kritzinger, 2008:772). In the context of this study, it is useful for this notion of the church as family. At this point, I now turn to theological issues relating to each family type with the aim of using family diversity to develop an integrated notion of the Church as family in a Zimbabwean context.

5.2.1 Theological Issues relating to Nuclear families

Within the nuclear family, Trinitarian theology demands that the spouses have love and unity as solemnised by the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The equal footing of the spouses is the theological foundation of love and unity that spring from perfect love and unity between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. According to participant 1 (7 October 2020), "*The participation in the life of the Trinity begins with the sacrament of baptism and it continues with other sacraments within the church. While the Trinity involves love and unity the cultural representation of the nuclear family in the sense of the African nuclear family involves extended family ties.*" The African nuclear family participates in the Trinity by providing a union of love for family members, at least in principle.

However, the practical dimension shows that the patriarchal structures result in male domination in matters of faith. The faith that is followed by the family head is in most cases, the faith that is followed by all other family members. "*Where equality of choice is granted, there is mixed faith within the nuclear family. There are scenarios where the faith of the wife becomes the faith of the family. African families hold the cultural assumption that the husband is the head of the family and this assumption holds in matters of faith*" (Participant 35, 23 October 2020). The hierarchy takes the father as head of family in patriarchal lineages while the mother becomes head in matrilineal families. When it comes to child(ren), free choice is done within the limits of Catholic faith in matters to do with priestly and religious

vocations or marriage. With one spouse as head of family, the African nuclear family's participation in the Trinity is limited to the extent to which equality is reduced because of hierarchy. The Trinity remains an ideal of the family and African families should strive to overcome weaknesses brought by cultural assumptions such as low regard for women and child(ren) to bring about greater equality of dignity, love and unity within the nuclear family.

In line with the demands of the Trinity at family level, women are granted love in the African nuclear family. The love enables women to be full members of the family and make important decisions relating to faith. While the Shona proverb '*musha mukadzi'* (the woman builds a home or literally, 'the home is the woman') allows women to make decisions at the domestic technical level (see section 3.4.5.2), the same concept also empowers women in matters of faith. The centrality of the woman extends to theological issues in the sense that the heart of the woman plays a central role in the faith of the family. The concept of *musha mukadzi* places the woman at the spiritual centre of the home. The proverb depicts women as important in shaping the faith of the family. Participant 33 (23 October 2020) argued, *"In reality, I owe my Catholic faith to my mother who taught me to attend mass, pray and always find a place for God in my life."* The point from participant 33 can be generalised to apply to most Catholics. Women are at the centre of faith and this is evidenced by their participation in church gatherings such as retreats, family days, pilgrimages and mass attendance. In focus group 2 (20 October 2020), participants noted that since the child spends most of the time with the mother, theological concepts are first introduced by the mother. Furthermore, participants noted that a mother also plays a role in discussing faith issues and setting good moral values for their child(ren).

5.2.2   Theological Issues relating to single parent families

In section 4.2.2.5, it became clear that single parent families struggle with exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation within parishes. These issues are not inherently theological, but they demand a theological response. However, an in-depth analysis of the theology of the single parent family requires that there should be a distinction between single mothers and single fathers.

Single mothers can help reveal truths about God. Having a healthy theology of the family, especially one that is inclusive of single-parent families, has important implications for practical theology and ministry. However, a theology of the single mother involves the image

of God is the basis of inclusion and not exclusion. This means that stigma and discrimination faced by the single mother are human experiences that are inconsistent with theology. The task of theology is to use the divine image to challenge cultural practices that threaten love and unity. To be human is to reflect the divine and that is the foundation of relationality. A theology of the single mother enlarges our view of God so that our image and understanding of God can hold both the traditional nuclear family and the non-traditional family. "*This comes from a biblical ethic of the family where all in society are cared for. This theology should include care for all of God's child(ren), including single mothers. Theology of the single mother needs to be Trinitarian, so that love and unity are reflected in parishes.* (Participant 34, 23 October 2020). A theology of the single mother will incorporate the idea of holy friendship as the basis for healthy relationships between the single parent and the child(ren).

To overcome exclusion and discrimination, single mothers tend to fill the pastoral gap on their own through deep commitment to faith. The commitment helps the child(ren) not only by setting a role model, but by also ensuring that the spiritual vacuum created by stigma and isolation is filled with regular prayers and Bible reading. According to participant 23 (15 October 2020), *"After realising that parish members were discriminating my children in Sunday Schools, I had to shoulder the task of being a catechist at home to ensure that my three children are able to recite prayers and interpret Biblical stories."* The view from participant 23 is a trend that affects single mothers in most parishes and deep religious commitment is seen as a way of overcoming the isolation. The kind of thinking that is reflected by participant 23 should be matched by an embracing theology from parish members. The embracing theology should truly reflect the Trinity so that love and unity can keep parish members as one family. The embracing theology is seen in the Bible that contains mothering images of God, which means that God is not 'essentially' male; that the male metaphors (Father, Shepherd, Warrior, etc.) used for God in the Bible are balanced and complemented by feminine metaphors like Mother (Isa 42:14, 49:13-15), Mourner (Jer 8:22-9:1) and Midwife (Ps 22:9-10; 71:6; Isa 66:7-13). The embracing theology can help parishioners to rethink their image of God and theology so as to overcome discrimination.

Exclusion is even greater with the single father family where there is no support in terms of meeting specific theological needs of this type of family. The definition of single parent is often associated with 'mother' yet the 'fatherly' aspect is left out. Trinitarian theology demands human participation in love and unity so there is need to develop an inclusive

theology that caters for single fathers as well. According to participant 10 (7 October 2020) *"In reality, single fathers are often neglected and even forgotten when the theology of the family is thought about. I still have to come across a theology book that targets single fathers."* The reason for failure to develop such a theology is that most single fathers are already part of other guilds such as St. Joseph and Hosi yeDenga (section 4.2.1.1). However, the category of 'single father' may also be difficult to pin down because it may be a temporary or transitional state due to the fact that most of the single fathers remarry and then qualify as reconstituted family members. A theology of the family requires an inclusive approach that addresses the needs of all family types. The exclusion of single fathers may result in failure by the Church to develop one family. Using the ideals of love and unity, Trinitarian theology is inclusive and communal in nature. The inclusivity of the Trinity entails that single fathers have to be reached out to by the community so that they participate in activities of the larger parish. One way of accommodating the theological needs of single fathers is formation of a guild that addresses the needs of single fathers. This idea is further explored in section 6.7.2. It is important to strengthen individual family types before we can embrace the vision of the church as family.

5.2.3 Theological Issues relating to child-headed families

In the African context, formation of child-headed families occurs as a result of failure of cultural safety nets. Ordinarily, the extended family should take care of orphans but when this fails, the formation of child-headed households is unavoidable. Other causes of child-headed families are migration of parents and abuse from step parents (section 3.2.3 of chapter 3). Positive characteristics such as equality and respect usually develop in matters of faith. According to participant 33 (23 October 2020) *"Most Catholic child-headed families inherit Catholic faith from parents or guardians. This faith is sustained under the guidance of the elder sibling and spiritual advisors may come in to help here and there."* This shows that faith can be sustained responsibly even in the absence of an adult. In child-headed families, the notion of the Trinity is more represented because love and unity are shared among siblings with minimum hatred and conflict. The absence of an adult figure allows the child-headed family to mature in love and unity as members of such a family share joys and sorrows of life. In matters of faith, members of the child-headed family often follow the faith of their parents or guardians. Within the child-headed family, child(ren) have equal opportunities and choices in matters of faith due to the absence of a responsible adult.

The elder sibling may enjoy control over other siblings, but this control is in the context of love and unity. Within African culture, the demand is such that the elder sibling should take care of younger siblings in terms of economic, social and spiritual well-being. In African culture, love among siblings is cultivated and this virtue can be exploited to support a Trinitarian ideal of the child-headed family. In the child-headed family there is less tension between theological beliefs and indigenous beliefs since there is less diversity in background among the siblings. An African theology of child-headed families should blend traditional theology with the communitarian relations of African culture. The relational aspects of African culture include notions of care, sympathy and respect within the blood relations of siblings.

In the child-headed family, members develop a sense of responsibility towards their own faith through resilience. In the context of theology, responsibility is the capacity of individuals to navigate their way through faith as a way to sustain their life. Members negotiate life's adversities through faith and continue along the path of self-actualization. Participant 17 (15 October 2020) gave the following testimony, *"I grew up in a child-headed family and we agreed as siblings to put our trust in God since we could not trust any earthly being after the death of our parents. We grew up to love the Catholic Church because it proved to be the source of comfort for all our problems."* The experience from Participant 17 is a general trend among child-headed children to buttress the view that members become responsible for their own faith at an early stage. Such responsibility continues in their life as the children become adults. However, some child-headed families sadly become estranged from the church due to work and financial pressures on them as children (and sometimes disillusionment with the church). To ensure that the notion of Church as family is developed and sustained, it is important for pastoral care givers to be proactive by identifying such families, listening to them, providing counselling and giving appropriate economic care and support.

5.2.4   Theological Issues relating to reconstituted families

The reconstituted family may find it more difficult to fit into the notion of the Trinity because of the diversity of backgrounds between the spouses and sometimes the child(ren). As already noted in section 3.4.4.4, the spouses may have different faiths and this results in a mixed

theology of family. In most cases, the faith of the male spouse is dominant within the reconstituted family. In such mixed theological backgrounds, the practice of Catholic faith may face tension as family values borrow from different theologies. According to participant 13 (15 October 2020), ''*When I was the chairperson of a section, one member always reminded me of her non-Catholic background whenever I gave her responsibilities…she would tell me that she is Catholic because of her marriage but non-Catholic at heart. So Catholic faith comes in as a marriage compromise."* Under such a situation, it may be difficult to persuade or convince the spouse in matters to do with Catholic faith. A reconstituted family is often a result of the demands of African culture where parental responsibilities follow gender lines.

While women may find it comfortable to play the traditionally male role of parenting such as bread winning, men find it difficult to perform traditional female responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and child-care. Bread-winning is typically associated with males because of gender stereotyping that confirms patriarchal domination. Similarly, the cultural belief that a woman cannot successfully lead a family without a spouse results in less confidence among single mothers, often leading to remarriage (Focus Group 2, 20 October 2020). The reconstituted family faces challenges from both the Trinitarian model and the cultural grounding of family since both ends indicate less unity due to the diversity of backgrounds. As a result, a unified theology of family requires a lot of ministry effort so that the theological pillars of love and unity are strengthened within the reconstituted family.

To ensure that a Trinitarian unity is achieved within the reconstituted family, the theology of acceptance is significant for reconstituted families. Accepting each other means that the step-parent has to treat the step-child(ren) with embracing love and vice-versa. In focus group 3, participants argued that if members of a reconstituted family treat each other with love and unity as prescribed by the image of God model, conflicts will become less frequent. The view from focus group 3 is reinforced by participant 11 (7 October 2020), *"I grew up in a reconstituted family but tensions were rarely seen in the family because the local priest always reminded us that God loves us since we are his image."* The view from participant 11 shows that the Trinity can be used to overcome differences and members of the reconstituted family can achieve unity as seen in the ideal of the Trinity.

5.2.5   Theological Issues relating to extended families

Within the extended family, the faith tends to follow a patriarchal lineage and the faith of the fore-fathers tends to dominate. Trinitarian theology of the family is applicable in the extended family if the great grandfathers shared similarity of faith. In cases where there were differences, these differences are reflected in the descendants. "*Members of the extended family have to negotiate their faith within the extended family. While freedom is granted in principle, to follow different faiths, there are challenges involved when one practises faith against the majority of extended family members*" (Participant 21, 15 October 2020). If Catholic faith dominates within the extended family, then the practice of Catholic faith is easily supported by other members of the extended family. Examples of Catholic villages were found in Chirumanzu and Chishawasha communal areas of Zimbabwe in Gweru Diocese and Archdiocese of Harare respectively. However, these former Catholic villages have now become 'secularized' and diversified in terms of the faith orientation among village members even though Catholic faith tends to be statistically higher than other religious orientations. The contribution of African culture to the extended family makes the application of Trinitarian theology difficult because the extended family is a family of families (Focus Group 3, 28 October 2020). The Trinitarian attributes of equality of dignity and respect are often negated by hierarchical cultural structures within the extended family. This is explained by the fact that family rituals tend to follow the faith of the elders and what the elders suggest is often taken with authority. To strengthen the extended family along the lines of Trinitarian theology of the family, the virtue of respect for elders that is enshrined in African culture can be developed further to facilitate family bonding that is based on respect.

Family bonding is the source of unity in the African extended family. From birth to death and life hereafter, the African person is bound as a family being to everyone around themselves, those still to be born, the living and the living dead. For participant 3 (7 October 2020), *"Unity within the African extended family is important when it comes to faith since it enables members to share similar beliefs and participate in religious functions."* This unity is evidenced by extended family gatherings during functions such as priestly ordinations, weddings, graduation parties and sad events like funerals. These functions are usually accompanied by Mass to show common intentions and demonstration of solidarity in faith. Participant 23 (15 October 2020) had this to say, *"The most important event that happened during the burial proceedings of my late mother was the Eucharistic Celebration. The*

celebration of Mass gave my late mother a good blessing which we always remember as the extended family." In pastoral theology, the most important aspect of family ministry is to be present at such gatherings when congregants go through happy or sad moments as families.

5.2.6   Interpretation

A cross-cutting issue across focus group discussions was that child-headed families tend to fit more into Trinitarian theology compared to other family types since there is more love and unity among siblings when it comes to matters of faith. This point relates to the Synod document where:

> the Bishops of Africa, in whom the Catholic Church during those days found herself expressed in a special way at the Tomb of the Apostle, confirmed their steadfast belief that the greatness and mercy of the one God were manifested above all in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God, the Son who is consubstantial with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit and who, in this Trinitarian unity, receives the fullness of honour and glory (EA, 10).

This point is further developed by Orobator (2000:13) who views the African family as a living unity. The family is seen as the primary hermeneutical space where child(ren) come to an understanding of themselves, others, the world and God (Mushete, 1979:27; Tshibangu, 1979:75; Nyamiti, 1996:38; Nel, 2000:5[50]; Bujo and Maya, 2006:18). This space is realised fully in the child-headed family though such a family is often viewed as undesirable because it is seen as a failure of African culture safety nets.

The importance of the Trinity in the African Church had been observed before the Synod. An approach that has found wider expression amongst African theologians is the appeal to the social analogy of the Trinity often on the basis of communal orientation of most African contexts. Mwoleka[51] (1975:204) opined that the Trinity is not a puzzle to be solved but rather an example to be followed. According to Mwoleka (1975: 204), the "three Divine Persons share everything in such a way that they are not three Gods but only One." The unity of the Trinity is therefore the foundation of communal unity. The "Social Trinity" implies that there is diversity within God's unity because the Father did not become incarnate and the Spirit

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[50] Nel (2000) writes about youth ministry in the South African context but his ideas are applicable to the present research because Christian principles and approaches are universal in application.

[51] Although Mwoleka (1975) writes before the African Synod of 1994, he sees the Trinity as having existential application since the Trinity has to be lived within the community. Living the Trinity entails application of the virtues of the Trinity in daily life.

was not crucified. So the social Trinity is a basis for the affirmation of both human unity and diversity.

The leading role of women in matters of faith was viewed as the most frequent aspect in relation to the nuclear family. The reason for the higher number of women can be explained by their commitment to faith and their desire to bring up child(ren) within Catholic faith. McGarry[52] (1995:5) notes that when translated into the ideal of the Church these positive values offer a living, vibrant and promising ecclesiology of Church-as-family. Opportunities are also given to religious women to train according to their capacities. Lay women are also given quality formation to prepare them for responsibilities as a wife, mother and in other social careers. By so doing the Church is promoting the dignity of women and therefore liberating them from marginalization. Amongst African women theologians, Oduyoye (2000:141) has argued that the Trinity may be understood as offering an egalitarian model of female-male relations. Without suggesting that the Trinity is indispensable, Oduyoye (2000:142) interprets the symbol of the Trinity as a model for society. Our baptism into the name of the Trinity, Oduyoye (2000:143) writes, "means that we should stand not for monarchies and hierarchies but rather participation." Participation into the Trinity is the basis of equality and dignity despite gender differences. Other African women theologians such as Dube[53] (2012:126) critique the male language of the Trinity and argue that it not only reflects the patriarchal context in which it arose but also legitimises a male view of God, thus sustaining patriarchal relations.

The monograph by theologian Bitrus[54] (2018:187) is the most recent African attempt to unravel the implications of Trinitarian theology for Christian life, ecclesiology, socio-political life, socio-economic systems, relations between women and men and the environment. The significance of Bitrus' (2018:187) Trinitarian hermeneutics lies in his reinterpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity as a critique of patriarchal domination inherent in African communalism and the divisive challenges posed by ethnic and religious

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[52] McGarry (1995) writes soon after the African Synod and his ideas are in the African context of Kenya. However, the Catholic Church in Kenya shares a lot of similarities with the Zimbabwean church particularly in the areas of family relations based on African culture.

[53] Dube (2012) writes in the context of an academic theologian. Her ideas are useful in helping to rethink how social construction of gender affects theological discourse.

[54] In a recent publication *Community and Trinity in Africa* (2018), Bitrus argues that the Trinity should provide sensitivity and theological awareness to African communities where solidarity, harmony and love are not remote attributes but lived experiences within the communities.

exclusivism in the African context. According to Bitrus (2018:187), "an authentic African tradition of community is that which lives out the just, egalitarian, and inclusive life of the Triune God." There is a need to take the Trinity as a role model in family life.

Emotive tones were expressed by participants in relation to single parent families and reconstituted families. These emotions were based on the often erroneous judgements by other congregants on these family types. Both the single parent and the reconstituted family are often compared to the nuclear family and judged to be inadequate or lacking. Participants argued that such judgemental views can only be explained by stigma attached to these family types. To avoid such problems, Graham[55] (1998:161) suggests that we develop divine and coherent and viable central theological norms, such as attributes of the Trinity, for evaluating diverse forms of family today. The diversity of families today therefore requires an objective standard that is higher than the nuclear family (Kombo, 2016:11). Furthermore, seeing the reconstituted family as different from the nuclear gives a better perspective of such a family. According to Mvududu and McFadden (2001:17), diversity accepts difference as part of social reality, allows a wider understanding of a family and could keep us from speaking and understanding the family as a timeless entity.

Although Volf (1993:16) wrote in the context of the Balkan ethnic and religious crisis, his theology of embrace is important for this study because it provides insights on how to build the church as family through the concept of embrace in situations where stigma and discrimination challenges its unity and integrity. For Volf (1993:17) embracing is necessary because the others are part of identity and authentic life involves welcoming others. Just as the Trinity involves indwelling of three persons in one, human relations involve other persons. "The Spirit of embrace creates communities of embrace-places where the power of the Exclusion System has been broken and from whence the divine energies of embrace can flow, forging rich identities that include the other" (Volf, 1993:17). In the context of single parent and reconstituted families, the concept of embrace is theologically significant because it reaches out to the other for the formation of an authentic family within the Church.

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[55] For Graham (1998) the model of the Trinity must be used as a transcendental standard for evaluating human affairs and actual families. The vertical dimension of the Trinity gives a better direction compared to historical or Biblical families that may be characterised by human weaknesses.

A point of importance was raised by participants regarding the need to form guilds to support single fathers. Participants saw this as important since the category of single fathers' spiritual needs may not be adequately addressed by other guilds and associations. The spiritual dimension from guilds will enable the single father to guide child(ren) in matters of discipline, especially of the youth. Furthermore the guild will allow single fathers to handle issues that emanate from African culture regarding choices for being single or remarrying. De Vries[56] (1994:85) describes "Youth ministry without the involvement of the family as driving a car without an engine." Youth ministry and family structures are thus understood as interdependent, for youth ministry builds on what is taught and modelled in the family home and should therefore be practised in co-operation with parents or care givers. The parent should therefore get extra guidance from an appropriate guild for the purpose of effective family care. While more guilds seem to contradict the concept of Church as family, in reality, these guilds strengthen the notion of Church as family by providing appropriate psychological, moral, spiritual and economic support to a particular category of congregants who usually share the same gender and age group while experiences and aspirations are similar.

Conflicting views from participants were seen in relation to extended families where some participants saw extended families as imposing cultural beliefs into Catholic faith while others viewed the role of the extended family as both positive and consistent with inculturation efforts. African culture is defined by its palpable sense of family, a high spiritual vision of life, and the sense of community (Hickey 1982:23; Ogbonnaya, 1994:8). The high spiritual vision of life is consistent with Catholic faith manifested within the extended family. African perspectives to the Trinity adopted the social analogy of the Trinity to draw implications of the doctrine for Christian life and society. The attempt to place the symbol of the Triune God in the public sphere illustrates the importance of the social context in African theological method (Uzukwu, 2009:23; Conradie and Sakupapa, 2018:37; Sakupapa, 2019:1). The Trinity is the ontological basis of African communality and relationality that define the extended family.

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[56] Family based youth ministry is understood as the starting point of understanding the youth since parents are in a better position to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their child(ren).

5.3 MINISTRY STRUCTURES IN RELATION TO FAMILY TYPES

This section focuses on how ministry structures work with various family types to promote the notion of the church as family. Ministry structures is a collective term that refers to guilds, associations and commissions with their common goal of improving the spiritual, moral, social and psychological development of families within the Diocese. Ministry structures target specific needs within family types as shown by views of participants. These views include spiritual, psychological, social and economic support in relation to each family type. By strengthening individual family types, ministry structures provide a basis of building the concept of Church as family at parish, deanery and diocesan levels.

As shown in Appendix 9, eligibility to guilds is on the basis of age, gender and marital status so that each guild provides spiritual, social, psychological and economic support to a particular category of congregants who share similar experiences. Concerns of teenage boys, for example, are different from those of married women and these two groups belong to different guilds. Each parish has all the guilds that are discussed in the next section and each congregant is expected to join a guild. Although it is possible to find congregants who may not belong to any guild, it may be impractical for someone to belong to more than one guild given the age, gender and marital status requirements. Associations combine two or more guilds and they cut across gender although they focus on age groups of a specified range. The Youth Association combines boys and girls who are yet to choose their vocations in terms of priestly, religious life or marriage while the Couples' Association, for instance, groups together married men and women to address issues in marital life. It is possible for one person to belong to two or more associations because the associations are less restrictive and open to the extent that a teenage boy or girl can be a member of Youth, Choir and National Movement of Catholic Students at the same time. Commissions are structures that work with parishes in matters to do with education, health, social communications, justice and peace, developmental projects and humanitarian aid. Commissions have an advisory and educational role to parishes. Each parish appoints committee members who represent parishes and provide feedback on important issues. The specific issues addressed by each guild, association or commission link well with specific family types to the extent that while it is possible for a ministry structure to address concerns of more than family type, my focus is on the most appropriate family type.

5.3.1   Ministry Structures in relation to the Nuclear Families

This section focuses on the roles played by St. Anne and St. Joseph guilds, Couples Association and the Health Commission in building and strengthening family structures within the nuclear family in Masvingo Catholic Diocese.

5.3.1.1   St. Anne's Guild

St. Anne guild is the biggest guild in the Diocese of Masvingo in terms of numbers. It is the most active of all the guilds in the Diocese since its programmes include weekday meetings, monthly gatherings, congresses, retreats and recollections and members of the guild strictly follow the programmes. St. Anne's Guild teaches members to be good mothers following the example of St. Anne in the promotion of better hearts through spiritual activities such as recollections, retreats, workshops and prayer groups. The good heart manifests itself in good social relations with members of the neighbourhood and community. "*Saint Anne Guild follows the model of Saint Anne, a devout and pious servant to the Lord God who also played an important role as both the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus Christ*" (Participant 12, 5 June, 2020). Similarly, St. Anne's Guild members are expected to be righteous and devoted to their faith since their child(ren) and grandchild(ren) look up to them as spiritual models. Participant 12 (7 October 2020) adds that *"Members of the guild are reminded about their spirituality through their uniforms. The brown colour symbolises maturity in faith and the cream colour symbolises humility by reminding members that they came from ash."* Maturity in age should therefore match maturity in faith to enable members to effectively guide their families spiritually. The virtue of humility is significant for prayer since it enables members to always remember their dependence on God.

Members of the guild assist each other in psychological counselling services, especially where one member experiences problems. Issues that require counselling relate to domestic violence, child indiscipline, infidelity and relations with extended family members. St. Anne's Guild provides counselling services to members who face domestic violence. According to participant 36, (20 June, 2020); *"Domestic violence against women is only reported when it comes to physical violence that gives evidence of visible physical injuries. This is a very narrow conception of domestic violence since other forms of domestic violence against women take economic, political, emotional, cultural and even educational dimensions. These forms of violence bring untold invisible injuries to women, including*

Catholic women." The contribution by participant 36 is very important for this study since it reveals that domestic violence takes several forms. These observations are consistent with findings from all focus groups that indicated that women are often denied opportunities for employment and further education. These denials constitute economic and educational violence respectively. In focus group 3, participants indicated that cultural assumptions were responsible for oppression of women since African culture limits activities of women to the domestic sphere. All the aforementioned forms of violence against women require counselling services by St. Anne's Guild. Participant 11 (7 October 2020) argued that, "*the best counselling services to women in the Catholic Church are provided by other women who share similar experiences.*" While the counselling services provided by priests and the religious cannot be undermined, some cases that are private in nature may require freely sharing with other women so that the root cause of the problems are fully addressed. The kind of counselling provided by the members of the guild is largely informal and untrained and it involves use of experience, Biblical and spiritual resources.

Despite the counselling being informal and untrained, it is effective to some extent since it is a process that involves pointing someone in a certain direction, or to provide any criteria that helps the listener to resolve a doubt, conflict, or problem. This would be the activity that provides advice in the form of giving instruction, an opinion, or advice in order to help the counselled person out of their current situation. However, a few members of the guild may be trained professional counsellors. These trained lay counsellors such as psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, social workers and advanced psychiatric nurses do not get the skills from the Church but from their professions. Such counsellors combine strong psychological techniques with Biblical and spiritual resources. These counselling services enable members of the guild to be confident and bring change into their own lives while building harmony with their own families.

Socially, the guild of St. Anne organises sporting activities such as net ball and volley ball. According to participant 25 (23 October 2020), *"Sporting activities help to bring about hard work, team work, togetherness and discipline among members of the team"* These activities help to improve relations and allow members to work for a common goal. More importantly, sporting activities are aimed at cultivating virtues of perseverance, patience and honesty that are necessary in building and strengthening families.

Members are encouraged to be economically productive and engage themselves with activities such as farming and gardening to supplement the dietary requirements of the family. Members encourage each other to improve educational qualifications and seek employment opportunities so as to improve the economic well-being of their own families. According to participant 25, "*I am a graduate of a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Economics but my husband was against my idea of getting a job. However, elder members of St. Anne's Guild helped to convince my husband and I am now a working mother who helps to boost family income.* " At sectional level, members of St. Anne help each other through soft loans and revolving funds. Within the parish, fund raising activities take the form of subscriptions and pledges. The economic activities are intended to fund monthly meetings, social gatherings and congresses which in turn, help to shape family life.

5.3.1.2   St. Joseph's Guild

On the other hand, St. Joseph is a role model to married men. According to participant 1, (5 June, 2020), "*Saint Joseph is a model to married men because he was foster-father of Jesus, spouse of the Virgin Mother Mary, devout carpenter and honest worker.*" In addition, Joseph is depicted by members of the guild as a man of calmness and humility. The guild of St. Joseph provides many spiritual opportunities for its members such as visiting the sick, spiritual talks and pilgrimages. The spiritual talks draw from real life family experiences and allow members to reflect in the light of St. Joseph, their model. The pilgrimages to the local Shrines and Holy Land involve sacrifice for the family following the example of St. Joseph's pilgrimage to Egypt.

Counselling services aim at helping members of the guild to examine and refocus their lives since problems such as alcohol or smoking addictions, relationship concerns, and joblessness are common. The counselling services help affected members to think of new possibilities in life and offer new perspectives on their situations. According to participant 6 (7 October 2020), "*The Catholic Church teaches responsible consumption of alcohol but we experience several cases of drunken behaviour and addiction to alcohol.*" This challenge affects family life among the members of the guild and informal counselling sessions by experienced members of the guild can help affected members to come up with responsible drinking habits. This kind of counselling involves situations where, after witnessing or hearing about something that seems wrong or going in the wrong direction, members of the St. Joseph's Guild make use of their array of personal experiences and knowledge to help. Situations like

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this make some members of the guild counsellors, though informally. This type of counselling provides a service that some members of the guild need. Participants of Focus group 3 (28 October 2020) pointed out that one of the greatest threats to family well-being is infidelity within families mostly by male spouses and this requires strong counselling sessions to restore damaged relations with their partners. This type of counselling may be done by a few members of the guild who may be psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors or social workers by training.

Despite the professional counselling skills by a few of the members, the use of Biblical and spiritual resources is important to make the counselling meaningful in the context of faith. For participant 29, (23 October 2020) "*While depression may not easily be associated with men, job losses due to retrenchments, dismissals and redundancy exercises cause serious depressions to members of the St. Joseph's Guild.*" The most probable reason for such depression is the cultural expectation that men should be bread winners within families and failure to provide food, health care, school fees and rentals by a fatherly figure tend to be depressing. Given such a scenario, members of the guild help to restore hope and provide avenues for income generation to affected members. Using the model of Joseph, the guild encourages members to fend for their families through honest means and shun criminal activities such as robbery, theft and fraud.

 Socially, the guild provides opportunities for members to interact with each other and share family experiences through sport, touring and braai outings. Participant 35, (23 October 2020) maintained that, "*My problems are easily solved through interactions with other members of the St. Joseph's Guild. During the outings, I get the opportunity to narrate my problems to others and they provide meaningful solutions at no cost. Good examples are that I got help to find a boarding place for my son and I got free legal advice during these outings.*" The point from participant 35 is that the social outings help to improve inter-personal relationships and enhance social networks among members of the guild. These outings also help members to refresh and take a break from daily routines. More importantly, the outings help members to be responsible family men.

Economically, members of the guild raise funds through monthly subscriptions, voluntary donations and pledges. These funds are used to cater for expenditure within the guild and parish expenses such as electricity, water and wage bills. For participant 28, (23 October 2020), "*The guild of St. Joseph always keeps a fund meant for the vulnerable members such*

as pensioners, the sick and the disabled. As the dictum charity begins at home goes, we strive to help our members who may be facing economic problems through our funds." The point by participant 28 is that while St. Joseph's Guild provides funding for parish capital projects such as buildings and repairs, it also accommodates its own members who are in need.

5.3.1.3   Couples' Association

The Catholic Couples Association functions under the supervision of the Marriage and Family Commission which in turn is under the supervision of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. The aim of the association is to strengthen Christian marriage by deepening family spirituality, identifying family challenges and finding pastoral solutions to these challenges.

Participant 34 (23 October 2020) observed that, "*Couples' Association is very helpful to the nuclear family by promoting unity through encouraging them to work together as equal partners, allowing their individual characteristics and abilities to complement each other and by being loyal to one another."* This view from the participant is representative of the respect that couples should give each other in sustaining their marriage vows. For Participant 10 (15 October 2020), "*The Couples' Association helps members to promote both spiritual and material well-being of the nuclear families.*" Through prayers, retreats, recollections and masses, members are helped to enhance their faith and this, in turn, facilitates raising of child(ren) in a Christian way. These spiritual exercises enhance their prayer life, thereby improving their marriage and family responsibility. For participant 33, (23 October 2020), "*the Couples' Association also helps members with counselling services in the event of marital problems.''* These counselling services are usually offered by elderly couples to assist younger couples to cope with the marital problems. While the counselling involved is informal, it seeks to help affected members achieve constructive change in their marital problems, in the context of a caring relationship. However, a few of the members of the association who may be psychologists, social workers or counsellors, among other professions, employ psychological techniques blended with spiritual approaches to assist fellow members.

However, if the problems are too complex for them to handle, the elderly couples can also advise the younger couples to seek the counselling services from priests and religious. According to participant 13 (15 October 2020), "*the association encourages its members to*

embark on small scale projects such as horticulture, poultry and piggery to supplement family income and support the economic base of the nuclear family." These projects are important since they help members of the association to be self-reliant and support their families in a sustainable way. The projects prepare members for future upkeep of their families in the event of retirement, retrenchment, expulsion from work or death of a breadwinner.

5.3.1.4   Health Commission[57]

Apart from guilds and associations, the Diocese has put in place a health policy to strengthen healing ministry. While health care applies to all family types, the Health Commission works more closely with the nuclear family where primary health care is found. The physical and mental health of nuclear family members has direct and indirect relationships to the entire family compared to other family types. Directly, certain child-rearing practices such as provision of balanced diet can protect against common influenza or kwashiorkor. Hereditary diseases such as asthma and sugar diabetes can be traced with a given nuclear family. Indirectly, emotional strain within the family such as depression due to a job loss can be most severe in nuclear family members in the sense that the strain can easily spread from the affected member, to the other spouse and to children.

For participant 22 (15 October 2020), *"This healing ministry is targeted at all family types. For the nuclear family, hospitals and clinics provide health care and education."* In addition to the treatment of diseases, the care offered embraces the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of the human person. The healing ministry also promotes and defends human dignity from the moment of conception until death by offering counselling services. These counselling services are mainly offered by trained nurses, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. Priestly pastoral care encompasses the full range of spiritual services, including Masses and prayer sessions for the sick at the level of the nuclear family. Priests, deacons, religious, and laity exercise diverse roles in complementing medical health care.

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[57] Although the Health Commission applies to all family types, it closely relates to the nuclear family to ensure that the medical requirements of family members are met. The outreach programmes of the commission that include awareness and educational campaigns target the nuclear family without necessarily excluding other family types.

Although the above association, guilds and commission target specific members of the nuclear family, the role they play in strengthening the nuclear family is complementary in the sense that St. Anne spirituality focuses on females while St. Joseph spirituality focuses on males. Both guilds have a common aim of strengthening marriage and promoting family values. On the other hand, Couples Association unites the aims and values of the two guilds that focus on the well-being of the spouses and their families. The Health Commission also compliments the well-being of the family by providing health care services.

5.3.1.5 *Interpretation*

The most frequent aspect in relation to the nuclear family that participants raised, was the spiritual contribution of the St. Anne's and St. Joseph's Guilds, Couples' association and the Health Commission. This frequency can be explained by the fact that the guilds and association mentioned are involved in spiritual exercises such as recollections, retreats and prayer groups. This point relates to the African Synod Document that places emphasis on spiritual support drawn from various guilds and associations (EA, 1995:100). The Health Commission also touches on the spiritual element by its emphasis on both physical and spiritual healing. The Health Commission draws from the healing ministry of Christ to provide a holistic health care system (Masvingo Catholic Diocese Health Policy, 2001). The role of the guilds and the Couples' Association in promoting self-reliance in the nuclear family is a point that cuts across participants from urban, semi-urban and rural parishes. The reason for the extensiveness is based on the participants' awareness of Masvingo Diocese policy on promoting a self-reliant Church.

According to Masvingo Diocese Terms of Reference of the Self-Reliance Committee (2006:2), self-reliance can be explained in three ways: a self-supporting Church involves having adequate resources for evangelisation, self-ministering Church has enough vocations to the religious and priestly life as well as lay ministries, and a self-propagating Church implies the Church's ability to sustain herself by having sufficient human and material resources. This concurs with the teaching of the African Synod on the need of the African Church to provide for its own needs through financial and material means (EA, 1995, 104). Provision for own material needs helps the parishes to be economically productive and self-sustaining so that families are fully strengthened.

The most emotional aspect for participants was a discussion of threats to the unity of the nuclear family such as infidelity, failure to meet family needs and bad influence from friends and relatives. The reason for the emotions is that the threats identified contradict the purpose of the guilds and associations. These threats have been documented in parish councils' minutes (Rujeko Parish Council Meeting, 2020:3; St. Mary's Nyika Parish Council Meeting, 2020:2; Bondolfi Mission Council Meeting, 2020:5).[58] Although these minutes are from three parishes, they represent a common trend within the Diocese at large. These parish Council meetings are also a platform for dialogue within the family of the Church.

A point of importance that was raised by participants is that, in the event of conflict between the spouses within the nuclear family, counselling services should be sought within the guilds and Couples' Association by conflicting parties. These counselling services help to preserve the unity of purpose of the nuclear family. In some cases, counselling can be provided by trained members from professions such as nursing and social work where psychological procedures are just tools of a second order, that is, to be used sporadically and only when needed, rather than to be understood as an integral part of any process of giving advice.

5.3.2 Ministry Structures in relation to the Single Parent families

This section focuses on St. Monica's and Women's League guilds, and the Caritas Commission in empowering and strengthening single parent families. The guild, association and Caritas jointly help to fight stigma and discrimination which are the main challenges to the single parent family in Masvingo Diocese.

5.3.2.1   St. Monica's Guild

For participant 2 (7 October 2020), "*St. Monica's Guild is based on the model of the Patron St. Monica the mother of St. Augustine and it is meant for single mothers. Key virtues that can be attributed to the patron saint are humility, forgiveness, faith and peace.*" These virtues are reflected in St. Monica's Guild purple and white uniform with purple symbolising humility and forgiveness while white symbolises peace and faith. The uniform reminds members of these key virtues each time they wear it. According to participant 32 (23 October 2020), "*Just like St. Monica, members of the guild are single mothers who strive to raise their*

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[58] While the minutes apply to three parishes, the trend represented applies to all other parishes across the Diocese of Masvingo given that the underlying factors are fairly uniform.

child(ren) in a God fearing environment and by honest means. Augustine, proved to be quite a challenge as he passed through his adolescent and early adult years. All throughout Monica laboured in prayer for his conversion." Similarly, members of the St. Monica's Guild encourage each other to pray for the discipline of their child(ren), as represented by Augustine[59], especially in the context of single motherhood where the boy child proves to be a challenge in the absence of a fatherly figure. The members are involved in charity activities that include caring for the sick, elderly and orphans. For participant 14 (15 October 2020), *"counselling services among members of the guild are usually provided to new members by elder members. Cases that require counselling involve death of a spouse, indiscipline mostly by teenage child(ren) and discrimination or stigmatisation by other church members within the parish."* The provision of untrained and informal counselling services within the guild is based on experience and members feel that it is important to support each other emotionally in the upkeep of single parent families before seeking help from outside the guild. In such a context, the counsellor facilitates an understanding of the conflict situation and directs the counselled in deciding how to manage it. Faith resources, such as prayer, Bible reading and analysis, and reflection on God's intervention in the lives of believers, are also utilised. In terms of practical activities on self-reliance, participant 23 (15 October 2020) maintained that, *"members of the guild work as small teams that generate revolving funds for income generating projects such as vending, horticulture and poultry, among others."* Members of the guild also guide each other in managing family income to ensure economic use of hard-earned money.

5.3.2.2   Catholic Women's League

Furthermore, single mothers can also join Catholic Women's League. Catholic Women's League is a guild that works with women from all family types but it is more accommodating to single women since the conditions to join the guild are more relaxed. Membership includes women married in church and receiving Communion, women with broken marriages, divorcees and those preparing to get married. For participant 23 (27 October 2020), *"The unifying factor in the Women's League is that all members are baptised women in the Catholic Church. The sacrament of baptism treats all women as equal before the Lord and*

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[59] Augustine represents a problem child to a single parent. Despite the fact that Augustine presented problems to his mother, the lessons drawn from St. Monica in guiding a problem child can be applicable to girl child(ren) as well. Furthermore male single parents can also learn from St. Monica on how to assist problem child(ren).

circumstances that affect women such as failed marriages, death of spouse and even failure to get married are considered insignificant when joining the guild. As a matter of fact, the Catholic Women's League actually addresses the problems affecting women." The significant point from participant 23's contribution is that the guild grants equality of dignity and respect to all its members to address stigma surrounding single women. The main aim of the Catholic Women's League is to attain spiritual development of its members individually and collectively through prayers, recollections and retreats.

According to participant 9, (7 October 2020), "*praying is the solution to all our problems as women and we encourage each other to recite the rosary, deepen family prayers and pray for each other in the event of success or failure.*" The Women's League recognises that women constitute the largest number in almost all parishes and it aims at active participation of women in church and society. The Women's League is also involved in counselling of its members who face spiritual, social or economic challenges. "*Since we accept all women who have been baptised in the Catholic Church, the range of problems that are brought before the guild is very wide. These problems include infidelity, divorce, separation and betrayals and our counselling services address each of these problems in the context of women experiences*" (Participant 31, 23 October 2020). Members also assist each other in self-help economic empowerment programmes that include setting up flea markets and cross-border trade. These economic programmes are meant to establish income stability and food security within the family. The single parent woman benefits more from these programmes since they get the first priority.

5.3.2.3   Caritas

While Caritas works with all Catholics for socio-economic empowerment, it gives priority to the most disadvantaged members within the diocese. As a result, single families in general and single mothers in particular tend to benefit more from Caritas projects. For participant 15 (15 October 2020), "*Caritas works closely with single parent families, most of them who turn out to be women, in provision of water and sanitation, agricultural and food security projects and in providing humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters such as floods or droughts.*" The focus on more vulnerable members of the community makes single parents eligible for its programmes. In focus group 3, it was pointed out by participants that

women were the most affected flood victims of Tokwe-Mukosi[60] and conditions at the Government relocation centre of Chingwizi were more severe to women and child(ren). As a result, Caritas helped women with clothing, food and shelter at the Chingwizi Camp site. All the efforts by Caritas are meant to reconstruct family pillars especially in the single parent family.

5.3.2.4   Interpretation

The most frequent aspect that participants raised is the role played by St. Monica in influencing, shaping and interceding for the single parent family. This frequency can be attributed to the faith and prayer exhibited by St. Monica during her earthly life. It can also be explained by the fact that most members of the guild are committed single mothers who take care of their families with hard work and honesty. This point relates to the African Synod Document where "Africa is a Continent where countless human beings - men and women, child(ren) and young people – are lying, as it were, on the edge of the road, sick, injured, disabled, marginalized and abandoned" (EA 41). The integrity of the single mother is central in shaping the single parent family (Wachege, 1994:18; Sullivian, 2008:157; Petts, 2012:251). This shows the need to strengthen family structures among single mothers who are often neglected by parishes.

The role of St. Monica's Guild in counselling services among its membership to promote family life is a point that cut across the age groups of participants. The reason for the extensiveness is based on the participants' awareness of child discipline problems among single parents where the tendency is such that guiding a boy child in the absence of a fatherly figure is challenging. Furthermore, the single mothers themselves find it hard to build inclusive family structures due to discrimination from other parishioners. These impediments relate to the point where the whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization, each according to his or her specific role within the Church (EA, 53). This means that everyone should participate equally in church and discrimination of single mothers becomes inconsistent with the Synod's teachings.

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[60] The Tokwe-Mukosi flood was a national disaster that occurred in February 2014 after heavy rains in Masvingo Province. The Tokwe-Mukosi Dam, which was under construction by then, filled up earlier than expected resulting in 1 500 families becoming homeless upstream. Government relocated the flood victims from Chivi to Mwenezi District (Maponga, 2014). The disaster area, Chivi South, lies within Masvingo Diocese. Women and child(ren) were mostly affected by the disaster.

The most emotional aspect from participants is the fact that male single parents do not have a guild that is equivalent to that of St. Monica to address their concerns. Participants turned emotional on this aspect because they felt that single fathers lack the strength of single mothers as they tend to quickly surrender family responsibilities through remarriage or tasking in their relatives to take care of their own child(ren). While other participants felt that single fathers are already absorbed in other guilds such as St. Joseph and Hosi Yedenga, it was argued that the concerns in these other guilds are much broader than the needs of single fathers. Furthermore, the emotions were based on the perception that single fathers are more in need of a guild compared to single women because single fathers lack the motherly touch that builds family structures. These concerns, though emotionally charged, relate to the *Ecclesia in Africa* in the sense that it advocates for "the thorough formation of the lay faithful, a formation which will help them to lead a fully integrated life. Faith, hope and charity must influence the actions of the true follower of Christ in every activity, situation and responsibility" (EA, 54). This means that the exclusion of any member of the Church from a guild or association where experiences are shared and solutions to challenges are sought negates the ideals of faith and hope (Holland and Henriot, 1983:95; Zurheide, 1997:44; Moyo, 2015:56). A point of importance that was raised by participants is that, inclusive family structures are only possible if everyone is treated with equal dignity and given equal opportunity within parishes: "In creating the human race 'male and female', God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person" (EA, 82). Equality and dignity are understood within the context of morality where each human being has to be respected (Chamanda, 2008:301; Metz, 2010:81; Ikuenobe, 2017:437). God-given equality of dignity and rights should therefore be the basis of non-discrimination within parishes to avoid discrimination of single mothers.

5.3.3 Ministry Structures in relation to the child-headed families

The child-headed family is one of the most vulnerable families due to the absence of an adult spiritual guide, psychological misfits, social challenges and poverty.[61] The child-headed family works closely with guilds such as Missionary Childhood, St. Mary and St. Peter to strengthen its family structures. The family also benefits from the activities of Catholic Youth

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[61] These are the most common problems in child-headed families. However, despite these problems there is also evidence of responsible child-headed families within the Diocese that follow Catholic teachings.

Association and National Movement of Catholic Students Association. These guilds and associations are most appropriate for the child-headed family since this family type involves decision making in matters of faith whereas such decisions are made by parents and guardians in other family types[62].

5.3.3.1 *Missionary Childhood*

The founding principles of child-headed family are based on the rights and dignity of child(ren). These rights grant child(ren) the opportunity to fully participate in church. The Pontifical Mission Society of the Missionary Childhood Association, helps child(ren) to proclaim and share the joy of the Word of God with other child(ren) through their prayers, works of charity, inviting others to join them and providing material help to those most in need. The *Missionary Childhood Association* concentrates its efforts on teaching the Catholic Faith to child(ren), promoting their rights and providing assistance in situations where child(ren) are suffering due to various reasons that include poverty, dropping out of school, emotional or physical abuse and being family heads. It promotes missionary vocations at an early age hence future apostles: priests, sisters, brothers, catechists and responsible parents.

The Mission Society of the Missionary Childhood Association, aims to foster Christian faith and missionary formation of child(ren) and help them take their responsibility in the Church as missionaries. Missionary childhood spiritual advisors are involved in teaching basic prayer to members of the guild. According to participant 24 (15 October 2020), *"It is important that child(ren) are taught basic thanksgiving prayer to thank the Lord for the gift of life, talent, intelligence and those who care for them. Child(ren) are also taught how to ask for what they desire in life."* In addition to prayer, members of the missionary childhood are also involved in retreats and spiritual talks. These spiritual activities benefit all members of the guild but they are more significant to child-headed families that do not have adults to guide them in spiritual activities. Members of child-headed families learn from the guild and develop prayer life within the family. In the event that the child-headed family is due to death of parents, the child(ren) develop a sense of security and belonging to God thereby giving them hope.

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[62] While these guilds and associations are applicable to children in all family types, children in nuclear, single parent, reconstituted and extended families have decisions made on their behalf by parents and guardians.

Along social lines, members of Missionary Childhood are taught how to care for the needy in society. These needy people consist of both members and non-members of the guild. "*Senior members are also involved in identifying members that face psychological problems such as physical and emotional abuse, reporting these cases to spiritual advisors and recommending counselling for such cases*" (Participant 3, 7 October 2020). Through such awareness activities, members of the guild are taught by spiritual advisors and peer leaders to be empathetic and sympathetic to others. The aforementioned social and psychological approaches are significant for child-headed families in the sense that they help to instil a caring and loving attitude towards family members. The unity of the child-headed family is enhanced as members are taught how to care for each other through charity works that are exercised within the guild.

For economic and self-reliance activities, the Missionary Childhood guild trains its members in fund-raising activities through drama, singing and Bible quiz competitions. Such activities do not only train self-reliance, but they also develop skills that help in planning, budgeting, allocating and accounting for resources. Through such activities, members are taught to be financially independent from parents and the parish. According to participant 30, an elderly person who worked with missionary childhood for over a decade (23 October 2020), "*members of the Missionary Childhood can easily become good child-head family members since the skills they get from the church are transferable and useful within family settings.*" The economic and self-reliance skills that are gained in the Missionary Childhood guild can be used within child-headed families in the responsible use of resources such as money, food and stationery items.

5.3.3.2   St. Mary's Guild

Child(ren) in the child-headed family can also join St. Mary's Guild when they get to the stage of secondary school. The guild is modelled along the virtues of the Virgin Mary. Mary stands as the model of authority, dignity and purity among members of the guild. Members of the guild learn the virtue of chastity from Mary and this enables them to avoid fornication and adultery. Members of the guild can draw from Mary and make prudent decisions regarding religious and family life.

Basing themselves on the foundational virtues of the guild, members are involved in spiritual activities such as reciting the rosary, recollections and retreats, among others. These spiritual activities enable members to reflect on their daily lives in the light of the Virgin Mary. Related to these spiritual activities, members are also involved in visiting the sick, attending funerals and helping the needy within the community. Prayer life and charity work are very important to the child-headed family because these enable the girl child to follow the Virgin Mary in preserving purity. Reference is made to the girl-child because the guild is exclusively for girls.

Psychologically, members of the guild are involved in informal counselling services to other members who may experience economic, social or psychological difficulties. According to participant 25 (23 October 2020), *"the girl child who is also a child-head within the family or just a member of the child-headed family is vulnerable to sexual abuse by male members of the community. As a result, girls within these families are closely monitored and guided by senior members of the guild and spiritual advisors."* This observation by the participant is a common trend and the Guild of St. Mary works closely with girls from such families. Furthermore, the guild works with religious sisters to provide awareness campaigns that help against possible sexual abuse thereby avoiding related problems such as teenage pregnancies, child marriage and school drop outs.

St. Mary's Guild also trains its members in self-reliance activities that are ethical and dignified for the girl child. The Virgin Mary had a deep sense of calling, purpose, destiny, and her model helps the girl-child not "throw her life away" or "cut corners" if she has clear goals and a sense of purpose or vision. According to participant 8 (7 October 2020) *"We are very much aware that the girl child of today wants to cut corners and get easy money through immoral activities such as prostitution, dating married men and having multiple boyfriends to supply the girl child's needs such as airtime, whatsapp bundles, makeup, hair dressing and new clothes. Such immorality stands in sharp contrast with the virtues of purity, honesty, faith and prudence that are taught by the Virgin Mary. To ensure that members of the St. Mary's Guild raise money through ethical means, we help them to be financially self-reliant by fund raising through catering, drama and singing."* The participant presents a parallel scenario of virtue against vice that the girl child is faced with. The guild trains its members in the rightful path. This kind of self-reliance training is important for the child-headed family to avoid excessive reliance on outsiders who have the potential to abuse the child. Self-help

skills are important to the girl child because they empower her to fend for her needs especially in the context of a child-headed family.

5.3.3.3   St. Simon Peter's Guild

On the other hand, the guild of St. Simon Peter is designed for teenage boys and it is modelled along the virtues of their patron Saint. St. Simon Peter's character has three significant stages of fisherman, disciple and apostle that contribute to his virtues. These virtues include courage and patience which are rooted in the trade of fisherman; faith and hope which are developed in discipleship with Christ; and as an apostle, he had boldness and strength to suffer persecution and imprisonment. The combination of practical and theological virtues enables members of the guild to face earthly challenges in the light of theological insights. The guild of Simon Peter is applicable to the child-headed family insofar as the virtues of courage, patience, hope and faith provide a balance in guiding this type of family.

It is necessary to pick up the experiences of St. Simon Peter as a fisherman and draw virtues that are important in shaping members of the guild. As a fisherman, St. Simon had a tough job which has significant contributions to his character. Fishing was a very physically demanding job that enabled St. Simon Peter to be fearless because some of the storms that came quickly upon the Sea of Galilee were fierce and furious. These storms often caught the fishermen by surprise and could easily capsize the boats they used. The virtue of patience was exercised almost daily by St. Simon Peter since fishing demanded a lot of time characterised by long hours of waiting for the first catch of fish even during the night.

From the three stages of the life of St. Simon Peter, members of the guild can draw important lessons that can be used to guide their spiritual, moral and economic life. These lessons can also be useful in the event of being the eldest child within the child-headed family. According to participant 26 (23 October 2020) *the prayer life of St. Simon Peter can help boys to develop a deep commitment to Christ. This commitment in turn provides a spiritual foundation for responsible leadership within a child-headed family*. Prayer is a requirement for a child headed family since there are many challenges encountered.

At a social and psychological dimension, the courage of St. Simon Peter to speak his mind and the ability to speak on behalf of others are qualities that can be harnessed within a child-headed family. According to participant 16 (15 October 2020) "*There must be courage to stand up for one's beliefs and convictions within a child-headed family. The example of St. Simon Peter is important in the face of opposing views that come from relatives who may try to interfere with decisions within child-headed families. So standing up to speak for oneself in the way St. Simon Peter did is very important.*" Apart from expressing one's views against imposition of viewpoints by adult heads, the responsible child-head who draws lessons from St. Simon Peter finds it easier to stand against negative peer pressure. Ability to decide and speak against negative peer pressure comes in the context of alcohol and drug abuse by boy-child(ren) and within child-headed families the problem can be more serious since there are no adults to provide guidelines. However, positive peer pressure helps members to influence each other in schooling, sporting and choosing professions, among other good aspects. Furthermore, positive peer pressure gives members a sense of focus in achieving goals, thereby avoiding alcohol and drug abuse.

In a practical dimension, members of the guild are involved in tasks that are physically demanding as shown in the demands of fishing in St. Simon Peter. In parishes members of the guild help in physically challenging tasks such as construction, repairs and maintaining grounds among other heavy tasks. Members of the guild can also fund raise along these heavy tasks. In one rural parish, a focus group member indicated that, "*The Guild of St. Simon Peter carries out the task of gathering firewood whenever there are gatherings for other guilds such as St. Anne, St. Monica, Missionary Childhood and St. Joseph. This is often done for a fee and in this way St. Simon Peter guild is able to fund raise*" (Participant 4, 7 October 2020). However, apart from fund-raising, members of St. Simon Peter learn a lot of skills from these tasks. In the absence of a fatherly figure, a child-headed family can benefit from the skills of St. Simon Peter Guild especially, when it comes to construction and repairs within a home environment.

5.3.3.4   *Catholic Youth Association*

The Catholic Youth Association also works closely with child-headed families by drawing membership from St. Mary and St. Simon Peter to focus on common issues that involve the

spiritual, moral, intellectual and material welfare of the youth.[63] Spiritually, the association seeks to deepen an understanding of the Bible, Christian principles, the sacramental life and knowledge of Catholic doctrine. According to participant 17 (15 October 2020) *"the Catholic Youth Association tries to encourage its members to take an active part in Church related matters, especially in the Liturgy. It also helps its members to assist the local parish council in achieving the aims of the Diocese to work towards a self-supporting, self-propagating and self-ministering Church. It prepares its members for priestly and religious vocations and good Catholic Marriages."* The contribution by participant 17 is based on the awareness that the future of the Church is in the hands of the youth, so to ensure responsible Catholics in the future, a solid spiritual foundation is required among the youth. The solid spiritual foundation that is prepared by the Catholic Youth Association provides a strong standing for child-headed families. While attempts to bring members of the child-headed family into the extended family, the sense of responsibility that is cultivated by the Catholic Youth Association among members of such families, results in the choice to remain within the child-headed family.

The Catholic Youth Association also strives to shape the moral and social life of its members. They organise social gatherings such as Congresses, conferences and retreats in accordance with Christian dignity and values. Participant 7 (7 October 2020) argued that, *"the Catholic Youth Association helps its members to preserve and promote life. This is done by firstly avoiding and discouraging each other from behaviours that contradict our Catholic values such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse and premarital sex. Secondly, members are assisted to plan for marriages that are free from divorce, abortion, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, extramarital affairs and related deviant aspects."* These teachings help to enforce discipline among the youth. For Catholic Youth Association members who also head child families, the Christian values that are imparted are important to guide the family, especially in the absence of an adult.

Intellectually, the Catholic Youth Association promotes the intellectual abilities of its members by organising and attending courses, debates and discussions. For participant 18 (15 October 2020), *"members are encouraged to study the social teachings of the Church,*

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[63] Vocations for priestly and religious life are usually promoted during such gatherings. Candidates for priestly and religious life who happen to belong to child-headed families become role models to this family type.

Church history, church documents and current publications of the Church such as Papal Encyclicals and newspapers. They also study the laws and regulations governing the country, the residential areas, the family situation, the working places in the civil jurisdiction and, above all, the Human Rights." The Association provides leadership roles in the Church Community and in the civil society. Experts are hired from different fields to facilitate informed debates that help members of the Youth Association to appreciate the Catholic position on several issues such as vocations and priestly life. These intellectual issues help members to be good citizens and when it comes to child-headed families because it enables them to make prudent decisions on the basis of the teachings of the Church.

5.3.3.5   National Movement of Catholic Students (NMCS)

In addition to the contribution of Catholic Youth association, the National Movement of Catholic Students (NMCS) also plays a major role in uniting Catholic students at various tertiary institutions.[64] According to participant 8 (7 October 2020), "*The association gives guidance to Catholic students in universities, vocational and technical colleges on matters of faith.*" This movement helps students to become more deeply aware of their own faith in Jesus Christ as an experience to which they bear witness through their commitment to build up a more just society and to promote the apostolate of students among students. It enables students to engage in mission trips and social action. These kinds of experiences provide students with a powerful avenue to a deeper understanding of the way the association shapes faith.

The movement encourages child headed family to be self-reliant, according to respective needs and possibilities. Although students who are heading child-headed households must probably leave home to study full-time at a university, leaving their younger siblings at risk, they continue to take care of the siblings using skills learnt from the Association. Members help each other to manage projects and account for funds which are used on daily expenses. For participant 7 (7 October 2020), "*the movement has greater exposure to the world of work, human rights groups and non-governmental organisations that assist the vulnerable members of the community. As such the National Movement of Catholic Students directly assists child-*

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[64] The role played by the National Movement of Catholic Students (NMCS) in strengthening families spiritually, morally, socially and economically is similar to the roles played by Young Christian Students (YCS) and Christian Living Community (CLC). Hence for the purposes of this research, I have chosen NMCS and YCS as representative of other Catholic student associations.

headed families with food hand-outs and indirectly, it opens up opportunities for assistance by humanitarian organisations." The point by participant 7 shows that the National Movement of Catholic Students provides varied solutions to the challenges affecting child-headed families.

5.3.3.6   Education Commission

While the Education Commission works with all family types in the provision of quality education in the Diocese, it gives special attention to child-headed households in terms of covering needs such as school fees, uniforms and books. It also provides guidelines for mentors to facilitate psycho-social support, monitor schooling progress and address barriers to schooling among vulnerable children.

Participants explained the importance of the Education Commission in providing support to child-headed families in several ways. Participant 8 (7 October 2020) pointed out that, "*The Education Commission identifies vulnerable children within the Diocese and it provides schools fees, uniforms and textbooks.*" Despite the fact that the Commission targets vulnerable children, child-headed families are the greatest beneficiaries of such support. Participant 23 (15 October 2020) observed that "*The Education Commission understands education holistically and the psychological condition and the social environment of the learner are key determinants in school performance. As a result, the Commission provides guidelines for counselling services to pupils from child-headed families by mentors within the school.*" This shows that close monitoring of learners from child-headed families entails a better consideration of the learner's psychological and social needs. These factors help in both schooling and in managing the home environment.

For participant 26 (23 October 2020), "*Guidance and counselling services provided by Catholic schools are more useful to pupils from child-headed families to ensure that these pupils are aware of their skills, interests and personalities.*" Child-headed families are often identified in Catholic schools and necessary support to such families is often provided. Self-assessment is more important to pupils who are from child-headed households to ensure that they make wise decisions in the absence of adult heads. Self-assessment exercises also help learners to connect the schooling environment with the outside world.

5.3.3.7   Interpretation

The most frequent aspect that participants raised is the spiritual contribution of Missionary Childhood in shaping family bonds among child-headed families. This frequency can be explained in that this is the stage where most Catholic prayers are taught. This is also the stage where family values of sharing, solidarity and togetherness are taught. Furthermore, participants argued that the future of families lies in the Missionary Childhood since it is among this group where future leaders of the church are found. This point relates to the Synod document that states that, "the future of the world and of the Church passes through the family" (EA, 50). This means that a proper foundation of Missionary Childhood ensures a bright future for the Church (Hickey, 1982:33; Mugambi, 2013:162). A cross-cutting point within age groups among participants was expressed on the importance of counselling services for both St. Mary and St. Peter guilds. These counselling services were seen as significant in shaping family structures. In addition counselling services were seen as helping to guide teenagers to follow their clean conscience and avoid drug and alcohol abuse. In view of this, the Synod Document states, "It is thus necessary to help young people to overcome the obstacles thwarting their development: illiteracy, idleness, hunger, drugs."(EA, 181). In order to meet these challenges, young people themselves should be called upon to become trained counsellors of their peers and the counselling is more effective since it relates to their own experiences.

The most emotional aspect from participants was a discussion on lack of seriousness in spiritual activities among the youths of today as expressed in their indiscipline in church gatherings. Participants argued that while a lot of effort is invested in empowering the youth in family matters, indifference among the youth is a challenge. Reasons for the emotions include the use of cell phones during Mass by the youth and their unwillingness to take up important posts within the parish administration. According to the Synod Document, "the pastoral care of youth must clearly be a part of the overall pastoral plan of Dioceses and parishes, so that young people will be enabled to discover very early on the value of the gift of self, an essential means for the person to reach maturity" (EA, 182). In this regard, indifference by the youth to appreciate empowerment efforts results in failure to realise their maximum potential.

A point of importance that was raised by participants is that; guilds, associations and the Education Commission working with child-headed families shape family life by ensuring that

the child(ren) involved lead a morally upright life. An upright moral life will ensure that they make good decisions in issues that affect family life. The Synod asks young people to take in hand the development of their countries, to love the culture of their people, and to work for its renewal with fidelity to their cultural heritage, through a sharpening of their scientific and technical expertise, and above all through the witness of Christian faith (EA, 222). The call by the Synod there requires the youth to be morally upright in all spheres of life so that sound family roots are established.

5.3.4 Ministry Structures in relation to the reconstituted families

The reconstituted family is the most stigmatised[65] family type since it is a result of remarriage. As a result, this family type requires greater pastoral care to provide forgiveness, healing and acceptance among family members. Due to the fact that most guilds and associations stipulate stringent conditions such as church marriage and recommendation by senior members for one to join, members of the reconstituted family often face difficulties in being accepted into guilds and associations. The strictness by other associations must not be understood as a contradiction of the concept of church as family but a way of ensuring conformity to the teachings of the church among members. Despite the centrality of the concept of the Church as family in guilds and associations, stigma and discrimination often affect members of the reconstituted family. On the basis of awareness of such stigma and discrimination, the guild Hosi Yedenga ([Mary] Queen of Heaven) readily accepts members of the reconstituted family.[66]

5.3.4.1   *Hosi Yedenga*

Members of Hosi yeDenga follow the model of Mary Queen of Heaven. Mary Queen of Heaven provides an example of virtues such as simplicity, silence, solitude, charity, humility, mortification, obedience, wisdom, purity, faith and patience to members.

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[65] While African culture readily accepts reconstituted families, the source of stigma within the Church members is the often unfounded suspicion that one or both members of the reconstituted couple could have been involved in extra-marital affairs before the death or divorce of the previous spouse.

[66] The *Hosi yeDenga* guild focuses on forgiveness and acceptance as shown by Mary, Queen of Heaven. The guild accommodates those who are found ineligible by other guilds on the basis of the reconstituted marital status.

Spirituality of the guild is centred on organising and attending retreats, recollections and congresses to deepen faith among members. Members are also involved in fortnightly meetings to share the word of God and engage in works of mercy such as helping and praying for the sick, visiting them hospitals and those in prisons so as to bring hope to their fellow brothers and sisters who have been incarcerated. Participant 19 (15 October 2020) states, "*I joined Hosi Yedenga because they accepted me as I am without any stigma attached. While I really wanted to join one of the guilds for married women, they asked me to get married in Church first. I do not have any objections to their condition, but I think I should get spiritual nourishment from a guild while I arrange for Church marriage with my husband.*" The point being raised by the participant is that the guild accepts members who are still sorting out their marital issues before receiving the sacrament of marriage. This transitional period surely requires guidance and members to encourage those who have not yet been joined in holy matrimony to do so.

Counselling services are provided to members of the guild who face challenges in being accepted within the parish, such as stigma and discrimination. The counselling may be informal (on the basis of experience) or formal (by a few members who may be social workers, counsellors or nurses). Participant 27 (23 October 2020), also highlighted that "*I received the sacrament of marriage in the Catholic Church but I was married to replace a deceased wife. I had challenges when one guild continued to make reference to the late woman instead of directly addressing my concerns. I later joined Hosi Yedenga and I am actively involved in their activities without any challenges.*" The guild is aware of possible discrimination within other guilds and the task of Hosi Yedenga is to address and accommodate people facing such challenges. Hosi Yedenga therefore supports the reconstituted family to address stigma and discrimination that affect its members in parishes. Members feel loved and this becomes the basis of dignity and value within a hostile community. Such hostility, though inconsistent with the idea of 'Church as family' may only be minimised without being completely eradicated as this may be part of human weaknesses even within the Church. On the basis of such awareness, Hosi YeDenga facilitates the spiritual and moral development of its members by bringing healing, restoration, reconciliation, and resolution to situations of stigma and discrimination.

Members of the guild make monthly contributions which are used for daily expenses and to assist members financially when the need arises. According to participant 5 (7 October 2020), "*We do not allow our members to suffer in poverty. As charity begins at home, our financial*

assistance is prioritised to our members. As the Chinese proverb goes, we do not help our members with fish, but we teach them how to catch fish.” This means members help each other with small investment projects for income generation. The contributions are also used to the church to support priests and religious within the parish by recognising their birthdays, anniversaries and honouring day of the religious together with other fellow parishioners.

5.3.4.2   Commission for Social Communications

Communication is becoming a central part of all activities of the Church. The purpose of communication is to build, convince, connect and coordinate. According to participant 4 (7 October 2020), *“The diocese established a Social Communications Commission to cover important diocesan events and addressing the real needs and aspirations of the people with a strong emphasis upon conscientising and educating them to promote justice and peace, truth, unity and freedom.”* The means of social communications help the reconstituted family to foster dialogue within the family. With the influx of different media and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, the Commission works very hard in developing constructive communication as an alternative to irresponsible voices emanating from every corner. Constructive communication entails building good relationships and understanding within the community for the purpose of achieving the goal of the mission of the 'Church as family'. The commission promotes communication among the laity, religious and clergy through *Patavari* Newspaper[67]. This also presents an enormous potential for the service of the common good and build cooperation and communion in the reconstituted family.

While communication skills are important for every family type, the reconstituted family demands greater skills such as listening, conflict management and openness to dialogue. For participant 35 (23 October 2020), *“Good communication skills are important because the reconstituted family has internal differences within it and it also faces hostility from members outside the family.”* The contribution by participant 35 is significant for this study because conflict that may arise between spouses, step-parents and step-child(ren) and conflict that comes due to perceptions of outsiders require balanced communication skills for the purpose of family cohesion. The Commission for Social Communications therefore becomes very

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[67] *Patavari* is a Diocesan Newspaper that informs members of the Catholic Church about key events that take place in the Diocese. The events include ordinations, pilgrimages, retreats, recollections and workshops, among other important events.

important for peace building within the reconstituted family and between the reconstituted family and the rest of parish members.

5.3.4.3   Interpretation

The most frequent aspect that participants raised is the need for unity and love within the reconstituted families. The virtues of Hosi Yedenga were considered key in building family cohesion within the reconstituted families. This point was frequent because participants saw two levels of unity among members of the reconstituted family. These levels include unity among the spouses themselves and unity among the step-child(ren). In the spirit of reconciliation, the Synod document expresses the value of unity as follows: the challenge is fundamentally the challenge of transforming relationships between individuals; it is the challenge of Christ's love for all people, a love that the disciple must reproduce in his own life" (EA, 79). An emotional aspect that was raised by the participants is that members of the reconstituted family are discriminated against and stigmatised within the parish. Reasons for the discrimination include perceptions of such families as deficient when compared to the nuclear family and the view that reconstructed family members are a result of sexual immorality that is inconsistent with the teachings of the sacrament of marriage. Such discrimination contradicts the communal dimension of marriage as expressed in the Synod Document, "By its nature marriage, which has the special mission of perpetuating humanity, transcends the couple. In the same way, by its nature, the family extends beyond the individual household: it is oriented towards society" (EA, 85). The social dimension of such marriage is seen in the parish and in sections. Parishioners should therefore accommodate reconstituted families to build strong family structures and *Hosi Yedenga* plays this pivotal role.

The role of *Hosi Yedenga* in promoting self-reliance in the reconstituted family is a point that cut across participants from urban, semi-urban and rural parishes. The reason for the extensiveness is based on the participants' view that discriminated families should build their own financial resources and help each other as a team while efforts to absorb them in main parish structures are on-going. This is validated by the Synod Documents where the Church is able to reach material and financial independence only if the people entrusted to it do not live in conditions of extreme poverty (EA, 104). A point of importance that was raised by participants is that, in the event of differences between the spouses within the reconstituted family, counselling services should be sought within Hosi Yedenga. These counselling

services help to preserve the unity within the reconstituted family. The nature and quality of counselling varies depending on whether the counselling is formal or informal. Formal counselling by priests, religious and lay social workers, psychologists and nurses is more effective since it harmonises psychological techniques and spiritual resources. Informal counselling is less effective yet helpful since it helps an individual out of difficult circumstances through the use of experience and spiritual resources. The least discussed issue among participants were reasons for remarriage since these issues were considered personal and private. In addition members of such families already suffer from stigma.

5.3.5   Ministry Structures in relation to the extended families

The extended family is the 'family of families' and guilds, associations and commission that work with the extended family go beyond the stipulations of gender, age or marital status as seen in other guilds and associations. Instead, these guilds include all baptised Catholics to give the feeling of 'family' in the true sense. The Sacred Heart Guild, Choir Association and the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice are covered in this section.

5.3.5.1   *Sacred Heart of Jesus Guild*

The Sacred Heart Guild is founded on the basis of the attributes of the Sacred Heart of Christ[68]. These virtues include empathy, sympathy and humility. As shown by the *Constitution of the Sacred Heart Guild*, (2006:3) empathy involves understanding another person's circumstances and situation; sympathy encompasses feeling pity for someone and humility implies prioritising the needs of others before one's own needs. Members believe that these virtues can be used to strengthen family structures. Participant 28 (23 October 2020) maintained, *"Membership to the Sacred Heart Guild is open to all and this guild works well with all family types since the heart of Jesus is non-discriminatory."* The point from the participant is that the guild is all-inclusive in membership regardless of gender, age or marital status of the members. Members pray for "*humility, patience, purity and obedience within their families as the guild undertakes spiritual activities such as retreats, recollections, spiritual talks and pilgrimages*" (Participant 29, 23 October 2020). The responsibility of the

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[68] The Sacred Heart of Jesus guild is a welcoming heart to all. As a result, the guild accepts all baptised Catholics without restrictions on gender, age or marital status. The guild therefore accommodates all in a manner similar to the extended family. In reality, this is the guild where members of the extended family are eligible to join.

guild is to evangelize one another as Catholics and preach to those who still want to know more about God and the Catholic Faith. Members visit the sick and the elderly in old age homes and also child(ren) at child(ren)'s homes. "*Members celebrate special solemnities or feasts related to Christ: Corpus Christi, Sacred Heart, Christ the King and perform works of mercy out of love for Christ*" (Participant 6, 7 October 2020). They are also involved in family gatherings such as Feast Days and Congresses. Praying to the Sacred Heart is an essential element of this devotion.

5.3.5.2   Choir Association

According to participant 12 (7 October 2020), "*the mission of Catholic Church choir is to enrich, inspire, motivate, and engage the community in hymns and sacred songs in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations.*" Catholic choirs cultivate a family spirit through a threefold task; being rooted in Catholic Spirituality that seeks the overall growth of the members; having discipline and respect for authority and being knowledgeable of the liturgy and various liturgical seasons of the church.

Members of the Choir Association give each other psychological and social support in several respects. For participant 20 (15 October 2020) "*elder members within the choir provide guidance to younger members during choir practice, especially in relation to substance abuse. Cases of drug abuse are usually noted when a member misses practice sessions or comes late for these sessions.*" Members provide psychological support by counselling the undisciplined member. Social support comes in when members' co-ordinate in a united manner during choir practice and singing competition.

According to participant 36 (23 October 2020), "*members of the choir are involved in fund raising activities to support singing competitions at Diocesan and National levels. These competitions are funded by guilds and associations as well as ordinary well-wishers.*" Members of the choir promote family spirit through these fund raising activities given that some of the funds are raised through totems. The totem approach helps in fund-raising because parishioners will be using totems to compete.

5.3.5.3   Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

According to participant 11 (7 October 2020), "*the aims of the CCJP are to inform people's consciences, to make people aware of their rights and duties as citizens, to encourage love, to*

promote the Church's social teaching, to investigate allegations of injustice and to take appropriate action." CCJP works closely with extended families within Masvingo Diocese because peace building is understood as an extended family affair. Furthermore, violation of human rights through acts of murder is believed to affect the extended family through avenging spirits (*ngozi*). [69] For participant 21 (15 October 2020), "*the extended family works best with CCJP because conflict prevention and peace building are done by families to avoid ngozi especially where politically motivated violence is involved. While political parties are ultimately responsible for violence, human actors involved in actual murder cases cause problems in their extended families through ngozi."* In African culture, there is a strong belief that human life is sacred and killing someone is considered as a violation of the sacredness of life. When someone is killed, it is believed that the departed spirits of the deceased join forces with the specific spirit of the one who was killed to wreak havoc on the blood group of the perpetrator. The group, which is the extended family, by virtue of blood links of the aggressor, is considered equally guilty. So to avoid *ngozi* (avenging spirits) CCJP helps extended families by teaching them to avoid conflict and promote peace building.

The mandate of the CCJP is to monitor and document human rights situation in the diocese for appropriate action, to research, investigate and publish situations of injustice and violence and use the information to promote justice and peace and to inform the faithful and the clergy of their responsibilities to work for justice and peace. All these tasks are done through working closely with extended families.

In the Shona indigenous justice system, *ngozi* is understood in the context of vengeful deeds wrought out by the spirit of a murdered person against the murderer or his relatives to execute retribution for taking human life. The belief in *ngozi* encapsulates a number of positive values such as corporate guilt and responsibility built into the 'extended family' system, justice and restitution / reparation and reconciliation as shown by participants from all the three focus groups. The extended family shares the responsibility of guilt if one of their members gets involved in an act of murder. The Shona also believe in *ngozi* (avenging spirit). This is an evil spirit of someone who was murdered and is revenging his murder by attacking the murderer or his family. The *ngozi* can attack the victims in various ways such as causing

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[69] Former Midlands Province governor Jason Machaya, whose son was involved in murder during political violence, parted with 35 head of cattle and US$15 000 to compensate the deceased's family (the Chokudas). For two years, the Chokudas had refused to bury their son's remains and the burial was only done after the compensation (The Standard, 2011). The case is now used by CCJP as a lesson against political violence.

sickness, death or disaster in the family. In its administration of justice, the avenging spirit kills the family members of the offender before finalizing the kill with the real culprit. If the offender is a poor person who fails to compensate the offended family, his or her family members are supposed to help by contributing because if they fail on this responsibility, the consequences of the revenge will be undesirable and destructive.

Among the Shona, members of the extended family unite to compensate the wronged extended family. Restitution is part and parcel of the African justice system. Among the Shona, there is a belief that life lost is replaced with life; that is why a virgin girl is usually given to the offended family so as to continue the life of the deceased through her off-springs. This way the injustice caused by the act of murder is addressed. To them *ngozi* is an integral part of their justice system; it is a form of IKS that essentially expresses disapproval when it comes to actions that result in taking away life; hence to the Africans *ngoz*i has a regulatory function of deterrence. Despite having compensated the deceased's family, the ultimate goal of *ngozi* is to compensate the two extended families involved, the offending family and the offended. While compensation of the victim's family using a young girl is objectionable before the law, the purpose of that was to build relations among the two families as a way of reconciliation.

5.3.5.4 Liturgical Commission

The Liturgical Commission promotes faithful liturgical participation in parishes, deaneries and in the whole Diocese. Since the Commission operates at all levels from the section to the Diocese; it works best with the extended family. Participant 6 (5 June 2020) maintained that "*the Liturgical Commission promotes family unity in the church since participation in acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes is done in solidarity.*" The various ministries of liturgical service which the faithful embrace in the sacred liturgy serve to enhance the praise and worship of God through the exercise of ministerial participation in its rites and prayers. Priests conduct daily, wedding, graduation, feast day, sections and anniversary Masses.

In addition to the ordained ministries of bishop, priest and deacon, lay people are blessed with talents and called forth by God to share those gifts for the benefit of the church. At the very core of the Christian life is the celebration of the Liturgy, which has been entrusted to the Church and her ministers. "*The commission has a responsibility to promote and to*

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celebrate the liturgy so that God's people can fully, actively and consciously participate in paschal mystery." (Participant 35, 23 October 2020). As one accepts a role of ministry for liturgy as a right and duty, one must understand the privilege and responsibility attached to their ministry. The role is to be fulfilled with all due reverence and dignity warranted in serving Christ. When embracing a role for liturgy, one embraces the commitment to dependability, time for preparation and time for ongoing development and enrichment. So that each role may be given its proper status, no individual is to be given more than one role in a given liturgy. For participant 27 (23 October 2020) *"allocating leading responsibilities in liturgical participation should be done in a fair manner so that the family atmosphere is sustained in the celebration.*" To ensure a smooth implementation of policies, the Liturgical Commission works closely with the committees of liturgical music and liturgical art, architecture and environment. The liturgical music committee evaluates liturgical music in the diocese and helps plan and carry out workshops and in-service programs. The Liturgical art, architecture and environment committee provides information and education for liturgical art and environment. Both committees are available for consultation with parish committees to ensure that the ideal of Church as family is maintained in the parishes.

5.3.5.5 *Interpretation*

Most respondents pointed out that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Guild facilitates support of the extended family. Participants saw the guild as the most open and accommodative guild without restrictions on gender, age and marital status. The reason for the openness in the guild is that it tries to resemble the heart of Jesus that invites and forgives all. The aspect of forgiveness is consistent with the Synod Document as it states, "Forgiven and mutually reconciled, these sons and daughters will thus be able to bring to the world the forgiveness and reconciliation which Christ our Peace offers to humanity through his Church" (EA, 79. This process of forgiveness and reconciliation best starts at family level.

A cross cutting point across all age groups was that choir builds up the family spirit through songs. The reason for that is that choir practice requires team work and cooperation for practice sessions and singing during mass and competitions. The unity and togetherness shown in choir practice is useful for building family relations. As a vehicle of the wisdom and soul of the people, music is a precious source of material and of inspiration for the modern media (EA, 123).

However, emotions were raised by participants over the limited participation of adult males in choir practice. This is an emotional issue because participants view the non-participation as a contradiction of family building at parish level. Having both been created in the image of God, man and woman, although different, are essentially equal from the point of view of their humanity. "From the very beginning, both are persons, unlike the other living beings in the world about them. The woman is another 'I' in a common humanity", (EA, 159) and each is a help for the other (cf. *Gen* 2:18-25) (EA, 82). While devout Catholic men will probably agree with this teaching, they may still be reluctant to sing in the choir. This means that the barrier to men's participation in choir is not doctrinal; it is more likely cultural. In African culture, singing is considered a feminine task though a few men take part in singing, drumming and horning. Having considered both sides of the debate, the concept of Church as family can only be fully promoted if men are encouraged, rather than forced, to join the choir.

A point of importance is the significance of CCJP in conflict management and peace building within families. The concept of *ngozi* (avenging spirit) affects extended families because of one member who is violent. This point relates to the African Synod document as follows: endowed with this extraordinary dignity, people should not live in sub-human social, economic, cultural and political conditions. This is the theological foundation of the struggle for the defence of personal dignity, for justice and social peace, for the promotion, liberation and integral human development of all people and of every individual (EA, 69). This violence can be prevented thereby bringing peace and harmony to extended families. The most controversial point was the role of the extended family in supporting other family types in matters of faith. Some participants argued that the religion of the extended family should be followed by all its members while other participants thought that members of the extended family must be accorded freedom to choose their religious affiliations. These differences in participant views can be attributed to diversity of religious beliefs and practices within the extended family. It is easier for the extended family to be united if it practices one religion. However, even Christian families differ in indigenous religious beliefs. Furthermore, participants indicated the significance of the Liturgical Commission in facilitating family unity within the church. It teaches the faithful about liturgy "so that the faithful can better understand and live liturgical celebrations" (EA 64). Through liturgy the faithful are sanctified and nourished by the sacraments. Liturgy takes place within the African communal understanding that stresses the importance of solidarity and a family spirit.

5.4   MINISTRY CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO FAMILY TYPES

5.4.1   General challenges

This section focuses on challenges faced by priests, religious, catechists and lay leaders when working with families. These challenges can be classified as general or specific to family types. These challenges may be liturgical, strategic or logistical. I will first examine the general challenges and then proceed to specific ones.

The first challenge is that there is inadequate individual pastoral family care owing to shortage of priests, religious and catechists within the Diocese. "*While there are family days on the liturgical calendar and as arranged by the Diocese, for collective spiritual talks, getting together and mass attendance, the approach is meant to address the needs of all family types at once. This approach provides inadequate pastoral responses to specific family needs such as counselling, guidance and prayers*" (Participant 2, 7 October 2020). Currently, priests and religious work with families through sections, guilds and associations (as shown in section 5.2 of this chapter) but these gatherings involve too many families at any given time. Participant 32 (23 October 2020) noted, "*Due to the shortage of priests, pastoral care to individual families is given when there are events that warrant visits such as weddings, graduation ceremonies or sectional masses. Sad events such as sickness or death may also require the priest or religious to visit the affected families and provide consolation.*" While such efforts are noble in the present circumstances, there is need to strengthen individual family pastoral care so that specific pastoral needs of family members are fully addressed by the priests, religious and catechists. It is important for priests and religious to train congregants in counselling so that the load of pastoral care is shared among the parishioners.

The second pastoral challenge that applies to all family types is inadequate attention to family members who are in a transition from one guild to the next. This leaves a spiritual vacuum among family members. "*Such transitions affect all family types but the most challenging ones involve transition from Missionary Childhood to St. Mary or St. Simon Peter, transition from St. Mary or St. Simon Peter to St. Anne or St. Joseph. These transitions are difficult especially for early teenagers as they find themes addressed in the Missionary Childhood guild unsuitable for their age*" (Participant 13, 15 October 2020). At the same time themes addressed by the senior guilds of St. Mary and St. Anne may be too demanding for their age group. The transitional period occurs when the child fails to fit properly in any of the guilds.

Pastoral care givers also find this category missing in parish activities that enhance family unity. The transitional stage can also be a source of confusion to the concerned family members since this is usually the stage of peer pressure among the early teenagers. Regarding the transition from St. Simon Peter to Joseph or St. Mary to St. Anne, the transition occurs as one prepares for marriage to the early days of marriage. This gap presents pastoral challenges to care givers given that one misses on family themes participation. Linked to this challenge is that some parishioners delay joining St. Anne and St. Joseph guilds yet they are already parents. This means that there is delayed pastoral care among young couples and this is a challenge.

In relation to the above, "*there is a challenge of parishioners that do not belong to any guilds and associations yet these parishioners attend mass especially on Sundays. This category of parishioners is often unregistered in section and parish registers and it may be difficult to trace them. Challenges arise when such parishioners require services such as counselling, mass and the sacrament of the sick*" (Participant 4, 7 October 2020). While such parishioners need help, pastoral workers may find it difficult to trace their families. Furthermore, such parishioners are left out from participating in family gatherings and family events that are organised through guilds and associations.

For participant 7 (7 October 2020), "*there is a shortage of transport especially in rural areas and farming communities to allow spiritual advisors to visit families more frequently. One way to address the problem is to ask parishioners to provide transport for family visits.*" However, such an approach leaves out poor families and such an arrangement may potentially exclude child-headed and single parent families as well.

Geographical factors such as language barriers, population density, pandemics, weather conditions, road networks and human/animal conflict also hinder pastoral efforts to enhance family cohesion. Language is a key point that participants pointed out include differences in indigenous languages such as Shona, Ndebele, Venda and Shangani. During Diocesan gatherings, the dominant language that is used is Shona and this reduces active participation from non-Shona speakers within the Diocese (Focus Group 3, 28 October 2020). Related to this challenge is the use of non-indigenous languages such as English, Latin and Greek to express certain concepts that may be difficult to translate into indigenous languages. In addition, most pastoral workers within the Diocese are Shona-speaking and interaction with Shangani, Venda and Ndebele families becomes a challenge to the pastoral worker. The

pastoral worker also fails to understand the culture of Venda, Shangani and Ndebele communities.

Low population density especially in farms makes it difficult for pastoral workers to visit such places frequently because travelling from one family to the next is expensive and time consuming. Meeting several families at one point in the farming communities again fails to address individual family pastoral needs. Global and local disease outbreaks can cause a break in face to face interaction between pastoral workers and families. Currently, coronavirus has caused the global outbreak of covid-19 and several countries including Zimbabwe[70] have imposed national lockdowns, which prohibit church gatherings and movement of people. As a result, pastoral workers can only use online platforms to communicate with families yet there are cases that require the pastoral worker to visit the family concerned. Locally, outbreaks of cholera and typhoid can also create zones that are prohibited thereby hindering effective pastoral work among families. Weather conditions can give several problems in family ministry. Areas around Chiredzi for example, have dark clay soils that get sticky when wet and the mud makes it difficult for vehicles to travel in the rainy season. Alternative plans involve the use of motor bikes and bicycles to improve navigation but still sometimes the mud can hinder the traction of the cycles. This means that some families are unreachable during the rainy season. In areas around Gonarezhou National Park, human-animal conflict reduces the rate of interaction between pastoral workers and families. The reason is that stray animals like lions, buffalos, elephants and leopards can be a threat to human life.

5.4.2 Challenges specific to family types

Having discussed common challenges that affect family ministry in general, this section focuses on ministry challenges that affect specific family types. These challenges are based on family composition, pastoral needs and cultural factors.

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[70] The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) issued a pastoral statement on the closure of all Catholic Churches for liturgical worship and church gatherings as from March 24, 2020 until further notice (ZCBC Pastoral Statement, 24 March 2020). Following the presidential announcement to ease restrictions on church gatherings (*The Chronicle,* 11 June 2020), ZCBC partially lifted restrictions on Catholic Church gatherings on 12 June 2020 to allow church gatherings of a maximum of fifty people (ZCBC Pastoral Statement, 12 June 2020).

5.4.2.1   Ministry challenges in nuclear families

Pastoral workers working with nuclear families observed that the pastoral needs of nuclear families vary and it is difficult to address these needs in gatherings such as family days and mass. Such gatherings only address common themes that affect the nuclear family such as unity, love, child discipline, vocations and prayer life. According to participant 5 (7 October 2020), " *when one particular family is undergoing grief, for example, the whole parish can help in prayers during mass but if we had enough priests, more time for professional counselling can be accorded to such a family*." The pastoral needs of a grown-up couple that include care and love may differ from a young couple that is still learning how to build its relationship and strengthen discipline among child(ren). Participant 8 (7 October 2020), pointed out that *"in urban areas, nuclear families that do not have own houses find it difficult to host the priests for mass or family visits*." They should always seek the permission from the landlord and if the landlord is non-Catholic, the permission may not be granted or it may be granted under certain conditions. Such conditions may permit holding of mass outside the home and if there is a funeral, some landlords may not allow funeral proceedings to be done at their homes (Focus group 1, 10 October 2020). Another pastoral challenge is that it is difficult to maintain an accurate register for parishioners given that some members do not announce themselves when they leave the parish. Another challenge is that some nuclear families are unregistered in sections, guilds and associations and when a member of such a family falls sick or dies, the priest may not be clear of the identity of such a family member. Since priests compile parish registers using section registers, congregants who are unregistered in sections are also unregistered at parish level.

5.4.2.2   Ministry challenges in single parent families

The single family is often left out in parish and section activities because of misconceptions from other parish members. One such misconception is the belief that a single parent is unable to host mass for the section. These views are a result of discrimination against single parent families. The challenge is that sometimes the priest works with parish leadership and he may not detect the discrimination which may be entrenched within the parish. Participant 30 (23 October 2020) argued that *"the definition of single parent should be revisited because I am single yet beyond the age of any realistic marriage prospects. So where do I fit in? I cannot be among the youth who are preparing for vocations or marriage. I cannot be among*

mothers because I am single but not a parent. I am my own family and when I make family contributions in Church, some people may want to know if my husband contributed yet I was never married.'' The participant explained further that within the section she stays, men warn their wives against associating with her fearing that she is potentially a bad influence to their family lives. "*If I associate with male colleagues at the parish, their wives are quick to label me as a prostitute.*"(Participant 30, 23 October 2020). Such scenarios are often hidden away from pastoral workers since sections believe that only members of St. Anne's or St. Joseph's Guild are allowed to lead sections and families that can host priests, brothers or sisters are the ideal nuclear families. This does not mean that only members of the nuclear family belong to guilds, but leadership roles are often accorded to nuclear family members since they are considered exemplary section members. Participant 20 (15 October 2020), observed that "*the fear of being single is not a topic that is discussed in single family gatherings because they are already living as single, rather it is a topic that comes at St. Anne gatherings.*" This means that issues that relate to single parents are left out in pastoral programmes.

5.4.2.3 *Ministry challenges in child-headed families*

The child-headed family was identified as the most difficult in terms of family ministry. Participant 12 (7 October 2020) argued, "*This family type is difficult to work with because they are always left behind in terms of pastoral planning and counselling. Due to the fast-changing society, the needs of child-headed families are often elusive to us; we are always reactive rather than proactive. This family type is often vulnerable to drug and alcohol abuse and pre-marital sex but we always assume that members of the child-headed family are innocent. The time we get to know that there is a problem that may be too late. So even young priests find difficulties with this family type.*" Due to the absence of parental guidance, the child-headed families sometimes mix Catholic faith with the practices of non-Catholic denominations or they may end up abandoning Catholic faith completely.

Another challenge is that these child-headed families are often hidden away from pastoral workers because parish leaders may find them too challenging for priests, brothers and sisters. To support that view, participant 12 (7 October 2020) said, "*I only got to know of the existence of child-headed families within the parish after making investigations through Missionary Childhood. While I may not blame parish executives for the omission, their assumption is that the priest should work with a balanced nuclear family.*" The view from the

participant can be a general trend which shows that child headed families are often looked down upon and parishes may give inadequate attention to such families. The assumption is that family types that are seen by parish executives as shameful to priests, brothers and sisters, such as child-headed ones, are ignored. However, priests, brothers and sisters are actually more interested in such family types because they require very close monitoring, guidance and counselling.

5.4.2.4 Ministry challenges in reconstituted families

Reconstituted families present pastoral challenges that relate to changes in the family composition. The coming in of a new spouse and sometimes step-child(ren) results in problems in matters of faith, relations and family disunity that the pastoral worker should attend to. Participant 13 (15 October 2020) said, *"A member of the St. Joseph's Guild remarried after the death of his wife. His child(ren) who are now family men and women disagreed with the whole plan of remarriage to the extent that they stopped supporting their father financially and materially. When I stepped in to reconcile the family, the child(ren) insisted that their father had brought in a new wife with step-child(ren) and these cannot be their responsibilities."* The point from participant 13 gives a picture of the friction that is sometimes associated between parents and child(ren) when there is a reconstituted family. The reconstituted family members are often excluded from full participation in parish activities. Like the single parent family, the reconstituted family also faces stigma and discrimination that may go undetected by priests, brothers and sisters. According to participant 5 (7 October 2020), *"When we look for reconstituted families to address issues of stigma and discrimination within the parish, sometimes we are given the wrong picture of such families because they are already discriminated. So talking to these families directly is beneficial to such families."* It is important for a reconstituted family to work closely with priests and religious to get first hand issues arising from reconstituted parent families. Such issues include child discipline, loneliness, financial constraints, stigma and discrimination.

5.4.2.5 Ministry challenges in extended families

In the extended family, influential family members may impose beliefs that contradict Catholic faith to other family members in the attempt to solve family problems. Beliefs from African tradition religion and African independent churches often divide family members even if they belong to the same Catholic faith. Rites relating to vocations, marriage, child-

naming, initiation and death also present pastoral dilemmas and uncertainties. Participants pointed out that effective pastoral work is sometimes negated by the influence of the extended family.

Priestly and religious vocations are sometimes less understood within extended families as members may differ in opinion. According to participant 23 (23 October 2020), *"the extended family members are supposed to help each other to support priestly and religious vocations but sometimes influence from other extended family members negate such efforts. It is difficult to explain issues of vocations to non-Catholic extended family members."* Culturally linked issues of child-bearing and family expansion can be attributed to such problems. Regarding marriage, extended family members put up conditions such as payment of bride price before the couple can be united for the sacrament of holy matrimony. For participant 3 (7 October 2020) *"I came across a situation where the demand for bride price was being set as a condition for the sacrament of marriage. The aunts were more vocal on this issue compared to biological parents of the bride."* The challenge that is found in family ministry is that as the economic problems worsen, more young couples fail to meet this condition and in the end such couples do not fully participate in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Such liturgical participation is partial rather than complete.

The naming of new born child(ren) is a privilege extended to senior members of the extended family who are usually the grandparents to the new born child. Sometimes these grandparents may contradict Catholic faith in the process. For participant 13, (15 October 2020) *"An expecting couple had approached me on the possible name to their baby, I encouraged them to pick on one of the saints. However, when they came for infant baptism, they had named their daughter Netsai 'Give Trouble.' Upon asking why, they explained that the paternal grandmother of the new born baby had given her own name to their child and it is uncultured to challenge her."* This example from participant 13 is a general trend that presents a headache for pastoral workers as they try to mediate on the influence of extended family members. The issue of initiation ceremonies has a lot of controversy within the extended family. Family ministry faces challenges as child(ren) may go away for nearly six months as part of initiation ceremonies. These initiation ceremonies deprive child(ren) of pastoral care and education. When the child(ren) come back from the initiation ceremonies, some of them think of marriage at a tender age and they think that cultural expectations are superior to Catholic faith.

Participants identified the inculturation of rituals as an issue that is controversial among family members within the extended family due to forces of modernity and globalization which keep the African culture dynamic and changing. As a result, it is difficult for extended family members to agree on what authentic African culture entails. In addition, participant 7 (7 October 2020) *"pointed out that the picture painted by missionaries that see African culture as pagan and primitive still affects the mindset of many Catholics resulting in skepticism about the value of cultural rituals."* It is difficult to draw the fine line between Catholic practice and African culture in the performance of rituals and some participants maintained that it may be very easy to go off the mark.

5.4.2.6   Interpretation

An analysis of responses of ministry challenges relating to the extended family shows that most participants presented ministry challenges of discrimination from other parishioners as the greatest challenge with the single parent families. This high frequency can be attributed to patriarchal thinking among parishioners as they think that single parents, especially single mothers, are incapable of guiding families by themselves. Such challenges can also be explained on the basis that the single parents appear to accept the discrimination to the extent that single parents are left out in participation within pastoral family activities. These views relate to Dube (2012:126) in her analysis that patriarchy results in the male language of the Trinity and argue that it not only reflects the patriarchal context in which it arose but also legitimises a male view of God, thus sustaining patriarchal relations. The patriarchal context affecting most single parent families is the African culture in general and Shona, Ndebele, Shangani and Venda cultures in particular. The most cross cutting aspect along priests, religious and catechists is that the pastoral needs of nuclear families differ with age and type of marriage. Two reasons were used to explain this cross-cutting point. First, participants argued that nuclear families can be categorised as young, middle-aged and elderly nuclear families whose needs differ with their respective ages. Secondly the economic and social circumstances of nuclear families differ from time to time, hence pastoral counselling relating to these circumstances also varies.

The most emotive aspect in the discussion was inadequate pastoral attention to child-headed families because they are perceived as unsuitable to host priests and the religious for mass or prayers at their homes. The reason for emotions was that the perception stands in contrast with the views of pastoral workers who described such a perception by parishioners as

unfortunate. According to priests and religious who are on the ground, delicate care should be given to child-headed families instead of hiding information about this family type. A point of importance concerns ministry with extended families where participants expressed the view that consulting priests, religious and catechists on issues of African Indigenous religion that contradict Catholic faith is important. This point was expressed given the background of the influence of extended family members on decisions to do with birth, naming, initiation and death rituals. The cultural context of rites addresses the needs of the whole person, from birth to death.

However, participants generally agreed that death rites are more sacred than other rites and inculturation of these rights takes priority. Birth was also considered as important and the stage involves naming ceremonies (Focus Group 1, 7 October 2020). Marriage rites had mixed feelings as some participants saw them as less important while others placed significance over them, especially the rites connected to the wife. Both in these ceremonies and in many other traditional rites the symbols, the formulae and the religious intermediary are the main part of the rite and have a deep meaning. Therefore, in this case the traditional culture had offered relevant examples upon which the missionaries drew and prepared careful and respectful people to appreciate every kind of rite to implore, to thank and to worship God. Nevertheless, because of the historical constraints characterizing the beliefs of the people in Masvingo, several rituals had to be considered as aspects to inculturate the Gospel as people attend ceremonies of which they generally understood very little and if they did appreciate the rather complex ritual, it was yet alien to their tradition.

5.5   CONCLUSION

The chapter presented and analysed theological reflection on the mission of the Church as family in relation to family types in Masvingo Diocese. It also analysed participants' views on how the Divine attributes can challenge and shape each family type in the Diocese to achieve this ideal of the mission of the Church as family. The Trinity forms the basis of the mission of the Church as family and the participants also revealed theological issues that relate to each family type. These theological issues are applicable to family types and they are based on family structure, diversity and state of preparedness within the family ministry and should reflect the Trinitarian attributes. The attributes of the Trinity (unity and love) are integral to the mission of the church as family as expressions of the fundamental mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Trinitarian attributes promote communion which

strengthens the mission of the Church as family. This communion is centred on and initiated by the Triune God. Drawing from the Trinity the mission of the church as family must be seen to be a communion whose mission is to build communion, communion among family members, communion of all people with God and communion of all family types.

Furthermore, the Chapter has shown that despite the strategic planning that results in the ministry structures (guilds, associations and commissions) to support this ideal of the mission of the Church as family. Findings reveal that while these Ministry Structures are in place, they are not used to full potential due to socio-economic and cultural obstacles. Participants also provided suggestions on how guilds, associations and commissions can fully support family structures by opening up these Ministry Structures to facilitate greater participation by family members for the full realisation of this notion of the Church as family. Lastly, the chapter analysed findings on ministry challenges that affect family types. The theological reflection in this chapter prepares for the next chapter which suggests recommendations regarding further research, pastoral strategies and family ministry in relation to the mission of the church as family.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The research question of this study (1.3) was to examine the extent to which the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo in Zimbabwe implemented the mission of Church as family of God as formulated by the African Synod (1994). To achieve that purpose, four sub-questions were explored (1.3.1). The first was to examine the teachings of the 1994 African Synod regarding the ideal of Church as family (Chapter 2). The second sub-question involved an analysis of values, customs and worldview that are found in African families in Masvingo Catholic diocese (Chapter 3). The third question concerned evidence that the mission of the church as family is being realised in The Catholic diocese of Masvingo, in other words, the extent to which the families of this Diocese families are agents of proclaiming the Good News and of Inculturation (Chapter 4). The fourth and fifth sub-questions dealt with the theological reflection that underlies and flows from the mission of the church as family (Chapter 5.2) and the ministry structures such as guilds, associations and commissions that the diocese have in place to implement the mission of the church as family (Chapter 5.3 and 5.4).

Section 6.2 contains a reflection on whether this study adequately answered sub-question 1 on the mission of the Church as family as expressed in the 1994 African Synod. Section 6.3 examines whether sub-question 2, on the analysis of the culture (customs, values and worldview) of the families in the diocese (as a foundation of receiving and adapting the Gospel) was adequately dealt with in Chapter 3. In section 6.4, I assess whether Chapter 4 adequately answered the third sub-question on the implementation of the vision of Church as family in the Masvingo diocese. This relates to the empirical findings on the role of families in proclamation and inculturation. Section 6.5 discusses whether Chapter 5 gave a satisfactory answer to the fourth and fifth sub-questions on the theological foundations and practical ministry structures to embody the Church as family. In section 6.6, I provide practical recommendations for pastoral planning and strategies to embody the vision of the Church as family and section 6.7 makes suggestions for further research that have been stimulated by the writing of this thesis.

6.2   REFLECTION ON THE 1994 AFRICAN SYNOD

The first focus of the study was to explore the foundations and features of the ideal of Church as Family as expressed by EA. In terms of the cycle of mission praxis, this represents the

element of theological reflection on the notion of Church as Family. The 1994 African Synod deliberated on five aspects of the ecclesiological ideal of the Church as the family of God, as indicated in Chapter 2.4. For the sake of depth and clarity, this study focused on only two of the five themes, namely proclamation of the good news and inculturation, in order to explore the interaction between gospel and culture, as it plays out in the families of the diocese. This was appropriate since the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa,* placed a strong emphasis on family in connection with the nature and mission of the Church. In other words, this study reflects on the interaction between the notion 'Church as family of God' (1994 African Synod) and the concrete reality of the families of the Catholic diocese of Masvingo.

The study has shown that human weaknesses such as stigma, discrimination and conflict threaten family structures and that it is necessary to work and improve on such weaknesses. The 1994 Synod recommends the use of values that are contained in the traditional African family (section 1.1). However, I have noticed that the family which the Synod had in mind was the extended family. My study of actual families in the Masvingo diocese has shown that some of the key values identified as belonging to the extended family (such as love, honesty, solidarity, forgiveness) are still strong, but that since the 1994 Synod other dimensions of family life have changed (such as the influence of communal structures of the extended family). In terms of the cycle of mission praxis I therefore needed to avoid a deductive or normative interpretation of family (based solely on EA) and to explore the interaction between a sociological understanding of the family and the theological notion of Church as family. The actual families in the diocese are varied as a response to globalisation, modernisation, urbanisation and new understandings of what family involves. The traditional structure of the extended family still exists but the bonds that keep this family type together have been weighed down by forces of modernity. As a result of such changes, there has been a shift from the extended family to the nuclear family. However, the type of nuclear family found in the Catholic diocese of Masvingo is not the same as nuclear families in the North Atlantic world. It is not as autonomous as a North Atlantic family but also not as strongly embedded in the extended family as in the past. It is a moderate nuclear family that is in flux, with weaker connections to the traditional African extended family. Due to such changes in the family structure, I adopted a sociological approach in this study. Such an approach enabled me to identify actual family types that are found within the diocese of Masvingo, namely the nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended family. These

family types are off-shoots or deviations from the traditional African extended family, in which no isolated orphan or widow was known.

What I discovered in *Ecclesia in Africa* is that the Synod fathers place more emphasis on the African indigenous extended family, which was more intact at that time. The impact of modernisation and other factors (highlighted in section 3.4) has shifted focus from the extended family to nuclear families. Furthermore, family types that were unknown to the traditional African extended family, such as single parent and child-headed families, have now emerged. However, as pointed by one participant during interviews, the family types I examined are not exhaustive because there is another new 'family' type, especially among professional women. This is a category of single women who never got married but have passed the age of marriage, so they are single yet they are not parents; they live independently of their own parents and are outside the scope of nuns. While such single 'families' are a reality, time constraints prohibited me from including it under family types, but this certainly constitutes an area for further research.

These changes in family realities underline the importance of context analysis in the cycle of mission praxis and the fruitfulness of using a sociological method in this particular study. Due to this fluid and complex family situation it wasn't possible to bring all five the theological themes of EA into the interaction. That would have complicated the study unnecessarily, so (as explained already) I chose to focus on only two of the five themes raised by Synod fathers, namely evangelisation as proclamation of the good news and as inculturation. Even though it could be argued that the study lost some theological breadth by leaving out the three other dimensions of EA – justice and peace, dialogue and the means of social communications – I would justify this from the point of view of producing a focused and profiled academic study. I also contend that my concentration on the Trinity in Chapter 5 expresses the theological heart of EA and the 1994 Synod.

The analysis of EA in Chapter 2 provided the historical background and motivation for the study and identified the key theological themes to be dealt with. However, since the implementation or 'reception' of the 1994 Synod document occurs within the real context of Masvingo Catholic Diocese, this study required the use of critical works to supplement the views contained in EA. The literature sources used in this study are a blend of EA (1994) and more recent critical scholarly work from the fields of Missiology and Pastoral Theology. In other words, my conceptual framework is a product of a scholarly conversation between EA

and experiences/documents from the rest of Africa as well as Europe, America, Asia and Latin America because many of the experiences addressed in the study are shared by Catholic families across the globe.

6.3   SHORTER'S CULTURE MODEL

The second sub-question driving the thesis involved an analysis of the values, customs and worldview operative in African families in the Masvingo diocese. In terms of the cycle of mission praxis, this represents the element of context analysis and I chose Aylward Shorter's culture model to explore the five family types found in the diocese. The focus on culture in my context analysis, rather than class or race, for example, was deliberate since it dovetailed with the theological focus on inculturation, derived from EA.

The significance of the culture model was to provide a focus on the anthropological dimension so as to understand the human side of the concept of Church as family. To a large extent, I found Shorter's culture model applicable to Masvingo Catholic diocese because each family type has phenomenological, domestic technical and worldview dimensions. These three dimensions helped to provide depth to my description of the five family types, to acknowledge the complexity of the interaction between gospel and family, and to avoid superficial statements about inculturation. This culture model is helpful in tracing the dynamics of how faith is implanted, welcomed, ignored or taken for granted in the life of a family. The first two dimensions (phenomenological and domestic-technical) helped to highlight the basic material aspects of faith while the last two aspects (values and worldview) link well with the spiritual dimensions of faith.

However, an application of Shorter's culture model to family types was far from uniform. I found his model more applicable to the nuclear and extended families because those two have a stronger cultural foundation. Single parent, child-headed and reconstituted families are formed due to the fact that the extended family no longer provides the strong safety net to other family types. These family types, which were absent in the traditional African setup, have gradually emerged as part of a modernising and more complex African society. It is not honest to idealise a past in which harmony, solidarity and togetherness kept extended families together; I had to shift my thinking from the ideal social cohesion of the extended family to focus on the actual families in the diocese, and analyse them from a sociological point of view.

Shorter's model of culture provided a helpful framework for understanding family types in terms of their phenomenological, domestic-technical, values and worldview dimensions (section 3.2.1). Chapter 3 revealed that each of these dimensions applies differently to the family types, owing to their varied structures. Each family type shapes its own domestic technical dimension depending on how it responds to circumstances on the ground. If a family has boy children only, the domestic technical roles tend to shift from traditional gender roles to a situation where these boys are involved in tasks that are culturally construed as feminine, such as cooking, washing clothes and cleaning the home. Conversely, a family that is exclusively made up of girl children results in the girls carrying out heavy tasks like cutting firewood, ploughing, gardening and herding cattle. Such an exchange of gender roles made me conclude that while gender roles in the domestic technical dimension are largely culturally defined, there is a flexible approach to these roles, depending on family composition.

The worldview dimension likewise revealed varied elements within family types in the diocese. In the nuclear family, there is a focus on family rituals, which include wedding, child naming and child rearing. In contrast, it has been shown that deep religious commitment characterises the worldview of single parent families. Child-headed families tend to develop a strong sense of religious attachment in their worldview. With reconstituted families, the mixed history and experiences sometimes result in mixed beliefs about God, spirituality and family rituals. When families come together, the worldview of the extended family draws them to place emphasis on death, burial and *kurova guva* (home coming) ceremonies. The varied values and beliefs at work in the different family types have emerged as important factors in the planting or adapting of faith in relation to evangelisation as proclamation of the good news and inculturation respectively.

6.4 FINDINGS BASED ON EVANGELISATION AS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS AND INCULTURATION

The third sub-question was to determine whether there is evidence of the implementation of the mission of the Church as family in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo tallies with context analysis in the cycle of mission praxis, in the sense of analysing the life and functioning of the church, as part of the context.

A qualitative research methodology was used in the study because it was considered appropriate for exploring the belief systems and experiences of families in the diocese. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth data on the issues raised in the research. Interviews gave a one-to-one interaction where research participants sought clarification on questions they did not understand. Furthermore, some participants gave useful suggestions on the nature and structure of the questions, thereby enriching the study. For example, one participant indicated that my focus was just on the formal family types that are registered in parishes, while polygamous and co-habiting families were left out. I acknowledged the point, which demonstrated the limitation of my approach. Although unregistered families are a reality within the diocese, it is difficult to get to know about them since I made use of parish registers to get participants for interviews. This is a matter that merits further research.

The use of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) helped in the interaction between group participants in the sense that they complimented each other's ideas and challenged each other concerning the accuracy and validity of points that were raised. These FGDs added value to the research by bringing community interpretations to the research questions and objectives. The group members were able to interrogate one another and to raise information specific to certain family types. The objective of the FGDs was to gain a collective community perspective on the research questions and compare that with the information obtained from the personal interviews.

As a participant observer, I also took field notes of important family gatherings. These notes were an important additional source for an analytical comprehension of family types. I was able to document my thoughts and feelings about family gathering events occurring during research, the way conversations are made, and my interpretations of them. These three data gathering techniques were jointly employed to enable comparison and validation of data.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought challenges to the data gathering process since there were travel restrictions and limited time for discussions. Participant observation helped to mitigate this challenge since I had an opportunity to carry out some pastoral activities with a limited number of people. The pandemic was not anticipated when the research was designed, but it was nevertheless possible to interview most of the participants as envisaged. Out of these 36 participants, only three were prevented from attending the second interviews in October 2020 due to health reasons.

To generate "evidence of the implementation of the mission of the Church as family," as required by the third sub-question, involved two different dimensions of evangelisation: firstly to examine the role of families as agents of proclamation of the Gospel and secondly to examine families as agents of inculturation.

Chapter 4.2 explored the first aspect and found that each family type proclaims the Gospel in a different way as a result of its distinct structure and composition. Chapter 4.3 explored the second aspect and likewise found that the distinct nature of each family type brought about a different shape of inculturation. These two aspects, proclamation and inculturation, can be seen as two movements, with the family as the site where they meet. Proclamation is the movement of the Gospel towards culture and inculturation is the movement of the culture towards the Gospel. Or, in different words, proclamation is how Gospel shapes culture and inculturation is how culture shapes Gospel. There are many institutions of society where this creative, and sometimes conflictive, encounter takes place; this study focused on the cultural institution of the family as the site of the encounter. Other sites of encounter are no less important than this one, but in the African context the family is a crucial site of evangelisation, as wisely highlighted by the 1994 African Synod.

6.5   FINDINGS BASED ON THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AS FAMILY

The fourth and fifth sub-questions deal with the theological reflection guiding and shaping the understanding of the mission of the church as family. Chapter 5.2 focused on the divine side of the notion of church as family, reflecting theologically on the role of the Church in strengthening families. This exercise represents the element of theological reflection in the cycle of mission praxis and it was achieved by integrating the views of interview participants and focus groups with the theological vision of EA. While the previous sections approached proclamation and inculturation with empirical, sociological tools, that was useful in addressing the human side of the concept of Church as family, but inadequate to do justice to the divine side of the concept. As a result, I complimented the empirical or inductive approach of Chapter 4 with a deductive or reflective approach in Chapter 5 to provide a theological foundation for the Church's proclamation and inculturation in relation to families. This was done by reflecting on the Trinity, which is a central emphasis of EA, to develop a Trinitarian understanding of the family that transcends the shortcomings of the human side of the Church.

Basing on such reflection, the Trinity is both the foundation of African communal life and the basis of love and unity, attributes that bind families together in the Church. Chapter 5.2 showed how Trinitarian theology influences different family types in different ways. In the nuclear family, Trinitarian theology is the foundation of love and unity between the spouses despite the patriarchal nature of the African nuclear family. The Trinity is the ideal of unity of all baptised persons and, on that basis; it binds all family types together. Hence the single parent family deserves equal opportunity for religious participation. The child-headed family also fits well into a Trinitarian view because there is less friction among siblings in matters of faith. In the reconstituted family, one of the challenges is that of different religious beliefs but by taking the Trinity as role model such a family can learn to cherish unity in diversity. In the extended family, there is need to work hard on the part of pastoral caregivers because hierarchy influences family decisions in matters of religious beliefs and practices.

By analysing the role and impact of the Trinity in Chapter 5.2 as the foundation of African communal life and of the life of the Church as family, the study has adequately answered sub-question 4 concerning the kind of theological reflection that leads to – and emerges from – the mission of the Church as family.

Moving to sub-question 5 on the ministry structures that the diocese has in place to implement the mission of the church as family, Chapter 5.3 shows how the Masvingo diocese is an agent of evangelisation that strengthens families in concrete ways. It shows how the diocese provides support for each family type through ministry structures such as guilds, associations and commissions that it has put in place to implement the mission of the church as family.

Eligibility to guilds is structured according to gender, age and marital status, with some exceptions. Both formal and informal counselling services that relate to marital problems, child indiscipline and family conflict are provided by the guilds. As indicated in Chapter 5.3, formal counselling services are provided by parishioners who are professional counsellors, doctors, nurses and related professions. While all these professions may not be found in one parish, the pattern is that there are qualified counsellors in diocesan hospitals. Informal counselling relies more on spiritual resources and experience, with limited use of psychological approaches. As also pointed out in Chapter 5.3, associations such as the Youth Association, Couples' Association and Choir Association function in the diocese to address family needs across all family types. Likewise, the four Commissions of the diocese, the

Health Commission, Caritas, the Commission for Social Communications and the Commission for Justice and Peace, support all family types in distinct ways.

Through this encompassing set of active ministry structures the diocese makes provision for members to be accommodated and to feel at home in the Church on each step of their life journey. They ensure that each parish and the whole diocese functions as a family, where everyone is cared for and has an age-appropriate, gender-appropriate and needs-based community to belong to. These structures also allow lay leadership to grow and flourish.

Chapter 5.4 highlights a few general and specific challenges facing the diocese in the practical side of its ministry of evangelisation in relation to families. The shortage of pastoral workers such as priests, religious and catechists results in inadequate individual family care. The transition of family members from one guild to the next leaves family members in a spiritual vacuum as they fail to fit into the next guild due to differences in age, status and themes to be addressed. Geographical hindrances such as economic factors, language barriers, population density, pandemics and climatic conditions also have a negative impact on family ministry.

Specifically, the challenge of nuclear families is in different needs at different times and inadequate individual family care leaves pastoral gaps within the nuclear family. Single family members (parents and children) are often left out in parish activities due to stigma and discrimination. Pastoral ministry in child-headed families faces the obstacles brought about by changing technology, fashion trends and peer pressure, thereby making it difficult for pastoral caregivers to monitor and guide members of this family type effectively and proactively. The family composition of the reconstituted family, consisting of step-parents and children, often causes conflict and tension that give dilemmas to pastoral care givers. Differences in religious beliefs and tension between Catholic teachings and indigenous religious practices are challenges in the extended family.

By surveying and analysing all these guilds, associations and commissions, and their role in ministering to the different family types, Chapter 5.3 and 5.4 have adequately answered the sub-question regarding the ministry structures that the Catholic diocese of Masvingo has put in place to implement the mission of the Church as family.

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6.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASTORAL STRATEGIES

As a conclusion to this study, the following recommendations for pastoral strategies to strengthen family cohesion can now be made. These concern all the levels of the diocese, including church administration, priests, religious, catechists, parish leaders, guilds, associations and commissions. The recommendations are based on the findings and are meant to give future direction to families and family ministry in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo. The recommendations are presented according to each category listed above. These recommendations fulfil the last step of the cycle of mission praxis which consists of strategies for transformation as indicated in section 1.8.1 (Karecki, 1999:165; Kritzinger, 2002:149). These strategies for mission provide direction to the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo.

6.6.1   Church Administration

Following the ideas of Healey (2012a:24) who traces the notion of small Christian communities in Kenya, there is need to set up small Christian Communities of 8-12 families each in Masvingo Diocese and move away from sections approach. Currently, a section consists of up to 30 families and such a number is too big for the laity to take care of each other spiritually as families. Small Christian Communities will provide greater participation, team work and accountability among members. The number of family days on liturgical calendar should be increased to cater for more devotions and prayers towards families. It is important for Church administrators to promote more priestly and religious vocations to increase the number of spiritual advisors for families. It is necessary to establish a guild for single parent fathers so that their spiritual needs are addressed.

6.6.2   Priests

Following suggestions for priestly training that have to meet the circumstances of the present day *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992), the interviewees suggest that more training should be given to priests on counselling and psychological services to families so that they address both the spiritual and emotional dimensions of families. It is recommended that priests should design pastoral programmes for family visits to enhance the pastoral care of families with special attention and support given to vulnerable family types such as child-headed, single parent and reconstituted families. These family types appear to be marginalised and excluded from visits as shown by participants in interviews and focus group discussions. Priests should guide

parish leaders on embracing all members in parish activities and avoid discrimination of other family types by parishioners.

6.6.3   Catechists

In rural parishes where there is reduced population density compared to urban areas, training of more catechists is required to reduce pressure on the current number and make their services efficient. Training workshops should be done for catechists to facilitate training on family counselling in line with suggestions in *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995 proposition 58). It may also be necessary to encourage more females to become catechists so that they can work closely with single mothers to compliment already existing efforts from religious sisters.

6.6.4   Parish Leaders

From interviews and focus group discussions, participants pointed out that stigma and discrimination (Ayieko, 2003:34) is sometimes reinforced by parish leaders resulting in exclusion of vulnerable families such as child-headed, single and reconstituted in full liturgical participation and leadership roles (Ugeux and Lefebvre, 1995:48). Given this background, parish leaders should protect the rights of all family types against stigma and discrimination. These leaders should work closely with guilds and associations to identify problem areas so as to assist vulnerable families with social and economic support. Such support helps to strengthen the concept of Church as family at parish level by building social and economic safety nets.

6.6.5   Guilds

Each guild must increase the number of spiritual activities such as retreats, recollections and prayer sessions. Given the challenge of transition from one guild to the next, each guild must establish two to three distinct categories based on age and spiritual needs so as to accommodate the needs of these categories and transitional members. Guilds should encourage family visits among guild members thereby putting solidarity into practice *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995 propositions 138 and 139). It may also be important for guilds to frequently provide spiritual talks on current themes reflecting on family challenges of the time. In addition, guilds are encouraged to train members in professional family counselling services so as to meet spiritual and emotional needs of members.

Youth ministry, is one of the most important key areas in the attainment of this vision of the Church as family. According to *Christus Vivit* (no.202), Young people frequently fail to find programmes that response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues. The youths from these different family types face many challenges. It is necessary to help the youth to overcome obstacles that thwart their development, such as literacy, idleness, hunger, drugs,   alcohol and diseases. Inculcate in them Christian values. The youth should be involved more in church activities like organising youth pilgrimages, retreats, seminars, prayer vigils with adult supervision.

They need to be encouraged to join the Catholic Youth Association (CYA), St. Mary guild, St. Simon Peter guild, Young Christian Students (YCS), Christian Living Communities (CLC), National Movement of Catholic Students (NMCS), Missionary Childhood, set up social and income generating activities of the youth in parishes, associations and youth movements.

Have a Junior Parish Council to cultivate youth participation in parish affairs. Avail the youth with Catholic Literature for reading and expose the youth to modern technology. The youth need to develop a sense of love and respects for the sacraments, especially, the Eucharist and confession so as to deepen their faith.

Pastoral care for the youth must be part of the overall planning of the diocese and parishes so that the young people may discover early the value of the gift of self, an essential means for the person to reach maturity.

6.6.6   Associations

It may be suggested that associations should work closely with guilds for feedback on family types and identification of areas that require attention. They should also encourage family gatherings that draw from family building themes so as to provide spiritual nourishment to membership (*The Family in Africa,* 2013). Associations should constantly draw from African culture and build on virtues that support family types in order to strengthen the human side of Church as family. They should help members to reflect on Synod family themes so as to construct the ecclesiological ideal of church as family. Associations should work closely with spiritual advisors to proactively identify and keep in pace with issues that affect membership.

According to the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christfidelis Laic* (no.10) and the Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (no.71), the laity is to be helped to become increasingly aware of their role in the Church, so as to fulfil their particular mission as baptised and confirmed persons. The laity should be agents of evangelisation. They are to be trained for their mission through proper training, ongoing forming, retreats, recollections, study sessions, seminars and leadership courses at suitable centres and schools of biblical and pastoral formation. This kind of formation will strengthen the faith of all family types.

6.6.7 Commissions

Commissions should identify economically vulnerable families and assist them with developmental projects. They should work closely with guilds and associations in matters to get first-hand information on matters relating to family needs. Commissions should revise strategies to work with families from time to time so as to understand family changes in line with research into African culture (EA, 62). It may be important for Commissions to come up with inter-commission committees to address cross-cutting family issues. It is also important for Commissions to support publication of books relating to spiritual, social and cultural foundations of families.

The Diocese Institutions such as Missions, Schools, Hospitals, Clinics and Training Centres are agents and good places for evangelisation. Institutions should be places for learning the Scriptures, theology, Church doctrine, catechism, the social teaching of the Church, besides the usual curriculum. These institutions strengthen family types by providing spiritual and moral support to the family members.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Recommendations for further research are based on important issues that were raised in this study as shown by participants and participant observation but are outside the direct scope of this thesis. These issues appear in all family types and further investigation into them will help to enhance the ideal of church as family.

6.7.1 Nuclear Family

The focus of the study was on family types in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo but it emerged during the research that some members of nuclear families within the Diocese

(spouses, children) are based in the diaspora within the region (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Mozambique) or overseas (United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand and others). This is a growing trend that affects nuclear families in the Diocese and further studies in this area will help to avoid collapse of families and enhance the notion of Church as family.

6.7.2 Single parent family

The ideal of the Church as family is meant to improve family stability and cohesion but cultural assumptions on single mothers may entrench forms of stigma and discrimination. Further research on stigma and discrimination in parishes can be a necessary means of overcoming such challenges. Further research can be an effort to examine and reformulate ways of thinking to overcome entrenched bias and enforced inequality of the past as it structures human concepts and institutions for the future.

The area of single fathers seems to have very little attention but the number of single fathers in the Diocese is increasing due to death of spouses as a result of terminal diseases such as cancer and diabetes. One interviewee pointed out that a Christian book on single fathers is yet to be seen. To avoid a spiritual vacuum within this category of family members, it is important to explore, by means of in-depth studies, Catholic and African cultural values that may assist single fathers within the Diocese.

6.7.3 Child-headed family

Regarding child-headed families, the study has shown how this family type can be accommodated in the vision of Church as family. However, it was indicated that this family type is the most complex since it appears to follow new trends of technology, fashion and patterns of behaviour. Further studies are necessary to examine reasons of the collapse of the extended family, coping mechanisms of members of this family and efforts by the Church to take care of this family type. Since child-headed families were investigated using the views of adults, further research may be necessary to get the voices of children themselves (after seeking assent from them) in this family category.

6.7.4   Reconstituted Family

While reconstituted families are the result of decisions made by consenting adults, the impact of reconstituted families on children is an area that requires further study. It emerged during focus group discussions that most children are hostile to step parents. A study that would involve participants who have past experiences of step families as children and those who are experiencing the life of reconstituted families may reveal so many issues about the future of such families.

6.7.5   Extended Family

Findings on the extended family within Masvingo Diocese tend to represent Shona culture more than Venda, Shangani and Ndebele which are also found within the Diocese. It is important to research further into Venda, Shangani and Ndebele cultural values and their significance in shaping of church life. While similarities may exist in what is termed 'African culture' certain customs, values and practices are specific to cultural groupings and investigating these issues may help to enrich the vision of Church as family.

6.7.6   Other Family Types

As indicated in 1.6, two family types were not addressed specifically in this study, namely polygamous and same-sex families. Since these two family types are frowned upon by the Catholic Church, interviews of people involved in such relationships would be sensitive and difficult for a church leader like me to carry out, but they do form part of the social reality and it is important for research to be done on them in future.

6.8   CONTRIBUTION TO MISSIOLOGY

My study contributes to the discipline of Missiology by evaluating the implementation of the ideal of Church as Family in Masvingo Catholic Diocese. On the empirical level, this case study fills the literature gap within the discipline of Missiology given that similar studies have been carried out mostly in Kenya while being underexplored in Zimbabwe. Ecclesiological ideal of Church as family is expressed in changing family structures such as nuclear, single parent, child-headed, reconstituted and extended family types in Masvingo Catholic Diocese. While these patterns may exist elsewhere, the socio-economic and political

circumstances of Zimbabwe give particularity to the changes in family trends raised in the study. The human side of the concept is understood through culture and African values and ritual practices are significant in understanding the human dimension. Families are agents of the Gospel and inculturation and these types contribute according to their circumstances and situations. The church is also an agent of evangelisation that binds families together using the ideal of the Trinity. There is a mutual relationship between the human side and the theological aspects in building the notion of Church as family although the theological side provides the ideal.

The study gives centrality to the importance of African values in building the ideal of Church as family. This dimension is an important contribution to Missiology given that much the literature is Western in orientation and it provides relevance to values within cultures in Masvingo Diocese. The study gives a voice to the marginalised African approaches in the study of Missiology through making use of local participants and evaluating their existential experiences in Mission praxis.

Methodologically, work contributes through the application of mission praxis to the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo. It consists of five elements: identification, context analysis, theological reflection and strategies for mission and Karecki's inclusion of spirituality as the motivational force is of paramount importance in this research. This approach had not been applied to the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo by previous researchers. Its application to the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo provides an analysis to a new situation whose results are significant for further reflections on mission studies.

Lastly, the study contributes by unpacking strategies for mission practice that are not only important for the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo but for other Dioceses in Zimbabwe as well. Furthermore, these strategies are also significant for other African countries as they continue to reflect on the demands of the 1994 African Synod.

6.9   CONCLUSION

I have shown that the ideal of Church as family has both Divine and human dimensions. In order to strengthen both dimensions, it is necessary to address theological foundations of the family and cultural values while expressing an authentically African Church. By

contextualising the Gospel to the African family as well as accommodating cultural values in the Gospel, the two-way process gives a dynamic ideal of Church as family in Masvingo Catholic Diocese. In a way the ideal of the Church as family can be understood in the following three aspects: firstly, it points to the Holy Trinity which is the basis and source of the Church. The Church entailed as family is therefore a sacrament of the union and love of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Secondly, it points to the Christological character of the Church. In his salvific work, Jesus chose to be born into a human family. For that reason, the family acquired a unique value as a continuation of Christ's saving mission. The Church has to cherish, embody and foster the family spirit to all its members. Thirdly, this ideal points out the unity in diversity that characterises and enriches the Church. The diverse members of the Church must therefore complement each other for the attainment of this vision. Recommendation have been suggested to ensure that Church administrators, priests, religious, catechists, parish leaders, guilds, associations and commissions combine efforts to improve the life of all family types in all important dimensions to promote this vision of the Church as family.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:   Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

27 May 2020

Dear Rev. Michael Basera

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
2020-CHS -41469143

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 27 May 2020
to 27 May 2023

Researcher(s): **Rev. Michael Basera**   E-mail: 41469143@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor(s): **Prof J.N.J Kritzinger**   E-mail: kritzjnj@icon.co.za

Title: The mission of the Church as family: Implementing the ecclesiology of the African Synod (1994) in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo

Degree Purpose: DTh

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The *Low risk application was reviewed* by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **27 May 2020** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the

confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(27 May 2023)**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2021-CHS-41469143** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

Dr. K.J. Malesa
CHS Ethics Chairperson
Email: maleskj@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 4780

Signature : PP

Prof K. Masemola
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 2298

Appendix 2: Permission to carry out research in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo

CATHOLIC   DIOCESE OF MASVINGO

THE SECRETARY, PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL   **Tel. +263-39-263457**
P. O. BOX 1400   **+263-39-263465**
MASVINGO   **Fax. +263-39-263541**
ZIMBABWE

"The family of God united in love: seeking and proclaiming Jesus Christ"

24 January 2020

Dear Priest/ brother/sister/parishioner

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
        MASVINGO-BISHOP MICHAEL BASERA

This letter serves to inform you that Bishop Michael Basera (student number 41469143) has been granted permission to conduct research towards DTh degree with UNISA. The title of the thesis is THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AS FAMILY: IMPLEMENTING THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE AFRICAN SYNOD (1994) IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MASVINGO.

Kindly assist him in the best possible manner.

Yours sincerely

....

Fr. Peter Chimombe
Secretary of the Presbyteral Council

Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Questions

The mission of the Church as family: implementing the ecclesiology of the African Synod (1994) in Masvingo diocese.

Participants: Priests, religious and the laity

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION A: EVANGELISATION AS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

Interview for priests and religious

1. What is the role played by the following families in the proclamation of the Good news?

   (a)   Nuclear

   (b)   Single parent

   (c)   Child-headed

   (d)   Reconstituted

   (e)   Extended

2. Explain the challenges faced by these families in the proclamation of the Good news?

3. How can these challenges be addressed?

Proclamation in the context of priests' formation

4. What kind of formation is needed to enable priests to minister effectively to the above mentioned families?

5. Give an explanation of the challenges presented by these families to formation of priests?

6. How can these challenges be addressed?

Proclamation in the context of Catechists formation

7. How can Catechists enhance the ideal of the Church as family within the following?

   (a)   Nuclear

   (b)   Single parent

   (c)   Child-headed

   (d)   Reconstituted

   (e)   Extended

8. As Catechists what challenges do you face in working with the above families?

9. How do you propose that the above challenges can be addressed?

10. Which of the following terms describe your family?

(a)   Nuclear

(b)   Single parent

(c)   Child-headed

(d)   Reconstituted

(e)   Extended

11. What do you expect from the Church in promoting the life of your family?

12. Are they any programs in place in the Diocese to promote vocations?

13. Explain the challenges faced by your family in promoting vocations.

14. How can these challenges be addressed?

15. In which ways does your family help to make the parish to be a family?

16. How can your family be helped to play a stronger role in the parish?

SECTION B: EVANGELISATION AS INCULTURATION

17. How do African family practices and worldview shape the life of your parish?

18. Which of its practices should the church change to become more fully shaped by the African family?

19. In which ways does the gospel continue to be a challenge to the cultural practices of families?

20. In your view, how can such challenges be addressed?

Appendix 4:   Focus Group Discussion Questions

<u>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS</u>
 <u>INTERVIEWEES: PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS AND THE LAITY</u>
 SECTION A: EVANGELISATION AS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

 1. Which activities in current guilds and associations help to promote proclamation of the Good News in the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo in relation to the following family types at parish, deanery and diocese level?
    (a)   Nuclear
    (b)   Single parent
    (c)   Child-headed
    (d)   Reconstituted
    (e)   Extended
2. What are the achievements of these activities in relation to the above mentioned family types?
3. What are the challenges faced in activities mentioned in question 1?
4. In what ways can the challenges be addressed?
5. What is the role played by schools, hospital/ clinics in shaping the following family types:
    (a)   Nuclear
    (b)   Single parent
    (c)   Child-headed
    (d)   Reconstituted
    (e)   Extended

SECTION B: EVANGELISATION AS INCULTURATION

6. Which cultural aspects can be used to shape Church life in the following family types:

    (a)   Nuclear
    (b)   Single parent
    (c)   Child-headed
    (d)   Reconstituted
    (e)   Extended
7. How does the gospel shape church life in the context of the above family types?

8. What challenges arise in attempts to use culture to shape Church life?

9. In what ways can the above challenges be addressed?

SECTION C: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOSPEL AND CULTURE

10. What is the interrelationship between the gospel and culture in the context of family types?

11. How can the relationship between gospel and culture can be improved in the context of family types?

Appendix 5: List of interviewees

Participant 1, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Don Bosco, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 2, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Don Bosco, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 3, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Don Bosco, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 4, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Don Bosco, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 5, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Don Bosco, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 6, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Don Bosco, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 7, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Theresa Rujeko Parish, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 8, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Theresa Rujeko Parish, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 9, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020, St. Theresa Rujeko Parish, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 10, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Theresa Rujeko Parish, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 11, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Theresa Rujeko Parish, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 12, interviewed by field researcher on 5 June 2020 and 7 October 2020, St. Theresa Rujeko Parish, Masvingo Urban.

Participant 13, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, Ss Peter and Paul, Bondolfi Mission, Semi-Urban.

Participant 14, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, Ss Peter and Paul, Bondolfi Mission, Semi-Urban.

Participant 15, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, Ss Peter and Paul, Bondolfi Mission, Semi-Urban.

Participant 16, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, Ss Peter and Paul, Bondolfi Mission, Semi-Urban.

Participant 17, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, Ss Peter and Paul, Bondolfi Mission, Semi-Urban.

Participant 18, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, Ss Peter and Paul, Bondolfi Mission, Semi-Urban.

Participant 19, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, St. Barbra Mashava, Semi-Urban.

Participant 20, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, St. Barbra Mashava, Semi-Urban.

Participant 21, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, St. Barbra Mashava, Semi-Urban.

Participant 22, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020, and 15 October 2020 St. Barbra Mashava, Semi-Urban.

Participant 23, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, St. Barbra Mashava, Semi-Urban.

Participant 24, interviewed by field researcher on 13 June 2020 and 15 October 2020, St. Barbra Mashava, Semi-Urban.

Participant 25, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika, Rural.

Participant 26, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika, Rural.

Participant 27, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika, Rural.

Participant 28, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika, Rural.

Participant 29, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika, Rural.

Participant 30, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika, Rural.

Participant 31, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Daniel Manyama, Rural.

Participant 32, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Daniel Manyama, Rural.

Participant 33, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Daniel Manyama, Rural.

Participant 34, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Daniel Manyama, Rural.

Participant 35, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Daniel Manyama, Rural.

Participant 36, interviewed by field researcher on 20 June 2020 and 23 October 2020, St. Daniel Manyama, Rural.

Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussion 1 (Urban) – 08 June 2020 and 10 October 2020, Bishop's House, Masvingo.

Focus Group Discussion 2 (Semi-Urban) – 17 June 2020 and 20 October 2020, St. Mary's Nyika Mission, Masvingo.

Focus Group Discussion 3 (Rural) – 23 June 2020 and 28 October 2020, Bondolfi Mission, Masvingo.

Appendix 7: **Pastoral program for Confirmations, Ordinations, Jubilee Celebrations, House Blessing, Anniversary Celebrations and Weddings.**

PASTORAL PROGRAMME 2020

PROGRAMME FOR CONFIRMATIONS, ORDINATIONS, JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS, HOUSE BLESSING, ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND WEDDINGS.

DATE	VENUE	EVENT	TIME
19 September	St. Joseph's Beitbridge Mission	Ordination to Priesthood	9:00 am
21 November	St. Don Bosco Parish(Morning Side)	House Blessing	9:00 am
13 December	St. Joseph's Nemanwa Mission	Priestly Anniversary Celebrations	9:00 am
15 December	St. Barbra Bangala Mission	Confirmation	9:00 am
19 December	St. Peters-Maregedze Area	Jubilee Celebrations	9:00 am
20 December	Ss Peter & Paul Cathedral	Wedding Celebrations	9:00 am

Appendix 8: Map of Dioceses in Zimbabwe

Appendix 9:   Map of Masvingo Catholic Diocese
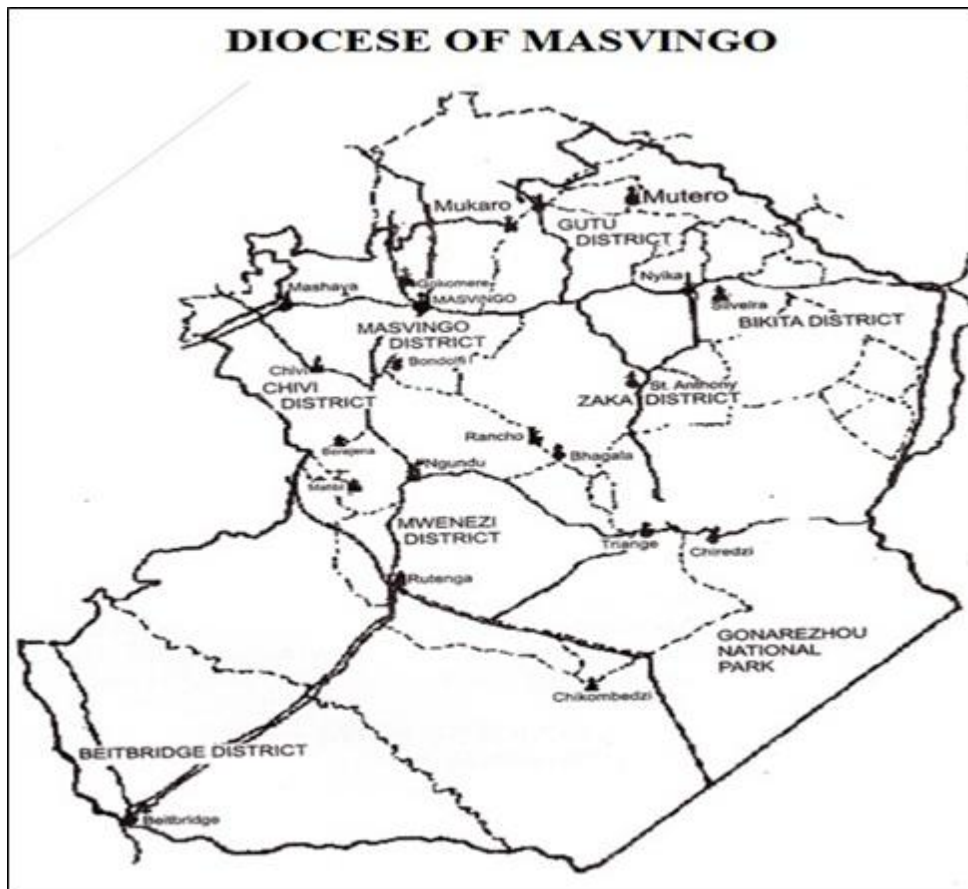
Appendix 10: **Ministry Structures in Masvingo Diocese**

GUILDS		
Guild name	Membership	Most Applicable Family type(s)
Missionary Childhood	Boys and Girls between 3 and 12 years	Child-headed
St. Mary's	Girls from 13 years to mid-20s	Child-headed
St. Simon Peter's	Boys from 13 years to late 20s	Child-headed
St. Monica's	Single mothers	Single parent
Sacred Heart of Jesus	Boys and girls from 13 years and above Unmarried men and women Widowed parents Married men and women	Extended family
Catholic Women's League	Married and Unmarried Women Widowed women	Single parent
St. Joseph's	Married men	Nuclear
St. Anne's	Married women	Nuclear
Hosi YeDenga (Mary Queen of Heaven)	Married men and women	Reconstituted

ASSOCIATIONS		
Name of Association	Membership	Applicable family types
Couples' Association	Married People of all age groups	Nuclear
Catholic Youth Association (CYA)	Boys from 13 years to late 30s girls from 13 years to mid-20s	Child-headed
National Movement of Catholic Students (NMCS)	Tertiary level students	Child-headed
Choirs Association	All age groups including married and unmarried people	Extended

COMMISSIONS	
Commission	Most Applicable Family Type
Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)	Extended
Education Commission	Child-headed
CARITAS	Single parent
Social Communications	Reconstituted
Health Commission	Nuclear
Liturgical Commission	Extended