Jordan University College

THE REFLECTION MEDIUM

AFRICA TOMORROW

Inculturation is a difficult and delicate task, since it raises the question of the Church's fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of cultures.

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Editorial – Human Resource

Dear Readers, we are pleased to present to you issue number 25 of *Africa Tomorrow*. The month and year of this publication are the month of May in the year 2026. We are in the process of updating African Tomorrow in order to correlate sources, references and footnotes within their proper historical position.

We invite you, the reader, to participate with us in a slice of life that corresponds to the beginning and the end of many of our lectures. The slice of life to which I refer is a moment of prayer to exalt the name of God who in his glory and compassion is to be exalted as *great*. It is the moment for the humble acknowledgement of the God who is always with us, the God – Allah – who acts with Compassion and Sustains us as the Creator and Lord of the universe, the God to whom we lift our hearts in praise and thanksgiving, the God whom we invoke as the Sovereign of the Universe and therefore as a Giver of Peace to those who are willing to submit themselves always and everywhere to his All-Holy Will. He is *Al-Malik.*

It is well known that Jordan University (College) has been founded by the Salvatorians, who are Catholic and venerate their Founding Father, Blessed Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, as a Catholic priest and as a holy man. The horizon of his vision and labor knew no boundaries: he and those who live by his charism have known that by the Supreme Will of God they are to introduce peoples of every culture and nation, of every age group and socioeconomic status, of every stage of popularity, influence, health and prosperity, of every circumstance of isolation, misfortune and marginalization to God's sovereign desire to establish all of us in a love that proceeds directly from his Providence. By the Power of His sustaining love for all humanity, we are meant to be brothers and sisters to each other for all eternity. By our holiness, compassion and capacity to forgive we are to "teach all nations".

Blessed Jordan may sometime soon be venerated as a saint. This would place him among such famously holy people as St.

Teresa of Kolkata, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Paul VI and St. John Paul II.

It has become well known throughout Tanzania that at Jordan University College we study together in many, if not most courses, as brothers and sisters. This is true whether we belong to the Islamic Brotherhood, to one of the various Christian denominations, or to the Catholic religion. This seems irrevocably true in the Social Sciences. At the Farewell celebration that we enjoy together each year it is remarkable how many students call their group of colleagues and fellow students as a "family".

In Vol. 20(1-2) (June-December 2018), the Department of Psychology and Counseling was pleased to designate a student who had taken much intellectual initiative, Raniya Muhammed, for the privilege of joining her efforts to those of her supervisor, a Catholic priest. As the primary author, Raniya framed the Background, the Statement of the Problem, the Research Objectives, the Literature Review, Methods of Data Collection, Results and Discussion. The foci of the article were self-image and self-concept.

The secondary author, her supervisor, stood on the sidelines as an observer up to and including the final publication of the article. There Raniya expressed her own intuitive insights into the notions of self-image and self-concept. Her results somewhat surprisingly unearthed an undeniable link between prayer, devotion to the Will of God, and both a positive concept and a positive image of the self.

The point she brought into the spotlight was that those who praise and worship God, surrender themselves to his supreme mercy and submit themselves wholeheartedly to his Sovereign Will are more likely to have a concept and image of the self that exudes a self-confidence that does not easily fade away. The one who perseveres in prayer, fasting, acts of charity and a steadfastly active fidelity to God's will is in truth abiding within the love that always lifts the person up no matter how far that person may have fallen because of the adversities of life. This person receives the seal so to speak of a child treasured by God.

In this current issue of *Africa Tomorrow* of May 2026, the Islamic devotion to children enters into the spotlight, a love for children that dovetails with the Catholic admiration for what God has done in creating the child according to his divine image and likeness. Both Islam and Catholicism embed the mother's heart in a gratitude and humility that energize the mother as she beholds in the countenance of her child God's choice to move the family forward towards eternity.

This is true even in the case of twins or – as is the case of this editor's mother's older sister – the case of triplets. Indeed, we can go even one step farther when we consider the day when the editor of this journal met, one by one, twenty-five children – including sets of twins – that came forth in birth from their single mother and their single father. In viewing the panorama of the mother, the father and their twenty-five children, the editor of *Africa Tomorrow* saw the family's love in action. The place was Tijuana, Mexico.

A member of the Islamic community, Zulfa Yahaya Mkumba, teams up with a Catholic faculty member who as a priest has been blanketing his students with key notions in Human Resource Management. Among these notions are the understanding of organizations. We keep in mind that Human Resource lectures begin and conclude with prayer. The prayer is a moment for worshipping God in his greatness, an invocation of his blessing and a prayer that his Peace be upon us all.

One determinative factor in any professional investigation into Human Resource Management is the nobility of the career that a person can accept as his or her personal destiny, both in this life and in eternity. Scientists with the caliber of Michael Polanyi and psychologists with the depth of insight of Edith Stein have reminded us that one's career finds its origin in God's divine plan for the human person and the grace necessary to put that plan into lifelong action. A career that "matches" so to speak a person's identity is, properly speaking, a vocation – it originates with God, the Creator.

A vocation may blossom forth in many directions. One vocation that finds its origin at the very moment of the creation of the first man and woman is that of motherhood and fatherhood.

Marriage – the joining together of the man and woman into the unity of one flesh – has as its purpose the begetting of children.

When one rescinds from the priority that God seems to have given to marriage and its positioning of men and women as parents, as co-creators of the human race, one also recognizes the many and varied systems around the country and around the world that locate women and men not only within jobs that match their knowledge, skills and abilities, their capacities to be empathic, compassionate, thoughtful, respectful towards supervisors, understanding towards those who are subordinate and trustworthy with colleagues who work in solidarity with each other, but can also remain united in a common encouragement for those who are parents, need help with their families at times of sickness and economic misfortune, and could benefit by support from their colleagues in their attempts to move their families towards their eternal destiny in matters of prayer and religion.

Covering only one semester, the Human Resource course offers what is necessary for entering professional life, pursuing a religious commitment in vows, or aspiring to higher studies. The course helps one to pursue her or his vocation even on the practical level.

The Course Assessment (CA) can seem formidable in comparison with other courses: Completing an Application Form for a Job (10 marks); Curriculum Vitae (10 marks); Practice Job Interview (10 marks); Authenticating Information Received during the First Stages of the Application (10 marks); Midterm (20 marks); Job Description (10 marks); Job Design (10 marks); Analysis of Personality Types that Reduce Organizational Morale (10 marks); Analysis of Organizational Discipline including Benefits, Sanctions and Dismissal (10 marks). A Course Assessment grade of 100 marks is not difficult, mathematically speaking, to transpose into a 40-mark assessment score which at present is the norm for Jordan University (College. All factors included within the CA can help the graduating Psychology and Counseling student not only to decide what to do after graduation, but also how to approach a desirable profession – or postgraduate school – with confidence.

The substantial labor involved in completing the assignments, research and evaluations in this course, however, do not dampen the disposition of the students. Muslims and Christians proceed as a single family. When possible, they go on field trips and will help each other economically so that as many as possible can participate – sometimes it's the lecturers who contribute to the success of the trips. More active members of the psychology club do not shirk their responsibility: they know that what they are doing is worthwhile for their colleagues who become more and more like brothers and sisters.

All study together in preparation for exams – even without phubbing.

Sentus Dikwe, **SDS** contributes to the eternal dimension of Human Resource Management when he places at the forefront of our contemplative attitude the worship of God through images, particularly through icons. His effort as a theologian offers a rebuttal to all those who may attempt to reduce icons to unholy idols to be spurned rather than to true pathways to our incarnate God, Jesus Christ.

Indeed, Dikwe gives us insight into St. John Damascene's exhaustive teaching on icons that, in turn, gives root to what St. Bernard would say in a later century about the visibility of Jesus after his resurrection from the dead. In his visibility after his resurrection, Jesus was a living icon that manifested to all who believe in him, the Father's glory. One way of putting it is like this: "By touching his visible wounds, we touch his invisible glory as God."

When Jesus told St. Thomas the Apostle to touch his wounds, he was inviting Thomas to put aside all doubt that he, Jesus, was the invisible God, the glorious Lord of the universe. This is why St. Thomas' response, "My Lord and my God", is a religious act of adoration for the one God, who is supremely invisible, who nevertheless has chosen to reveal himself in the Visibility of Jesus.

In Jesus, we worship his bodily form; and in doing so, we hope to attain to a contemplative worship of his invisible divine glory.

The Invisibility of the Lord of the universe renders itself visible on a number of occasions. The man born blind receives the gift of healing from Jesus, and within the light of that gift recognizes Jesus

as his Lord and his God. The apostles recognize him as God when he walks upon the water in Mt 14. They fall down and worship Jesus when he enters the boat.

In the same vein, the Samaritan woman who meets and dialogues with Jesus at Jacob's well receives from Jesus a word about the invisible God when Jesus speaks about those who would worship God in spirit and in truth; and with this declaration on the part of Jesus, the Samaritan woman is able to proclaim him in his visibility as the Christ who proceeds as a gift of love from the invisible God. The Samaritan has the deep-felt recognition that the invisible God so loved the world and the Samaritan woman within the visible space of that beloved world that she was rendered capable of worshipping God in spirit and in truth and so by God's love and grace could reach an entryway into eternal life.

The Incarnation is the foundation of all reverence for icons and for the God whose glory may touch the human person through the visible dimension of Jesus by means of icons. When the angels of heaven gather together to proclaim God's glory by means of a song that extends throughout the universe, at the moment of Jesus' birth, they are declaring that in the visibility of the baby shines the invisibility of the God of the universe, both in his supreme glory and in his tender, Fatherly love for the baby.

Within this scene what Zulfa describes in her research assumes a special tone because she studies women who have had children outside of marriage. Even if the woman and/or the man did not cradle themselves within the All-Holy Will of God, God still cradles the child within his eternal choice to give that child a life and a destiny totally immersed in the protection and ever-diffusive goodness of the angels. God continues to prize the child.

Zulfa, however, does not overlook the variables that can sink the person into self-absorption when the person conceives a child outside of marriage. The heart can become an impediment to the teenager or the young adult who wishes to grow towards a horizon that gives the peace and the joy that flow forth with the conviction that she or he can become a blessing to others, not only for the moment but for a lifetime. The heart that does not abide by God's

will can become an impediment to the person who wishes to make of her or his life a gift of love to others.

What Zulfa is bringing to light here is the secularist lifestyle. A secularist lifestyle is the daily routine, the daily constellation of habits that betrays a lack of connection with God. Rather than giving intellectual and moral priority to God's will – to his divine plan for all human beings and for each one in particular; and to his divine plan for the groups and organizations to which human beings belong – the secularist gives intellectual and moral priority to her or his personal will. Groups that give priority to secularism give priority to their group will and purpose without any reference to God. The fundamental questions that motivate a person's decisions and preferences are: What or who encourages me? What or who discourages me?

The secularist attitude governs what are called the "schools of suspicion". These schools of suspicion, in turn, link directly to three forms of self-serving mentality.

Embedding the secularist attitude in the human heart – the schools of suspicion and the consumer mentalities: of what does this embedding consist?

There are those who suspect the human heart: some say that even unconsciously a person's every decision and action is driven *by a profit motive, the desire to gain something.* This person feels human if he or she has the material things she wants: a car, a piece of land, an attractive house that will draw the attention of others. Even when such a person performs acts of charity, this person hopes to receive in return for all of his or her acts of charity expressions of acknowledgement and recognition, physical or emotional compensations that will fortify his or her sense of safety, security, a stress-free and comfortable lifestyle, the all-embracing conviction that one has everything that one needs to live a healthy and happy bodily existence. Karl Marx was a major adherent to this form of materialist determinism.

A person subscribing to materialist determinism has chosen to live by a style referred to today as materialistic consumerism. Materialism entrenches the person in the secularist attitude because the desire for profit replaces the desire to give glory to God. The materialist consumer lives by the mindset, "I am what I have; I am

what I want to have." The materialistic consumer suffers confusion about needs and wants – what she or he thinks is a need is really a want. The "product" that this person craves is a material object – dresses, suits, shirts, trousers, shoes, sandals, perfume, mobile phones, cosmetics, eye makeup, lipstick, computers, cars, cycles, money. This kind of consumer may establish a social network of friends, but friends are just human bridges to further accumulation of those things which are beautiful, fashionable, costly, and time-consuming.

There are those who suspect that the human heart is driven *by instinct*, whereby what motivates the person even unconsciously is *the desire to survive by means of emotionally uplifting relationships* – the antidote to depression – and *enjoy personal gratification* that is typically of a sexual nature. Freud exemplifies the psychic determinism typical of all those who suspect that it is the drive for sensual and emotional gratification that governs the human heart even if the person involved is totally unaware of it.

The instinct determinism that motivates a person to seek self-gratification gives rise to a lifestyle of psychosocial consumerism. The desire for psychosocial gratification embeds a person in the secularist attitude because finding emotional satisfaction tends to replace the desire to serve God no matter how painful acts of service may be. This kind of mindset anchors itself in the shallow conviction, "I am what I feel."

This is the person who feels a great need for social contact with individuals and groups. The temptation to seek a friend – usually of the opposite sex – that one finds attractive, appealing and even emotionally exhilarating pushes the heart to ignore the fact that God is in love with the unwanted, the lonely, the unappealing, the rejected, the unloved, the abandoned … those through whom God draws very close in the distressing disguise of the suffering human being.

Among the lonely among whom God chooses to abide may be the psychosocial consumers themselves who refuse to associate with the lonely. Loneliness can make this person look for romantic relationships that will gratify sexual inclinations and impulses, friendships that are emotionally pleasing. To this person the

"product" is another human being whose physical and social behavior are touching, soothing, peace-giving, tender, gentle, delicate, exciting, uplifting, and sensually stimulating.

There are those who suspect that the human being, even unconsciously, is driven by *the will to power, to control, to move into an advantageous position so as to be able to dominate others*. Nietzsche represents this school of suspicion.

Those driven by the will to power submit to the lifestyle of informational consumerism. The person driven by this mentality is an intellectual secularist: his or her own ideas about the way the world should operate replace their convictions about God's preferences for the world and its operations. The mindset of the informational consumer is: "I am what I know." In today's global system of communication, those who control the flow of information are indeed the persons of power and influence. This mentality is an unbridled, frantic search for a secure personal identity based on the talents and skills one can develop and accumulate, skills by which one can achieve pre-determined professional goals and attain a position of influence and power. This person, too, is capable of establishing a network of friends; but for this person friends are the ones whom this consumer uses to get a job, secure promotions at work, to establish a reputation on the social ladder, and to find respect, admiration, love and acceptance. The "product" that this person craves is expertise in fields that demand intellectual know-how and that respect intellectual achievements. To this person one's university, one's degree, one's professional experience – one's CV – is the most valuable commodity.

The psychologists who have entered the school of suffering humanity pose another possibility: the heart is capable of purity; and the heart finds its purity by earnestly searching for a meaning to life – something/ someone the person is willing to live for; something/ someone the person is willing to die for. Most often, the ultimate source of meaning comes from someone divine, from God; yet there are more proximate goals and meanings that give concrete form to a person's priorities, decisions and everyday

behavior. These goals and meanings harmonize with God's goodness and love, and correspond to his will for the individual and for society. When the human being refrains from giving his or her attention to the schools of suspicion, considers meaningful options and makes thoughtful choices from the options that are available to him or her, he or she enjoys liberation from the shackles of the schools of suspicion and is ready to live with irreplaceable human freedom.

The virtues that one would want to cultivate in order to enter the psychological, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual suffering of those persons who do not yet enjoy this freedom are those of empathy, compassion, thoughtfulness and solidarity. We have already defined these terms: it is necessary to recall that all these virtues are necessary to live according to God's will. Thoughtfulness is the virtue that helps liberate brother, sister and friend from each of the three schools of suspicion, in other words, the consumer mentalities.

Instead of the introspective and retrospective therapies that flow forth from the conviction that a person may be driven by profit, pleasure or power and hence is a victim of determinism, those who enter the school of the pure heart see therapy as the challenge to the human person to go out of the self and strive to find a future that begins now, in the present moment. The path constituted by patterns of thoughtful choices that render the heart pure, and that dynamically orient interpersonal relationships to solidarity – that is to say, to communion in truth and love – is the path of *freedom* that leads to the individual's and the community's participation in the peace and joy of the ever-living God.

The secularist mentality is one that is gravely preoccupied with the desire to receive. If there are moments when one gives a gift to another, it is with the hope that one is going to benefit by this act of giving.

The consumer mentalities identify a person as a secularist because they put the self at the center. One plans for oneself in order to satisfy one's desire to have, to possess, to live a lifestyle by which a person can fulfill all of one's needs for material things and physical well-being. One plans for oneself in order to have just

the right friends and partners that are going to make one feel loved, appreciated, warmly embraced and tenderly coddled. One plans for oneself in order to enjoy the right level of prestige, the right position of honor and influence, the right degree of power and control in the greater social fabric. When the person plans for oneself, one is a secularist. When one proceeds to discern how God wishes him or her to use his or her knowledge, skills, abilities, virtues, energy inputs and all resources available to him or her, the person is free of secularism. The person is giving God the Creator and Sustainer His proper role as planner for the life of each individual.

In order to verify whether one is suffering a consumer mentality, one may ask oneself the following questions: (A) What material things seem to be important for me/my friends/my colleagues to have or possess in order that we feel peaceful? (B) What is the level of knowledge, academic or professional achievement that I must attain in order to feel secure about the future? (C) What groups must I belong to and with what individuals must I establish long-term relationships so that I may feel appreciated, accepted, and loved?

It is worth repeating: *When one proceeds to discern how God wishes him or her to use his or her knowledge, skills, abilities, virtues, energy inputs and all resources available to him or her, the person is free of secularism. The person is giving God the Creator and Sustainer His proper role as the divine planner for the life of each individual.* The persons and groups who are oriented to eternity give intellectual and moral priority to God's will. They focus their preferences and priorities on the fundamental questions: Who am I encouraging today by my words and behavior? Who am I discouraging? These people then proceed to pray to the almighty, all-merciful God for help so that they may be persons of encouragement at all times.

It is an organization oriented towards eternity who will recognize that even the man or woman suffering from a grave mental or emotional disorder, or from a grave personality disorder, can still be a precious human resource for the organization. From a climate of suffering is born a climate of thoughtful love.

An organizational climate of love, empathy, thoughtfulness, compassion and solidarity becomes a very peaceful atmosphere where everyone works with positive feelings of trust, hope, and energetic desire because this organization knows that from the suffering of its members true love and friendship come to birth. This is an atmosphere that embraces the depressed, the discouraged, the lonely, the marginalized, the forgotten and the excluded.

A person who presents to us a Tanzania free of secularism is Brother Polycarp Hongole, who makes his goal the physical, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual formation of an educational system that (a) develops its own economic resources in order to thrive, (b) its own system of self-reliance, and (c) its own modality for interpersonal and interregional sharing according to the contours of solidarity. He premises his contribution on the wisdom of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and Prime Minister Edward M. Sokoine. Both leaders concerned themselves with the tendency of students who were graduating from universities to seek white collar jobs in the urban areas that were ordinarily not available. Their concern was to insert these students thoroughly into the rural areas where they could apply themselves to jobs that were not only self-satisfying but also uplifting for their families and their regions.

If groups are tailoring their vision and their mission according to goals that are ultimately oriented towards winning at all costs, becoming famous with a good reputation, financial success, multiplication of products and services, and continuously improving the quality of both, then they may be inclined to see each human recruit as “human capital”: i.e., the collective value of the capabilities, knowledge, skills, life experiences, and motivation of the organizational workforce. The term “human capital” carries the nuance that if a person’s presence improves the organization’s financial standing, long-term durability, and reputation among the target client population, then the person is an asset; if not, the person is a liability. This is why recently a Nobel prize-winning economist, Gary Becker, emphasized that countries managing human capital better are more likely to have better economic results.

One must be cautious. There is a vital cautionary consideration for those entrusted with the responsibility of actualizing the mission of the school or the organizational vision. All members of the organization need to be aware of the fact that the ultimate orientation of the human being, her or his family, and his or her organization ought to be towards eternity – in other words, each human person is most securely an "asset" when he or she is helping create a social climate that enables others to develop interpersonal relationships according to ethical parameters, especially those of empathy, thoughtfulness, compassion and solidarity. These "soft skill" parameters secure fidelity to ethical norms of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; and they are more capable of sustaining day-to-day fidelity to the organizational vision.

One remembers that empathy is the ability to see and understand a situation not only from one's personal point of view but from the point of view of other people. I see a situation not only with my eyes, but also with their eyes. Thoughtfulness is the ability to appreciate a person's needs (a) for food, clothing and shelter, (b) for social relationships and friendships that grow according to the parameters of truth, mutual respect, dignity, purity and holiness, (c) for a life project that entails certain forms of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual labor, a life project that is invigorated with meaning, purpose, and objective, a life project that serves to bring others and oneself into an ever-expanding confidence in God's mercy and love. Thoughtfulness does not pause at this appreciation of the other's needs; thoughtfulness adopts ways of responding to the other's needs in ways that are creative, insightful and expressive of tenderness and self-sacrifice. Compassion is the ability to suffer with those who suffer. Solidarity is the attitude – not only in word but in behavior – that all are responsible for all.

It becomes noticeable that God has acted in a particular way within human history to bring about the grace of salvation to all that would receive it. By means of his divinely generous love, God manifests his greatness.

For Catholics, this action of making divine grace accessible to all is a resplendent manifestation of God's Will, that is to say, a

divine will that expresses itself this way: “My thirst for you and your salvation is so divinely complete that I intend to love you even more.”

St. Thomas – with the help of St. Dionysius – explains that God in his supreme wisdom by the exercise of his all-powerful Will chose to create the Seraphim as the presence in the angelic world precisely of the love that is so utterly selfless that it always reaches out beyond itself. Here is what he says in ST I, Q. 108, art. 5, the reply to objection 5:

Reply to Objection 5: The name "Seraphim" does not come from charity only, but from the excess of charity, expressed by the word ardor or fire. Hence Dionysius (Coel. Hier. vii) expounds the name "Seraphim" according to the properties of fire, containing an excess of heat. Now in fire we may consider three things. First, the movement, which is upwards and continuous. This signifies that they are borne inflexibly towards God. Secondly, the active force which is "heat," which is not found in fire simply, but exists with a certain sharpness, as being of most penetrating action, and reaching even to the smallest things, and as it were, with superabundant fervor; whereby is signified the action of these angels, exercised powerfully upon those who are subject to them, rousing them to a like fervor, and cleansing them wholly by their heat. Thirdly we consider in fire the quality of clarity, or brightness; which signifies that these angels have in themselves an inextinguishable light, and that they also perfectly enlighten others.

By his eternally selfless, perpetually ardent love, the God whose mercy expresses itself as a thirst without boundaries has taken to himself a human nature and so rendered himself ready to accept the vicissitudes that may afflict in even an excruciating manner the person who lives with hunger, thirst, homelessness, sickness, on the margins of a society that leaves very little space for those who are desolate and forsaken. Our God in Jesus Christ seems to act in quite an unseemly fashion. Nevertheless this is the God in whom we believe; from within his eternal unity with the heavenly Father whose will governs everything that exists by a name and a will that

in Jesus God acts to save the human race from their unrighteous, merciless, impure, greedy, proud, envious and self-absorbed ways by remaining joined to the Father with whom he is one God, and by remaining joined with the one Holy Spirit – the power of God's Love in Person who inspires hearts to receive God and his grace without hesitation, resistance, or crass opposition.

God always acts with compassion: He is the Sustainer. By means of his compassion and sustaining power He exercises Sovereignty throughout the universe.

In a word, God acts kenotically. Kenosis may be interpreted to mean self-emptying. It certainly refers to God's choice to act by the supremacy of a will that requires obedience in the most humiliating and painful of circumstances. For us men, women and children, he has reached into the depths of the human soul and drawn from that soul an aspiration for beauty, truth and goodness. That again is his will for our salvation in action. The threefold aspiration which God in Jesus intends to draw forth from the soul as the grace of salvation may be summarized as one divine intention: he intends us to be merciful as he, God, is merciful.

The humility of God shows its face in the Book of Proverbs.

Bernard Witek, SDS, provides a contextual reading of Prov 15:23 that illustrates the downside of the kind of human resource necessary to aspire to eternal life. If a person preoccupies the self with joys that come forth from his own lackluster sincerity to commend himself to God and his ways, then he/she will prove to be an antithesis to the kind of person dear to God's own heart.

George Ndemo offers us insights that emancipate the African soul from the shackles of colonialism even when those shackles have become interiorized so that they have lost their visibility. There are central notions to African philosophy that accelerate the reconstitution of an identity and so restore to Africans the dignity that God himself has given them. Key examples are:

1. *Reclaiming Identity:* The works of the philosophers spotlighted by Ndemo emphasize the necessity of reclaiming African identity and cultural heritage as foundational to a personal and collective wholehearted grasp of the truth in the most noble sense of the word "truth". The truth is that we are a God-given blessing to each other and to the world according to the spirit of the

interpersonal sense of togetherness manifested in *Ubuntu.* This reclamation is vital for resisting the psychological impact of colonialism, undermining the foothold of the schools of suspicion in African cultures and fostering a sense of pride in one's cultural roots.

2. *Community and Relational Ethics:* Gyekye's focus on community-centered ethics highlights the importance of relationality in African moral thought. This perspective offers valuable lessons for addressing contemporary ethical dilemmas, emphasizing interconnectedness and responsibility towards one another.

3. Desmond Tutu argues that without forgiveness, true reconciliation remains elusive, preventing individuals and communities from moving forward. Despite the pain of the past, Tutu's philosophy instills a sense of hope. He encourages a forward-looking approach that focuses on possibilities for growth, healing, and reconciliation. Tutu promotes restorative justice practices over punitive measures. He believes that addressing past injustices through dialogue and understanding fosters a more just and equitable society. He grounds all of his ethical convictions in his over-riding perception that there is one Author of Truth, God himself, and that he always conducts himself as a Good Shepherd who, because of his love, does not intend to let anyone remain lost on account of their crimes and perversions.`

Octavian O. Hinju, CP and Marcel Mukadi, SDS, touch upon a very delicate situation in the area of Human Resource development. What happens when the person receives a priestly vocation from the Savior of the world and then shirks the responsibilities of that vocation even though God offers him the opportunity to abide always in his love? It is as if the Holy Spirit were looking for a true home in his heart, but his heart was dispersed in too many directions.

Victor M. Biramata, O. Carm and Marcel Mukadi, SDS, on the other hand, move precisely in a non-secularized direction by bringing to the forefront the resurrection of the body. All Human Resource Management reaches its horizon by fixing the interior gaze of the mind, heart and soul on the person's true home – that

home would be heaven where all who have lived by faith in the Body and Blood of Christ, may live, body and soul, together for all eternity in Appreciative Love for what God has done. This indeed brings into focus the true home for everyone in the non-secularist organization who has lived by an ethic of solidarity, togetherness, and trust in the One who raises up our bodies from the dead to usher us forth into an eternal life where there are no regrets or misgivings about the joy that identifies us for who we are.

Thomas R. Mathias and William Ngowi, OFMCap, bring us back to our starting point: the beauty and grandeur of Human Resource Development when the starting point for that development is the advent of a new child into a family. The authors focus on a perplexing moment in the life of the child and his father. The child Isaac trusts his father, but we learn soon enough that Abraham is trusting God even though God's command to sacrifice Isaac seems enshrouded in mystery. Nevertheless, we are reminded in the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11, that Abraham believed in the resurrection of the body so that God would fulfill his promise to Abraham through Isaac.

This article manifests a thoughtful consideration of the suffering that a childless couple may have to endure. It dovetails with the teaching of divine revelation that every married couple, even those who suffer an unexpected turn of events in their married life, remain within the loving Plan of God and so whatever happens in their life, if they accept it as God's Will, is embraceable as the best that can happen.

When we allow the variants of Human Resource Development to grow into a physically, intellectually, emotionally, social, moral, spiritual human person, we bring the organization more and more into the atmosphere of a true family. When the invariants remain – trust in God and complete acceptance of his divine Will – we become more and more suitable for God's family in heaven. One variant, however, must remain firmly in place as a perpetual invariant: the ability to live as one who always forgives.

Kierkegaard suggests that hope inspires within us a gratitude that God is *not* like us. His words: "As a sinner man is separated from God by a yawning qualitative abyss. And obviously God is separated from man by the same yawning qualitative abyss when

He forgives sins. In case it were possible by a converse kind of accommodation to transfer the divine attributes to a human being, in one respect man will never in all eternity come to resemble God, namely, in forgiving sins."[1]

The Editor

[1] S. Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death,* 141. Hence the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1441 states that "only God can forgive sins." And when laying down the directives for the sacrament of reconciliation, the Catechism explains in no. 1448 that the absolution is "God's action through the intervention of the Church."

LAW

Oral Advocacy in Motion Practice: The Judge[1]

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Introduction

All paths in motion practice lead to a judge. Your presentation must be tailored to the particular judge in your case. To connect with the judge, you must personalize your advocacy. All judges have their strengths, idiosyncrasies, opinions, and attitudes that impact how they see the world and how they will see your case. You may have the most logical, eloquent, and compelling argument, but if it does not speak to your judge, you lose.

Persuasion requires the input of the judge. You provide information and arguments to him, and he processes them through his personal filter and comes to his own conclusions. To convince,

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[1] This chapter on "The Judge" from the book *Point Well Made: Oral Advocacy in Motion Practice* is reprinted with the permission of the authors. The book itself was published in 2016 by the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (Boulder, Colorado, USA).

[2] For full profiles of the Honorable Nancy Vaidik and Rebecca Diaz-Bonilla, see the Appendix that follows the Law article by the same authors in *Africa Tomorrow*, Vol. 24 (June-December 2022), 30-31.V

you must understand the judge. Persuasion is not telling a judge how he must rule. Rather, persuasion means understanding the judge's view of your case, meeting the judge where he is, and speaking directly to him so he wants to rule in your favor.

All judges are persuaded by credible attorneys who, with conviction, logically argue their positions. In our presentation of oral advocacy in motion practice, we speak at length about how to gain and maintain your credibility and logically argue your case with conviction. However, when we talk about knowing the judge and tailoring your presentation accordingly, we direct the discussion to characteristics that are peculiar to judges. In particular, we talk about what you should know about the judge and your case – his motivating concerns; his knowledge; his opinions, attitudes, and beliefs; and his relationships with others – and how these factors impact his view of your case. Then we turn to the judge and how he runs his courtroom. Finally, we give you suggestions about how to find and use this knowledge to customize your argument.

1.0 The Judge and His Motivating Concerns

All judges are, to some extent, motivated by fairness, a fear of reversal, a desire for resolution, and the need to be consistent. Speak to one or all of these concerns in your argument or ignore them at your peril. The degree to which you address the judge's concerns depends on how much each of these factors influences your judge.

1.1 Fairness and Justice

Most judges desire to be fair and just in their decisions. Judges want to get it right. They want to leave the courthouse at the end of the day with a sense of satisfaction. They want to be respected for ruling justly. Well-intentioned attorneys and judges often disagree on what should be considered fair in a case. Respectfully convincing the judge of your position and assuming he desires fairness will achieve the best long-term results for you and your client. Do not underestimate how the draw of just and fair result impacts a ruling. Because fairness is subjective, your job is to

convince the judge that a result in your client's favor is the right decision – a decision he can be proud of.

All judges were trained – as all attorneys are – to think logically and follow the law. Certainly your argument should appeal to the judge's analytical mind. Logic and law are an important part of a decision, but in many cases, the law is flexible enough to allow the judge to rule for either party. This is particularly so at a trial court level, where the judge is the sole determiner of the facts and has broad discretion. Law is more than logic; it is about people, right and wrong, good and bad. Link your vision of fairness with the law and the facts so the judge sees it your way.

After making your logical case, follow the logic with an appeal to justice. The blatancy of the appeal depends on the judge and the facts of the case. Some judges are more amenable to these pleas than others. Because appeals to fairness are appeals to the emotions of a judge, tread lightly – do not be careless in your appeals to fairness. No matter the judge, begin by using subtle appeals to fairness. Naked appeals to emotions, before laying a logical foundation, generally backfire, as a judge views sound decisions as reasoned ones, not emotional ones.

Earn the right to preach an emotional point and wait for the right facts to present themselves. One way to earn the right to speak emotionally is to avoid using hyperbole. You are more likely to be believed that "all interrogatories are lacking" if you have previously avoided using "always, never, all, and completely" for emphasis. Over-exaggeration is a dangerous way to make oneself believable. It makes it hard to deliver a believable emotional argument when you have over-inflated most points along the way.

In an indirect manner, appeal to a judge's sense of fairness through your theme. A theme tells the court why your client should win and why it should matter to the court. Usually, the theme speaks to a judge's inner sense of fairness and justice. For example, "Equity does not reward those with unclean hands" and the petitioner has "unclean hands because…" makes clear that a ruling for the petitioner would be unfair. Yet, at the same time, it addresses the very issue the judge must resolve. Likewise, in a discovery dispute using a theme such as "They are asking for too

much, with too little value, at too high a cost," tells the court where justice lies.

Dealing with the facts also gives you an opportunity to appeal delicately to the justice of the case. Tell the facts of your motion in a story from your client's vantage point. Where legitimate, portray your client as the good guy who was wronged because of the actions of the other side. Persuade the judge that a ruling in your favor will resolve the conflict in a just and fair manner.

Near the end of your argument, after you have argued why the law demands a ruling in your favor, argue the fairness for your client. By then, you have shown that reason and logic demand your result and so too does fairness and justice. This plea comes at the end of your presentation before the prayer for relief. The plea, the call to duty, is designed to make the judge proud of his decision and gives him the strength to do the right thing. The call to duty must be delivered with conviction. If you do not believe in your case, neither will the judge. Show you have confidence in your position; your enthusiasm will be contagious (i.e., your enthusiasm may motivate the judge to share your enthusiasm).

1.2 Reversal

Judges generally do not want to be reversed. Some judges disdain reversal, while others are merely annoyed by it. The level of sensitivity depends on a judge's personality or his ambitions. Nevertheless, all judges are sensitive, even if slightly so, to being reversed. You must appeal to that concern. The judge who may be indifferent to reversal may not be persuaded, but it is worth a try, as you are also appealing to the interest of the judge to follow the law. In any event, all appeals to a judge's concern for reversal should be indirect.

No matter what, do not say to the court, "I am going to take you up on appeal if you rule against me."[3] Statements like that only make the judge more resolute in his conviction. Do you imagine

[3] Every experienced trial attorney has one story of how threatening an appeal worked on a judge. The operative word here is "one." With years of experience and the credibility to back it up, the threat may succeed for the veteran, who delivers the message with style and elegance.

after threatening appeal a judge will say, "Oh, I now see the light. You're right. I'll reverse my position"? The odds are highly unlikely. With a challenge like this, the judge usually says, "Go ahead." When you alert him of your intention to appeal, he is usually more careful with his written findings. Remember, a judge is the sole decider of credibility, and your threat may have inspired the judge to find facts unfavorable to your position, making a successful appeal difficult. Threats to appeal are not only unsuccessful, but they also reduce your chances of a reversal on appeal.

How, then, do you appeal to a judge's sensitivity to reversal? If the law is on your side, immerse yourself within the crystal clarity of precedent. Glue yourself to it. Identify quotes of well-respected jurists who support your position. Identify the author of the quote, who may be the judge whom you are addressing. Explain that the case before him harmoniously interlocks from every angle with another case that supports your argument.

Argue the standard of review ever so lightly. Attorneys seldom think in terms of the standard of review on appeal because so few cases are appealed, but judges know the drill. If the appellate court engages in de novo review, a judge is much more likely to be reversed than if the higher court reviews for an abuse of discretion. Argue that what you are asking is within the broad discretion of the judge. Empower the judge, appeal to his pride and discretion. However, if you are pushing the limits of the law, argue that the relief you request is in line with the natural progression of the law or gives the judge a golden opportunity to be a pioneer.

On the other hand, if opposing counsel is asking for relief that may be legally weak, tell the court the relief the other side asks for is without precedent. Explain that no reported case has provided such broad relief. You can discourage the judge from being a pioneer by casting the move in a risky light. Try the alternatives below.

SENSITIVITY TO REVERSAL

“Our case accords completely with Smith.”

“There is nothing new here, the case of…”

“The leading case in this area…”

“The relief the other side asks for is unprecedented.”

“A long line of cases hold that …”

“Judge Learned Hand said of this…”

“This is within your discretion, Your Honor.”

No reported case has ever provided such broad relief.”

1.3 Concern for Time and an Overloaded Docket

All judges in all cases want resolution. You may think that is an overstatement. It is not. Judges are busy; their job is to resolve conflicts in an efficient way. Judges understand this mission. What is more, every year, a judge creates a statistical report distributed to the public that shows the number of cases he closed and the number of cases still pending. All judges are evaluated, in part, by their peers, themselves, and their superiors on these numbers.

This is not to say that a judge favors resolution over justice. In other words, a valid claim will not be dismissed by the judge for the sake of his numbers. But if the claim is meritless, then dispositive motions, such as dismissals or summary judgments, are an attractive avenue for a judge to take. If you are asking the court to grant a dispositive motion, then note for the court that the ruling will end the case.

Even if the motion is not dispositive, show the judge how to use the motion to encourage the parties to settle. Indicate to the court how a ruling in your favor will facilitate settlement. Or show the court that ruling for your opponent will likely result in future headaches for the judge. If you doubt you will prevail on the motion, encourage the court to take a ruling under advisement pending negotiations.

To the judge overly concerned with his congested docket, hit hard on how a ruling for your client may facilitate an ending to the case. Even for the judge unconcerned with time efficiencies, appeal to his interest to resolve the case by showing him the path forward.

APPEALING TO RESOLUTION

"Granting our motion will bring this case closer to resolution – one way or another."

"This motion is dispositive because…"

"A ruling in our favor will substantially narrow the issues."

"A ruling for [insert issue] will bring all parties to the settlement table."

"A ruling for the other side will create an enforcement nightmare."

1.4 Desire for Consistency in Rulings

Judges want to be predictable – some more than others. Predictability is important to attorneys and their ability to advise clients. Attorneys advise businesses and individuals to chart a

course of conduct or avoid another based upon the probability of an outcome. Judges know this. Predictability also makes a judge's life easier because parties settle their cases based upon their expectations of a judge's ruling.

Most judges also want to be internally consistent. Where appropriate, appeal to a judge's desire to issue rulings that are consistent with what he has ruled in the past. Argue that ruling for you will be consistent with the way he ruled in a similar case and therefore gives predictability to the attorneys who appear before him. Also, you may argue that the case is a typical case that should result in a typical ruling – one he has decided in the same manner many times before. Alternatively, if you do not want the court to follow a normal course, argue how atypical this case is based on the facts.

A JUDGE'S MOTIVATING CONCERNS AND YOUR CASE

Reasoned decisions	*Tell why the facts and law compel a win.*
Fairness and justice	*Use themes. Facts in story. Direct appeal to fairness only after the logical argument.*
Fear of reversal	*Glue yourself to precedent. Argue the court's discretion.*
Desire to resolve	*Show the path forward, smooth or bumpy, after the ruling.*
Desire for consistency in rulings	*Refer to prior decisions of the judge consistent with the ruling you want. Or distinguish the case from the norm.*

2.0 A Judge and His Knowledge: A Sliding Scale

What the judge knows when he walks into the courtroom for your hearing will significantly affect your presentation. Talking to a prepared judge is different than talking to one who is ill-prepared. Likewise, discussions with an expert in the law are on a different plane than discussions with a novice.

2.1 Reads Nothing, Little, or Everything

What has your judge read before the hearing? Has he pored over every paper you filed and researched the cases cited? Has he cursorily reviewed your papers? Or has he read nothing? Although you never will really know beforehand, more judges follow a pattern. Find out the judge's habits.

Make an educated guess about the amount of preparation the judge has done. Do not ask the judge if he has read the papers. That question reveals what you think of the judge – he is unprepared. The judge will not appreciate it.

Prepare to dig deeper into the cases and facts with a prepared judge. He does not want you to merely repeat the content of the pleadings. He wants to probe the nuances of the arguments. Even so, do not forego the crucial facts of your case with the well-informed judge. Tell the facts in a story to him. Know the two or three key cases with a full knowledge of every angle involved in each case. Be able to discuss the similarities and dissimilarities with the facts in your case.

The typically ill-prepared judge will probably not disappoint expectations in your case. Prepare a thirty-second fact wrap-up, and dive in without fanfare or fancy word play:

"Here's how we got here, Your Honor…"

"To sum up the course of events so far…"

"As your Honor knows…"

Rely heavily on the magic words found in the cases. To learn auditory information for the first time is difficult for anyone, let alone to absorb the subtleties of a complicated argument in a limited time. Keep your arguments simple and clear.

No judge wants to look stupid. Regardless of whether the judge is prepared, do not talk down to him. Do not mock or belittle a question from the bench. Do not say, "That is not the issue here, the better question is…," or "This is an interesting question, but not relevant here." After a dumb question, do not give the judge a shocked look. Keep your calm, mildly expressive face in place and answer the question as best you can.

Make the judge appear smart by using his words in your argument. When answering a question, weave the judge's words into your answer. Take this exchange, for example:

Judge: Counsel, isn't personal jurisdiction met here?

Counsel: Yes, Your Honor, personal jurisdiction is met here.

Use the judge's words in other parts of your argument as well:

Counsel: As the judge said when discussing this with my colleague, "the issue boils down to the amount of the contacts in the jurisdiction. The contacts here show…"

2.2 Expertise in Area of Law

Your judge may know nothing about the law in your case, may know a moderate amount, or may be an expert in the field. Find out where on the spectrum of knowledge your judge lies.

If the judge is a novice in the area of law, spend some time explaining the law. Tell him the reasons the law is so written. Talk to him about the law; do not lecture. Put your explanation in plain words. Simplify without talking down to him. Do not preface your sentences with, "Let me explain to you…" Do not slow your cadence down to a crawl thinking that the judge needs slowness to capture your point. Do not robotically repeat the same point using the same words. Instead, mimic the most engaging teacher you have seen.

On common issues that are likely to often come before the court, do not waste your time on the basics. Instead, zero in on the flashpoint. For example, on a motion for a preliminary injunction, do not waste time outlining the elements that must be proven by the petitioner. If your strongest argument is that the petitioner is unlikely to succeed on the merits, go directly there.

If a judge is an expert in the area of law, there is no need to begin with the basics. Plunge head first into the conflict. Plan to have a profound discussion on the issue. Plan for more than a superficial conversation about the law and focus on your facts.

Expert in the area of law or not, many judges need help with the practicalities of the case. It may have been a long time since the judge practiced in the area or he may have never practiced in the field. Tell him how it actually works in the real world and the consequences of his ruling. He relies on you for that expertise. Give him your know-how. When done properly, this becomes a way to collaborate with the judge so he joins your cause.

3.0 A Judge and Opinions, Attitudes, and Beliefs

Life experiences result in opinions, attitudes and beliefs.

Two people can see the same homeless person walking down a city street in an entirely different way. One is convinced the person is lazy and an alcoholic, undeserving of a handout. The other is convinced the person is down on his luck, mentally ill, and in need of help. All of us, including judges, view the world through the prism of our experiences.

3.1 Judicial Philosophy

Judges form strong opinions about legal issues. Those opinions may have been formed in law school or may have been formed through practicing law. But judges, like most people, have attitudes and beliefs that shape their judgments. Judges may have been public defenders or prosecutors, sometimes both. They may have practiced either plaintiff's personal injury work or insurance defense. Whatever their prior experience, they developed judicial philosophies.

Judges also have views on procedural matters. Some judges are liberal in discovery, others are not. Some judges are more likely to grant summary judgment, dismissals, or default judgments. Some are generous on attorney fee awards, while others are stingy.

Learn your judge's preferences on the issues of your case. If the judge is prone to agreeing with your position, use it to your advantage without flaunting it. If you are not so lucky, find a common ground and build from there. Begin by starting with the judge's preference on the issue and then hint at the differences posed by your case. For example, if the judge generally grants discovery requests, begin by explaining that most discovery should be granted. With this start, you align yourself with the judge, making it more likely that he will listen to your argument. But, then explain why this is not the typical discovery case.

Consider this sample language:

> *Counsel*: Your Honor, I understand that discovery should be liberal in most instances. Open discovery normally promotes settlement. While discovery should generally be liberal, here disclosure would interfere with confidential attorney-client privilege and work product. In this shareholder-derivative action, the shareholders are demanding the complete written report of the special-litigation

committee. The report was prepared to determine whether to pursue the shareholder's claims. We have provided the report to the shareholders but redacted those portions of the report prepared by the corporation's counsel advising the committee of the likelihood of the suit's success. The material deleted from the report is attorney-client privileged information and work product in preparation of litigation. We've given them what we could.

3.2 Conservative versus Liberal Views

Political views impact judges' decisions. Reams have been written by political scientists about the effect of conservative and liberal beliefs on the decisions of appellate courts and the United States Supreme Court. Less has been printed on the influence on trial court judge. [5] Nevertheless, trial court judges have considerable discretion in determining the facts and applying the law, allowing political views to influence their decision making.

Where a judge lies on the continuum of political views impacts all judgments. In criminal sentencing, admissibility of evidence, and dismissals, the conservative judge is more likely to impose stricter sentences, less likely to suppress the government's evidence, and less likely to dismiss an indictment. Political views impact business cases with liberal judges more likely to hold against a corporation and tending to be more favorable to plaintiffs in personal injury cases and medical malpractice cases.[6]

Judges cross party lines issue by issue. Some may be conservative in criminal cases, yet liberal on cases involving corporations and personal injuries. Determine where your judge stands on the political spectrum regarding your issue. Begin by

[5] For a scholarly work summarizing this issue read, *What's Law Got to Do with It? What Judges Do, Why They Do It, and What's at Stake*, by Charles Gardner Geyh (Stanford: Stanford University Press, Stanford 2011).

[6] Many works do not define liberalism and conservatism in the context of trial judges. Even though USLAW does not define these concepts, its website at uslaw.org classifies every county in each state by liberal, moderate, or conservative benches.

aligning yourself with the judge's view, then either convince the judge that a favorable ruling aligns with his philosophy or gradually pull the judge toward your position. Argue the other factors that influence the judge – such as concern for resolution, reversal, and fairness – hoping that those factors will override the conservative, moderate, or liberal viewpoint.

4.0 A Judge and His Relationships with Others

Knowing a judge's relationships with others and his preconceptions about various types of attorneys is helpful information to know before arguing your motion.

4.1 Elected or Appointed

When standing for election, a judge may be swayed by public opinion on issues before him that are of public concern. Depending on the judge, the time in the cycle of his election, or the issue, the election may or may not have an impact on his decision. An appointed judge can also be influenced in his decision making by the importance of the decision to the party or parties responsible for his appointment.

Be aware of these potential influences. Argue the other interests of the judge aggressively to counterbalance the effect of politics. Justice, fairness, and the rightness of the ruling tug strongly on a judge concerned with political affairs because his future could be at stake.

4.2 The Judge's Alignment with Opposing Counsel or You

Sometimes the judge will have a relationship with the attorney on the other side of the case. Relationships vary – maybe they belong to the same Inn of Court, maybe they practiced law together at one time, maybe they serve on the same board of a charitable organization. Relationships can be worrisome for a number of reasons. First, the attorney knows what is likely to persuade the judge and how to push those buttons. Second, the court likely finds the attorney credible and so the attorney's arguments carry extra weight with the judge. Third, the relationship may engender favoritism – but remember, it may also create animosity. Short of recusal, there is not much you can do but be aware of the relationship. If you show the judge that you are not ruffled by the

relationship and assume he will be fair despite the connection, you will earn the judge's respect.

If you are the attorney with a relationship with the judge, avoid presumptive behavior instigating a familiar tone. You do not want opposing counsel to pine away for recusal, nor do you want to act aloof with a judge who knows you outside the courtroom. To strike the right balance, behave respectfully and confidently and respond in a friendly manner when and if the judge refers to your history together.

Likewise, judges have preconceptions about various types of attorneys. Some judges favor attorneys from large law firms, while others favor attorneys from small firms. Maybe your judge is inclined toward more experienced attorneys over less experienced ones or local counsel over out-of-town counsel. If you are not in a position to add the type of attorney favored by your judge to your team, then buck the stereotype about the type of attorney disfavored by the judge. As the out-of-town attorney, faithfully follow all local rules with alacrity, including any dress code preferences.

THE JUDGE AND THE CASE

Reads everything or reads nothing	*Prepare to dig deep into the issue with the prepared judge. Have a thirty-second fact wrap-up for the ill-prepared. Do not make the judge look stupid.*
Expert in the area or novice	*If an expert, no need for the basics. Delve in the issue. If a novice, spend time explaining the law and its reasons. No lecturing.*
Judicial philosophy	*Identify it. Start with the judge's opinion and then differentiate the case from the norm.*
Conservative or liberal	*Identify it. Convince the judge that ruling aligns with his view. Argue other factors that may influence the ruling.*
Elected vs. appointed	*Recognize the influence. Argue justice, fairness, and the correctness of the ruling in your favor.*
Alignment with you or opposing counsel	*Buck the stereotype the judge has about the type of attorney you are. Consider change of judge or recusal depending on the relationship.*

5.0 The Judge and the Courtroom

Learn the judge's courtroom procedures. Adapt your presentation to the judge's preferences.

5.1 Informal versus Formal

Some judges handle motion hearings very casually. Some even hold the hearings in chambers. If the hearing is held in chambers, the good news is that you will be more relaxed and able to better connect to the judge and his concerns. The bad news is that often these in-chamber discussions are not recorded. For any number of reasons, including the possibility that your client may want to appeal, you need to preserve an accurate record.

If you find yourself in an informal chamber and need to capture the discussion, politely ask for the court reporter to join you or ask that the hearing be held on the record in the courtroom. If you absolutely know you will win and have no intention of appealing, then go with the flow and let the other side take the heat for being record-hungry.

In the courtroom, some judges are very informal while others are formal. You will rarely offend a judge by erring on the side of respectful decorum in delivery and dress. Even if the judge prefers a more casual atmosphere, treat every party with good manners and present yourself in a polished, professional way.[7] The courtroom is the judge's office. Consider yourself a guest in his space and act accordingly.

If the judge conducts formal hearings, follow the protocol. Some judges are taskmasters for decorum in a courtroom. Unwritten and written rules abound about how attorneys are to conduct themselves: be timely; rise when speaking to a judge; deliver your argument behind the podium; address the judge as "Your Honor" or "Judge [insert surname]"; do not disparage opposing counsel; and direct all arguments to the judge, not opposing counsel. If your judge is a stickler for obedience in the courtroom, disobedience can be costly. The judge may believe that you are being disrespectful to him and to the institution. Your credibility will be diminished.

[7] Be careful to dress proportionately to your client or the opposing party. If your client is being sued by a nonprofit, best to avoid wearing the Armani suit and cufflinks to court.

Do not confuse formality with coldness. A more formal judge may be more concerned with efficiency and knows that formality keeps things moving on a motions day. Judges appreciate your adherence to the rules as a sign of respect. Certain judges tolerate a little deviation from the rules, which allows you more flexibility in your argument. For example, some judges permit you to speak even when not called upon. Others allow you to speak beyond your time. In the more laidback court, if the judge is particularly interested in a topic, sur-rebuttal and sur-sur-rebuttal arguments are routine. Often the judge will invite sur-rebuttal, even with only a slight glance in your direction; sometimes not. But if the judge is interested, the conversation may continue well beyond your preordained turn.

The judge who prefers a more casual atmosphere will encourage more small talk, include his clerks in conversation during a proceeding, and readily switch the schedule at a hearing depending on the circumstances. This requires an advocate to be flexible. Even if the judge is more casual in the courtroom, show him respect. For example, the practice may be that the attorneys sit at counsel table while presenting their arguments. Even so, do not address the judge while sitting. Out of respect for the judge and the position, rise to your feet. Standing indicates how serious you are taking the matter. If he asks you to remain seated, then comply.

5.2 Humor

Most judges want to have some fun. An attorney should not think of himself as a stand-up comedian, but it is important to be energetic and entertaining. The next time a judge falls asleep during your motion, consider that the problem may be you. Craft interesting phrases. Be creative in problem-solving. Make exhibits colorful. Have energy in your voice, stressing what is important so the judge will follow your lead. Distinguish yourself from the mass of attorneys he has seen that day. You want the judge to say to himself, “That was well done. This is why I do this for a living.”

Always laugh at a judge’s joke. Laugh with the same intensity the judge does – not more or less. Do not out-humor a judge. A little self-deprecation can be effective, but avoid false humility.

For example, do not pretend to be less intelligent than you are. "Your Honor, I can hardly understand this regulation." Instead: "I can understand the regulation, but the engineer on the ground can't consult with me every time a government change order is needed to complete the electrical project."

There are certain types of humor that should always be avoided. Do not use humor at the expense of the parties or other counsel. Avoid sarcasm in general, and never engage in racial, gender-based, or cultural jokes.

Beyond that, it depends on the judge. If you are before a judge who appreciates the clever exchange between quick-thinking trial attorneys, employ a reasonable amount of taciturn exchanges and humor. But, the humor should not be prearranged; it should come naturally from the circumstances of the hearing. If used properly, humor energizes a bored judge, makes your arguments memorable, and reveals you to be the intelligent and clever person you are.

5.3 The Overworked Motions-Call Judge

Motions-call day means the judge's brain is on overload. The courtroom is full of litigants and their attorneys, patiently (or impatiently) waiting their turn. Numerous hearings are held – one after another, without a break. During the hearing, the judge is listening to your argument while at the same time signing agreements that have been reached by other litigants scheduled that day. In a word: chaos. Get to the point quickly.

5.4 Law Clerk

Many judges have a law clerk who listens to the arguments and helps write the judge's order. Some judges heavily rely on their clerk; others not.

If a writing clerk is present during the hearing and the judge relies on the clerk for research and/or her opinion, you may be speaking to two audiences. During your argument, your eye contact should remain with the judge. You do not want the judge to think that you believe his clerk is more important than he is. But, you may briefly look at the clerk to see her reaction when you release your eye contact from the judge or when the judge is reading. This technique is important of the judge runs a more

casual courtroom and likes to include the clerk. If that is the case, then occasionally make eye contact with the clerk.

When your opponent argues, you will be able to survey both the judge's and clerk's reactions to your opponent's arguments. You may also catch some of the nonverbal communication between them. The nonverbal information you gain may allow you to modify the direction of your argument and craft your rebuttal.

5.5 The Extent of the Judge's Questioning

Your judge may or may not be an active questioner. If the judge is known to be an active questioner, odds are that you will be extensively questioned. Prepare for that reality. On the other hand, if you know the judge to be a silent observer, prepare to monologue.

THE JUDGE AND THE COURTROOM

Formal vs. informal	*Stick to formality even if in an informal setting. Make sure you get your record.*
Decorum in the court	*Stick to the rules with the judge who demands obedience. Energize the courtroom with your enthusiasm. Laugh at the judge's jokes. Sparingly use self-deprecation.*
Motions-call vs. time certain	*The shorter the time and the more chaos, the simpler and more succinct.*
Law clerk	*Depending on if the judge relies on a clerk, you may be speaking to a second audience.*
Questions, yes or no	*If the judge is normally inclined to ask questions, spend time predicting questions and answers. If he does not ask questions, have a bullet point prepared script and watch the judge.*

6.0 The Judge's Personality

The more that you know about a judge, the better you can modify your arguments to speak directly to him. Here are suggestions on how to deal with some common personality traits of a judge.

THE JUDGE'S PERSONALITY

Cautious	*Give the judge courage to rule in your favor. The law is settled; the ruling is fair and right.*
Easy-to-change positions	*Keep the conversation going. Try for the last word. Ask for sur-rebuttal.*
Thinks out loud	*Listen. Adapt your argument to what you hear.*
Processes silently	*Do not be concerned. Watch the judge for nonverbal cues.*

Big picture	*Paint the landscape. Do not drill down to the details.*
Detail oriented	*Make sure you correctly state the facts and law. No errors.*
Industrious	*Help the judge write the order. At the end, tell him what you want and how to get there.*
Creative	*Propose creative solutions.*
Lazy	*Prepare impressive findings of fact and conclusions of law. Track your argument to the proposed order.*
Curt	*Do not let it shake you. He is curt to everyone.*
Ambitious	*Show him that he will not be reversed on appeal by ruling for you – and a ruling for you is within the mainstream.*
Shoots from the hip	*Try to slow down the argument. Slow your pace. Appeal to broad principles of fairness and justice.*

7.0 How Do You Research the Judge?

If you have been in front of the judge numerous times before, you will not have to do much research. Better yet, if you have served as a law clerk for him or for a colleague of his, then you have even more insight. However, if you do not know the judge, use the resources at your disposal to gather information.

Go online. Read the judge's decisions. Look at the court's website and his biography to learn what the judge wants you to know. Search for his name online. You will be surprised what you may learn from a simple internet search this may provide newspaper articles about him, speeches he has made, or his favorite community organizations. You may find out he has ambitions for a higher court or that he is in limbo, awaiting appointment, at the time of your hearing. Go to www.therobingroom.com, a website where attorneys rate and comment on judges. Use the various litigation services available on the internet that profile judges.

Talk to attorneys in your firm of your attorney friends. Send an email advising them that you will be appearing before the judge and asking them if they have any insight into the judge. Write the email in a way that if it is forwarded to the judge you will not be embarrassed. Likewise, ask for a phone call in return, as opposed to an email response.

Talk to former clerks. Make blind calls to attorneys whose names appear on the court's decisions. Research the local bar's ratings of him.

Go to the courtroom. Sit through a proceeding. File a pleading directly with the court staff. Engage in small talk with the court staff about the judge's favored practices.

Go to the judicial qualifications board in your state and get a copy of his statement of economic interest. Each year, a judge must file a report indicating income and gifts he receives from any source. If the judge is elected, go to the local election board and get a copy of his campaign financing report. It will tell you who has contributed to the judge's election campaign.

If your client has the resources available, hire local counsel, someone who has repeatedly been in the court.

8.0 Putting It All Together

To see how to pull all of elements we've discussed in this article into a theoretical strategy for addressing a judge, consider the Elephant, Inc., scenario below. Then study the tables and graphics that follow the narrative to track how we built an effective strategy for facing the judge in this case.

You represent the Green family in their dispute against Elephant, Inc. Elephant, Inc., travels the country staging their renowned Elephant Extravaganza. The Extravaganza is held in a three-ring circus tent, where twenty elephants perform feats never before seen by circus audiences. Unfortunately, the elephants make quite a mess inside and outside the tent. Each morning, afternoon, and evening of a performance, a three-man crew cleans the tent and its surroundings by spraying Elephant-a-Clean on the tent floor, elephant cages, circus rings, and apparatus. Elephant-a-Clean contains toxins known to cause bronchiolitis obliterans and other respiratory illnesses in workers spraying it.

Mayor Green, his wife, and two children – Matthew, age ten, and Charlotte, age eight – attended the 20th of May performance of Elephant Extravaganza in their hometown of Pachydermia, Oregon. The Greens arrived early at the performance and sat ten feet from the center ring in the front row, where approximately five minutes earlier the workers sprayed Elephant-a-Clean. Two days later, both children experienced a dry cough, shortness of breath, and wheezing. One year later, after the children's symptoms

worsened, a lung biopsy established that they developed bronchiolitis obliterans (BO), a disease characterized by progressive decline in pulmonary function.

The Green family hired you to represent them in a personal injury suit. To prove general causation, Dr. Ayre, a prominent toxicologist specializing in airborne toxins, will testify that Elephant-a-Clean is capable of causing the children's injuries. Dr. Ayre bases his opinion on a study that the toxins in Elephant-a-Clean can cause BO in workers repeatedly exposed to it. Extrapolating from those studies, Dr. Ayre opines that because of the children's tender age, even the limited exposure they had to Elephant-a-Clean could cause BO. To prove specific causation, Dr. Smith, the children's pediatrician, will testify that before the circus, the children had no respiratory problems.

Elephant, Inc., moves in limine to exclude Dr. Ayre's opinion, challenging the reliability of his "scientific" method under *Daubert*. Dr. Ayre's opinion is your sole evidence on general causation, and if excluded, the court must grant summary judgment for Elephant, Inc. There is no case in your jurisdiction that allows an expert to extrapolate general causation from a group repeatedly exposed to a toxin to a group with limited exposure. The standard of review is an abuse of discretion.

The judge who will decide this case is an expert in evidence law. He is very sensitive to being reversed, even more so because he stands for re-election later this year. He is known to be liberal and is a member of the same political party as Mayor Green. Before taking the bench, he was a plaintiff's personal injury attorney for fifteen years. He efficiently disposes of his cases but not at the expense of fairness, justice and victims' rights.

You consult a colleague who has argued before him, who tells you that the judge has a keen legal mind and actively questions the attorneys. You are set for an all-day evidentiary hearing. He runs his courtroom in a formal manner and has no law clerk. The judge reads everything, is somewhat of a stickler for the rules, and is moderately deadpan.

A spectrum graph of the judge, his concerns, interests, and proclivities would look like the following.

THE JUDGE – A SPECTRUM GRAPH

Concern for law	---------- X ----------	Concern with fairness and justice
Sensitive to reversal	------ X ----------	Oblivious to reversal
Concerned with case load	---------- X ----------	Unconcerned with case load
Dispositive	------- X ----------	Not dispositive
Formal courtroom	------ X ----------	Informal courtroom
Time certain	------ X ----------	Cattle call
Relies on law clerk	---------- X ---	No law clerks
Asks questions	------ X ----------	Refrains from queries
Stickler for rules	------ X ----------	Easygoing
Serious	---------- X ----------	Fun-loving
Prepared	----- X ----------	Not prepared
In law at issue: expert	----- X ----------	Novice in law at issue
Developed judicial philosophy in area of law	------ X ----------	No developed judicial philosophy in area of law
Concerned about consistency	---------- X ----	Consistency is not a concern
Conservative	---------- X --	Liberal
Elected	------- X ----------	Appointed
Close alignment with opposing attorneys	---------- X ----------	Not aligned with opposing attorneys

TAILORING YOUR PRESENTATION

	PLAINTIFF
Sensitivity to reversal	*Emphasize the clear abuse of discretion standard of review. Evidentiary rulings are generally within the purview of the trial court judge.*
Expert in area of law	*Discuss the history of* Daubert. (Daubert *is intended to liberalize the admission of expert testimony*.)
Concern for fairness	*Make sure that the story is from Matthew's and Charlotte's perspective. Stress the proximity in time from the circus to three days later, when the respiratory problems began. Emphasize the expertise of Dr. Ayre.*
Concern for consistency	*Predictability of law is less important than the right and fair outcome.*
Judicial philosophy on personal injury suits	*Highlight the right for the injured to have a jury trial. Do this after the legal case. The judge understands the stakes with a mention – no need to pull too hard at his heart strings.*
Dispositive motion	*Underscore that this is a dispositive motion. Without causation evidence, the court must grant the defendant's summary judgment.*
Concern for resolution	*Fairness and justice are more important to this judge. Because this is dispositive, concern for efficiencies is probably irrelevant.*
Has read everything – inquires	*Bring legal discussion to platitudes – philosophy behind* Daubert *is for increased admissibility of expert opinion. Show although no case law authorizes extrapolation, given the expertise of Dr. Ayre and the short time between exposure and symptoms, the natural progression of the law would admit the testimony.*
Formal courtroom/ serious demeanor	*Follow all protocols. Formal is good because we need a record. Display the seriousness of this motion with your tone.*
Elected	*The judge will expect this to make the newspaper because of the mayor's involvement. Because this is an election year and the judge is the same political party as the mayor, it may have an impact. Behind the scenes, manage public relations tactfully. To the judge, make no mention of the connection.*

	DEFENDANT
Sensitivity to reversal	*Stress that no case has ever allowed extrapolation of one study to a dissimilar factual situation. This is not reliable science. What the plaintiff asks is unprecedented in this or any jurisdiction. Cite cases where trial courts have been reversed on* Daubert *rulings to show abuse of discretion is not a license to err.*
Expert in area of law	*Go back to Federal Rule of Evidence 702 and its demand that the testimony must be the product of reliable scientific principles and methods.*[8] *Just because Dr. Ayre says it is so is not enough. Highlight the facts of Dr. Ayre's method – not the facts of the injury. Cite cases where the court has explained reliable scientific methodology. Argue the facts of those cases. Show that none use extrapolation. Get into the weeds of the law.*
Concern for fairness	*Acknowledge that the sympathies lie with the children, but the ruling must be based on the law. Keep bringing the court back to the law.*
Judicial philosophy on personal injury suits	
	Understand the tragedy of the children, but it is not our fault. Give him the courage to do his duty. If causation could be found with expert testimony, surely able plaintiff's counsel would find the expert. No one exists.
Dispositive motion	*Yes, but must follow the law. We are not at summary judgement stage yet. This motion is narrow; we must stick to the issues presently before the court.*
Concern for resolution	*Have a settlement number ready to offer the judge and opposing counsel. Emphasize that the plaintiff is unlikely to prevail at a jury trial and as a matter of law.*
Has read everything – queries	*Choose two to three cases that highlight what is needed for a truly scientific method. Know the facts. Contrast the facts with Dr. Ayer's method.*
Formal courtroom/ sober demeanor	
	Follow protocols. No humor whatsoever. This is serious business.
Elected	*Include a call to duty after the logical argument recognizing that it is a tough case because*

[8] The reference number for the Rules of Evidence obviously differs from country to country (ed.).

children are involved. It particularly strikes close to home because the mayor's children are involved, but exclusion is the right decision.

EXERCISE

Plan your next motion hearing. Fill out the spectrum graph. Decide how to tailor your argument to the judge.

THE JUDGE – A SPECTRUM GRAPH

Concern for law	« ----------»	Concern with fairness and justice
Sensitive to reversal	« ----------»	Oblivious to reversal
Concerned with case load	«----------»	Unconcerned with case load
Dispositive	«----------»	Not dispositive
Formal courtroom	«----------»	Informal courtroom
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Serious	«----------»	Fun-loving
Prepared	«----------»	Not prepared
In law at issue: expert	«----------»	Novice in law at issue
Developed judicial philosophy in area of law	«----------»	No developed judicial philosophy in area of law
Concerned about consistency	«----------»	Consistency is not a concern
Conservative	«----------»	Liberal
Elected	«----------»	Appointed
Close alignment with opposing attorneys	«----------»	Not aligned with opposing attorneys

EDUCATION/PSYCHOLOGY

Education and Self-Reliance: Julius K. Nyerere's and Edward M. Sokoine's Contributions

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Introduction

The year 2024 was special in Tanzania. There were events, for example, that became occasions for celebrating those individuals who were instrumental in giving our nation a backbone and so were vital in planting the country within the fertile soil of cultural and moral integrity and providing it with wellsprings for that integrity to ensure her growth in the virtue of self-reliance.

(1) It was the twenty-fifth (25th) year since the death of our beloved Father of the Nation, His Excellency Julius Kambarage Nyerere.

(2) It was the fortieth (40th) year since the death of our beloved Edward M. Sokoine, who served as the Minister and Prime Minister in the Government of His Excellency Mwalimu Nyerere.

Kasimila (2012:22) presents one of the statements of Mwalimu Nyerere concerning education that he (i.e., Kasimila) believed to be fitting for Tanzania. "We must train our youth to live in the villages where they have to strive for a better life and contribute to our economic development." He reminds us that Nyerere emphasized technical and agricultural training. These two types of education were suitable for the Tanzanian society. If enough people received this kind of training, community-based development

could be enhanced. Indeed, that was the position espoused by Sokoine as the nation's Prime Minister.

1.0 Education for Self-Reliance

Defining education for self-reliance, Thung'u and his co-authors (2008:23) observe:

> Education for Self-Reliance was propounded by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. The underpinning principle of this philosophy is that education should produce an individual who has acquired not only knowledge but also social and mental attitudes that will help the individual to be self-sufficient after leaving school. Education for self-reliance should also integrate the pupils with the local community so that they can learn relevant skills from other community members.

Those familiar with Pope St. John Paul II's elucidation of the virtue of solidarity will recognize the kinship in thought patterns that motivate Nyerere's notion of cooperative learning, particularly in the domain of relevant skills, and those that motivate John Paul's cardinal notion that the society that advances with a true spirit of self-reliance is the one where "all are responsible for all". To appreciate the links that interlock these streams of thought, one may profitably read the concluding pages of K. Wojtyla, *The Acting Person,* and the thorough description of solidarity that John Paul offers in his encyclical letter *On Social Concern*. It is not difficult to perceive an intuitive and well-reasoned integration of everything that concerns self-reliance in Archbishop Desmond Tutu's thoughtful explanation of *ubuntu* in his book *No Future without Forgiveness.*

Thung'u (2008:24) goes on:

> In his Arusha Declaration of 1967, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere advocated 'Education for Self-Reliance.' This Declaration proclaimed war on poverty, oppression and dependency on foreign aid. Nyerere stressed that the country's development depended on wise use of the land, effective leadership and intelligent application of individual effort.

Similarly, Mwakajinga (2013:40) states that Nyerere saw the education inherited from the colonialists as enslaving and oriented

to interests and norms that came principally from western and central Europe. His points of emphasis:

(A) It was basically elitist in nature, catering to the needs and interests of a very small proportion of those who manage to enter the hierarchical pyramid of formal schooling.

(B) It was divorcing its participants from the society for which they are supposed to be trained.

(C) It was breeding the notion that education is synonymous with formal schooling, and people are judged and employed on the basis of their ability to pass examinations and acquire paper qualifications.

(D) The system was not involving its students in productive works. Such a situation was depriving society of a much-needed contribution from students in order to increase the national economic output. The situation seemed to be breeding an attitude of contempt for manual work on the part of the students.

1.1 Reasons for which Nyerere Introduced Education for Self-Reliance

Mwakajinga (2013:40) suggests that it is his personal vision that Nyerere is proposing in his directive on the Education for Self-Reliance. This was to be a form of education intended to counteract the weaknesses engendered by the colonial system. Nyerere envisioned a system which had to address the realities of life in Tanzania. Thus, the following changes seem to accord with what he was proposing:

(A) Education had to be oriented to rural life.

(B) Teachers and students together had to engage in productive activities; and students had to participate in the planning and decision-making processes for organizing those activities.

(C) Productive work had to become an integral part of the school curriculum and provide a meaningful learning experience through the integration of theory and practice.

(D) The importance of examinations had to be downgraded.

(E) Children were to start school at the age of seven so that they would be old enough and sufficiently mature enough to engage in

self-reliant and productive work when they completed their educational training.

(F) Primary education had to be complete in itself rather than merely serving as a steppingstone to higher education.

(G) Students had to grow in self-confidence, moral integrity, fidelity to religious principles, the ability to cooperate in a spirit of solidarity, and the facility to develop critical and inquiring minds.

These seven proposed changes corresponded to the seven reasons for renovating the system that were specified by Thung'u and his colleagues (2008:24). They harmonized, in turn, with the seven foci with which Umwalimu Nyerere introduced his philosophy of education. To mention three of them: (i) to dissolve dependence of Tanzania's development on foreign assistance and control; (ii) to inculcate a sense of responsibility, moral and spiritual integrity and solidarity towards the society on the part of the youth; and (iii) to solve the problem of unemployment for school dropouts and for university graduates.

1.2 Avenues for Introducing the Philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance

After specifying the reasons that led Mwalimu Nyerere to introduce Education for Self-Reliance, Thung'u and his coworkers (2008:24) identify twelve avenues by which the philosophy was introduced.

To highlight a few: (I) Ujamaa schools were established and through them, education became a community responsibility. In that way children and members of the community learned from each other in a spirit of mutual cooperation. (II) Students engaged themselves in learning and practicing agriculture on the school farms. (III) Each school, especially if it was a secondary school, had to contribute to its own upkeep. To achieve this, it had to have a farm to grow its own food and craft workshop to generate income. (IV) Teaching methods emphasized learning by experimentation, active participation and experience in real-life situations. It was understood that all must practice at all times moral integrity, fidelity to religious principles, and the spirit of togetherness characterized by *ubuntu*.

Such methods of imparting knowledge, skills, competence, values, attitudes and personal integrity are commended by many scholars in education. For instance, Eng (2017:178) insists that to help students succeed is the main purpose of effective teaching. Here, of course, he is not speaking necessarily of material, social or rise-in-status success, but is referring importantly to success in virtue formation.

That is not a surprising position for Eng since the integrity with which he conducts his marketing ventures seems to occupy him as much as his teaching career. He stresses the kind of learning that would make people positive animators of influence in the society. To achieve that, Eng highlights five issues that should concern a teacher.

One of them is: student participation. A Chinese proverb cited by Rutherford (2008) presents an expression that captures the essence of what participation means: *Tell me I forget; show me I remember; involve me I understand!* Indeed, we don't teach so that learners may listen absent-mindedly to what a teacher is saying, or commit to rote memory without exploring the nuances of what they are supposed to remember. We teach, on the other hand, to that they may understand, cultivate insights into the matters learned, perceive oversights, face the implications of inverse insights and enjoy the ever-expansive knowledge of complementary insights.

That is what effective teaching and learning means. Learners should be given a chance to translate into action what they learn through insightful reasoning; they should be taught how to provide good food for themselves and their families – both materially and spiritually. Such values have been lacking in the kind of education we have been providing our children and adolescents. It was to adopt a system where such values would flourish that became a primary objective both for the late Mwalimu Nyerere and Prime Minister Sokoine.

2.0 Reinforcing the Philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance: Compulsory National Service

Apparently, reinforcing the envisaged philosophy of education for self-reliance needed more ways than the twelve ways referred

to by Thung'u *et al* (2008:24). One such additional way was that of the National Service (NS). Indeed, it seemed to accomplish its end. All teachers who passed through the Compulsory National Service received a commendable formation in relevant skill sets, and in social, intellectual, practical and moral uprightness. Once dispatched to schools, those teachers translated the philosophy of education for self-reliance into their daily biological, aesthetic, intellectual and dramatic patterns of experience.

Establishment: National Service was established on 10th July 1963 emanating from the ideas of the Father of the Nation, the late President Julius K Nyerere, who once said: *National Service is the demand made by the Nation on youth and youth response in fulfilling their duty in building the Nation*.

Legal Mandate: National Service was operating under a set of laws passed by the Parliament 'National Service Act No. 16 of 1964 (Re 2002)'.

Purpose: The purposes of Compulsory National Service were: (i) to grapple with the grave shortcomings of the colonial legacy; (ii) to overcome ethnic and social cleavage; (iii) to imbue youth with moral and spiritual integrity with a concentrated focus on patriotism; and (iv) to impart skills relevant to Tanzanian culture.

The Vision: Through the National Service, Tanzania was envisaged to be a country whose youth are well nurtured so as to constitute a productive part of a society which enjoys a virtuous form of living that prioritizes: (i) confidence (ii) self-discipline (iii) patriotism (i.e., a love and fidelity to country that expresses itself in action more than in words) (iv) brotherhood (v) co-operation in the spirit of solidarity (vi) a sense of responsibility that is not afraid of accountability.

Mission: The mission of National Service was mainly to equip Tanzanian youth with the requisite knowledge, skills and cultural values which could enable them to contribute positively to socio-economic development, to the defense and security of the nation, and to the moral and spiritual uprightness of every citizen and every family.

Objective: National Service had mainly two objectives: (i) to build national unity with a view to the God-given dignity of each individual and (ii) to carry out economic activity consistent with the dignity of each person, particularly, the neediest among us.

Core Values: National Service was believed and designed to impart: (i) proficiency in the sense of speedy execution of tasks; (ii) discipline; (iii) the resolution on the part of the youth to have a willing obedience to all directives that mirrored the wise and just policies of those issuing them; (iv) integrity; (v) high quality of honest and strong moral principles; (vi) diligence; (vii) execution of duties thoughtfully and thoroughly; (viii) high standards of quality in the daily application of knowledge, skills and abilities to patterns of experience; (ix) the thoughtful use of money in goods produced and services provided.

Indeed, there appeared to be an evident fidelity – at least in the short term – to the values just enumerated in the lifestyles of the graduates who went through the Compulsory National Service. To mention a few graduates: the late Edward Moringe Sokoine, Rashid Mfaume Kawawa and the late John Pombe Magufuli.

3.0 How Nyerere and Moringe Linked Education to Self-Reliance

Mwalimu Nyerere viewed education as a means to liberate Tanzanians mentally, socially and economically from those that had shackled them to a colonialist mentality that had its origins in northern and western Europe. In May 1974, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation organized a seminar that transpired in Dar es Salaam with a focus of interest on education and training and alternatives available for the purpose of attaining educational goals in African countries. During the course of that seminar, Nyerere emphasized that education has to liberate both the mind and the body of the people whom the educators are forming so that they may live freely according to the dignity God himself has given them.

Education, therefore, is a co-laboring with God so that those educated become human beings who are aware of the potential God has given them and thereby grow into positive, life-enhancing relationships with God, with themselves, their neighbors and their

environment. Education, therefore, is to enable the youth to throw off the impediments to freedom which restrict their full physical, mental, moral and spiritual development. It is thus a matter of attitudes, convictions and skills.

Nyerere emphasized that *education is incomplete if it only enables man to be a rhetorician and a diplomat but does not teach him how to provide good food – physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual – for himself and his family.* It is equally incomplete and counterproductive if it merely teaches man how to be an efficient tool user and tool maker but neglects his personality and his relationship with his fellow human beings.

In order to have a meaningful understanding of the notion of 'education', in 1967 Nyerere defined the purpose of education: to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of one's society, and to prepare the young people for their future membership in the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development.

3.1 Edward Moringe Sokoine

The late Sokoine served two terms as Prime Minister, from 1977 to 1980 and again from 1983 to 1984. He died at the age of 45 in a road accident on 12 April 1984, when his car collided with another vehicle on the road from Dodoma to Dar es Salaam.

In the year 2024 on the celebration to mark the fortieth anniversary since Sokoine's death, the President then in office described the late Sokoine as a hardworking and dedicated individual. He is remembered as a strong leader during times of economic hardship in Tanzania, exacerbated by the oil crisis of the 1970s, the breakup of the East African Community in 1977 and the Kagera War of 1978/79 against the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin Dada.

Sokoine championed a government crackdown on economic saboteurs who hoarded essential commodities for profit during the economic crisis and period of poor local production. He was committed to agricultural development, which aimed to address the hunger crisis that prevailed in the early 1980s**.** The impact of Sokoine's contributions is further evident in the establishment of

the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), founded in 1984 and named in his honor.

During his leadership, Edward M. Sokoine – as the Prime Minister – felt concerned about the tendency of many capable and energetic youth to migrate to urban centers where employment opportunities are scarce. Consequently, they end up roaming aimlessly and involving themselves in illegal activities. As a reaction to what was happening, he introduced a movement entitled NGUVU KAZI (a Swahili term that in English means "manpower"). His aim was to encourage all jobless youth to displace themselves from urban centers to rural centers.

Such a movement aimed at decongesting urban centers while adding to the labor force in rural areas where there were farmlands. The principle at work was that of self-employment: those youth who had been jobless could employ themselves and contribute to the economy of the country, particularly adding to food production and security. In fact, he was trying to implement the mind of his boss, his President, who emphasized that, "We must train our youth to live in the villages where they have to strive for a better life and contribute to our economic development" (Kasimila, 2012:22). The President himself 'walked the talk'. That is, during his short break he went back to his home village (Butiama), where he worked on his farm.

Indeed, in his role as leader, Sokoine was the model: he was the man of action; he was corruption-free; accountable; intolerant towards capricious and whimsical thinking; tough on corruption and misappropriation of public and/or government wealth.

In the conjectures and discussions of 1984 concerning who could be the potential successor of Mwalimu Nyerere, Sokoine's name drew the most attention. His untimely death by road accident was greatly mourned by Tanzanians, who had invested their hopes in him. He has been very much remembered: several establishments are named after him. Those include the Sokoine University for Agriculture.

4.0 Some Declarations Clarifying Nyerere's Self-Reliance Philosophy

4.1 Iringa Resolution of 1972

It was in 1972 when His Excellency, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, issued the Iringa Declaration, a public pronouncement that carried the motto, 'Politics Means Agriculture'. He made this motto-like assertion after explaining a philosophy of development that hinged on four basics: People, Land, Good Policy and Good Leadership. These statements of agenda carried the implication that manpower and land are indispensable for agriculture. By then, agriculture was employing seventy-five per cent of the Tanzanian population, most of whom were peasants.

According to Kasimila (2012:40), the Iringa Resolution was founded upon the understanding that agriculture is and always will be the main provider of food for the nation and a main source for exports and an influx of foreign income.

4.2 Musoma Declaration of 1974

In 1974, Mwalimu Nyerere issued the Musoma Declaration, the pronouncement that emphasized universal primary education, cost sharing for higher education and volunteering in public national projects (Compulsory National Service) before enrolling in university education. Such a system of education was meant to liberate a person mentally and impart the spirit of valuing work without sacrificing one's mental or moral integrity. Consequently, manual work was part and parcel of training at all learning institutions, including secondary schools, but with the accent on the dignity of the laborers. No one was deemed to be a slave or a mere tool for the agricultural development of the country.

5.0 Shelving the Philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance and its Corollary, the Institution of a Compulsory National Service

The time came when education lapsed into a malaise: self-reliance and national service seemed to have lost their devotees.

Education seemed more and more to resemble that of the colonial system. Consequently, Tanzania groomed graduates who harbored negative perceptions and attitudes towards economic activities - manual works were an example – and they seemed incapable of performing economic activities that the nation's leaders had espoused as important for the nation's development. Mwakajinga (2013:40) seemed to have harbored a negative perception of the graduates with negative perceptions. He claimed that they were, in general, elitist. On account of their attitudes, they could not contribute to national economic output; they had contempt for manual work.

That was a point of emphasis by the *Guardian* newspaper of 29 Feb. 2016 which came with an article entitled: '*How Education and its Technical Sector Can Encourage Economic Development.*' The writer of the article was Masozi Nyirenda. In the article Nyirenda analyzed the current situation of education and its negative impact on the economy.

Nyirenda noted that education in general terminology is simply understood to be a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or research. Some scholars see education as an experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts. Ordinarily the parents of the children would agree with this understanding of education. Education is very important and vital to the development of an individual and the society; education is a wheel which drives the economy. So, when the educational system is weak, it greatly affects the economy of an individual, of one's family, and that of the society.

Furthermore, contextualizing it within the current situation of the economy in the country, the writer admitted that the rate of unemployment in Tanzania is higher than that of the adult population. Then he admitted that the major hurdle for the youth of this country is how to make the transition from formal schools to fit well into the job market.

It is a fact that the number of learning institutions and the enrolment have tremendously improved. Ultimately, in each year

Tanzania gets a good number of graduates from all those educational institutions. But what comes out clearly is that most of those graduates lack knowledge and skills for the many new jobs created by a rapidly growing economy.

Nyirenda's observation is seconded by Mhando (2012:184) who has formulated some observations on the situation of education in Tanzania after Mwalimu Nyerere. That is, education standards have declined leading to the blaming game among the sections of the public.

The blaming game has become a vicious circle that needs to be broken. For instance: (A) Universities are blaming the high schools that they are no longer producing strong candidates for higher learning. (B) High school veteran teachers are blaming the universities for producing graduates who are unqualified as professionals ready to cope with the day-to-day challenges that schools, at all levels, offer. (C) Secondary schools are blaming primary schools for producing semi-illiterate candidates for entry into secondary education. (D) Primary schools are blaming the teachers' colleges for producing incompetent teachers. (E) Teachers' colleges are blaming secondary schools for giving them candidates who are so weak in their teaching subjects that as they enter the colleges, they have to go over the secondary school content before learning how to teach. (F) Again, the teachers' colleges blame the universities for bringing out graduates that are not properly prepared to become teacher educators.

Those who are good in following news in mass media like radio, TV, newspapers... would all agree with me that schools, i.e., the education sector are some of the areas which get good coverage in papers in Tanzania and outside. That is, almost every day there is something written or commented upon about the education sector. For instance, the *Citizen* of 8 Jan. 2013 presented an article entitled: "We Can't Afford to be Casual on Education". Even without reading the details of that article one can guess the sense and sentiment of the writer who sounds greatly concerned with the deteriorating system of education – education that does not impart the skills and competencies that it is supposed to impart.

Conclusion

The present article has affirmed that the education we adopted in the wake of the government policies under two greatly celebrated Tanzanian leaders, the President, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere and Prime Minister Edward M. Sokoine, were not efficaciously implemented – to a great extent there was a skills gap on both the part of the students and on the part of their teachers:

One: For most graduates of today, education only enables them to be rhetoricians and diplomats, but it does not teach them how to provide good food for themselves and their families. Most graduates today are mere jobseekers: they cannot employ themselves but rather seek to cling to the possibilities of white collar jobs that are generally not available.

Two: Most graduates today would like to be in urban centers. What often motivates them is the possibility that the skills, knowledge and abilities that they developed during their years in the university can translate into a good job in the urban area. Disappointments may ensue because such jobs are hard to find in the urban centers.

These same graduates do not prioritize rural areas where there may be job opportunities related to the agricultural use of land and to the need for skilled teachers who may be in short supply in the rural areas.

Currently, there are changes that aim at making the education policy more effective. The education policy brings into the limelight those areas of study and research within which graduates have skills that make them productive and competitive. This policy aims to be practical for family living: it helps the students understand that whatever they choose for their livelihood, they should know how to provide good food for themselves and their families. This is the many-faceted approach to education that the late President Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere and the late Prime Minister Edward M. Sokoine emphasized.

To put it succinctly, education in Tanzania is one of integrity – physical, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual integrity. May the God who is the source and summit of all integrity bless us. Amen.

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PSYCHOLOGY/ETHICS

Assessment of the Factors that Occasion Teenage Pregnancies at the Secondary School Level: A Case Study in Morogoro

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of the present study were to determine the principal motivating factors for teenage pregnancy outside of a legally recognizable marriage. Special attention was given to the respondents' perception of a sense of shame and loss of dignity on the part of women pregnant outside of marriage. The research also aimed to identify possible solutions for teenage pregnancies among girls in the study area.

Fifty respondents were chosen according to a purposive sampling technique.

The results – obtained through written questionnaires, open-ended interviews and systematic observation – revealed that teenagers may often place the blame for their pregnancies on poverty; ignorance of sexually ethical behavior occasioned by an inadequate level of education; drug and alcohol abuse; sexual violence; absenteeism of parents; peer pressure; and cultural norms

that undermine a young woman's dignity. Interviews revealed a poor ethical understanding of why God prohibits contraceptives; a failure to grasp the connection between one's dignity as a woman and one's potential to be a mother; ignorance of what is necessary for reproductive health; early marriages that do not meet standards for emotional, moral and spiritual maturity; and low access to family services that respect moral norms.

Systematic observation techniques in each personal interview brought to the surface the desire to cover up concomitant feelings of shame and loss of dignity. Respondents communicated their clear perception that even if they had considered contraceptives or other plausible means of hiding their choice to refrain from linking sexual relations with the responsibility of motherhood, they would have felt that they were betraying themselves as women capable of goodness and love, especially towards children.

It was clear from the research that both the women and the men involved needed moral training. Even though the Islamic understanding of God differs from that of Christianity, it is the one true God that all the adherents to these religions worship. Islam and Christianity both honor the woman as the heart of the family: this is a gift from God, i.e., from Allah, who gives the woman the ability to love wholeheartedly no matter how undeserving her husband or her children may seem to be.

Our research brought to light the surprising result that only five out of the fifty respondents admitted that defying the will of Allah is a problem when it comes to engaging in avoidable sexual misconduct. In both Christianity and Islam, it is gravely immoral to engage in acts of sexual relations where a man and a woman hanker after feelings of gratification with each other and grudgingly accept the ensuing pregnancies as major inconveniences in life.

Pregnancy prevention strategies are recommended based on the results. The strategies focus on improving female literacy rate and the establishment of adolescent friendly clinics where pubescent teens can learn proper strategies for dealing with the sexual abuse that is often interwoven with the immorality of intercourse outside of marriage and the unwitting submission to emotional motives that

are riddled with desires for sexual satisfaction or with desires to please the male, whether it is out of fear or out of apparent need for economic and emotional security.

1.0 Introduction

In Tanzania, school pregnancy is a term widely used when referring to teenage pregnancy within school settings when the pregnancy occurs outside of a legally recognizable marriage. It is important to note that in the Catholic Church by virtue of its Canon Law (1083§.1), a fourteen-year-old girl may marry if she freely chooses to do so. In the Q'uran An-Nisa 6, a girl of "marriageable age" (almost universally recognized to be the age of puberty) and demonstrating clear evidence of both the psychological and intellectual maturity needed to make contracts and handle money and property responsibly, may marry if she freely chooses to do so. Ordinarily, this is either 15 or 16 years of age.

Our research, on the other hand, refers to pregnancies among adolescents who are still in school, specifically in primary or secondary schools, and are not legally married. These are to be distinguished from teens who may be legally married or are situated outside a school setting. More specifically, this research analyzes the causes of teenage pregnancy in Tanzania with a focus on adolescent girls who are in secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal at Nane Nane ward and are not living in regular marriage situations.

1.1 Background of the Study

On 10 April 2024, the World Health Organization published a Fact Sheet that presented the following data (whenever organizations associated with WHO or with such UN agencies as the UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund) speak of "adolescents", they are referring specifically to the age group of 15–19-year-old teenagers):

(A) As of 2019, the most reliable accumulations of data from around the world indicate that among adolescents aged 15–19 years in low- and middle-income countries, there were more or less 21 million pregnancies each year. Fifty percent of respondents – whose degree of candor could be

doubted – reported that their pregnancies were unintended. If this figure is correct, there would have resulted 12 million births that were not intended.

(B) If the respondents mentioned in (A) were reporting their state of mind candidly, 55% of the unintended pregnancies among adolescent girls aged 15–19 years resulted in abortions. Since the human body was not designed by Allah, the Creator, to serve as a killing field, these abortions, like all abortions, were unsafe.

(C) Adolescent pregnancy tends to be higher among those with less education or of low economic status. Marriage against the will of the child and child sexual abuse place girls at increased risk of pregnancy, often unintended. In many places, adolescents resist the ploys of others to make them into sexual objects and so refuse to subject themselves to contraceptives. In this scenario the adolescent may accept the pregnancy even if initially unintended, but it may not be recorded as such by government or non-government agencies who are attempting to publicize their own agenda, especially if they favor restricting the number of births in their populations.

(D) There is growing attention being paid to improving access to quality maternal care for pregnant and parenting adolescents. WHO works with partners to advocate for attention to adolescent pregnancy, to build an evidence base for action, to develop policy and programme support tools, to build capacity and to support countries to address adolescent pregnancy effectively. While as stated above, the tendency of world organizations such as WHO (the World Health Organization) and UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund) seems to be to discourage any and all adolescents, even married ones, from having children, there do exist programmes who accept the child as sacred. The data supplied by these agencies, however, may be kept “off the record”.

(E)

1.2 Scope of the Problem

As stated above, every year an estimated 21 million girls aged 15–19 years in developing regions become pregnant and approximately 12 million of them give birth. The issues that come into focus for this present research are:

(1) If they are "in school" pregnancies, are they necessarily unwanted children even if unintended?

(2) Are the data coming from the WHO giving a pejorative evaluation of adolescent marriages even if they are freely chosen and permitted by parents?

(3) Are the WHO giving a pessimistic evaluation of childbearing in socio-economically poor circumstances even when the teenagers giving birth do not share this pessimism?

The WHO report of April, 2024, is merely presenting an objective datum with its comment that the adolescent birth rate has decreased from 64.5 births per 1000 women (15–19 years) in the year 2000 to 41.3 births per 1000 women in 2023. The present researchers take note, however, that this datum seems to merge with the subjective opinion of WHO statisticians when they surreptitiously invite their readers to cast a scornful glance at those who still have the highest adolescent birth rate: the Latin American and Caribbean people – coalesced into one region – with a rate of 51.4 births per 1000 adolescent women and sub-Saharan African people with a rate of 97.9 births per 1000 adolescent women. During this same year, Europe recorded 13.1 births per 1000 adolescent women.

The subtle insinuation behind the reporting is that high adolescent birth rates are to be found in regions where there is poverty, ignorance (even illiteracy), an inattentiveness to the methods of family planning especially to such consumer items as contraceptives, and the continuing confinement to home and the family without recourse to careers, professions or employment opportunities outside the home environment. Without too much reading into the WHO report there is certainly a tone of "these are the people who have lagged behind and have not caught up with the times". It is supposed that the poor and unsophisticated do not

know how to avoid pregnancy and that they do not know how to plan.

Even within countries, there are enormous variations. In Zambia, for example, in 2018, the percentage of adolescent girls aged 15–19 who had either brought a pregnancy to term or were pregnant at the time of the interview ranged from 14.9% in Lusaka to 42.5% in the Southern Province. The same pejorative overtones even seem to pervade these data: Lusaka is more in pace with the times; the Southern Province is afflicted with rural backwardness.

1.3 Context in which Adolescent Pregnancies Occur and the Acceptance of Contraceptives as a Panacea

Global reports on adolescent pregnancies and births that come to us through the filters of the World Health Organization veer towards the opinion that if there are societies – ordinarily poor and educationally substandard – that encourage girls to marry and bear children, this encouragement must be a pressure imposed upon adolescent girls that may leave them frustrated and unfulfilled.

As of 2021, the estimated global number of child brides was 650 million: the WHO report of 2024 surmises that child marriage places girls at increased risk of pregnancy because girls who are married very early typically have limited autonomy to influence decision-making about delaying child-bearing and contraceptive use. The presupposition is that young brides find having children to be an imposition. Is this true? Perhaps an even more enigmatic statement is the following: "… in many places, girls choose to become pregnant because they have limited educational and employment prospects and motherhood is valued".

According to this scenario, women become pregnant because they would rather be in school and employed but these possibilities are not available. The statement that raises the specter of a World Health Organization that does not appreciate womanhood is the last one, "motherhood is valued", reported in such a way as to suggest that valuing motherhood aligns with limited educational and employment prospects and is, therefore, an intellectual mistake on the part of adolescent girls who should be empowering themselves with a profession or career.

In contrast to the tendency of various organizations associated with the United Nations there are some individuals who give both the mother and the child the place of privilege. The following are remarks that became internationally famous. They were uttered at a very important UN Conference held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994, the year of the Rwandan Genocide. The speaker was Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan. She was that country's Prime Minister. She was known to have worked closely with Pope St. John Paul II on the issue of human development for many countries.

Bismillah Arrahama Nirraheem

Mr. President, Secretary General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies, Gentlemen,

I come before you as a Woman; as a Mother; and as a Wife.

I come before you as the democratically elected Prime Minister of a great Muslim nation -- the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

I come before you as the leader of the ninth largest population on earth….

This conference must not be viewed by the teaming masses of the world as a universal social charter seeking to impose adultery, abortion, sex education and other such matters on individuals, societies and religions which have their own social ethos.

By convening this conference, the international community is reaffirming its resolve that problems of a global nature will be solved through global efforts.

Governments can do a great deal to improve the quality of life in our society. But there is much that governments cannot do.

Governments do not educate our children. Parents educate children. More often mothers educate children.

Governments do not teach values to our children. Parents teach values to our children. More often mothers teach values to children.

Governments do not socialize youngsters into responsible citizens. Parents are the primary socializing agents in society. In most societies, that job belongs to the mother….

> The followers of Islam have no conceptual difficulty in addressing questions of regulating population in the light of available resources. The only constraint is that the process must be consistent with abiding moral principles.
>
> **Islam lays a great deal of stress on the sanctity of life.**
>
> The Holy Book tells us: "Kill not your children on a plea of want. We provide sustenance for them and for you."
>
> Islam, therefore, … rejects abortion as a method of population control. There is little compromise on Islam's emphasis on the family unit.
>
> The traditional family is the basic unit on which any society rests. It is the anchor on which the individual relies as he embarks upon the Journey of Life.
>
> Islam aims at harmonious lives built upon a bedrock of conjugal fidelity and parental responsibility.
>
> Many suspect that the disintegration of the traditional family has contributed to moral decay.
>
> **Let me state, categorically, Mr. Chairman, that the traditional family is the union sanctified by marriage.**

These remarks by Benazir Bhutto present a moral benchmark for the present research. The present research identifies the One primarily responsible for valuing motherhood: God himself, the Creator, the Sustainer, who always acts with Love and Mercy and is the one who gives the woman a feminine heart, that is to say, a mother's heart (and the man, a father's heart!).

Contraceptives clearly seem to be valued more in the WHO report and in reports issued by UNICEF and the UNFPA than the God-given prospects of motherhood. Speaking about Ghana, these agencies reported: "Phase 1 reached over 1.9 million adolescent girls and 250,000 adults, with 240,000 girls benefiting from improved SRH [Sexual and Reproductive Health] services. However, challenges such as early sexual debut, limited contraceptive use, and high adolescent pregnancy rates persist" (UNICEF, UNFPA, and Canada in Ghana, 2025).

From this citation, there are three impulses to UNFPA policies to be recognized: (1) Early sexual debut is problematic for a teenage girl's moral, sexual and reproductive health. Our research will show agreement with this assessment. (2) Limited use of contraceptives is deplorable. To make contraceptives available is labeled more and more as "adolescent empowerment". Our study will show, to the contrary, that recourse to contraceptives (a) actually provokes the early sexual debut, and (b) supports the temptation to view sexual intercourse as a means for the male to use the human body for self-seeking pleasure. This seems to happen when the male has a modest income and gives in to the temptation to use the woman's body for sexual purposes knowing full well that because she is very poor she is going to show willingness to submit her body to the man with the hope of receiving what she needs for her and her children to survive.

This cluster of motivational dynamics for sexual relations provokes the failure to understand marriage – even adolescent marriage – as a mutual openness to God's gift of children. (3) The absence of an upright attitude about adolescent marriages that provide a healthy emotional and spiritual milieu for children leads to the brazen conclusion that high adolescent pregnancy rates are to be curtailed at any cost. This remark of the Ghana report fails to recognize the beauty of adolescent marriages where children do indeed grow up in a milieu saturated with moral, emotional, social, educational, and religious values.

The current research makes a careful commentary on those policies that place psychological burdens on adolescent girls because the idea of motherhood has lost its divinely given value.

Those societies who value motherhood often have restrictive laws and policies in place regarding the provision of contraceptives to adolescents. This is often combined with the moral and religious convictions of health workers and their lack of willingness to support adolescent sexual misconduct, whether within or outside the boundaries of marriage.

1.4 The Specter of Sexual Abuse

A final consideration for purposes of the present research is that of child sexual abuse. This certainly increases the risk of

unintended pregnancies. A WHO report published in 2021 claimed to have enough data to show that in the global context approximately 120 million girls aged under 20 years were subjected to sexual violence by someone other than a partner. The report offers the opinion that this abuse is deeply rooted in gender inequality; it affects more girls than boys, although many boys are also affected. The report does not entertain the possibility, however, that the changing attitudes towards intimate relationships that have placed mutual emotional gratification in the place of privilege and hence have relegated potential parenthood to a distant second place may be instrumental in the perverted tendency to look upon sexual partners as sexual objects. It is this perversion that occasions the violence.

This may surely be the case when one considers that in 2020, WHO estimates that 1 in 8 of the world's children had been sexually abused before reaching the age of 18, and 1 in 20 girls aged 15–19 years had experienced forced sex during their lifetime. Would this have happened if the world had decided to shun contraceptives and their capacity to stimulate the drive towards feelings of sexual orgasm and ecstasy? Would this have happened if the world with its variety of cultures had chosen to promote the kind of marital intercourse that activates the man's and woman's potential to enjoy marital love as an avenue for allowing God to put into living action his creative love that opens their ability to accept children who grow in their capacity to love their parents?

The WHO report entitled *Violence against Women Prevalence 2018* estimates that 24% of adolescents aged 15–19 years may already have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime, and 16% of adolescent girls and young women aged 15–19 may have been subjected to this violence within the past 12 months.

A glance back at recent decades in Tanzania unveils the ugly face of sexual violence. A national survey in 2009 found that almost a third of Tanzanian girls who had sex before the age of 18 said that it was against their will. According to the survey, almost 40 percent of the girls who experienced sexual violence said that they were attacked either on the way to or from school or while at

school. Perpetrators included teachers who sometimes traded sex for grades, bus conductors and taxi drivers (Tanzania Demographic Health Survey 2004). World Bank data shows that 22.8 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 in Tanzania had children or were pregnant in 2010, while the teenage fertility rate (the number of births per 1,000 girls aged 13-19) was 129, giving Tanzania the highest teenage fertility rate in the world, a situation blamed to a large extent on early marriages and a high school dropout rate which the Daily News reported on the 6th of April 2010. Our review of recent literature shows that the Tanzanian fertility rate among adolescents is indeed diminishing, but it remains among the highest in the world.

Strategies and interventions related to adolescent pregnancy have focused on pregnancy prevention. It is no secret that international programmes do not make a distinction between those adolescents who, according to their religion, are validly married and hence by vocation value pregnancy and child bearing and those adolescents who may be pregnant because they involved themselves in sexually intimate relationships that did not place value on the responsibility of child-bearing and parenting and may even have invited violent behavior on the part of a sexual partner who treated his supposed intimate partner as a sex object.

There are economically powerful organizations in the world who are of the opinion that any kind of adolescent pregnancy may be considered not only to be unintended but even worse unwanted. As mentioned previously, this viewpoint presents a scornful opinion of happily married mothers who are adolescent child-bearers. There are organizations – UNICEF is a noteworthy example – that view the pregnant young woman as somebody who feels saddled with a baby whom she feels to be a grave inconvenience in her life and hence should receive the assistance of the international community to eliminate all possibility of her suffering such an intolerable imposition as a pregnancy in her adolescent years (UNICEF, UNFPA, and Canada in Ghana, 2025).

In some parts of the world, those who do not confine their concentration on the violence to which some adolescents may be exposed, may turn their attention to improving access to quality

maternal care for pregnant and parenting adolescents who are not necessarily victims of violence. All in all, access to quality care depends on the geographic parameters and the social status of adolescents. There remains, however, a problem of age inequality: even where access is not limited, adolescents appear to receive a lower quality of both clinical care and interpersonal support than adult women do.

The World Health Organization has chosen to respond to adolescent pregnancy by seeking to prevent it, even if the young women are married and living within a healthy milieu for raising children. The reluctance to support the morally healthy marriages of adolescents continues to cast a shadow over WHO initiatives. The UNFPA does not seem markedly different from WHO.

The disregard for those adolescents who become pregnant within morally upright, psychologically stable and socially uplifting circumstances leaves initiatives in a state of confusion. There is a growing global, regional and national commitment to prevent child marriage and adolescent pregnancy and childbearing at all costs no matter how healthy adolescent marriage may be. Nongovernmental organizations have led the effort in several countries.

In contrast, in a growing number of countries, governments are taking the lead to put in place large-scale programmes that help adolescent childbearing within morally healthy climates. These governments do not necessarily accord with the NGO tendency to deplore adolescent childbearing. These governmental programmes challenge and inspire other countries to do what is doable to encourage adolescents who are raising families.

1.5 Teenage Pregnancy – a Violation of Human Rights?

For about two decades now, the UNFPA has been issuing public fact-sheets that declare that the issue of teenage pregnancy is not just considered as a health issue, but also as a development issue that is deeply rooted in poverty, gender inequality, violence, forced marriage, lack of education, and lack of an upbringing in a social environment where women are free to make choices, first, about a professional career, and later about pregnancy. There seems to be an overwhelming emphasis on placing the choice to

have a child in second place and to relegate to first place the more appealing priority of a high-caliber education that, in turn, opens opportunity's door to a respectable, self-esteem-enhancing profession. The UNFPA strategy presents the woman's dignity and her Bill of Rights within this perspective of her freedom to develop her talents as a woman with intellectual and social skills, capable of developing a professional competence and only after the unambiguous feeling of self-fulfillment pillowed by a certain amount of professional prestige would she now turn to the possibility of being a mother. Within this so-called "empowerment" climate for women, national programmes for women would tend to measure the worth of the female quite independently of the God-given gift of motherhood and the joy of childbearing.

The feminine empowerment mentality seems to have found its roots within an accord that was reached at the Cairo Conference in Egypt in 1994. First of all, it must be admitted that there is very little doubt that the Cairo accords stimulated regimes that had paid little respect for the dignity of women to adopt attitudes that were more helpful for young women.

There are flaws, however, in the final document. A healthy social environment for these architects of contemporary family planning required full access to contraceptives, abortions where they were legal and family planning strategies that subdued women in their inclinations to become pregnant until they felt they had reached a happy stage of their professional development and were now ready to assume responsibility for a family of whatever size they might choose.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is the conference held in Cairo in 1994 to which we have been alluding. It marked a great paradigm shift in the field of population and development, replacing a demographically driven approach to family planning that emphasizes limiting population growth with one that is based on human rights and the needs, aspirations, and circumstances of each woman.

The UNFPA's document on Adolescent Pregnancy indicates that the impact of this axial shift of consciousness that now freed

the women to have children regardless of the size of populations introduced shifts in attitudes towards hundreds of millions of women and young people who have over an 18-year-period (1994-2012) gained the power and the means to avoid or delay pregnancy. The UNFPA opines that the results of the rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health and family planning have given extraordinary freedom to women, young and old, to be whom they choose to be. There is an oddity, however, that indicates that the shift in consciousness is not complete: there are women aplenty who measure self-fulfillment according to criteria that obviate motherhood as an indispensable means of self-fulfillment for those who accept them.

Those who stake their professional reputations on the Cairo Conference and its aftermath like to stress the fact that millions more women have become empowered to have fewer children and to start their families later in life, giving them an opportunity to complete their schooling, earn a better living and escape the trap of poverty. Countless studies have shown that women who use family planning are generally healthier, better educated, more empowered in their households and communities and are more economically productive. And in homes where parents have the power and the means to decide on the number and spacing of pregnancies, their children tend to be healthier, do better in school and grow up to earn higher incomes.

One side effect of the UNFPA reduces the populations of underdeveloped nations to manageable proportions – i.e. to proportions that release governments and international agencies from the responsibility of caring for the undernourished, the homeless, the hungry, the uneducated, and those who aspire to honor God's gift of parenthood.

In all these discussions, little or no value is attributed to those adolescent families that sustain upright moral and religious convictions.

1.6 High Pregnancy Rates in Tanzania

Mention has already been made of global birth rates among adolescents and the comparatively high birth rate for the Latin American/Caribbean and sub-Saharan African regions including

children born into psychologically and spiritually healthy family situations.

As has been noted, Africa has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in the world whereby 97 pregnancies per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years seems to summarize adequately what is happening in sub-Saharan Africa. While international teenage birth rates have decreased from 65 births per 1,000 women in 1990 to 47 births per 1,000 women in 2015, sub-Saharan Africa continues to have higher rates of teenage pregnancy despite several initiatives from both government and non-government organizations (Nyamhanga & Luoga, 2025). Estimates reveal that there were 6,114,000 births among 15–19-year-olds in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021.

There are dire consequences if adolescents are not adequately prepared for marriage. In 2022, 57% of children under the age of five died in sub-Saharan Africa, but this same region accounted for only 30% of global live births. Sub-Saharan African women suffered 27 deaths per 1000 live births of neonatal children (WHO 2024).

The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA, 2012-2013), an NGO for women journalists, has reported that there has been a strong correlation between child marriage, school dropout rates, early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS; and it estimates that between 20 and 40 percent of Tanzanian girls marry before adulthood.

Reliable data from Tanzania brings to light high teenage pregnancy rates. According to the Tanzania Demographic Health Survey of 2015/2016, one of every three Tanzanian girls marry before the age of 18. Over 44 percent of Tanzanian girls have given birth or are pregnant by the age of 19. It also has one of the world's lowest rates of transition of both girls and boys from primary to secondary school at 36 percent.

Tanzania's Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) reports show that teenage pregnancy increased from 22.8% to 26.8% between 2010/11 and 2015/16, and slightly dropped to 22% in 2022. This fluctuation is not statistically significant: the increase

followed by a decrease could be the result of spurious variance not related to sexual behavior and pregnancy outcomes.

The prevalence of teenage childbearing varies by region in Tanzania. Nyamhanga and Luoga (2025) report that the five regions with the highest rates are Songwe (45%), Ruvuma (37%), Katavi (34%), Mara (31%), and Manyara (29%). It ought to be kept in mind that this may be because Tanzania's marriage law still allows adolescent girls to marry at age 15 with parental consent but requires boys to be 18 years old. Concurrently, it must be noticed that this same legal situation exists in other countries and may even allow marriages of younger ages. This often depends on religious laws and customs. Catholic Canon Law, n. 1083, for example, allows girls of 14 and boys of sixteen to marry. Yet these countries and societies do not show a dramatic frequency of teenage pregnancies or, for that matter, teenage marriages.

The Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey of 2022 reports that 22% of women age 15-19 have been pregnant. Sixteen percent of this same age group have given birth. Two percent of this age group have had a pregnancy loss; six percent are currently pregnant.

When one shifts focus – as the present researchers do – to the issue of pregnancies among teenage girls outside of marriage, it becomes worthy of note that we are facing a worldwide problem. Teenage pregnancy and childbirth-related complications are the primary killers of teenage girls worldwide (UNFPA, 2007; 2025). UNFPA is careful to note that the age group the statisticians have in mind are those between 15 and 19 years of age. If you were to extend the age group in either direction, one would see that there are other causes of death for teenagers and adolescents that are not related to pregnancy and childbirth.

In the Morogoro Region, the last 25 years have indicated the perennial fact that the rate of pregnancy is high, that is, women aged between 13-19 years get pregnant with their first child (Philip, 2008). Teenage pregnancy is prevalent in societies characterized by both willful and inadvertent ignorance of moral norms both by perpetrators of sexual abuse and by victims, poverty, low education, fewer job opportunities and families headed by mothers

who give birth to their first children during their teenage years (Mwaba, 2000). Teenage pregnancy is also associated with other unethical behavior such as alcohol, drug use, and early initiation of sexual activity, which have been identified as predictors of pregnancy (Mwaba, 2000).

Peter (2007) argued that teenage pregnancies are associated with social disadvantage, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, bad housing, fragmented family structure and stressful life events. All of these factors may impede teenagers from acquiring a dignified moral education that places the emphasis on responsible loving. The youths emulate the behavior of their parents and of their society who may also be ignorant of basic sexual morality; thus social and cultural factors influence patterns of risk taking.

Based on the above-mentioned reasons, the present study was conducted to determine the impact of school-based reproductive health education programmers (SBRHEP) on teenage pregnancy

There was a great need to conduct this study in order to inform the public about the implementation of the effort to reduce teenage pregnancies at both national and local levels. The gathered information may be used for planning and designing interventions towards minimizing the extent of the problem.

There is a curiosity-provoking statistic from the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey of 2022 that must grab the attention of anyone researching the phenomenon of pregnancy in Tanzania. And what is this statistic?

- The Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey of 2022 reported that *about 86% of the women between the ages of 15 and 49 want to have a child if they do not yet have one: this statistic includes both married and unmarried women.*
- *If the woman already has a child, those in this same age group that report a desire for another child in the near future are 84%.*
- *Seventy-seven percent of those who have two children say they want another child in the near future.*
- *Sixty-three percent express the same desire if they have three children.*

- *The percentage falls below 50% for the first time for women of this age group if they already have four children.*
- *Twenty-three percent indicate this desire to have another child in the near future even if they already have six or more children.*

The child, pregnancy and motherhood are values that bring life and love to the Tanzanian woman.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Teenage pregnancy and its consequences for ethical development and socio-economic growth seem to become more and more noticeable in most developing countries irrespective of the measures to reduce it that have been taken by governments and other stakeholders. The ethical confusion and the high social and economic costs of teen pregnancy and childbearing can have short- and long-term negative consequences for teen parents, their children, and their community (Heaven, 2001). It has been recognized that pregnancy and childbirth have a significant impact on educational outcomes for teen parents.

Government statistics revealed that during the year 2006, about 44,742 children dropped out of primary school and 7,734 students dropped out of secondary schools: over 60% of these were girls. A thorough study on the tendency to dropout for those who live in vulnerable environments from the year 2019 to 2022 has suggested that dropout rates are increasing, especially in rural areas where parent involvement in education, involvement of the community in the school systems, and mentoring programmes are in very short supply (Mukama & Mgonya, 2025). Despite the government's effort to take sound measures to solve the problem successfully, the difficulties persist. Thus the aim of this study was to assess the factors contributing to teenage pregnancies in Morogoro Municipal at Nanenane Ward.

2.1 Objectives of the Study with their Relevant Research Questions

General Objective: The overall objective was to assess factors contributing to teenage pregnancies in Morogoro Municipal at Nanenane Ward.

***Specific Objectives*:**

I. To determine whether poverty contributes to teenage pregnancies in Nanenane Ward.
II. To determine whether an inadequate level of education of an individual contributes to teenage pregnancies in Nanenane Ward.
III. To determine whether peer pressure contributes to teenage pregnancies in the study area.
IV. To investigate the solutions for teenage pregnancies among girls in the study area.

***Research Questions*:**

i) What are the indicators that poverty contributes to teenage pregnancies at Nanenane ward?
ii) What are the indicators that an inadequate level of education of an individual contributes towards teenage pregnancies at Nanenane ward?
iii) What are the indicators that peer pressure contributes to teenage pregnancies at Nanenane?
iv) What are the possible measures that teenagers themselves, their families, their communities and their governments can take to reduce teenage pregnancies in Nanenane ward?

2.2 Significance of the Study

This study is important because it will help put more emphasis on the importance of an education grounded in the moral values that directly link to human dignity; the purposes for which God created the human body, psychosomatic impulses, emotions, desires, reason, will, and the inner spiritual life of the person; the purpose of marriage; and the place of sexual attractions, emotions, habits and behavior within God's plan for motherhood and fatherhood.

The present study can motivate teachers, parents and children to give priority to education for girls in their teenage years. What has been happening in the legal sector seems to reflect the concern for girls' accessibility to education.

Sections 10(2), 13(1) and 15 of Tanzania's Law of Marriage Act of 1971 allow men to contract polygamous marriages, and permit the marriage of 15-year-old girls, while the minimum age of marriage for boys is 18. On October 23, 2019, however, the Tanzania Court of Appeal upheld a dramatic change initiated in the 2016 ruling by the High Court against child marriage. The High Court ruled that marriage under the age of 18 was illegal and directed the government to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 for both boys and girls within one year. Such a decision freed teenage girls to continue their education without the fear that marriage may be forced upon them. This decision by the Court of Appeal was not made in the dark: the marriage laws had always brought to light a contradiction because by the Law of Contract anyone under 21 was to be defined as a child, while by the Child Law, a child was anyone under the age of 18 (*The Citizen*, 13 September 2025). To bring all the laws into harmony with each other would then seem to require a change in the minimum age of marriage (President of the Tanzania Public Attorneys Association (TPBA), Mr. Bavoo Junus, as cited by *The Citizen,* 2025).

Mr. Bavoo Junus' explanation did not fail to elucidate one fact that must be considered in designing Tanzania's marriage laws: many religions, traditions and local customs may not exactly coincide with present laws and their interpretation. Changes that might affect religious principles, traditions and customs can only occur after thoughtful reflection and discussion.

We are focusing on the fact that if Tanzania's courts raise the bar to an 18-year-old minimum age for marriage, there is more of a possibility for equal access to education for both adolescent males and females. As long as families act prudently for the future welfare of their children, they will recognize the value of the educational enterprise especially from the moral point of view, both in schools and at home so that they can pass on the knowledge

they have to their teenagers. This way all can live healthier lives and become empowered to make proper decisions in life.

The value of motherhood is not to be understated. This research can remind adolescents that if they prepare to marry their prospective bridegrooms even if they are barely eighteen years old, they are capable of motherhood and the raising of children.

Due to the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies in the district, this research will help to determine the level of knowledge and attitude of teenagers towards the place of sexuality, love and responsibility within God's plan for men and women of all ages. This research should be a source of encouragement to teenagers to learn how to recognize that family planning means keeping in mind what God expects of mothers and fathers: God is the one who designed the human heart and the human family. Teenagers, therefore, grow aware of their dignity when they recognize:

a) the insult and injury done to partners when there is sexual intercourse outside of marriage;
b) the problems occasioned by the lack of interpersonal love and respect by women and men in their sexual activities;
c) the confusion that ensues with the refusal to abstain from sex at certain periods during life;
d) the consequences of the failure to exercise chaste attitudes even at the moment of intercourse;
e) the sin involved in the failure to exercise justice towards God who is the One who created human beings to be sexual; and
f) the priority that child-bearing should have in any sexual relationship.

The teenagers should be able to avoid those existing family planning health services that emphasize contraceptives and so encourage teenagers to use each other as sexual objects and engage in sexual relations outside of marriage. This study will help teenagers to recognize the efforts that are done by parents/guardians and health providers in order to ensure that the teenagers do not involve themselves in early sex.

The findings from this study can help to enlighten the community members and the public at large about the positive

impact of Natural Family Planning and factors contributing to teenage pregnancies which will help them to carry out effective planning and various interventions in order to reduce the problem.

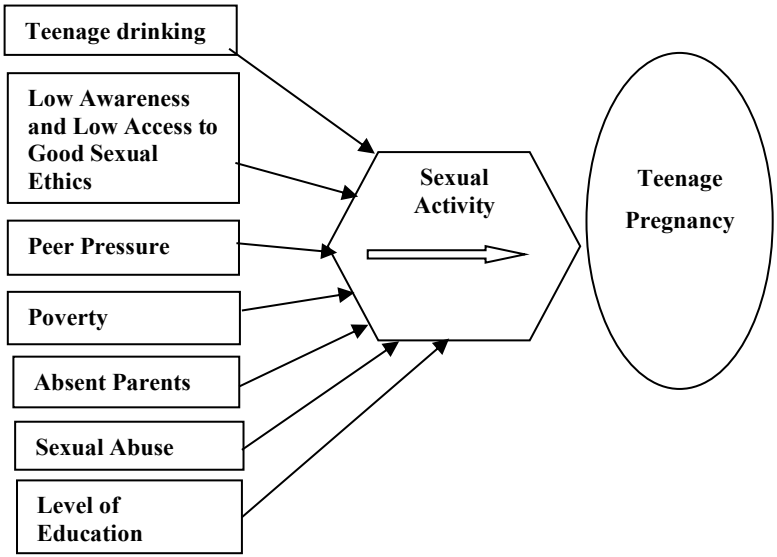
2.3 The Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Morogoro Municipal at Nanenane Ward and focused on the determining factors that contribute to teenage pregnancies. The study involved only the selected health facilities and the teenagers who were pregnant together with those who were involved in the lives of the pregnant teenagers.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on their research objectives and the information available to them from the Background of the Study and the Literature Review, the researchers analyzed their own data collection from 2019 and composed the following diagram. Their data collection is the source.

Relationships between Independent and Dependent Variables
Independent Variables/ Dependent Variables



3.0 Literature Review - Terminology

Teenagers are between childhood and adulthood and are unlike children in their awareness of their surroundings as well as in their experience of certain physical changes of their bodies and of their emotional makeup. By the UNFPA standards for assessing teenage pregnancy, a teenager is a young person whose age falls within the range of fifteen to nineteen (UNFPA in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2025). Given the age range of those involved in the teenage pregnancy issue in Nanenane Ward, the researchers chose 13 to 19 years old as their age range.

Family planning services are defined as "educational, comprehensive medical or social activities which enable individuals, including minors to determine freely the number and spacing of their children and to select the means by which this may be achieved" (Brooker C., 2006). Healthy family planning services consist of resources that help guests and clients to understand the responsible expression of sexuality that one finds in Natural Family Planning methods, all forms of abstinence/ continence and other forms of self-control that help adolescents to recognize each other as persons to be cherished in all dimensions of personality and not just as beings with a sexual appeal, and the choice to integrate one's marital sexual activity with one's capacity to procreate children. Unhealthy family planning services make available to guests and clients resources that reduce one or both partners/spouses to sexual objects for the sensual gratification of one or more people involved in the sexual activity. This is true of contraceptives and masturbation facilitators (condoms).

Contraceptives consist of various devices, drugs, agents, implants, injectables, IUDs, sexual practices, or surgical procedures that are meant to prevent conception or impregnation (pregnancy). They are nowadays designed to abort newly conceived children when the preventative measure does not succeed, and always reduce one or both sexual partners to the level of a sexual object.

The largest purveyor of contraceptives and abortion procedures in the world, Planned Parenthood, does not list condoms as contraceptives. ***Condoms, rather, are masturbation facilitators***

because they provoke orgasmic levels of sexual activity without allowing for the completion of the act of intercourse.

Sex education is education on the subject of sexual activity and sexual relationships. It is most meaningful and well-anchored in the truth when (a) it helps learners distinguish between the ethical exercise of one's sexuality and the unethical perversion of one's sexuality; (b) it helps learners to understand the dynamic inherent in puberty to bind into one act of love the sexual unity of two people who are personally disposed to be a mother and a father; (c) it helps learners to understand responsible timing of sexual relations as the fulfillment of a publicly made marriage commitment that may bring forth a pregnancy, childbirth, bonding, parenting and family living; (d) it fortifies the learners' capacity to respect the other person in her sexuality by not reducing her to a sexual object which means avoiding all contact for sexual purposes outside of marriage; (e) it helps learners to understand the constitution of the male and female bodies as bodies that reveal the visible presence of persons with their own interior, spiritual life, both of whom are capable to be parents; (f) it helps the learners to grow in knowledge about the social, emotional, and spiritual nuances of interpersonal relationships; (g) it helps adolescents understand the unethical character of contraception, the risk of sexually transmitted infections that ensues when behaviors are unethical, and the malevolence of any attitude that invites scorn or violence (Brooker, 2006).

Prostitution is a sexual relationship that ignores the nature of betrothal between a man and a woman. Sexual relations ought to express the love of a man and a woman who are betrothed to each other in the state of marriage. When this love degenerates into the emotional and sensual manipulation of another person for the purpose of momentary pleasure or for the purpose of receiving from the other important material benefits that may actually be lacking to one of the sexually involved partners (usually the woman), it becomes the kind of love that international society calls "prostitution".

If the love that binds together a man and a woman is not to succumb to the emotional tugs within the hearts that look for

continuing sensual gratification, the urge to assert oneself and the frantic search for material benefits for oneself and one's household, then this love – to be true – must carry within itself an inner need to make a gift of one's own person to another human being. This is a need realized between man and woman who are willing to involve themselves in a mutual self-surrender not only of the body but of a whole constellation of interpersonal values that are not precisely sexual. These values must actualize the dynamic of interpersonal sacrifice and the will to do what is best for the other in the transcendent world of values that lead to heaven.

The measure of this love and this surrender is the value of the person who gives himself or herself, and not just the degree of sensual and sexual enjoyment which accompanies the gift of self. If one or both partners/ spouses take away from love the fullness of self-surrender and the completeness of personal commitment, what remains is what we call the *state of prostitution.* The prostitute is one who manipulates the sexual urge in order to achieve one's own ends and does not enjoy the perspicacity of a spouse who intends to put into action the capacity to be a parent (Wojtyla, 1981).

3.1 Literature Review – Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancy

In assessing the factors contributing to teenage pregnancy with an ongoing acknowledgement of the complexity of the issue and, concurrently, with the goal of determining comprehensive strategies needed to address the problem, various theories typically associated with the issue are reviewed. The researchers chose to review theories with heuristic value for their objectives.

3.1.1 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory suggests that behavior is the cumulative pattern that forms when there is a continuing interaction between a person who has developed or is developing her self-concept and self-image, the developing constellation of behaviors of that person and the environment within which that person performs the behaviors. These behaviors can result from the characteristics of the person or from the environment within which the person is

immersed, or from an interaction between the two; and it can be used to alter that person or environment as well (Buss, 1991). Therefore, behavior is viewed not in isolation but rather as the outcome of the dynamic interaction of personal and environmental variables.

That people learn not only from their own experiences but from the actions and reactions of others as well is defined as a typology of modeling, which is a basic premise of social learning theory. The most recent and most accepted explanations of this person-environment interaction is that of the *social imaginary*. After having devoted an entire book to the concept in *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004), Charles Taylor updated his explanation of the concept in *A Secular Age* (2007).

We see the latest explanation of the social imaginary in A*frica Tomorrow,* 2021, 23(1-2), in the pages of that issue's Editorial.

What the Editorial of Volume 23 presented were Taylor's notion and Gibson's elaboration of the notion. First, Taylor:

> I want to speak of "social imaginary" here, rather than social theory, because there are important differences between the two. There are, in fact, several differences. I speak of "imaginary" (i) because I'm talking about the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, and so forth. But it is also the case that (ii) theory is often the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. Which leads to a third difference: (iii) the social imaginary is that common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.

Now, borrowing the vocabulary of Carl Trueman (2020), Gibson repeats what any ethically motivated person already knows:

> To demonstrate how the social imaginary functions: I am not living with a particular commitment to a theory that explains how the world works. I am not living within academic interests and intellectual systems. I am living, rather, intuitively in harmony with my social surroundings. In a culture where people are growing to accept the notion of a "self-created" identity – not as an

> elaborate understanding of the nature of gender and its relationship to the biology of a person's sexual make-up but instead as an intuitive, common sense idea that a person should be allowed to live as he or she wishes to live without fear of reprisal from others – the social imaginary would tend to leave the ordinary people of that culture with the idea that one should not hurt someone by refusing to affirm that person in his or her chosen identity however strange that chosen identity would seem to people of other cultures or other generations.
>
> If society is not attentive, there can be hidden within the social imaginary a place of privilege occupied by technology that ought to belong to God. It is not difficult to imagine, for example, that sex outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage has always occurred… until recently it was considered taboo. It violated divine moral law. With the advent of cheap and efficient condoms and contraceptives, however, it has become easier to have sex outside of marriage.

Within the Editorial, Gibson helps Trueman to disseminate Taylor's notion. Gibson explains:

> Hence there is a pattern: first, there is a form of behaviour acknowledged to be promiscuous. Next, there is a technology to facilitate it in the form of contraception and antibiotics. Because technology enables the sexually promiscuous to avoid the natural consequences of their actions, namely, unwanted pregnancies and disease, the rationales that justify the behaviour become more plausible and the arguments advanced to discourage the behaviour become less tenable. The behaviour itself becomes more acceptable and no longer finds a foothold in God-given moral norms. The social imaginary has shifted; and entire societies may be living unwittingly in their new social imaginary.

Because Trueman (2020) uses extra-marital intercourse as his example, it is not difficult to link the updated version of social learning theory, i.e., the social imaginary, to teenage pregnancy crises. A major component would be the teenager's tendency to imitate the behavior of others in their environment through observational learning and adaptation to what is observed and learnt. The environment is offering the teenager the plausibility of out-of-wedlock intercourse without unpleasant ramifications. The

increase of extramarital sexual activity and ensuing pregnancy for those not using contraceptive technology is the consequence. Indeed, this is how the social imaginary functions.

3.1.2 Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary psychology, which focuses on psychological mechanisms that have been shaped by natural selection, offers explanations that actually harmonize with those of the social imaginary except that the foci of the imaginary are not to be found exclusively within the external schemes of recurrence in the social environment but are to be found in the interior of the cognitive and emotional life that has its own history both in one's personal formation and in one's genetic design. If behaviors have evolved in response according to the pressure to select those behaviors that seem the most adaptive and benefit producing, it is plausible to argue that cognitive or emotional structures have evolved in the same way. Socio-biologists view human sexual behaviors as the product of natural selection in evolution and thus view these behavioral patterns as being genetically influenced. Contemporary evolutionary theories view behavior as the result of an interaction between mechanisms and environmental influence. As was just insinuated, however, the mechanisms that seem to be operative are nevertheless so intertwined with the interior environment of one's emotional pulls and pushes and one's cognitive processes that they cannot be given a conceptual independence from social imaginaries.

3.1.3 Sociological Perspectives

Not surprisingly, sociologists look for patterns that reinforce the notion of the social imaginary (Charles Taylor, 2004, 2007). Consistent with Taylor's insight, sociologists highlight the ways in which society influences social and sexual behavioral expression. By concentrating on the social environment and its impact, sociologists – like Charles Taylor – depart from any preoccupation with the way academics, concepts, theories or books may affect attitudes and behaviors.

At the macro level of analysis sociologists investigate the ways in which institutions such as religion, the economy, the family,

medicine and the law influence sexuality precisely through the medium of the social environment with its daily customs and practices. Sociologists approach the study of sexuality with three basic assumptions.

i) Every society regulates the sexuality of its members at a macro level. These are determinations made by people who are influential by virtue of their position of authority or by their ability to persuade others from within the social groups of which they are members.
ii) Basic institutions of any given society (such as religion and the family) affect the rules governing sexuality if the society is inclined to accept these institutions as normative.
iii) The appropriateness or inappropriateness of a particular sexual behavior depends on the culture in which it occurs.

As we have described it, the third factor just mentioned brings into play two styles of approaching morality: (a) the mimetic style of approaching morality, a style that permeated the lifestyles of people for centuries by its openness to God's will in the process of determining sexual norms and values, and (b) the poietic style which as a consequence of technology looks upon human sexuality as a deliberate manipulation of sexual norms and values in order to harmonize them with personal desires, needs and goals. While God's Will is the determinant of the mimetic style, one's own autonomous will becomes the determinant of the poietic style. Hence moral norms become as plentiful as the people who are creating norms for themselves. The sexual values of a society that hinge upon the poietic style is called a "Tower of Babel" mentality because everyone follows one's own principles regardless of their acceptability to the mimetic mainstream.

3.1.4 The Ethical Perspective: the Freedom to Choose according to Divine Truth and Goodness (Wojtyla, 1981)

Those who choose to adopt as their basic premise an understanding of the human person as a self-determining being who is capable of the free choice to act according to the parameters of divine truth and goodness while always integrating into their deliberations the interpersonal events that happen to him or her from the outside and the internal events of emotions and somatic

impulses that happen from the inside are those who have two basic human realities as their motivation: one, human love; and two, an interior spiritual life. Economics does not determine their ethics.

It is important to recognize the mimetic principle at work in the deliberations of a self-determining human person. He or she is not choosing according to self, but according to what God wants: his or her parameters are those of divine truth and goodness.

How do feelings enter into this picture?

Sexual feelings are a continually shifting response to many experiences, to impressions obtained from many persons. Similarly, sensuality is a shifting response to many "bodies" in the presence of which awareness of another person as a "potential object of enjoyment" is aroused. Love, therefore, cannot be founded on feeling alone, or on sensuality alone. Feelings and sensual impulses or urges are not affirming the other as a human person. Even if emotional love is making the other person feel very close, this love is not affirming the other person with the full knowledge and respect that the other person deserves as someone who has an interior, spiritual life.

I can make the free choice to love another person if I recognize that the other person is endowed with interiority, with all the elements of a spiritual life. The person's spiritual life determines his or her value as a person. The person is never just a body; the person is an embodied spirit. If my love for the other person does not follow the ethical norms that the Creator of the human person has established – the Creator is God – then I am not freely choosing to love, and I am preventing the other person to make a free choice to love me. This is sexual abuse.

A free choice to love another human being is the free choice to do what is necessary to help that other person reach the eternal joy that springs forth from the love that is only possible after death in heaven. Sex outside of marriage, sex manipulated by the use of contraceptives, and sex that does not respect God's desire to create new human beings is not the sexual activity that expresses the freedom of the responsible lover.

3.2 Empirical Literature Review

Various empirical studies have been undertaken to investigate the factors responsible for teenage pregnancies in Tanzania. Often the research strategy employed has been that of instituting comparisons with other developing countries and with those that have already publicized themselves as technologically and economically developed.

The findings of these studies vary in their assessment of the possible causes of pregnancies. The variations may be due to some differences in the research methodology (a) in the manner of determining samples, (b) in the manner of composing questionnaires and surveys, (c) in the care given to the choice of scales that already represent an admirable level of standardization, (d) in the manner of determining methods of data collection, (e) in the manner of choosing case studies that truly investigate the appropriate variables and (f) in the manner of involving respondents that truly qualify to offer input related to the purposes of the research.

From another vitally important perspective, the variations in the conclusions of studies concentrating on the causes of teen pregnancies could be due to the fact that there is a fundamental principle at work that distinguishes both the instruments used for data collection and presuppositions of the researchers that can draw contrasting perspectives on the issue of teenage pregnancy. And what is that fundamental principle?

The fundamental principle is the dignity of the human person when she joins herself to a man in a love that is at once unitive and procreative. As soon as a rupture infects the integrity of unitive and procreative love, for example, by the use of contraceptives that delude the couple into thinking that they can genuinely love each other while at the same time shirking the responsibility of that love and so declining to think of parenthood as an option, the couple's search for an apparently joyful, sexual "high" with each other, activates all the known reasons for unwanted teenage pregnancies. The inclination to use each other's emotions, sensual impulses, and triggers for physical stimulation results in an assault on each other's dignity.

Human Life International has made it abundantly clear that today's contraceptives are abortifacient, whether it is the intrauterine device, the pill or some other technological contraption that the woman is using to block conception of a child. contraceptives are all abortifacient, so anyone who uses a contraceptive (except for condoms) are probably aborting a newly conceived child from time to time. This is death from starvation because the contraceptive prevents the newly conceived child from implanting in the lining of the wall of the uterus. In other words, in its first moments of existence it is cut off from its proper source of nutrition.

Those who use male condoms are not really completing an act of sexual intercourse. Condoms are a method for using the woman's body as a tool for masturbation.

A study in Niger State in the northern part of Nigeria adopted a simple percentage survey research design involving 40 teenagers. A simple percentage rate was used to analyze the data collected. The results revealed that the age at which teenagers engaged in sexual intercourse was too early, the socio-economic background was not conducive to ethical and intellectual growth, early marriage and traditional gender roles interfered with ethical awareness of the sacredness of sexuality, peer pressure seemed overwhelming, lack of sex education and ambiguity in their sexual ethics seemed to remove their safeguards against extra-marital intercourse, and the unwillingness to reduce themselves to sexual objects through the use of contraceptives were causes of teenage pregnancies which led them to opt for worse decisions like abortion (Ogori, 2013).

In order to assess various factors causing teenage pregnancies in South Africa, exploratory and descriptive methods were used primarily through focus group interviews that were conducted with learners from grades 10 – 12, aged 15 - 19. The results of that study showed that factors contributing to teenage pregnancies were lack of openness and transparency, sexual violence, lack of access to government grants, peer influence, poverty, lack of recreational facilities, substance abuse by the learners and attitudes of Health Care Workers at Moshana clinic. It was concluded that although

sex education is now part of the Life Skills programme in schools in that particular region of South Africa, teenagers still fall pregnant due to lack of openness and transparency when discussing sexual matters (Locadian, 2012).

Early childbearing, particularly among teenagers (those under 20 years of age) had negative demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural consequences. Nyakubega reported that in Tanga the median age at first intercourse for women is just under 17 and most of the teenagers are not aware of the legal age of giving birth as per the Tanzanian constitution. It should be reviewed; and the minimum age for women to give birth should be included in order for them to be aware. About 15% of women aged 15-19 had sexual intercourse for the first time by the age of 15. Between the age of 15, and 18, 65% of the women were already sexually active and by 20, about 86% were sexually active. These statistics mostly refer to extra-marital activity, which means that it embraced the unethical. When a cross-sectional descriptive analytical study set their focus upon all girls in the secondary schools of the Tanga Municipality, 57.1% of respondents suggested that low socioeconomic status was found to be an important cause for teenage pregnancies. Other factors responsible were a sensual inclination to do what is unworthy of human dignity and deprivation of education for girls (43.5% and 16.5% respectively).

A study in the Kinondoni District of Dar-es-Salaam presented data concerning the socio-economic characteristics of teenagers, their general knowledge of reproductive health issues and the sources of influence on their sexual behavior. The major discoveries made from this study were that educational status, confusion about the malign purpose of contraceptives, and knowledge of reproductive health for these teenagers indicated that any help they may have received from the family or from the educational system was of inferior caliber. Even the means by which they learned about reproductive health were problematic: they were not from people who would typically enjoy links with health facilities or schools. Hence it was easy for them to be misled (Margareth, 2007).

It is not difficult to conclude that these teenagers were not learning sexual ethics and consequently had little awareness of the corruption of moral uprightness through the use of condoms and contraceptives. They were governing their relationships with emotional inclinations that they were identifying as "true love" or "right for marriage". The truth and the rightness of the love were coming from emotionally motivated wishful thinking and the reluctance to consider alternatives that seemed less euphoric and therefore less fulfilling.

Some were already dropouts from schools, and others were deprived of the chance to continue with secondary education. They had nothing tangible to do because of their scanty exposure to education and, given the fact that they were also economically impoverished, they were at risk of being involved in sexual activities at an early age resulting in pregnancies. In addition, like their children, their parents also flailed about with an educational and economic status that unbalanced their life opportunities.

From our point of view, there was a lack of common agreement on the causes of teenage pregnancies in Tanga and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, when the data are juxtaposed with Ogori's Nigerian study. Some found family structures, sexual abuse, and age at first intercourse, little awareness of their life positions and career opportunities, and a grave inattentiveness to ethical norms as the most responsible factors for teenage pregnancies. Tanzanian researchers found absenteeism of parents in Tanzania as well as in other developing countries to be correlative with the rate of teenage pregnancies. It came to the researchers' attention that no study had been undertaken to assess the causes of teenage pregnancies in Morogoro Municipal. Hence the present study gives a chance to open an investigation into the phenomenon in the Morogoro area so that the government can make headway for the formulation of policies of reducing the risks of teenage pregnancies. Therefore, the study set out to assess factors that have contributed to teenage pregnancies in Nanenane ward.

3.3 Factors that have an Impact on Unexpected Pregnancy

Teenage Drinking

Teen drinking can cause an unexpected pregnancy, according to the website Love to Know (King, 2024). Many teens experiment with drugs and alcohol. Drinking lowers a teen's ability to control her impulses, contributing to 75 percent of pregnancies that occur between the ages of 14 and 21. Approximately 91 percent of pregnant teens from the Magu District in Mwanza, Tanzania, reported that although they were drinking at the time, they did not originally plan to have sex when they conceived (Mchuruza, 2000). This almost certainly means they were manipulated and used as sexual objects. The statistics from Love to Know, an American-based research and social service program for teenagers and young adults, has consistently reported that 80 percent of the fathers of the children never marry the woman with whom they had sexual relations. Just as tragically, they never give economic support to the child and the mother.

Awareness and Low Accessibility to Family Planning Services

Teenagers are less likely than older women to seek out family planning services. Sometimes there are no services to be sought. The healthy family planning services that give top priority to Natural Family Planning and give teenage mothers an invigorating appreciation for their new babies are almost nonexistent.

Low access to social welfare personnel who are equipped to help the teenagers to be true mothers contributes much to the depression and anxiety that the teenage mothers feel (King, 2024). This means that no matter how unintended the pregnancies may have been, there could have been adults to help them accept themselves as truly loving mothers, and so give them courage, peace and hope; but such thoughtful adults may not have been available.

Contraceptive use among the teenagers causes confusion, because accessibility to contraceptives would certainly increase the possibility of unethical sexual behavior on the part of teenagers (Mchuzura, 2000). As mentioned in the footnote above, all

contraceptives today are designed to abort newly conceived children by starving them to death if the male's spermatozoa happen to reach the woman's ova. Condoms are an encouragement to the man to use the woman's body for masturbation, which deprives her of her dignity.

Peer Pressure

When children grow up, they start spending more time with their friends and less time with their parents. As a result, friends can influence a child's thinking and behavior. This is the meaning of peer pressure. Peer pressure can be a positive influence, for example, when it motivates the child to do well in school, or to become involved in sports or other activities. On the other hand, peer pressure can be a negative influence, for example, when it prompts your child to try smoking, drinking, using drugs, or to practice extramarital sex or other risky behaviors (Khoza, 2004).

Poverty

Poverty is a factor that may facilitate teen pregnancy especially if the parents are inattentive to their teenagers; to offer herself to an unconscionable man who wants to use her for his own sensual purposes may bring her a tidy sum that gives her economic relief. Extramarital relations may fatigue her, however, if she is not really looking for a spousal relationship that gives her the dignity of motherhood. and getting pregnant during the teen years makes it harder to break that cycle of poverty. The whole process of sexual relationships gnaws away at her dignity.

Many families living in poverty can barely afford to pay the rent and put food on the table, which leaves little funding for good education in sexual ethics and Natural Family Planning. Throughout the developed world, teenage pregnancy is more common among young people who have been disadvantaged in childhood and have low expectations of education or the job market (Marlow *et al*., 2001).

Absence of Parents

Teen girls are more likely to get pregnant if they have limited or no guidance from their parents. Many parents have busy lives

that prevent them from providing the guidance and support that their young teenagers need to make good decisions on issues such as sex. When a teen does not feel that she can talk to her parents about sex either because they forbid sex talk or because they are not around, she will more than likely turn to friends for direction on whether or not to have sex, resulting in misinformation and possible teen pregnancy (Khoza, 2004).

Sexual Abuse

Teens can become pregnant as a result of sexual abuse or rape. The availability of contraceptives has greatly increased the frequency of sexual abuse. The pro-abortion group named the Guttmacher Institute states that between 43 and 62 percent of teens acknowledge that they were impregnated by an adult male, and two-thirds report that their babies' fathers are as old as 27. Approximately 5 percent of all teen births are the results of a rape (Khoza, 2004).

Level of Education

Teenagers who have low education level are at a higher risk of getting pregnant than those with a higher level. This is because girls who are much educated have more knowledge of the ethics of engaging in sexual activities at an early age outside of marriage; and also they know how to take care of their bodies as well as issues concerning Natural Family Planning and how to use it. Those who are less educated end up getting pregnant due to little knowledge and bad moral choices (Khoza, 2004).

4.0 Research Methodology and Design

It is eminently clear from the research objectives that the author and her co-author were concerned with identifying the constellation of independent variables that may be affecting the dependent variable, which was extramarital teenage pregnancy. As we indicated above in the literature review of the terminology, the common norm for ascertaining the age of a teenager is the 15- to 19-year-old age range; but the local circumstances of the Nanenane ward seem to establish a more feasible range of 13- 19-year-olds.

The sampling was purposive: those teenagers that clearly matched the research objectives were included in the sample. Our study went one step further: we chose to give teachers and parents a say in the matter since their interactions with the teenagers (or, sadly, lack of interactions with the teenagers) influence the moral, emotional, educational and social formation of the girls whose plight were the objective of the research.

This study employed a cross-sectional design that was mainly descriptive in nature. We chose this design in order to establish an orderly arrangement of the appropriate demographic variables, the risk factors for extramarital pregnancy according to the respondents' input and the inter-relationships of these risk factors with each other, and the overall impact of the independent risk factors on the outcome variable, extramarital pregnancy.

4.1 Sampling Design

The size of the sample was dictated by the resources available for doing an investigation within a neighborhood where girls were to be found who were pregnant outside of marriage. The availability of teachers and parents involved in the formation of the girls was also a consideration in determining the sample size. Given our limitations in choosing the size and the parameters of the sample, we would place our research on the level of a pilot study.

This study consisted of a sample of 50 respondents who were assessed according to research objectives as appropriate sources of data. The sample included not only teenagers (13-19 years old), but parents and teachers who were involved in the moral, educational, social and emotional formation of the teenagers. It is easily observed from the following table that the teenagers constituted 60% of the sample.

Sample Size Determination

Category of respondents	Sample size	Percentage %
Teenagers (13-19 years old)	30	60
Teachers	10	20
Parents	10	20
Total	**50**	**100**

4.2 Data Collection Methods

This research employed a purposive approach in the effort to collate all the information supplied because the research focused on harmonizing respondent input with the research objectives.

Observation

The researchers made use of nonobtrusive observation techniques within the milieu where the interviews took place both to capture the parameters of the social imaginary at work and to assess emotional and nonverbal dimensions to the responses of research participants. At times, the milieu at issue was the home of an affected girl, a school or a dispensary where the girls may have been enrolled previous to the pregnancy and perhaps were now looking for assistance, understanding, or health services.

Interview

Usually, the interviewer had on hand a set of written questions which were posed in a structured and methodical fashion (Gray, 2007). For some questions related to the reasons why a teenager may become pregnant, several options were given in order to allow the respondent to indicate as accurately as possible her perception of what occasions teen pregnancy. The researcher used the interview method of data collection when the circumstances warranted it.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a form which is prepared and distributed for the purpose of securing responses. Generally, these questions are factual and designed for securing information about circumstances, attitudes, behaviors, notions of the self, notions about others or interpersonal notions involving both self and others. The respondent is not in communication with other respondents at the time the questionnaire is administered. The utility of the questionnaire coincides with its capacity to invite comparisons among all the respondents who are filling out the same questionnaire. The present research made use of both closed- and open-ended questions.

For the purpose of achieving validity and reliability, questionnaires were designed in such a way that they captured relevant information for the research objectives. Validity explains the suitability of the data for gaining insight into the research objectives. Reliability means that if the research is repeated by the respondents or independent observers with the same methods they will acquire the same results or data (Kothari, 2003). Valid and reliable data ensure that the community will accept the results according to their harmony or disharmony with the research objectives. The research instruments were pre-tested so as to ensure whether the questions were acceptable, answerable and well understood. The pre-tested instruments helped to identify questions which might have caused ambiguity and contradiction.

Ethical Parameters for the Use of a Questionnaire

Before starting the research process, the researcher asked for permission from all relevant authorities to allow the study. The researcher informed the respondents in advance about the aim of conducting the study and the need for their willingness to participate in the study. The researcher promised respondents that the information they were going to provide would be treated with utmost confidentiality to enhance their trust in the researcher who committed herself to keep confidentiality with all the information she gathered from the field. The researcher used all the data she collected exclusively for the purpose of the study.

5.0 Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

This section of the article presents and discusses the major findings concerning factors contributing to teenage pregnancies in Morogoro Municipal at Nanenane Ward according to the observations and opinions expressed by the respondents. Their input came forth from the contexts of their experience, personal history and perceptions about teenage pregnancies in Nanenane Ward. The researchers recognized the possibility of repression and dissociation for painful memories and the possibility of

rationalization, deflection, minimalizing and denial for any memories involving guilt, anger, resentment or shame.

5.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

5.2.1 Level of Education

Eighty-six percent (43) of the respondents completed secondary education, and the remaining 14% (7) primary school. The researcher inquired about their age and found that those whose ages lay between 13-15 years (77% of the teens) were found to have secondary education but the remaining (23%) had a primary education; for those within the 16-18-year-old age group, only 16% stopped at the primary education level, while 84% possessed some degree of secondary education. Those within the 19-and-above age group were all found to have received some secondary education.

The results reflected that, according to the respondents, the level of education was likely to contribute to teenage pregnancies. Those with a lower level of education were more likely to be exposed to the risk of pregnancy because they had little or no knowledge about sexual ethics and seemed to be unaware of the loss of human dignity involved in extramarital intercourse and the use of contraceptives.

Ogori's study in Nigeria (2013) concerning the causes of teenage pregnancies seemed to indicate that an incomplete education was an effect rather than the cause of the problem. From the observations, interviews and questionnaire responses available to the present researchers in Nanenane, the most pertinent conclusion is this: there is certainly a connection between a lower level of education and the possibility of a teenage pregnancy, but a cause-effect relationship is difficult to prove.

(A) Those with less education may become pregnant because of a lack of a mental foothold in prudential decisions about the choice of friends, extramarital ethics, and the moral dangers associated with contraceptives – this would mean that it is the lack of education that causes the vulnerability to teenage pregnancy.

(B) Pregnancy, on the other hand, becomes an entry into the life vocation of motherhood. Because the vocation absorbs time, energy and priorities, education loses its importance for the mother.

This is especially true for teens who are well established in their marriages – a situation that makes the woman and child secure if the father is conscientious about his paternal responsibility. Here, then, it is the pregnancy that causes the diminished opportunity for formal education – at least for the time being.

A study conducted by Maureen Were in Kenya (2007) on the determinants of teenage pregnancy seemed to emphasize evidence for lack of schooling as a cause of teenage pregnancy. Her conclusion introduces yet another consideration: the determination of cause and effect may depend on the particular place and culture where the research is conducted. She discovered that in the Busia District of Kenya the girls' educational level had a significant influence on the probability of teenagers giving birth, with non-schooled adolescents and those with only an ordinary level of education at the primary school level manifesting symptoms of greater vulnerability to sexual exploitation and consequent pregnancy.

5.2.2 Age of the Respondents

Age of the respondents is one of the most important characteristics in understanding the views of adolescents and young adults about particular problems related to pregnancy. Age can be an indicator of the level of maturity of any given individual.

As we said in the opening pages of this research, we recognize the international policy of categorizing 15- to 19-year-old adolescents as teenagers. Due to local circumstances in Nanenane, however, and the actual composition of our sample, we made the prudential decision to give the parameter of 13- to 18-years-old for our teenagers.

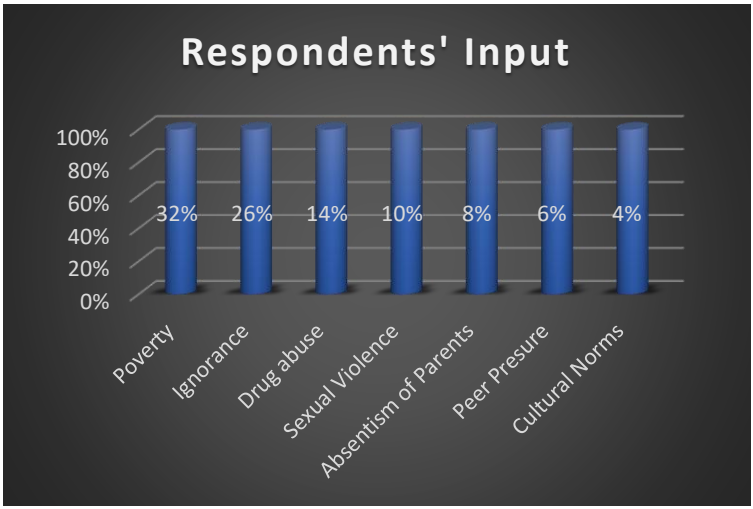
This shift in the parameter caused no significant variation in the attainment of research objectives.\

The consequent age groupings implies that the respondents involved in the study were both the teenagers themselves with whom the study was concerned, and the age group immediately above them, i.e., those who were in a position to comment from their experience on the research objectives.

5.2.3 Gender of the Respondents

Gender is an important variable when considering sexual activity as the major topic of the research. The group of respondents consisted of 74% females and 26% males. This means that among the 50 respondents who were questioned, 37 were female and 13 were male.

The source of this input was the data collected by the primary researcher, Z. Mkumba. The respondents' opinions about the causes of teenage pregnancy were:



5.3 Responses concerning the Causes of Teenage Pregnancies

Even though many of the respondents were not teenagers, all of them were involved with teenagers on a daily basis and so were included in the data collection. The answers showed that 16 (32%) of the respondents perceived poverty to be the cause; 13 (26%) mentioned ignorance, primarily, ignorance about how to protect themselves from unethical sexual decisions; 7 (14%) mentioned drug abuse; 5 (10%) affirmed the real threat of sexual violence; and 4 (8%) reported the absenteeism of parents as a cause.

Three (6%) of the respondents indicated peer pressure; one of the respondents reported that negative cultural norms, negative

cultural values and incidents of rape contributed to teenage pregnancies; and last, one mentioned that the shortage of pills, devices and methods for blocking the conception of unwanted children – or at least the lack of access to the available methods – contributed to teenage pregnancies. This person, however, seemed to be ignorant of the unethical character of contraceptives and their capacity to increase immoral sexual activity.

According to this finding, it was evident that those involved in the lives of teenagers and the teenagers themselves believe that poverty occasions unethical sexual activity outside of marriage and so can increase the possibility that a teenage girl is going to get pregnant. The girls were prostituting themselves: they felt forced to look for sexual partners to give them money. Ignorance was also a menace because without proper information, teenagers are more likely to be lured into immoral behavior.

The researcher who collected the data and conducted the interviews reached her conclusion that in Nanenane, the factors most operative in the plight of the women who became pregnant were (a) poverty, (b) lack of education (and the consequent ignorance), and (c) limited awareness of how to act prudently so as to avoid all sexual intercourse before one has made a full marriage commitment. The teenagers presenting these factors in their demographic and daily schemes of recurrence were the ones who seemed to be at a higher risk.

5.3.1 Poverty as an Operative Factor for Teenage Pregnancies

The researchers wanted to know whether poverty contributed towards teenage pregnancies by asking the respondents whether their parents were in a position to provide them with their basic needs. One-third of the respondents said that they do not get everything they need from their parents. Poverty was a factor that could lead to teenage pregnancies because many of the respondents said that they were forced to consider other possibilities for economic assistance since their parents could not afford to provide them with the essentials or give them financial assistance at critical junctures. Respondents seemed to show a lack of awareness that even for poor girls, sexual activity outside of marriage gravely

impairs their human dignity and reduces them to a lifestyle of being used constantly as sexual things.

5.3.2 The Influence of Peer Pressure on Teenagers' Behavior

The researchers wanted to know from the respondents whether their peer friends had any influence on their behavior, that is, if they encouraged them to engage in sexual activities. Granted that the sample size was small, it was quite eye-opening that the respondents mentioned ignorance, drug abuse (including the use of alcohol enough to diminish inhibitions), sexual violence and parents' frequent absenteeism from the home as more likely to occasion exposure to the possibility of teen pregnancy than peer pressure. Only 6 (12%) of the 50 respondents said, yes, peers influenced their behavior.

The six respondents that noted the occurrence of peer influence reported that their fellow peers encouraged them to participate in sexual activities in order to get money; others did so in order for them not to look outdated.

5.4 Responses concerning Measures to be Taken in Order to Solve the Problem by the Government

The researcher wanted to measure the respondents' degree of understanding and insight about the ramifications of teenage pregnancy by asking them what they thought the government should do in order to solve the problem. These were their responses: nineteen (38%) said that the government should make sure that natural family planning is available for everybody. These same respondents suggested that teenagers should pray to God for the wisdom and the courage to always do what is right in their relationships with the opposite sex. Twenty-six (52%) of them recommended the creation of youth education programmes that would focus on morally acceptable reproductive health with an emphasis on continence, abstinence and natural family planning, and a gender help desk in order for teenagers to be educated on how to avoid early sexual activity and how to report any matter that would arise as a result of sexual abuse that they might suffer. Five (10%) of the respondents commented that schools everywhere

should teach teenagers that the love in sexual intercourse is for having children within marriage and they can only find eternal happiness when they obey God's will.

This study brought to light the fact that every teenager had different ideas on how the problem could be handled. The majority suggested that the government create youth education programs on ethically tenable reproductive health and a gender help desk in order for teenagers to be educated on family planning and the freedom and intelligence to avoid early sexual activity. Others commented on the availability of natural family planning for everybody. A few said that schools everywhere should teach teenagers that the love in sexual intercourse is for having children and they can only find eternal happiness when they obey God's will.

A study by Opeyemi (2010) on teenage pregnancies in Africa suggests that a practical approach for reducing teenage pregnancy rate is to implement strategies and policies aimed at improving the female literacy rate. Nyakubega (2010) talks of discouraging early marriages for young girls and instead focusing mostly on their education.

5.4.1 The Influence of Peer Pressure on Teenagers' Behavior

This study unearthed the fact that giving in to peer pressure was not a major concern for teenage girls. The majority of the respondents highlighted their insistence that parents give their girls all the necessities of life so that they could feel not only a sense of self-worth but also carry within their hearts an abiding conviction that their parents were really loving them to the point of great self-sacrifice. The respondents focused on the need to learn good ethics and to have consistent access to adolescent friendly clinics. They gave the advice that such clinics should be furnished with the means necessary for passing knowledge to the girls concerning their bodies and the dignity that their bodies deserve and how to protect themselves from early sexual activity that more often than not blemishes the dignity.

Others commented on educating girls on how to protect themselves by introducing reproductive health education in

schools. Such an education would present with clarity and conviction the moral dimension of reproductive health.

6.0 Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Summary

The study was conducted with the overall objective of discerning the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancies at Nanenane ward in Morogoro Municipal. The assessment was done by establishing four objectives. First, to determine whether poverty contributed to teenage pregnancies; second, to determine whether an inadequate level of education contributed to teenage pregnancies; third, to determine whether peer pressure contributed to teenage pregnancies; and, fourth, what kind of solutions the respondents were ready to recommend in order to reduce or eliminate teenage pregnancies that occurred outside of stable, valid marriages.

The targeted population consisted of 30 (60%) teenage girls out of 50 respondents who were selected. Ten (20%) of the respondents were parents, and ten (20%) respondents were teachers: the criterion for selecting these subgroups was their involvement with the age group that constituted the focus of the study.

The dependent variable was teenage pregnancy while the independent variables were poverty, peer pressure, level of education (represented in its inadequacy by the term “ignorance”), low access to family planning services, teenage drinking, sexual abuse and absentee parents. It is obvious that the number of independent variables exceeds those indicated in the research objectives. The additional variables came forth principally from the empirical literature review and from what the respondents wrote or said when their views were sought by open-ended questions either in a written or oral format. The respondents’ understanding of the role of family planning clinics and the role of cultural norms, for example, were elicited as responses to open-ended questions.

The main variables that were used in the study were poverty, inadequate levels of education that leave lacunae both in the moral

attempts to make good judgments in the area of sex outside of marriage and in the understanding of the dignity of the body and the person whose presence is perceived by means of physicality. Other variables that were mentioned by respondents were those of low access to family planning services, peer pressure, drinking and drug usage, sexual abuse and parent absenteeism.

One result that is of note is the fact that when the respondents referred to one primary cause for teenage pregnancies, a majority of respondents mentioned three factors: poverty, ignorance (as described above) and drug usage. Seventy-two percent (36 respondents) mentioned these three variables as the primary cause – 66% constituted a majority.

The researcher observed that there was confusion about the meaning of family planning services: some thought of the dignity of the woman and so they considered the ethical dimension of sexual activity. For those who emphasized women's dignity, natural family planning and sexual activity within marriage were the only ethically viable alternatives since any activity outside of marriage that involves contraceptives reduces the woman and most likely the man to the level of sexual objects to be used and not loved.

Consequently, a family planning service that advocated the immoral use of technology in order to entice teenagers into immoral sexual activity could not be considered a "service" by these respondents. The respondents were becoming aware of another difficulty: today's contraceptives are also abortifacient and starve newly conceived children to death when the spermatozoa happen to reach the woman's ova. The contraceptives are produced in such a way that the new zygotes are not able to implant themselves within the wall of the uterus in order to get necessary nourishment.

Since contraceptives increase the likelihood of immorality and decreases the likelihood that the woman will be respected, such reproductive health centers that make contraceptives available were a reason why teenage pregnancies would increase, not decrease.

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were used in order to gain the most panoramic picture possible of how respondents viewed the teleology of teenage pregnancies. Primary data were used because it enabled the researcher to get more recent information straight from the field. These data were collected using questionnaires and interviews because of their ability to gather a lot of information. Validity and reliability issues were considered within the instruments of data collection by the sources mentioned in the Literature Review in the study in order to ensure consistency of the work, both internal consistency and consistency with the methodologies and findings of other researchers.

Calculations were made for the entire group of 50 concerning sex outside of marriage. Findings revealed that 40 (80%) of the study participants had already had sex. Only 13 (26%), however, were married. This means that there were 27 – regardless of age – that had sexual relations outside of marriage. This means that over half the group had acted unethically in sexual matters.

The findings revealed that majority of respondents said that their sexual behaviors were influenced by their friends and poverty. No one spoke of their personal moral weakness.

Those who were younger were more at risk of being impregnated than their counterparts due to ignorance, especially in moral matters. The results reflected that the level of education, poverty, and drug abuse were factors that contribute to teenage pregnancies. To a lesser extent, sexual violence, peer pressure, absentee parents, inaccessibility to morally viable family planning clinics and cultural norms factored into the reasons for teenage pregnancy.

Education in sexual ethics and pregnancy preparation strategies for those with impending marriages were recommended based on the results. The recommendations focused on developing youth friendly services for teenagers, revisiting current marriage law to avoid early marriages, initiating community-based programmes in rural settings to educate girls on how to protect themselves from sexual activity outside of marriage and creating pregnancy preparation programmes for those ready to marry.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendation Regarding the Influence of Level of Education on Teenage Pregnancies

Based on the findings, the government of Tanzania should contribute towards the effort to reduce teenage pregnancies outside of marriage by reducing – or even better – eliminating – the situations that tempt teenagers to engage in unethical sexual behaviors before they have committed themselves to spouses in a valid marriage. The government could improve the ethical and social health of the entire society by stable funding for comprehensive education for teenagers of both sexes to make sure that they reach a certain level in education that will help them to increase their appreciation of their own human dignity, a dignity that becomes even more precious with the preservation of upright ethical values.

A practical approach to reducing the rate of unintended teenage pregnancies and increasing the rate of those pregnancies that bring vigor and moral fiber to young families where the parents accept their identities as mother and father should be to implement strategies and policies aimed at improving the female literacy rate, the female awareness of her freedom to make upright decisions in matters of sexual activity regardless of her economic conditions, and health care expenditures when she is indeed pregnant.

6.2.2 Recommendation Regarding the Influence of Peer Pressure on Teenage Pregnancies

It seemed pathetically noticeable that the respondents were not inclined to blame peer pressure as a cause of out-of-wedlock teen pregnancy. Nevertheless, they were inclined to mention alcohol abuse and sexual violence as factors to be considered. Any behaviors associated with alcohol usage and sexual activity outside of marriage point to sensual or emotional stimulation or at least forms of gratification that can mushroom into addictions so that the ones experiencing them feel as if they cannot live without them.

The pathetic dimension of the road to addiction is the fact that even if peers are not the ones pressuring teens into gratification-seeking behavior, peers may still be the ones to condone it to such

a degree that the one victimizing himself with a drug, liquor or sexual activity may feel that his peers are simply friends that are accepting him with all his or her behavioral quirks no matter how immoral they may be.

Parents should guide their children on choosing the right company to hang out with in order to avoid being involved in bad company which may lead them astray not only to sexual immorality but to many forms of self-destructive behavior.

Teenage girls should create the habit of visiting health facilities in order to be educated on ways to avoid getting sexually active and to avoid becoming sexual objects. This means that they should have the opportunity to learn why contraceptives always devalue the woman to the level of a sexual thing to be used and always devalue the child as a nuisance to a woman rather than as a gift from God. When girls receive a morally upright education they are able to pass the knowledge on to their fellow peers and help them avoid listening to misleading advice from others regarding different forms of sexual activity.

In tandem with the government's new emphasis on the education of girls and young women and men in sexual/ marital ethics, the government can consider revising the current marriage law to legally declare a cutoff age for women to become spouses and mothers. From this study it was noted that young girls do not know the constitutional age for marriage and giving birth; and the youth should be directed how to access family services.

6.2.3 Recommendations Regarding the Influence of Poverty on Teenage Pregnancies

Our study showed that a good number of respondents accused poverty of pushing teenagers towards pregnancy. We suggest that with the help of funding from the federal government and the regional government, especially from those sectors that manifest a lively interest in the moral integrity of the country and its citizens, effective acts of encouragement should stimulate what is necessary for local community development and economic empowerment. These economic acts of encouragement could then set in motion the endeavor to eliminate abject poverty and the lapse into sexual promiscuity.

Of paramount importance is the education of teenagers and young adults so that they realize that poverty does not mean that they lack the freedom to live morally upright lives. A girl or young woman may have nothing to eat: she does not have to give her body away to be used as a sexual plaything.

Families should be empowered by the government and other stakeholders who can provide them with the skills of entrepreneurship and create a conducive environment for parents to effectively participate in economic activities. Teenagers should be enlightened on the consequence of having immoral sex at any stage of their lives, and parents should be first to meet the needs of each child with the conviction that the child's first need is not economic.

6.2.4 Recommendation for Further Studies

Further research might concentrate on sexual ethics. Girls who do not make their bodies available to boys or men who are not their husbands do not get pregnant. To study the causes for sexual activity outside a valid marriage is a vital need in the field of research.

Researchers could also give thoughtful consideration to the methodology and content of community-based programmes that could be initiated in rural settings in order to educate teenagers so that they come to know the demerits of some weak cultural norms and values especially those of forcing young girls to be married below an acceptable age. Researchers could investigate how to facilitate the establishment of adult-teenage communication programmes that carry guidelines so that adults may grow in their ability to effectively relay to young people the information necessary to implant within the young people the convictions that compel them to reduce risky and unethical behavior.

Studies could concentrate on the possibility of unintended pregnancy prevention programmes that operate in tandem with sexual exploitation prevention programmes where guidelines are made available and utilized appropriately in all areas where teenagers tend to congregate. There should be a gender help desk specifically for young girls who are tempted to engage in sexual

activity outside of marriage, or who may suffer rape, or may be forced to enter into extramarital sexual relations. In brief, researchers should seek to establish the parameters that create an ethically and socially healthy environment for girls, boys, young women and young men who wish to preserve their purity and trustworthiness as human beings and bring into the world children who reflect the goodness and integrity of their parents.

7.0 Conclusion

Teenage pregnancies are still a major health concern in Tanzania, Africa and elsewhere in the world. The roots of this concern lie in a far graver problem: sexual immorality. The increase in the number of teenagers who have sexual relations outside of marriage is causing a great concern and is becoming a critical issue. Teenage mothers' socio-economic advancement, education and job opportunities are limited and are made even more so by premature pregnancy. The present study found that poor knowledge about the ethics of sexual activity outside of marriage, almost complete ignorance of natural family planning, lack of awareness of the tendency of contraceptives to impair severely the dignity of both the woman, the man and the child, and in general a low educational level are the main factors contributing to high teenage pregnancy rate in Morogoro Municipal at Nanenane Ward.

Especially noticeable was the very lax and casual attitude of respondents in their attitude towards the questions posed to them about the place of God in their sexual lives. There is a high demand for addressing these problems in order to re-create an ethically healthy society and also to stimulate every sector of society to give their urgent attention to these matters in order to prevent family life from disintegrating completely.

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THEOLOGY

Is the Worship of Images a Worthy Religious Act? St. John Damascene's Response and its Applicability to Worship in Spirit and in Truth

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INTRODUCTION

In his *Apologia Against Those Who Decry Holy Images*, St. John Damascene (c.675 – c. 749) argued in favor of images. He wrote these arguments against those who subscribed to Iconoclasm (c. 726 – 843). Iconoclasm was a movement that evolved for the purpose of attacking the use of religious images. Although this work was written so long ago, it is still a meaningful work today.

There are still groups that criticize or speak vociferously against holy images in our time. As he said in his introduction, "The Church founded by God is beaten by rushing waves. I cannot keep silent because the Scripture warns me (Heb 10:38) and encourages me (Ez 33:8; Ps 119:46). The Church and her teachings are facing calamities as if the Church did not know God as He is." He emphasizes that he is motivated to write the apologia not for vainglory, but – as God is his witness – to put into action his zeal for the truth. He has used his talent (Mt 25:20ff) as God has intended him to use it.

The apologies of St. John Damascene are still a masterpiece for defending the reverence for religious images in our time. Indeed,

the Church is experiencing the same challenges as those that confronted her in the time of St. John of Damascus. The point of focus in the present work is to reflect on image and worship as St. John Damascene did in his three treatises. To this end we put together a constellation of his ideas as he has articulated them in his three treatises under the titles given below.

St. John offered several defenses of icons by drawing from the existence of divinely approved images in nature and Scripture and by anchoring them in the reality of the Incarnation. Where appropriate, he merged with his ideas those dimensions of the Platonic metaphysics of images that harmonize with the diverse details of creation that, as the work of God, participate in ascending prototypes.

This work is divided into two parts. The first part deals with image (icon) in its genres and purposes. Mention is made of limitations in the usage of icons. These limitations were occasioned by prohibitions that, in turn, were necessitated by tenets of the Mosaic law and the tendency of some Jews to violate those tenets.

The second part focuses on the worship of images.

1.0 On Image (Icon)

1.1 Meaning and Kinds of Images

In defining "image", St. John Damascene categorized various genres of image to give more exact specifications.

1. Image as likeness of the original (natural image).
2. Image as expressive of a future event.
3. Image as expressive of events that have taken place.

Image as likeness of the original.

St. John Damascene offers the definition: "An image is a likeness of the original with a certain difference, for it is not an exact reproduction of the original." The stress is that of likeness. Likeness implies that it is not totally the same as the original. There are certain differences. "The Son is the living, substantial, unchangeable Image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), bearing in Himself the Father in his entirety, being in all things equal to Him."

The Gospels revealed that for St. Philip the difference was that of the visibility: "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." Jesus' response, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father," reflects the Greek notion that the Son is the Visibility of the Father. The revelation is that of a single God, both in his Visibility and in his Invisibility (cf. John 14:7-9).

We as human beings grasp easily the visible things which direct us to the understanding of the invisible. The focus here is the grasping of the invisible. That means understanding God through His Son (the true image of God because he is the true God). Jesus came to reveal who God is to us.

God is invisible, but Jesus reveals God by revealing God in his Visibility, as his Image. All other qualities are equal; they are distinguished only by the fact that the Son abides in the Father as the Only-begotten. The Father is the One who begets. Another distinction is that the Father does not proceed from the Son; the Son rather proceeds from the Father. The mutual abiding, however, in their Oneness as God is the Perichoresis which reminds us that the Father and the Son exist in eternity only by virtue of their Oneness with each other.

Hence, with all these distinctions, it must be noted that through the Son "the Father is what He is", the Father who generates.[1] Without the Son, the Father is not who he is.

Image as expressive of a future event mystically foreshadowing what is to happen.

The image may express something that is going to happen in the time to come. It is mystically expressed. St. John Damascene cited some examples: "The ark represents the image of our Lady, Mother of God; so do the staff and the earthen jar. The serpent brings before us Him who is brutalized on the Cross – the bite of the original serpent in all its insidiousness; the sea, water and the cloud, on the other hand, bring before our eyes the grace of baptism. (I Cor 10:1).

In daily life the human person always draws images of the future. In every aspect of life – be it social, political, economic –

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[1] Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia against those who Decry Holy Image, I, 3. (Hereafter, St. John Damascene, Apologia,).

we have the tendency to look towards the horizon and draw the image of the future.

Image as expressive of events that have taken place.

These images are expressed as purposeful reminders. They can evoke wonder, or present to the forefront an honorable, or dishonorable deed, or good or evil act, in order to help those who look upon these significant traces of memory at a later date and learn from them. In other words, these images that remind people of what is going to deserve their attention in the future, can sway them to forego bad choices and do what integrity demands.

This kind of image is in the form of literary works or sculptures. One example is the Law that God had inscribed on tablets; other examples are the recordings of the lives of holy men, an enterprise that God himself ordered; under God's authority, there were also physical artifacts to be preserved in remembrance, as, for instance, the earthen jar and the staff in the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 34:28; Heb 9:4).

Today, in our daily activities we preserve in writing what we have done in anticipation and in preparation for the future and in remembrance of all that is significant to remember. We can read books of various forms because people preserved their ideas in writing. We visit museums and learn what happened in the past because works esteemed as significant have been preserved in writing and in sculptured forms. In many cities today, there are a number of monuments of various types: heroes of the nation or city, signs of peace after a long time of war, and of figures important to the populace concerned.

We are all aware that when we do not preserve images related to what has happened in the past, we will remain ignorant of connections, we will remain oblivious to the harmony of this world, how it was before, how it is now and how it will be in the future. There will be no point of reference. Analogously speaking, the same applies when we take away all sacred images: we will be out of harmony with God.

To conclude our discussion concerning the kinds of images and their significance, I can say that St. John Damascene attempted to give the meaning and kinds of image by distinguishing the

emphases offered by various time periods in history. He joined the present with the past and the future. These three periods are discernible in their relatedness within the life of man: a person understands the present as a transition from a past that is either known or yet to be explored, and he understands the future as an anticipation of the past and present.

Faith follows the same rhythm of the periods of past, present and future. There is no strong religion without a convinced recognition of the past, how was it before. The present is not something to argue about, and of course every religion has its future, the destiny of the believer. Natural image is very important and is that upon which St. John Damascene insists. It is the true image (Vera Icone) and natural concept. Other kinds of image are best described as imitations of the natural image. Knowing the meaning and kinds of image leads us to understand well the purpose of image.

1.2 The Purpose of Image

In all three apologies, St. John Damascene explains that images serve four purposes: First, every image is for revelation and representation of something hidden; second, image serves as a teaching aid to the illiterate; third, image serves as a device to communicate greater knowledge – it manifests and makes public secret things; and lastly, images serve as reminders of significant events.

First, image is for the purpose of revelation. It represents something hidden.[2] St. John Damascene declares that it is not possible to depict God in himself, but it is not only possible, but necessary to depict him as incarnate. As incarnate, he remains God. By means of the mystery of the incarnation, the Word made Flesh reveals the invisible God.

Before the Incarnation, we had a vague idea about God because we are capable of discerning what is invisible from what is visible. It is not easy to depict an invisible reality for those who do not exercise intellectual discernment. Only by means of God's

[2] St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 19.

revealed word can we realize that God sent his Son to reveal Himself to us.

The constitution of man is body and spirit. The spirit is veiled by the body; physicality alone does not give the human person a clear knowledge of what is invisible nor of future things, nor of things apart and distant, because what is physical is circumscribed by place and time.

Second, images are used as teaching aids to the illiterate. St. John Damascene says, "The image is a memorial, just what words are to a listening ear. What a book is to the literate is analogically what an image is to the illiterate. The image speaks to the sight as words do to the ear; it brings us understanding."[3]

On the basis of this statement, I can add that a human being is endowed with five external senses which are skin, nose, mouth, eyes, and ears. Temperature and pain sensors may be added. These help one to understand. But not all of us have all senses functioning. There are some who are blind, some are deaf, some are dumb, some are numb to pain… but all have the right to understand whatever they can through the sensory capacities available to them. Forbidding images is humiliating to those who cannot read and can even reach the level of an infringement of human rights.

Moreover, those who can read also use the aid of diagram or image. So, images are important to all human beings who can grasp them. When faith promotes images, it does not separate those who do not know how to read. It suggests various methods of learning and understanding, all of which can be applied to the understanding of their religion.

Third, image was devised for greater knowledge, and for the manifestation and making public of secret things. Hence images are meant to be pure benefits and helps to spiritual health, so that by showing things and making them known, we may arrive at the hidden ones to which the visible realities directly link us. In this fashion, there grow the desire to emulate what is good, and to shun and hate what is evil.[4] Therefore the purpose of an image is the

[3] St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 4.

[4] Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 19.

manifestation and display of the hidden – hidden because either it is invisible or it is not present, whether in place or in time. The image leads us to a reality that remains hidden within the physical milieu.[5]

Fourth, images are there for the purpose of recalling what deserves to be recalled from the past. "And God ordered twelve stones to be taken out of Jordan and specifies why: for He says: 'When your son asks you the meaning of these stones, tell him how the water left the Jordan by the divine command, and how the ark was saved and the whole people'" (Jos 4:21-22).

What we learn, we learn from history. We don't know all the significant events without referring to our history. Images provoke speculations about the purpose of God's past actions: why did God tell us such and such; what are we to tell our sons when they ask about a past event; are they to be told that it was like this or like that. This is how we manage to live in our society.

I would like to conclude what I have said about recalling those significant events of the past that God wanted the people to recall by citing St. John Damascene when he said, "To Christ our Lord it is worthy to record images of the saving work of God and the wonders [associated with that work], so that when my child asks me, 'What is this?' I may respond that God the Word became man, and that for His sake not only did Israel pass through the Jordan, but all the human race regained their original happiness."[6]

I would like to synthesize my reflections on the purpose of an image by affirming that an image serves as a medium for communicating knowledge. The revelation and presentation of something that is hidden is knowledge. When an image serves as a teaching aid to the illiterate, that image becomes a pathway for the pursuit of knowledge. Devices that help in the pursuit of knowledge by God's gracious design may become even more extensive so that a person enriches his or her perspective and accepts the new knowledge offered. This system of opening the human person to new knowledge vis-à-vis specifiable images is a cardinal benefit of images.

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5 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 19.

6 St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 4-5.

The ability to remember and recall is the source of knowledge. The manifestation and making public of sacred things is the knowledge that enables one to pursue salvation. The one who is against images, therefore, also is against knowledge.

Where do the Scriptures prohibit images? What follows establishes some clarifications.

1.3 On Biblical Prohibitions

Biblical prohibition of images enters into view with the advent of the Mosaic Law. The prohibitions of the Law, in turn, enter the view of the Chosen People in a particular way with the declaration of the first commandment of God. God prohibited idolatry. The people, on the other hand, were prone at times to worship images in a fashion that seemed idolatrous. Hence this link between idolatry and images becomes a focus for us.

Prohibitions of the Law. God commanded Moses, the transmitter of the law: "You will worship the Lord your God and only him, and not make an image for yourself of anything in heaven above, or on the earth below" (Ex 20:3-4). St. John Damascene says that the whole point of this is that we should not adore created things more than the Creator, nor give true worship to anything but him.

He declares that the Law is the forerunner of images. It does not forbid images *per se*. Indeed, the law itself is an image. It is inscribed in the book or in the wood or stones, analogous to the two plates of God's Ten Commandments. Therefore, according to St. John Damascene, there is no contradiction between the law and the image. "The law was not an image itself, but it shrouded the image. In the words of the letter to the Hebrews we read, 'The law contains the shadow of the goods to come, not the image of those things' (Heb 10:1)".[7] However, to discover the truth, the human being must know the scriptural teaching that there is a time for everything (Eccl 3:1).

Lapses into adultery handicap true worship of God. God forbids image-making because of idolatry (Dt 5:7-9; 12:3; Ex 34:17; Acts 17:29). The Jews were prone to idolatry. Their idolatry

[7] John Damascene for Icons, 3.

seems clearly evident. The Scripture bears witness that when Moses went up to Mount Sinai and persevered in prayer to God, God gave him the gift of the Law. While Moses was receiving the Law, they arose against Aaron, the priest of God, saying: "Make us gods who may go before us. For as to Moses, we know not what has befallen him" (Ex 32:1ff).

1.4 What does Scripture Really Mean by the Word "Image"?

In the Scripture, we read some texts that promote images, but we encounter other texts that forbid images. God forbids images according to the era and the milieu. "God forbade them to make any graven image, as Moses says in Deuteronomy: 'And the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the voice of His words, but you saw not any form at all' (Dt 4:12)".

However, there were times and contexts where God allowed the image. We read that God commanded a hanging of violet, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen in the entrance to the tabernacle, and the design of cherubim in woven work (Ex 37:26:31). And they made also the propitiatory, that is, the oracle of the purest gold, and the two cherubim (Ex 37:6-7). "But he allowed the people to make an image of the cherubim who are finite and who lie in adoration before his throne, overshadowing the mercy-seat. It was fitting that the image of the heavenly choirs should overshadow the divine mysteries."[8] That is to say, that it was appropriate for the angels to keep the divine mysteries in a state of hiddenness.

In these descriptions that touch upon the house of God, therefore, the Scriptural Word of God provides details for objects that define the milieu. Everything is good or bad according to the intention of the doer. St. John Damascene says, "Note how the object of Scripture becomes clear to those who really search it. You must know, beloved, that in every business truth and falsehood are distinguished, and the object of the doer, whether it be good or bad."[9] Therefore, Damascene concludes that God forbade images because of idolatry.

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8 John Damascene for Icons 3.

9 St. John Damascene, Apologia, II, 14.

Regarding the issue of prohibitions specified in the Sacred Scriptures, St. John Damascene proposes that the Scripture should be examined with an enlightened mind. We should enter the deeper meanings of the Scriptural word. If we were not to take this approach, we would fall into misconceptions and contradictions.

2.0 What Concerns the Worship and the Veneration of Matter

When one speaks about the worship of the icon (i.e., the image), what is really worshipped? The Scripture and the Tradition offer reasons for worship. Even though in many circumstances, worship and veneration must be carefully distinguished for the principal reason that worship applies to God while veneration applies to sacred persons (e.g., the saints) and sacred objects (e.g., the altar of the Eucharistic sacrifice), during the course of our explanations we shall use the terms worship and veneration interchangeably.

2.1 What is Really Worshipped?

The first paragraph of the first apology reveals directly the answer concerning who is to be worshipped. St. John Damascene reasoned logically on the basis of the First Commandment of God: "God is one, and I believe in one God, the only one to be worshipped with the worship of *latreia*." This God has the following characteristics: source of all things, without beginning, uncreated, immortal, everlasting, incomprehensible, bodiless, invisible, uncircumscribed, without form. He is the unrestricted act of understanding. Up to this point, the idea of venerating matter was verboten.

However, St. John Damascene had more to say about the worship of the true God: "I believe in one all-substantial being, one divine Godhead in three hypostases, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and I adore Him alone with the worship of *latreia*. I adore one God, one Godhead but three Persons, God the Father, God the Son made flesh, and God the Holy Ghost, one God."[10]

[10] St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 2.

This is the second step which leads us to the understanding of the veneration of matter. Belief in one God who is a Trinity of Persons leads us to worship one God in three Persons.

The Son made flesh connects us to the understanding of the veneration of matter. "I do not adore creation more than the Creator, but I adore the One created as I am, adopting creation freely and spontaneously that He might elevate our nature and make us partakers of His divine nature."[11]

Due to the affirmation of belief in one God, St. John Damascene affirms here that God is the one to be worshipped. "I adore Him alone with the worship of *Latreia*. I do not adore creation more than the creator, but I adore the One created as I am and [hence] adopting creation freely and spontaneously that [by accepting] our nature, he might make us partakers of His divine nature."

I worship my Lord and King clothed in the flesh, not as if it were a garment, or as if He constituted a fourth Person of the Trinity – God forbid. Human nature was not lost in the Godhead but the Word made flesh remained the Word through union (the Hypostatic Union of the two natures, human and divine).

Misunderstandings of the Trinity and, more specifically, the Word made flesh bring to light the fact that there were those who opposed the doctrine of St. John Damascene because they did not have enough understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, especially that which concerns the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, who became man through the incarnation. John Damascene's point of emphasis: "Truly they err, not knowing the scriptures." They do not find the hidden meaning of the Incarnation. It is by not knowing what to worship and who is to be worshipped that leads people to make mistaken analogies (i.e., graven images).

What is really worshipped is the true God. If we made an image of the invisible God, we should in truth do wrong. For it is impossible to make a statue of one who is without body, invisible, boundless and formless. If we made statues of men, and hold them to be gods, worshipping them as such, we should be most impious. But we do neither. For in subsisting as the image of God, who

[11] St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 2.

became incarnate and visible on earth, a man amongst men through His unspeakable goodness, taking upon Himself the shape and the form of flesh, we are not misled. We long to see what hitherto was invisible. As the divine Apostle says, "We see now in a glass darkly" (I Cor 13:12). The image too, is, metaphorically, a dark glass, according to the denseness of our bodies.[12]

The main reason for the worship of what is physical or formed in the manner of an image is because our salvation is made possible through what is of matter. John Damascus said, "Of old, God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed was never depicted. Now, however, when God is seen clothed in flesh, and conversing with men (Bar 3:38) I make an image of the God whom I see. I don't worship matter, I worship the God of Matter who became matter for my sake, and to inhabit matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honoring that matter which works my salvation."[13]

2.2 Reasons for Worshipping God

God is worshipped in the form of *latreia* in order to express admiration and desire, to offer our thanksgiving, to give voice to our need and hope of benefits, to confess our wrongdoing and communicate our contrition for our misconduct.

Worship by way of admiration and desire: We worship God because of His essential glory. He alone is worthy of praise, who receives it from no one, being Himself the cause of all glory and all good. He is light, incomprehensible sweetness, incomparable, immeasurable perfection, an ocean of goodness, boundless wisdom, and power, who alone is worthy to excite admiration, to be worshipped, glorified, and desired.[14]

Worship of thanksgiving: We give thanks for the goods we have received. We must thank God for all created things, and show Him perpetual worship, since from Him and through Him all creation takes its being and subsists (Col 1:16-17). He gives lavishly of His gifts to all, and without being asked. He wishes all to be saved (I

12 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, II, 13.
13 St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 3.
14 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 21.

Tim 2:4), to come to the knowledge of the truth and to partake of His goodness. He is long-suffering with us sinners. He allows His sun to shine upon the just and the unjust, and His rain to fall upon the wicked and the good alike (Mt 5:45). Being the Son of God, He became one of us for our sakes, and made us partakers of His divine nature, so that "we shall be like unto Him" (I Jn 3:2), as St John says in his Catholic epistle.[15]

Worship by articulating the need and hope of benefits: this suggests that without God we can neither do, nor possess anything good. We worship Him, therefore, and ask Him to satisfy our needs and desires, that we may be preserved from evil and arrive at what is good.[16]

Worship of contrition and confession: As sinners, we worship God, and prostrate ourselves before Him, articulating our need for His forgiveness, as it becomes servants. A man may be sorry out of love, or out of the concern that he should lose God's benefits, or out of fear of chastisement. The first is prompted by goodness and desire for God himself, and is the condition of a son: the second is tied to self-interest, the third is slavish.[17]

2.3 Worship in the Scripture

To strengthen his apology, John Damascene brought forward some Scriptural arguments which favor worship. Some of the arguments are as follows: "Have no fear or anxiety; worship is not all the same kind. Abraham worshipped the sons of Emmor, impious men in ignorance of God, when he bought the double cave for a tomb (Gen 23:7; Acts 7:16). Jacob worshipped his brother Esau and Pharaoh, the Egyptian, (Gen 33:3). Joseu and Daniel worshipped an angel of God" (Jos 5:14).

He continues: "It is not matter which I adore; it is the Lord of matter, becoming matter for my sake, taking up His abode in matter and working out my salvation through matter. This is because 'the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us' (Jn 1:14)".

Reverently, we worship His bodily form; and contemplating it, we form some notion of His divine glory. For, as we are composed

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15 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 21.
16 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 21.
17 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 21-22.

of soul and body, and our soul does not stand alone, but is, as it were, shrouded by a veil, it is impossible for us to arrive at intellectual conceptions without corporeal things. Just as we listen with our bodily ears to physical words and understand spiritual things, so, through corporeal vision, we come to the spiritual. On this account Christ took a body and a soul. As man has both one and the other since the nature he joined to his Divine Person is fully human.

Baptism likewise is double, of water and the spirit. The physical Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are invisibly present in what looks like bread and wine but is no longer the substance either of bread or of wine. Prayer and psalmody both involve physical features – the written word, the audible word, the lexicology involved. Everything has a composite signification, a corporeal and a spiritual.

In the Gospel, our Lord Himself said to those who were tempting him under the guise of a question, whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar: "Bring me a coin," and they showed Him a denarius, the equivalent of one day's pay for a worker in Israel. And He asked them whose likeness it was and they said to Him, Caesar's; and He said, "Give to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's" (Mt 22:17-22). The coin bore the likeness of Caesar, so it is his, and you should give it to Caesar. So, the image that bears the likeness of Christ, you should give to Him, for it is His.[18]

2.4 Milestone Tradition

Veneration of images is not only based on the Scripture but also is based on the unwritten Tradition. It is necessary to follow both written and unwritten traditions. "Hence St. Paul says, 'Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned either by word, or by our epistle' (II Thess 2:15). As, then, so much has been handed down in the Church, and is observed down to the present day, why disparage images?"[19]

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18 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, III, 18.

19 St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 6.

"The eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word handed down the teaching of the Church, not only by writing, but also by unwritten tradition. Where does our knowledge of the sacred spot, Mount Calvary or of the Holy Sepulcher come from? … Why do we believe in three baptisms, that is, in three immersions? Why do we adore the Cross? Is it not through tradition?" [20] With these questions, St. John Damascene wanted to show that without tradition there are many truths that we could not know; they could have been forgotten. But because these oral traditions were then set down in writing, we can understand things of the past.

Thus, the Holy Apostle says, "Brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by words, or by our epistle." (II Thess 2:15). Many things have been handed down to the Church by unwritten tradition and have been kept to the present day. Why, then, are there some who slight images? St. John Damascene affirms what is established by patristic tradition, written and unwritten. As the written Gospel has been preached in the whole world, so has it been an unwritten tradition in the whole world to represent by way of image Christ, the incarnate God, to adore the Cross, to venerate physical representations of saints, and to pray with a specific bodily orientation towards the east.[21]

"Accept, therefore, the teaching of Scripture and spiritual writers." Even though the Scripture calls "the idols of heathens silver and gold, and the works of man's hand" (Ps 135:15), it does not forbid the adoration of inanimate things, of man's handiwork. It does declare as abominable, however, the adoration of demons."[22] Here, spiritual writers may refer to the tradition which is not in the scripture. "Do not disturb the boundaries of centuries, put up by your fathers" (Prov 22:28) is the message.

I have reached my conclusion concerning the substance of what really happens in the act of worship or veneration. I have specified what is really worshipped, reasons for worship, worship in the Bible and in the Tradition.

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20 St. John Damascene, Apologia, II, 16.

21 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, II, 16.

22 Cf. St. John Damascene, Apologia, I, 6.

We have touched upon St. John Damascene's insistence that we should worship only when we know what we are worshipping. The incarnation of God's Son is at the foundation of our worship. The practice of worship has its foundation from Scripture and Tradition. I would like to add that today we have a plurality of religions – this was also the situation at the time when Jesus fulfilled his public ministry among the Chosen People.

The way a particular religion worships God may signify its identity that distinguishes it from other religions. When the religion departs from its tradition, it may be liable to collapse or be transformed into another tradition which is not its real identity. Therefore, we should hold on to the tradition which identifies us.

CONCLUSION

From the perspective of St. John Damascene, there is no problem for linking images to God's prerogatives and for advocating worship of images as a practice pleasing to God. The problem is wallowing in a state of ignorance that subjects one to the cleverness of the devil. St. John Damascene gives a commentary on this point:

> The wicked serpent … I mean the devil is wont to wage war in many ways against man, who is made after God's image, and to work his destruction through opposition... At one time he has brought man to worship too many gods, at another not even the true God, ... Some, he has deceived by the misconception of one nature and one substance of the Godhead; some, he has induced to honour three natures and three substances; some, one substance in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity; some two natures and two substances.[23]

By these words, he alerts the People of God to be aware of the cleverness of the devil.

Image is for the sake of knowledge. As John Damascene explained in the manner of a Platonic philosopher, in the process of knowing the invisible we are departing from what is visible. We

[23] St. John Damascene, Apologia, II, 12.

can contemplate God who is invisible through His true visible image Jesus Christ. The prohibition of images in the Old Testament is due to the ignorance and idolatry that prevailed among certain segments of the Chosen People, but after God's total revelation through His Son what is worshipped by means of image is known: it is the Creator.

The incarnation of Christ made clear the issue of image and worship. God made Himself visible through Jesus Christ. Christ is the image of the invisible God. The first to be worshipped is God. But, for the sake of God who is by nature worthy of all worship, we honour and venerate his saints and servants. There is a necessity of worship, and it has its roots in the Scripture and its anchor point in the Tradition.

I would like to finish with some words of St. John Damascene that he uttered at the moment he was making an allusion to a Scripture verse to which he ardently subscribed: "He who walks by faith gains many things. The doubter, on the contrary, is as a wave of the sea torn and tossed; he gains nothing (Jam 1:6). Therefore, let us not seek to learn a new faith, destructive of ancient tradition… as St. Paul says, 'If a man teaches any other gospel than what he has been taught, let him be anathema'" (Gal 1:9).

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"Joy to a man in the answer of his mouth" (Prov 15:23a): A Contextual Reading

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Abstract

Applying rules of biblical and Semitic rhetorical analysis, this brief investigation brings forth a proposal for a contextual reading of Prov 15:23. The analyst considers first its literal context as a result of the internal composition of the passage to which it belongs (15:18–24) and then the biblical context that suggests a synoptic reading of a related passage (14:35–15:4) and lastly broadens the panorama to include other relevant biblical allusions. The respective steps of the analysis were carried out according to the proper analytical norms for sacred texts, namely composition, biblical context and interpretation of the passage (15:18–24). The entire procedure sufficiently demonstrated that an antithetical reading of Prov 15:23 would be a better solution.

Introduction

Proverb 15:23 is generally considered a couplet of statements that are synonymous with each other.

Its second line undoubtedly contains a positive statement:

> And a word in its season, how good [it is]! (23b)

The first line rendered literally sounds as self-congratulatory:

> Joy to a man in the answer of his mouth. (23a)

Therefore, some qualify the syntagma "the answer of his mouth" positively by adding some adjectives as "an apt answer" (RSV, NRSV), "a ready answer" (NJB), "an appropriate answer" (NET).

The Septuagint links v. 23 with the preceding proverb (22), giving to both lines of v. 23 a negative meaning:

> [22] Those who do not honor councils put off deliberations,
> but in the hearts of counsellors abides **counsel**.
> [23] A bad person will not listen to **it** *(it refers to the counsel above)*,
> neither will say anything appropriate or good for the common weal.

In my former analysis of Proverbs 15:18–24, I also treated v 23 as a couplet of statements that were synonymous following the general consensus among scholars.[32]

However, now I see that its literal context calls for a reexamination of the verse. For v. 23, which is parallel to v. 18, is an antithetical proverb and indeed the second lines in both proverbs contain similar ideas:

[18] A man of fury stirs up strife,
but *slow to anger calms contention*.

[23] Joy to a man in the answer of his mouth
and/but *a word in its season, how good (it is)*!

"Slow to anger" that "calms contention" (18b) can be identified with one who is not rushing to give an answer but

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[32] See WITEK, *Dio e i suoi figli*, 173–177. This paper is a revision of my former investigation applying biblical and Semitic rhetorical analysis.

speaks when an appropriate time comes, as 23b states: "a word in its season, how good it is."

Conversely, 18a is a negative statement about a hot-tempered person who "stirs up strife" by reacting instantly without waiting for an appropriate time. Because of the parallelism of both verses such meaning could be implied in 23a. Therefore, let us make a fresh analysis of the entire passage in 15:18–24, for it is a direct literal context for v. 23.

1. Text

[18] A man of fury stirs up strife,
but slow to anger calms contention.
[19] The way of the sluggard (is) like a hedge of thorns,
but the path of the upright[33] is made plain.
[20] A wise son brings joy to the father,
but the foolish man[34] despises his mother.
[21] Folly (is) joy to one lacking heart,
but a man of intelligence makes upright his going.
[22] Plans fail where there is no counsel,[35]

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[33] Since the Septuagint has *andreiōn* "vigorous" some suggest reading *ḥārûṣîm* "diligent" in place of *yᵉšārîm* "the upright" (See Gemser, 69; McKane, 482; Renard, 109; Toy, 311).

[34] Some Hebrew manuscripts, the Septuagint, Syriac version and the Targum read "the son". This could be influenced by 10:1 (TOV, *Textual Criticism*, 39); however, it is not a justification for emending the Masoretic Text as is suggested by BHS and Oesterley, 122. As for the syntagma *kᵉsîl ʾādām*, it is also found in 21:20 and it means "a foolish man" (cf. GJORGJEVSKI, *Enigma*, 98; GKC, 128*l*; Heim, 200; NICCACCI, "Analysing Biblical Hebrew Poetry", 83, note 24). This syntagma could have a function of superlative: "a most foolish among men" (DAHOOD, *Psalms I*, 289; VAN DER WEIDEN, *Le Livre des Proverbes*, 116–117).

[35] The noun *sôd* in 11:13 is rendered as "secrets."

but with many advisers they succeed.[36]
[23] Joy to a man in the answer of his mouth
and a word in its season, how good (it is)!
[24] The path of life (is) upward for the prudent
in order to turn aside from Sheol below.[37]

2. Composition

This passage is formed of three segments (18–19, 20–22 & 23–24). The eternal segments (18–19 & 23–24) with two proverbs each frame the nucleus (20–22) that, in turn, consists of three proverbs.

The proverbs within the external segments (18–19 & 23–24) seem to be disconnected. Nevertheless, there is a direct relationship between the proverbs that comprise the external segments. As mentioned above, the initial proverbs (18 & 23) are closely related.

Similarly, the final proverbs (19 & 24) are also related. The same word *ʾōraḥ* “path” (19b & 24a) occurs in statements stressing positive outcomes: “the path of the upright is made plain” (19b) and “the path of life (is) upward for the prudent” (24a). “To turn aside from Sheol below” that is, from a negative outcome, links with 19a where the

[36] Here is a case of a verb in a singular feminine referring to a subject in plural masculine (cf. GKC, 145*k*; Heim, 200).
[37] This proverb could be an allusion to heaven and hell (COTTINI, *La vita futura*, 73–74; Delitzsch, 237; Gozzo, 262–263; Ginsburg, 279; Kravitz – Olitzky, 152; Mezzacasa, 50–51; NICCACCI, “Sulla vita futura”, 384–385; Steveson, 209–210; Vaccari, 48; VAN DER WEIDEN, *Le Livre des Proverbes*, 117–118). Many, however, think that the idea of retribution in the afterlife would be premature (for instance: Greenstone, 167; McKane, 479–480; Oesterley, 123; Renard, 110; ROBERT, “Le Yahvisme”, 167; Toy, 314; Whybray, 234).

negative outcome is described as follows: “the way of the sluggard (is) like a hedge of thorns.”

A peculiarity of the central segment is a usage of terms that belong to opposing semantic camps, such as “wisdom” and “folly”: “a wise son” (20a) is opposed to “the foolish man” (20b), “folly” and “one lacking heart” (21a) are contrasted with “a man of intelligence” (21b); and “where there is no counsel” (22a) is in contradistinction to “many advisers” (22b).

–	[18] ***’îš***	*Ḥēmâ*	*yᵉgāreh*	*Mādôn*
+	*wᵉ’erek*	*’appayim*	*yašqîṭ*	*rîb.*
–	[19] *derek*	*‘āṣēl*	*Kimśukat*	*Ḥādeq*
+	*wᵉ’ōraḥ*	*yᵉšārîm*	*sᵉlulâ.*	
	……			
+	[20] *bēn*	*ḥākām*	***yᵉśammaḥ***	*’āb*
–	*ûkᵉsîl*	*’ādām*	*bôzeh*	*’immô.*
–	[21] *’iwwelet*	***śimḥâ***	*laḥăsar*	*Lēb*
+	*wᵉ**’îš***	*tᵉbûnâ*	*yᵉyaššer*	*lāket.*
–	[22] *hāpēr*	*maḥăšābôt*	*bᵉ’ên*	*Sôd*
+	*ûbᵉrōb*	*yô‘ăṣîm*	*tāqûm.*	
	……			
–	[23] ***śimḥâ***	*lā**’îš***	*bᵉma‘ănēh*	*Pîw*
+	*wᵉdābār*	*bᵉ‘ittô*	*Mah*	*ṭôb.*
+	[24] *’ōraḥ*	*ḥayyîm*	*lᵉma‘lâ*	*lᵉmaśkîl*
=	*lᵉma‘an*	*sûr*	*mišše’ôl*	*māṭṭâ.*

–	[18] **A man**	of fury	stirs up	strife,
+	but slow	to anger	Calms	contention.
–	[19] ***The way***	of the sluggard	(is) like a hedge	of thorns,
+	but **the path**	of the upright	is made plain.	
	……			

+	20 A son	(who is) wise	**brings joy**	to the father,
–	but the foolish	Man	Despises	his mother.
–	21 Folly	(is) **joy**	to one lacking	heart,
+	but **a man**	of intelligence	makes upright	(his) **going**.
–	22 Fail	The Plans	where there is no	counsel,
+	but with many	Advisers	they succeed.	
–	23 **Joy**	to **a man**	in the answer	of his mouth
+	and a word	in its season,	How	good (it is)!
+	24 **The path**	of life	(is) upward	for the prudent
=	in order	to turn aside	from Sheol	below.

The internal composition of the central kernel of the passage could also be considered concentric. For the external proverbs (20 & 22) describe the positive and negative impact that the wise and the foolish exert upon others, while the central proverb (21) focuses on the subject itself.

Within the central portion, i.e., the nucleus, the noun *śimḥâ* "joy" (21a) can be linked to the verb *yᵉśammaḥ* "brings joy" (20a), but the contexts are different: joy has a positive implication in 20a and a negative one in 21a. The same noun *śimḥâ* appears in 23a[38]: many prefer reading this noun in the positive sense of giving "an apt answer" (see above). However, the "one lacking heart" who finds "joy" in "folly" (21a) is identified with "the foolish man" who "despises his mother" (20b) and with one who acts without "counsel" (22a).

When the passage as a whole is considered, the "one lacking heart" (21a) is identified with "a man of fury" who

[38] 15:21a, 23a are two occurrences of this noun out of eight in the Book of Proverbs and they are found only in the First Solomonic Collection. The nearest occurrences are in 14:13 and 21:15.

"stirs up strife" (18a). Hence "joy to a man in the answer of his mouth" (23a) would rather imply acting in a foolish and impatient manner.

If our proposal for reading 23a is true, then we could establish a strong link between the first line of the central proverb (21a) and the first members of the initial proverbs that constitute the beginning and ending points of the passage (18a & 23a). Conversely, the second line of the central proverb (21b) shows a strong link with the second proverbs of the starting points and endpoints, through the use of terms from the same semantic field, especially in a positive sense "the path of the upright" (19b), "makes upright (his) going" (21b) and "the path of life" (24a).

The same term *'îš* "man" occurs at the nucleus (21b) and in the initial proverbs of the beginning and ending points (18a & 23a).[39] A synonymous term *'ādām,* also rendered as "man", is found in 20b.

As for the final proverb of our passage, it is a synthetic proverb and thus stands out from other proverbs in the passage that are antithetic. We could qualify it as a closing that is unique in its type.

A thematic relationship between the proverbs can be presented as follows:

Speech and its negative and positive consequences		18
	Two ways: negative and positive consequences	19
	Wise vs foolish and their impact on parents	20
	Folly of the senseless and the upright of intelligence	21
	Absence or presence of advisers: their impact on others	22

[39] The other closest instances are 14:17 (separated by 35 proverbs from 15:18) and 16:2 (separated by 11 proverbs from 15:23).

Speech and its negative and positive consequences	23
Way of life: positive consequences	24

3. Biblical Context

Positive and negative consequences of speech

The composition shows a strong link between vv. 18 and 23. We may now look at another passage (14:35–15:4) of the same pattern (14:24–15:24) in which there are found three antithetical proverbs about speech (in the panel below highlighted in gray):[40]

14:35 The favor of **a king** and his *wrath*	Is toward a servant of understanding, is (toward) him who causes shame.
15:1 A gentle answer but a painful word	turns away *fury*, raises up *anger*.
.....	
2 The tongue of the wise but the mouth of the foolish	makes knowledge good, pours out folly.
.....	
3 In every place watching the evil	the eyes of **the Lord**, and the good.
4 A healing **tongue** but perverseness in it	(is) a tree of life, (is) a breaking in the spirit.

In 15:1a is used the same noun *ma‘ănēh* “answer” as in the proverb we are discussing (23a). “A gentle answer” (1a) is parallel to “a healing tongue” (4a), and at the central kernel both syntagmas are identified with “the tongue of the wise” (2a). “A gentle answer” (1a) is set in contrast to “a painful

[40] Cf. WITEK, *Dio e i suoi figli*, 160–161.

word" (1b), which in turn is linked to "perverseness" of tongue (4b), and at the nucleus to "the mouth of the foolish" which "pours out folly" (2b).

We can relate the nuclei of both passages (2 & 21) because of the use of the terms "wisdom" and "foolishness". We can also put side by side the parallel proverbs concerning speech in both passages (1 & 4 versus 18 & 23).

15:1 A gentle answer turns away fury, but *a painful word raises up anger*.	18 *A man of fury stirs up strife*, but slow to anger calms contention.
2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge good, but *the mouth of the foolish pours out folly*.	21 *Folly is joy to one lacking heart*, but a man of intelligence makes upright his going.
4 A healing tongue is a tree of life, but *perverseness in it is a breaking in the spirit*.	23 *Joy to a man in the answer of his mouth* but a word in its season, how good it is!

We could read them as parallels. Verses 1 and 18 express the same ideas: "a gentle answer turns away fury" (1a) is synonymous with "slow to anger calms contention" (18b); and "a painful word raises up anger" (1b) resembles "a man of fury" who "stirs up strife" (18a).

At the nuclei of both passages we find the same word "folly" in synonymous expressions: "the mouth of the foolish pours out folly" (2a) could clarify the meaning of "folly is joy to one lacking heart" (21a). These expressions imply that one not only pours out folly but also finds enjoyment in doing so.

"A healing tongue is a tree of life" (4a) can be considered synonymous with "a word in its season, how good it is" (23b). In a similar vein, "a joy to a man in the answer of his mouth" (23a) could imply a connotation of "perverseness" in the tongue that causes "a breaking in the spirit" (4b). When meanings in these expressions are configured, one can

surmise that the person of which the proverb speaks is not simply careless in answering, but is deliberately speaking with an evil intent and finding joy in causing harm to others.

Irascibility

The initial clause of our passage (18a) is almost identical to 29:22a where we read that: "a man of anger stirs up strife",[41] and its second line seems just as synonymous when it states: "a man of wrath causes much transgression" (22b). Sirach gives the following advice: "Refrain from strife, and your sins will be fewer; for a hot-tempered man kindles strife" (28:8). He gives the reason: "A hasty quarrel kindles fire and a hasty strife sheds blood" (v. 11).

A word spoken at the right time

"A word in its season, how good it is!" (23b) could evoke another proverb from the Second Solomonic Collection: "Apples of gold in a setting of silver is a word spoken at the right time" (25:11). It could also remind us of the well-known discourse of Qoheleth concerning the seasons and their allocations according to the manner of the divine Creator. There Qoheleth states that there is "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccl 3:7). It is elaborated upon by Sirach who says that "there is a reproof that is untimely, but the silent person is the wise one" (20:1). And he states that there are two kinds of people: "one is silent and is thought wise, another is detested for being too talkative" (v. 5). And he adds: "a wise man remains silent till the right time, but an arrogant and a fool misses the proper time.

[41] Instead of *ḥēmâ* "wrath" (15:18a) is used *'ap* "anger" (29:22a), but *'ap* is used in the second line in the syntagma *ba'al 'ap* "a man of wrath" (22b).

Whoever uses too many words is detested, and whoever pretends to authority is hated" (vv. 7–8).

4. Interpretation

Patience of the wise

The nucleus of the proverbs describes the positive outcomes of the acting of the wise (20a, 21b, 22b), while in the clauses that form the parameters "a wise son" (20a) is presented as one who is patient and calm (18a) and who does not overreact (18b) and does not respond immediately (23a), but looks for an appropriate time (23b). The proverb at the core could also imply patience, for "making upright his going" (21b), requires a lot of effort and dedication to change one's own behavior, especially if one is impulsive by nature and must work hard on gaining the virtue of patience.

"Making upright his going" implies doing what is right, moving in a proper direction, i.e., proceeding by "the path of life" which leads to eternal life (24a). In other words, wisdom has practical and moral connotations.

Irascibility of the fools

Conversely, a "foolish man" (20b) is identified with a "man of fury" (18a) who does not have emotional self-control and therefore reacts immediately to whatever happens, answers impulsively without waiting for an appropriate time (cf. 23b) and in doing so "stirs up strife" (18a). A "foolish man" (20b) is also identified with a "sluggard" whose way is "like a hedge of thorns" (19a). This kind of comparison can imply unwillingness to change anything in his behavior.

The proverb that comprises the nucleus states that he finds "joy" in doing "folly" (21a). He knows what he is doing, and he finds pleasure in hurting others (18a, 20b).

Unwillingness to exercise effort in order to eliminate vices would be like pruning "a hedge of thorns" (19a) and would ultimately lead the person to "Sheol below," that is to say, a place of eternal punishment (24b).

Conclusion

This new contextual reading of Prov 15:23 demonstrates that attributing a negative meaning to 23a and therefore reading this proverb as an antithetical pairing instead of that of synonyms fits better into the literary context of the passage in which it is found (vv. 18–24) and accords more with what is highlighted in the text.

This solution is well supported by reading this passage synoptically with another passage (14:35–15:4) that falls within the same constellation of script (14:24–15:24). Included in this constellation were three antithetical proverbs related to speech and supported by other references within the biblical context under investigation. On the other hand, a reading of Prov 15:23 in isolation from the related texts generally brings forth an understanding of this proverb as a pairing of synonyms. We come to the conclusion, however, that this evaluation of the proverb seems totally inadequate within the literal context. Indeed, the context seems permeated with the antithetical presentation of the matter at issue.

Abbreviations

BHS	K. ELLIGER – W. RUDOLPH, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Stuttgart 1968.
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E KAUTZSCH, trans. A.E. Cowley, 2nd ed., Oxford 1910.
NET	New English Translation
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible

NRSV New Revised Standard Version
RSV Revised Standard Version

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Reflection on the African Mind

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Introduction

There exist critiques of African thought.[42] There are scholars and thinkers who express skepticism about certain aspects of African philosophy and mindset. Among them are H. Robin (1995), *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; M. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), *Re-Creating Ourselves: African Woman & Critical Transformations.* Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press; K. Wiredu (1980), *Philosophy and an African Culture.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Some philosophers from cultures that are more poietic in nature – i.e., from those cultures that rely on the observations, hypotheses, concepts, notions, norms of verifiability, norms of predictability, and applications that are more scientific and technological and preoccupied with human self-determinism – argue that African thought lacks the rigor or systematic nature of traditions that from their point of view are more worthy to belong to properly philosophical genres. They may question whether African philosophy meets the standards of critical reasoning, abstraction, conceptual clarity, verifiability, and foreseeable predictability that characterize the poietic brand of thought (cf. Gyekye's exploration of Akan philosophy while responding to criticisms regarding its lack of rigor and systematic approach in comparison to poietic philosophy in

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Kwame Gyekye, *African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). Some critics assert that while African philosophies are rich and diverse, they may not always offer universally applicable frameworks. This skepticism often centers on the belief that cultural specificity can limit the broader relevance of African ethical systems or epistemologies. Within the post-colonial discourse, some scholars contend that attempts to define a singular “African philosophy” can inadvertently reinforce colonial binaries. They argue that such definitions may overlook the continent's diversity and complexity, leading to essentialist interpretations that do not capture the multiplicity of African patterns of experience and thought (cf. Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996; Tsenay Serequeberhan, *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy: A Philosophical Study of Ubuntu and Postcolonialism.* New York: Peter Lang, 2001). Some African scholars themselves engage in critical discussions about the relevance of traditional philosophies in contemporary contexts. They may question whether certain indigenous ideas can adequately address modern challenges or advocate for integrating more global perspectives. Nevertheless, these critiques are actually part of a broader dialogue that ultimately enrich the understanding of “African thought” or African philosophies. The African mind embodies a rich tapestry of philosophical thought that reflects the continent’s diverse cultures, histories, and experiences.

The reflection offered here explores key themes within African philosophy, emphasizing the significance of community, identity, and resilience in the face of colonial legacies. By examining the works of prominent thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, V.Y. Mudimbe,

Desmond Tutu, and Kwame Gyekye, we can appreciate how African ways of thinking challenge and enrich contemporary discourse. The exploration of these philosophies reveals not only the complexities of African identity but also the potential for cultural reclamation and ethical frameworks that prioritize interconnectedness and collective well-being. In understanding the African mind, we invite a broader appreciation of its relevance to today's global conversations about identity, ethics, and liberation.

I.0 The Concept of the "African Mind"

The concept of the "African mind" has evolved over time and reflects a blend of historical, cultural, and philosophical influences. The idea of the African mind emerged prominently during the colonial period, when European powers sought to justify their domination over African societies. Colonial narratives, including philosophical ones – Locke, Hume, Kant and Hegel come to mind – often portrayed African cultures as primitive or inferior, which led to a counter-narrative elucidated by African intellectuals who sought to reclaim their identity and assert the value of African thought.[43] In the aftermath of colonialism, African thinkers began to explore what it meant to be African in a post-colonial context. Figures like Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah critiqued colonialism's dehumanizing effects and emphasized the need for a collective African identity that could unify diverse cultures under a canopy of shared values of dignity and self-determination.

The term "African mind" has been used to describe the unique modes of thought and understanding that arise from

[43] Hountondji challenges the essentialist views of African thought imposed by colonial narratives and advocates for recognizing the richness and diversity of African philosophical traditions. Cf Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*.

Africa's diverse cultural and philosophical traditions. Philosophers such as Kwame Gyekye and Molefi Kete Asante have contributed to this discourse, highlighting themes of communalism, relationality, and a holistic understanding of existence that contrasts with the kind of expressive individualism that one finds in those cultures of Europe and North America that have suffered a facelift through psychology.

The concept also encompasses the idea of cultural resilience. African thinkers have emphasized the strength and richness of indigenous knowledge systems, advocating for a synthesis of traditional values with modern thought. This resilience is often expressed through concepts like Ubuntu, which highlights interconnectedness and communal well-being. In recent decades, the "African mind" has gained recognition in global philosophical discussions. Scholars are increasingly emphasizing the importance of African perspectives in addressing contemporary issues such as ethics and development with a growing attentiveness to social justice. [44] This engagement with global discourse allows for a richer understanding of what constitutes knowledge and thought.

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[44] Wiredu explores how African perspectives can contribute to discussions on universality and ethics, emphasizing the value of African thought in contemporary philosophical discourse. Cf Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996); Mudimbe examines the evolving notion of Africa in global discourse, highlighting the importance of African intellectual contributions to contemporary discussions on identity and knowledge. Cf V.Y Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Serequeberhan analyzes the concept of Ubuntu and its implications for ethics and social justice, illustrating how African philosophy can inform global ethical discussions. Cf Tsenay Serequeberhan, *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy.*

The concept of the "African mind" encompasses a rich tapestry of thought that emphasizes community, spirituality, and the interconnectedness of existence. African philosophy often contrasts sharply with the expressive individualism that has emerged in some of those cultures riddled with psychology as a panacea for all personal, family and cultural problems. The African mind, on the other hand, offers the world a set of priorities that allow the human person to thrive on his or her interconnectedness with others. What occupies the horizon of the African mind and the cultural life it represents is communal well-being and the idea of interconnectedness—an idea encapsulated in the philosophy of Ubuntu. This philosophy asserts that one's humanity is intrinsically tied to the humanity of others, suggesting that personal identity is formed through relationships.

African philosophy typically gives the place of privilege to the community over the individual. This collective orientation fosters a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility, where the well-being of the group is seen as integral to individual identity. The notion of interconnectedness extends beyond human relationships to include the environment and ancestors. This holistic view emphasizes the importance of relationships in understanding existence and ethical behavior. Ubuntu encapsulates the essence of communal values, focusing on compassion, sharing, humanity, and mutual respect. It serves as a guiding principle for ethical conduct, encouraging individuals to act in ways that support the community.

Ethical frameworks in African philosophy often revolve around the idea of relationality. Decisions are made based on their impact on community harmony and social cohesion, contrasting with the focus of such cultures as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the Nordic countries, countries in the former Persian empire (including Iran), Iceland, and

countries who struggled to find their independence from England – the United States, India, Pakistan and Hong Kong – that have all veered towards a mindset that accentuates individual rights and autonomy. The principle involved was the responsibility of governments to protect the rights of citizens to the freedom they deserved as human persons, to their dignity in the socio-economic sphere, and their freedom to live within a family that had its own set of rights which the government must protect and preserve.

One key figure was John Locke who claimed the purpose of all government was to protect each citizen's right to life, liberty and property, which for Locke included the right not only to own slaves but to own their descendants. His policies as the author of the written text of the Carolinas Constitution in the United States were all bearing the thumbprint of a person who lived by the right to profit from one's labor and enterprise and to ignore those who had no means to such profit.

In contrast to the countries from both East and West, the African manner coalesces with the real nature of a human being: African philosophies (perhaps with the exception of Egypt) draw heavily on oral traditions and communal knowledge, valuing collective wisdom passed down through generations. This contrasts with the emphasis from the aforementioned countries on written texts and individual authorship.

In the post-colonial context, African thought has been deeply influenced by the historical and ongoing effects of colonialism. Philosophers like Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon critique the colonial mindset and its dehumanizing impacts, advocating for a reclaiming of identity and culture. Nkrumah's work, particularly in *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (Nkrumah, 1970),

emphasizes the need for a philosophical foundation rooted in African experiences.

II.0 Key Themes and Sources

II.1 Ubuntu and Communalism

Ubuntu, which means "I am because we are," emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within a community. This philosophy posits that one's identity and well-being are inextricably linked to the well-being of others. Unlike expressive individualism, which often champions personal achievement and autonomy, Ubuntu focuses on mutual support, cooperation, and social harmony. This communal approach fosters a sense of responsibility towards others, emphasizing that personal growth is achieved through collective flourishing.

II.2 Implications for Identity

In the context of identity formation, Ubuntu suggests that individuals derive meaning and self-understanding from their relationships. Personal identity is not viewed as an isolated construct but as a product of social interactions, communal values, and cultural heritage. This perspective encourages a holistic understanding of self that encompasses familial, communal, and environmental dimensions.

II.3 Broader Philosophical Context

African philosophy often critiques the expressive individualism of those styles of thought that breed a culture that is over-psychologized, which can lead to isolation and fragmentation. Expressive individualism refers to systems of thought, speech and behavior where individuals principally find their meaning by giving expression to what they feel and desire. Put in another way, people who live within this framework of the interior life declare that they have found their authentic identity by expressing their feeling about who

they are and by the desire to be what they want to be – a natural feeling of identity – and then claiming authenticity for the right to express one's value as an individual precisely in consonance with the feelings and desires they harbor inside. The cultures that thrive on expressive individualism are not necessarily confined to East, West, North or South. It is based on the premise that each of us have his or her own way of realizing our humanity and that it is important to find and live out one's own.[45]

Philosophers like **Kwame Gyekye**[46] and **Molefi Kete Asante**[47] highlight the importance of communal values in shaping ethical behavior and societal norms. This emphasis on interconnectedness fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility, which is crucial for social cohesion and resilience. African philosophers are ready to decipher the glaring shortcomings of expressive individualism and "psychological man" because they have lived reflectively the civilization of togetherness, of belonging, and of a milieu where all are responsible for all.

The insights and experience of those who live *Ubuntu*, in other words, are extraordinarily capable of helping those whose lives merge with each other to understand that their own self-realization is entirely intertwined with the self-realization of all those with whom they are related – not necessarily by blood but by culture and by common humanity. What one feels oneself to be becomes just as

[45] Trueman, C., *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020) 46.

[46] Cf Kwame Gyekye, *Philosophy, Culture, and Values in the African Heritage* (New York: Africana Studies Press, 1996).

[47] Cf Molefi Kete Asante's works: *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1980); *The Afrocentric Idea in Education* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1991) and; *Afrocentricity: The Global Perspective* (Chicago: African American Images, 2003).

deceptive as the other ambiguous claims to specific personal value adjustments that emerge from a supposed psychological measurement of one's authentic self. This is the psychological frenzy that one finds in the self-centered world of the expressive individualist.

What the African philosophers just named have clarified is that it is of little value for any human person to declare one's own authentic self independently of the civilization of belonging and interpersonal responsibility that characterizes the *Ubuntu* understanding of humanity.

Ultimately, the African philosophical tradition invites us to reconsider our understanding of identity, urging a shift from a solitary perspective to one that embraces community and relationships. This communal approach not only enriches individual lives but also enhances the overall well-being of society, illustrating the profound wisdom embedded in African thought.

Desmond Tutu's exploration of **Ubuntu** philosophy profoundly addresses the healing and reconciliation necessary in post-apartheid South Africa.[48] Ubuntu, which translates to "I am because we are," encapsulates the essence of communal identity, emphasizing the interconnectedness of individuals within society.

II.4 Key Aspects of Tutu's Emphasis on Ubuntu

1. *Forgiveness as a Path to Healing:* Tutu advocates for forgiveness as a critical step toward healing communities scarred by the traumas of apartheid. He argues that true reconciliation cannot occur without acknowledging past injustices and extending forgiveness, both to victims and perpetrators. This process fosters mutual understanding and

[48] Cf. Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) 31,32.

paves the way for rebuilding trust among divided communities.

2. *Reconciliation and Community Building*: The Ubuntu philosophy underlines the importance of collective well-being over individual grievances. Tutu's emphasis on reconciliation serves as a call to unite people around shared values and a common future. By promoting communal dialogue and restorative practices, Ubuntu encourages societies to move beyond cycles of blame and retribution.

3. *Essence of Communal Identity:* Tutu highlights that the strength of a community lies in its ability to embrace collective identity. Ubuntu teaches that individual identity is intrinsically linked to the community, suggesting that personal healing is bound to the healing of others. This interconnectedness fosters a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility, essential for social cohesion. Central to Tutu's understanding of *Ubuntu* is the place of God:

- With God there is objective truth. All of us live within a moral universe that receives its unambiguous definition from the one, true God. He is the Truth that governs us all; His Truth is perceptible even within the depths of the conscience.
- The possibility of repentance and moral conversion has its roots in the fact that God has willed all of us – even the perpetrators of crime – to be moral agents and his children.
- Even the most obviously guilty person remains within the reach of the Good Shepherd. To say that the one lost who seems outside the fold where 99 remain can never be found is to doubt the ability of God to be a Good Shepherd.

- We can never do anything to make God love a human person less than he currently loves him. His love for him or her is complete.
- Restorative justice is the norm for traditional African jurisprudence. The concern for this type of justice is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, and erstwhile effort to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator. Both are necessary for the integrity of the community.
- Once the conditions of restorative justice are met, amnesty must happen immediately and all crimes committed are to be expunged from the court record. The person must be allowed to live once more with a clean slate.[49]

4. *Moral Imperative*: For Tutu, practicing Ubuntu is not just a philosophical stance but a moral imperative. He asserts that embracing this philosophy can guide ethical behavior and decision-making in both personal and societal contexts. By prioritizing compassion and empathy, Ubuntu promotes a more just and harmonious society. It is to be added that in Tutu's exposition of Ubuntu and restorative justice, he made the point that President Mandela deliberately chose a religious person, a man of God, to govern the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Desmond Tutu's emphasis on the Ubuntu philosophy serves as a vital framework for healing and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. By highlighting forgiveness and communal identity, Tutu advocates for a path that not only addresses historical injustices but also fosters unity and resilience among communities. Ubuntu's teachings resonate

[49] Tutu, D., *No Future without Forgiveness*, 81.

far beyond South Africa, offering valuable lessons for societies grappling with division and conflict around the world.

Tutu explores the Ubuntu philosophy, emphasizing forgiveness and reconciliation as the divine directives from the Good Shepherd as foundational to healing communities scarred by apartheid, highlighting the essence of communal identity.

II.5 Colonialism and Identity

In the post-colonial context, African thought has indeed been profoundly shaped by the legacy of colonialism, leading to a critical examination of identity, culture, and self-determination. Philosophers like Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon provide vital insights into the psychological and social effects of colonial rule and the pathways toward reclaiming African identity.

II.5.1 Kwame Nkrumah: *Consciencism and Identity*

Kwame Nkrumah, a prominent political leader and thinker, emphasized the need for a philosophy that blends traditional African values with modern political ideologies. In his work *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (1970), Nkrumah critiques the colonial mindset, arguing that it alienates Africans from their cultural roots. He advocates for a synthesis of indigenous knowledge and contemporary thought, urging Africans to reclaim their identity and heritage as a foundation for nation-building. Nkrumah’s emphasis on a collective identity serves as a call to unify diverse cultures under a shared vision of independence and self-governance.

II.5.2 Key Aspects of Nkrumah’s Critique and Advocacy

1. *Alienation from Cultural Roots:* Nkrumah argues that colonialism systematically alienates Africans from their

cultural heritage. The imposition of foreign values and ideologies often leads to a crisis of identity, where individuals internalize colonial narratives that diminish their sense of self-worth and connection to their ancestral traditions. This alienation is not just a psychological issue; it undermines the social fabric and unity of African communities.

2. *Synthesis of Indigenous Knowledge and Modern Thought:* To counter this alienation, Nkrumah advocates for a synthesis of traditional African philosophies with modern ideologies such as socialism and pan-Africanism. He believes that indigenous knowledge systems, which are rooted in communal values and collective well-being, can be harmoniously integrated with contemporary political and economic theories. This synthesis is crucial for creating a uniquely African path to development and self-governance.

3. *Reclaiming Identity and Heritage:* Nkrumah emphasizes the importance of reclaiming African identity and cultural heritage as essential steps toward nation-building. He encourages Africans to take pride in their history, traditions, and values, which can serve as a foundation for a strong national identity. This reclamation process not only fosters individual and collective empowerment but also encourages a sense of belonging and purpose.

4. *Collective Identity and Unity*: A central theme in Nkrumah's thought is the idea of collective identity. He calls for the unification of diverse African cultures under a shared vision of independence and self-governance. This collective identity is vital for overcoming the divisions created by colonial rule and fostering solidarity among African nations. By promoting pan-African unity, Nkrumah envisions a

continent that collaborates towards common goals and addresses shared challenges and aspirations.

5. *Nation-Building and Self-Governance*: Nkrumah's synthesis of traditional and modern thought lays the groundwork for effective nation-building. He argues that a cohesive identity, rooted in shared values and heritage, is essential for mobilizing communities toward self-governance. By fostering a sense of collective purpose, Nkrumah believes that Africans can overcome the legacy of colonialism and chart their own course toward a prosperous and equitable future.

Nkrumah's critique of the colonial mindset and his advocacy for a synthesis of indigenous knowledge with modern ideologies reflect his deep commitment to African identity and unity. By emphasizing collective identity and the reclamation of cultural heritage, he provides a powerful framework for nation-building that remains relevant in contemporary discussions of post-colonial identity and development. Nkrumah's vision of a united Africa, grounded in its rich traditions and adaptable to modern challenges, continues to inspire movements for social justice and self-determination across the continent.

II.6 Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth*

Frantz Fanon offers a powerful critique of colonialism in his seminal work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963).[50] Fanon explores the psychological trauma inflicted by colonial rule, which he argues dehumanizes both the colonized and the colonizers. He emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and cultural reclamation as essential steps toward liberation.

[50] Cf Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

For Fanon, true liberation involves not only political freedom but also a radical redefinition of identity. He insists that the oppressed must confront and dismantle the internalized beliefs imposed by colonialism, advocating for a revolution of the mind alongside physical emancipation. It must be said that Fanon is quite aware of the perils of expressive individualism and its tendency to construct an authentic self from individual constellations of values and feelings that lie submerged within the self's interior. This is the mindset that afflicts so many countries that stress individual rights at the expense of community and interpersonal relationships. Fanon wishes to steer clear of this over-psychologized individualism.

II.6.1 Key Themes in Fanon's Thought

1. *Psychological Trauma and Dehumanization*: Fanon argues that colonialism fundamentally dehumanizes both the oppressed and the oppressor. For the colonized, this dehumanization manifests as a loss of identity, dignity, and agency, leading to internalized inferiority and alienation from their cultural roots. Conversely, the colonizers, by perpetuating violence and oppression, become estranged from their humanity. This mutual dehumanization highlights the moral and psychological costs of colonial power dynamics.

2. *Self-Awareness and Cultural Reclamation:* Fanon stresses the importance of self-awareness in the liberation process. He believes that for the oppressed to achieve true freedom, they must first confront and understand the psychological scars of colonialism. This involves a reclamation of cultural identity and heritage, allowing individuals to rediscover their value and agency. By embracing their history and culture, the oppressed can begin to dismantle the oppressive narratives that have been

imposed upon them. This rediscovery can only happen within the milieu of the community and the interpersonal relationships that bind people together.

3. *Redefinition of Identity*: For Fanon, liberation goes beyond mere political independence; it requires a radical redefinition of identity. He advocates for a transformative process where individuals redefine themselves in their own terms, free from colonial constructs. This redefinition is essential for developing a sense of self that is not only proud but also proactive in challenging the remnants of colonial thought. Redefinition occurs only in the milieu of a communal culture.

4. *Revolution of the Mind*: Fanon insists that liberation must include a “revolution of the mind” alongside physical emancipation. This means challenging and dismantling the internalized beliefs and stereotypes that colonialism has instilled. Such a revolution involves critical reflection and active resistance against the psychological effects of colonial oppression, fostering a new consciousness that embraces freedom, dignity, and solidarity.

5. *Collective Action and Solidarity*: Fanon emphasizes the need for collective action in the liberation struggle. He believes that true freedom can only be achieved through unity among the oppressed. By coming together, individuals can support one another in the journey toward reclaiming identity and dignity, ultimately challenging the structures of colonial oppression.

Frantz Fanon’s exploration of the psychological trauma of colonialism provides a compelling framework for understanding the complexities of liberation. His emphasis on self-awareness from within a milieu of solidarity rather than within a self-centered culture of expressive individualism, his insistence on cultural reclamation, and his

advocacy of the radical redefinition of identity through a sense of belonging to the community highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to decolonization that addresses both mental and physical aspects of freedom. Fanon's work remains essential in contemporary discussions of post-colonial identity, emphasizing that true liberation requires not only political change but also a profound transformation of consciousness and culture.

II.7 The Impact of Colonialism on African Thought

Both Nkrumah and Fanon underscore the necessity of confronting the colonial legacy to foster a renewed sense of identity. Their works highlight several key themes:

Reclaiming Culture: Post-colonial thinkers stress the importance of rediscovering and revitalizing indigenous cultures and philosophies, which were often suppressed or marginalized during colonial rule.

Psychological Liberation: The internalization of colonial values can lead to self-doubt and a fragmented identity. A crucial aspect of decolonization involves reclaiming self-worth and agency without surrender to the grievous flaws of expressive individualism and the recreation of the self through individual feelings and desires.

Collective Action: Both philosophers advocate for unity among diverse African groups to forge a common identity that transcends colonial divisions, emphasizing collective action as vital for true liberation.

The influence of colonialism on African thought has catalyzed a rich discourse on identity, culture, and resistance. Nkrumah and Fanon's critiques provide a framework for understanding the complexities of post-colonial identity, encouraging a reclamation of African heritage and values.

Their philosophies continue to inspire contemporary movements for social justice and cultural renewal, emphasizing the enduring relevance of African thought in a global context.

Fanon discusses the psychological effects of colonialism on identity, advocating for a revolution of the mind as a precursor to physical liberation. His work urges Africans to redefine themselves beyond colonial impositions.

II.8 African Epistemology

V.Y. Mudimbe plays a pivotal role in reshaping the discourse concerning African epistemology, particularly in his influential work, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (1988).[51] In this text, Mudimbe critically analyzes how narratives external to Africa have constructed and often distorted the understanding of Africa, emphasizing the need for an authentic African epistemological framework.

II.8.1 Key Themes in Mudimbe's Work

Colonial Narratives and Knowledge Attainment: Mudimbe argues that colonialism did not mean merely the conquest of territories but also controlled knowledge about those territories. Scholars not indigenous to Africa often portrayed Africa as a place devoid of history, culture, and rational thought, reinforcing stereotypes of the "primitive" other. David Hume and Immanuel Kant are examples of those who were clinging to such stereotypes.[52] This epistemic violence contributed to a dehumanizing view of

[51] Cf V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[52] Kant, I., *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*, ed. by P. Frierson & P. Guyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 58, 59.

African societies, relegating their knowledge systems to the margins.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Mudimbe champions the importance of indigenous knowledge systems, asserting that African cultures have rich philosophical traditions that deserve recognition and respect. He posits that these systems are rooted in communal experiences, spirituality, and relational ethics, which contrast sharply with expressive individualism. By valuing these indigenous perspectives, Mudimbe calls for a re-evaluation of what constitutes valid knowledge.

The Construction of Identity: The creation of an African epistemology involves reclaiming identity and understanding how cultural narratives shape self-perception. Mudimbe emphasizes the need for Africans to engage critically with both their past and the ongoing influence of colonial legacies. This process allows for a more nuanced understanding of identity that is not solely defined by colonial histories.

Philosophical Pluralism: Mudimbe advocates for philosophical pluralism, arguing that multiple ways of knowing should coexist and be respected. He challenges the idea that certain styles of modern and contemporary philosophy that come from Germany, England and the non-Latin American, non-Asian regions of the United States stand for a philosophy that represents the ultimate standard, promoting a dialogue between different epistemologies. This pluralism is crucial for addressing contemporary challenges faced by African societies.

Mudimbe's exploration of African epistemology serves as a critical counter-narrative to colonial discourses, urging a reclamation of indigenous knowledge and philosophies. By positioning the richness of African intellectual traditions in

the foreground, he paves the way for a more inclusive understanding of knowledge that transcends the binaries established by colonialism. His work is a call to recognize the validity and importance of African thought in shaping both local and global narratives.

Mudimbe examines how certain German, English and Anglo-American narratives have shaped the understanding of Africa, proposing an African epistemology that values indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies.

II.9 Cultural Resilience

Kwame Nkrumah's philosophy emphasizes the significance of cultural resilience in the struggle for decolonization. In his work, particularly in *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (1970),[53] Nkrumah articulates a vision for an African identity that is both rooted in traditional values and responsive to modern challenges.

II.9.1 Key Concepts in Nkrumah's Philosophy

Synthesis of Traditions and Modern Ideologies: Nkrumah advocates for a synthesis of traditional African thought with modern political and economic ideologies. He argues that for African societies to effectively navigate the post-colonial landscape, they must integrate the wisdom of their ancestral cultures with contemporary ideologies such as socialism and pan-Africanism. This synthesis is vital for fostering a unique African identity that can resist external pressures while promoting internal development.

Cultural Identity as a Foundation: Nkrumah emphasizes that a strong cultural identity is essential for the

[53] Cf Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

decolonization process. He believes that understanding and embracing African heritage empowers individuals and communities, enabling them to reclaim agency in shaping their destinies. Cultural resilience becomes a tool for asserting independence and resisting the lingering effects of colonial domination. There is also a distinct emphasis on the cultural values that preclude individualism and promote solidarity in the process of cultural resilience.

The Role of Education: Education is a critical component of Nkrumah's vision for cultural resilience. He argues for an educational system that reflects African values and history, encouraging pride in cultural heritage. By fostering an understanding of traditional philosophies and practices, Nkrumah believes that Africans can build a foundation for a self-determined future.

Pan-African Unity: Nkrumah's emphasis on cultural resilience extends to the idea of pan-African unity. He posits that a shared cultural identity can serve as a basis for solidarity among African nations, promoting collaboration and collective action against neo-colonial influences. This unity is crucial for political stability and economic development across the continent.

Nkrumah's vision of cultural resilience highlights the importance of integrating traditional African thought with modern ideologies as a path toward meaningful decolonization. By prioritizing cultural identity and unity, he provides a framework for Africans to navigate the complexities of post-colonial existence while reclaiming agency and fostering development. Nkrumah's work remains a powerful reminder of the potential for cultural resilience to drive social and political change in contemporary Africa.

II.10 Ethics and Morality

Kwame Gyekye is a prominent philosopher who has significantly contributed to the discourse on African ethics. In his works, particularly in *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics* (1996),[54] Gyekye presents a nuanced view of African ethical thought, contrasting it with frameworks imbued with expressive individualism and emphasizing the communal and relational aspects of morality.

II.10.1 Key Themes in Gyekye's Ethical Thought

Community-Centered Ethics: Gyekye argues that African ethics is fundamentally rooted in community and social relationships. Unlike the ethical theories that emphasize expressive individualism, African ethical thought prioritizes the well-being of the community. This communal focus fosters a sense of responsibility toward others, highlighting the interconnectedness of individuals within their social contexts.

Relational Ethics: Central to Gyekye's philosophy is the idea of relational ethics, which emphasizes the importance of relationships in moral decision-making. In African societies, morality is often assessed based on the impact of actions on family, community, and the environment, and the ability of all in their togetherness to abide in the life-giving power of God's sovereignty.

This relational approach encourages individuals to consider the broader consequences of their actions, promoting harmony and social cohesion that is not only confined to this world but also to the afterlife where abide

[54] Cf. Kwame Gyekye, *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics* (New York: Ghana University Press, 1996).

the ancestors who have completed their sojourn on earth and are venerated with piety and devotion and with the anticipation that they live within a horizon of fullness that never dissipates.

Moral Reasoning: Gyekye critiques the notion that moral reasoning in African contexts lacks depth. He argues that African ethics is not merely traditional but involves critical reflection on moral issues. This reasoning incorporates cultural values, communal norms, and personal experiences, allowing for a dynamic and context-sensitive approach to ethics.

Integration of Universal Values: While advocating for the uniqueness of African ethical thought, Gyekye also acknowledges the relevance of universal moral principles. He proposes that African ethics can engage with global ethical discussions, integrating universal values while maintaining its distinctive communal focus. This integration fosters dialogue between different ethical systems, enriching the broader philosophical discourse and encouraging other nations and societies to revise their principles when they sink into the lagoons that result from an exaggerated individualism.

Application to Contemporary Issues: Gyekye applies African ethical principles to various contemporary issues, such as justice, environmental sustainability, and human rights. By grounding these discussions in communal values and relational ethics, he highlights the potential for African thought to contribute meaningfully to global ethical debates.

Kwame Gyekye's exploration of African ethics provides a comprehensive framework that contrasts sharply with individualistic moral theories. By emphasizing community and relational ethics, Gyekye not only enriches the understanding of African philosophical traditions but also

invites a more inclusive dialogue in global ethical discussions. His work underscores the importance of cultural context in shaping moral values, illustrating how African thought can inform contemporary ethical challenges.

Gyekye presents a comprehensive view of African ethical thought, contrasting it with the ethical frameworks dominated by expressive individualism and emphasizing the importance of community and relational ethics in African societies.

Conclusion

The African mind is a complex, evolving constellation of philosophical traditions that interlock with the present-day reality of family, community and solidarity and so brings forth human beings who live in a state of abiding relationships with each other and with the milieu within which they find a home. Empathy, generosity, sharing and togetherness all reflect the continent's diverse of cultures and experiences. It resists simple categorization and challenges the philosophical traditions that have adopted a cultural personality, offering rich insights into community, identity, and resilience. By engaging with these philosophical works, one gains a deeper understanding of the African perspective, which continues to influence global thought today.

This reflection, grounded in these key texts, highlights the need for a broader appreciation of African philosophies and their relevance in contemporary discourse. It underscores the critical importance of African philosophies in enriching contemporary discourse on identity, culture, and ethics. By engaging with such key thinkers as Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, V.Y. Mudimbe, Desmond Tutu, and Kwame Gyekye, we can appreciate the depth and diversity of African thought.

Key Takeaways

➢ *Reclaiming Identity:* The works of these philosophers emphasize the necessity of reclaiming African identity and cultural heritage as foundational to a personal and collective wholehearted grasp of the truth in the most noble sense of the word "truth". The truth is that we are a God-given blessing to each other and to the world according to the spirit of the interpersonal sense of togetherness manifested in *Ubuntu.* This reclamation is vital for resisting the psychological impact of colonialism and fostering a sense of pride in one's cultural roots.

➢ *Cultural Synthesis:* Nkrumah's call for a synthesis of indigenous knowledge and modern ideologies illustrates the potential for African societies to develop unique frameworks that address contemporary challenges. This synthesis not only enriches African discourse but also contributes to global discussions on development and governance.

➢ *Psychological Liberation*: Fanon's insights into the psychological trauma of colonialism remind us that true liberation involves both physical and mental emancipation. Understanding and confronting internalized colonial beliefs is crucial for fostering a new consciousness that embraces dignity and agency.

➢ *Community and Relational Ethics:* Gyekye's focus on community-centered ethics highlights the importance of relationality in African moral thought. This perspective offers valuable lessons for addressing contemporary ethical dilemmas, emphasizing interconnectedness and responsibility towards one another.

➢ *Dialogue and Pluralism:* Mudimbe's advocacy for an African epistemology encourages a dialogue between different ways of knowing. By valuing indigenous knowledge systems alongside global philosophies, we can

foster a more inclusive understanding of knowledge that transcends colonial legacies.

- *Forgiveness and Restorative Justice*: Tutu's interpretation of *Ubuntu* not only addresses the specific context of post-apartheid South Africa but also offers valuable lessons for healing and community-building worldwide. He argues that without forgiveness, true reconciliation remains elusive, preventing individuals and communities from moving forward. Despite the pain of the past, Tutu's philosophy instills a sense of hope. He encourages a forward-looking approach that focuses on possibilities for growth, healing, and reconciliation. Tutu promotes restorative justice practices over punitive measures. He believes that addressing past injustices through dialogue and understanding fosters a more just and equitable society. He grounds all of his ethical convictions in his over-riding perception that there is one Author of Truth, God himself, and that he always conducts himself as a Good Shepherd who, because of his love, does not intend to let anyone remain lost on account of their crimes and perversions.

In short, the relevance of African philosophies in contemporary discourse cannot be overstated. They provide critical frameworks for understanding identity, ethics, and the socio-political landscape in a post-colonial context. By appreciating and engaging with these philosophies, we not only enrich our understanding of Africa but also contribute to a more nuanced global conversation about culture, identity, and liberation. Recognizing the depth of African thought invites us to explore new possibilities for social justice and cultural renewal, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and equitable world.

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THEOLOGY (SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY)

The Crisis of the Priesthood In the Modern World

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Abstract

The focus of this article is the priesthood as a sacrament of love. It actualizes Christ's love for His people and His desire for them to treasure this love until His glorious return. Through the priesthood, we encounter Christ, who bestows upon us Himself as a heavenly gift.

On the day of ordination, a person officially enters into the priesthood of Christ. This sacrament enables a priest to serve as a dispenser of Christ's love. To effectively fulfill his ministry, asceticism is the best spiritual tool for a priest in order to overcome life's challenges. An ascetical life, with its rigorous self-discipline and devotion to prayer, is the source of inner strength and closeness to God, who is the ultimate and most powerful source of the interior life. By personal prayer, asceticism allows priests to comprehend the significance of celibacy as a discipline in life and ministry.

In today's Christianity, the priesthood faces numerous challenges, which have led the sacrament of priesthood to be neglected in certain parts of the world. This study, therefore, analyzes some of the crises that impinge upon priesthood and proposes pastoral solutions. Since a priest is ordained to the ministry as an ordinary minister of sacraments, this article aims to reestablish the priesthood's original meaning and theology for all Christians and those interested in the priesthood. The approach of this work will base itself on a theological reflection of the priesthood as a ministry. The study will use a hermeneutical method that links it to the writings and teachings of Robert Cardinal Sarah in order to facilitate an understanding of principal points of the article. It will be evident that priesthood involves self-sacrifice, mirroring Christ's offering of Himself on the Cross for our salvation. This entails striving to emulate Christ's life and becoming one with Him as another Christ.
Key Concepts: Priesthood – Sacrament of love – Crisis.

Introduction

"Priesthood" and "crisis" are two words that appear to be very closely related in the Church of today. This is because crisis in the priestly ministry is constantly unveiling a new face,[1] even though "the beautiful aspect of priestly ministry, unlike any other calling, confronts human life in its entire spectrum including situations where fun ceases and yet the priest can still remain the servant of joy."[2] No single individual can doubt it, especially by looking at the pains of crises making their way towards the Church. These are the tragic, unbearable symptoms of a much deeper and more radical crisis. The Church today is running a great risk

[1] H. U. VON BARTHASAR, *Priestly Spirituality*, 7.

[2] Cf. G. AUGUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood*, 10.

because the profound meaning of the priesthood is sinking into a state of confusion.[3] In consideration of the trauma facing priesthood in the Church, this article is dedicated to discussing the crises of priesthood in the modern world.

1.1 The Background of the Study

It is fundamental to the understanding of the people of God to realize that ordination to priesthood exists in the Body of Christ. This means that "it has a share in the nature and the task of Christ and hence the whole people of God has a priestly quality."[4] Although the share in the priestly, prophetic and royal task of Christ is common to all people through the Sacrament of Baptism, "there is apart from this shared quality a special sharing in the priesthood of Christ, namely that of the bishops, the priests and the deacons."[5] The specialty of Christ's priestly sharing with the rest of humanity is necessitated by the love of Christ for His people who willed that their salvation be carried out through priestly services until the end of time.

God's initial plan of human redemption in the priesthood continues; whereby "a priest becomes the victim, minister and ambassador of Christ."[6] More and more, "the vision of Christ as Savior begins to illumine the world through the priesthood and out of it comes the love and Divine manifestation of God."[7] All of priestly ministry is the mystery of participation in the shared love of Christ, and "a priest exists to create the condition that allows this

[3] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat, The Day is Now Far Spent*, 53.

[4] Cf. M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma 5: The Church as Sacrament*, 185.

[5] Cf. M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma 5: The Church as Sacrament,* 186.

[6] Cf. F. SHEEN, *The Priest is Not His Own,* 9.

[7] Cf. F. SHEEN, *The Priest is Not His Own,* 9.

participation in the life of God the Father to be realized and experienced through the services of the priest."[8] In love, we not only share but also participate in the priesthood of Christ. Priesthood, therefore, becomes the Sacrament of the love of Christ for His own people. In the crisis of apostolate, every priest knows now that by divine election, he is a mediator between God and men, bringing God to men and taking men to God. The Sacrament of Ordination, therefore, expresses this very point: through the Sacrament, a priest is totally inserted into Christ so that by starting from him and acting in his sight, he may carry out in communion with him his service, i.e., the service of Jesus, the one Shepherd, in whom God, vis-à-vis , wants to be our Shepherd.

1.2. Research Questions

This article will attempt to answer the following research questions: What are the challenges facing priesthood in the modern world and their pastoral solutions? How does prayer become the most important tool for priests' success in the apostolate and mission? What are the joys of priesthood? What are the crises of priesthood in our modern world?

1.3. The Current Priestly Situation

It would seem absurd to speak of "priesthood in the modern world following up the beginning and development of the problems and sorting out influences and results."[9] However, it has to be noted that "there would be considerable risks in attempting a definitive history of these crises,"[10] especially

[8] Cf. G. AUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood,* 82.

[9] Cf. A.M. CHAURE, *Priesthood and Celibacy*, 351.

[10] Cf. A.M. CHAURE, *Priesthood and Celibacy*, 351.

if we are to look at "the openness of the priesthood onto the world as the realization of the meeting of the Church and the world."[11]

To a world which is becoming more and more secular, which considers itself self-sufficient with duties only to itself, the existence of a Church bringing salvation as a free gift from God seems superfluous. Priesthood is "discredited and has no meaning or reason for existence. Indeed, in a modern world there is no room for a priesthood which is the living instrument of Christ carrying out constantly the salvific will of the Father."[12] In such a situation, a priest who is a bearer of the sacred mysteries of Christ finds himself in a dilemma: either to accept a secular vision of the world and serve it, or remain in this world as an exile, ignored if not openly condemned by those who do have neither Christ nor the grace of salvation within their horizon.

1.4. Existing Reality

It is not easy to be an ambassador of the Word and a faithful minister of Sacraments. This is due to numerous challenges that have threatened the sustainability of the priestly ministry. This is because, even in modern times, priests continue to encounter many challenges in their quest to fulfil their daily responsibilities. "Temptations and opportunities to fall into sins are truly many; one could say more so than in the past. When we say more so than in the past we are not saying that all previous eras were better than ours, but rather that today there are means and habits, at least in the Western world, that facilitate sin which they do not

[11] Cf. R. SARAH, *God or Nothing: A Conversation on Faith with Nicolas Diat,* 109.

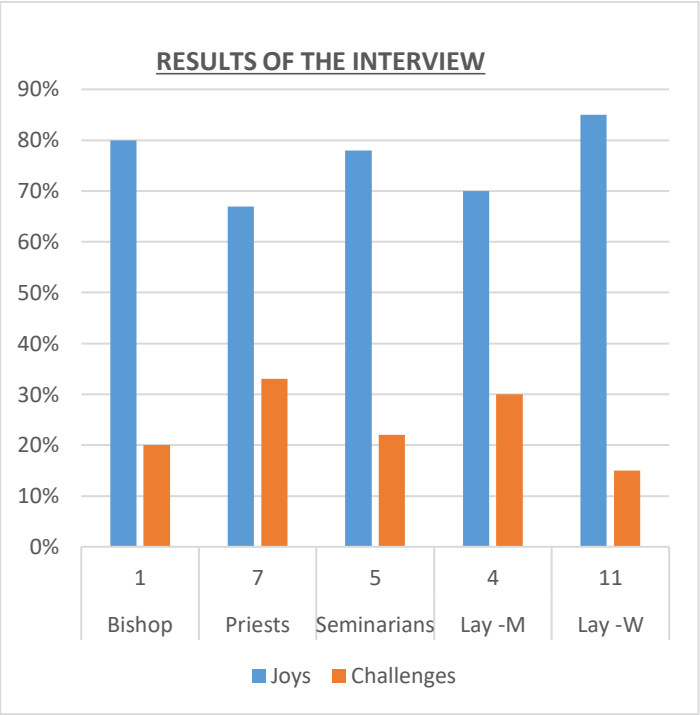
[12] Cf. A.M. CHAURE, *Priesthood and Celibacy,* 352.

positively approve of, promote or recommend."[13] Christ does not tire to "call priests to reflect the sun which is Christ Himself. In Him, they have been made a mirror of the holiness of Christ alone,"[14] intimately with Christ, the one who calls, in order not to lose its moral integrity.

This article is dedicated to the crises facing the priesthood. To make this work vivid and relevant, I had to conduct several interviews involving a Bishop, priests both religious and diocesan, laymen and women and seminarians from sample African countries. These are Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Two questions guided the interviews: what are the joys of priesthood and what are the challenges facing the priesthood in Africa? During the interviews, I discovered that the crises facing the priesthood cross-cut the African Christian world. The following are some of the crises which almost all respondents shared: poor parenting brought about by modernity, a misunderstanding or in practice an abuse of celibacy, wealth and financial challenges, religious syncretism, the question of power and authority, loss of priestly identity and unmet plans, which tend to yield loneliness of the heart and addiction.

[13] R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 20.

[14] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 20.



The qualitative method was applied to find the above-presented results. Respondents were to give their opinions and explanations in the light of an interviewer's questions. It was delightful to listen with interest from all of them, especially to their hope for the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Amid difficulties befalling priests, the Church in Africa and local Churches in particular still need priests as sure guides and persons one can trust. The following are the crises facing priesthood.

1.4.1 The Breakup of Christian Families

The first task of a family that is founded and given life by love is to live with fidelity the reality of communion constantly to develop an authentic community of persons."[15] We may say:

> The family to its original type as something holy, permanent and monogamous, but raised [to the level of] a covenant from which springs its dignity, that of a Sacrament and thus places the family itself upon the plane of the supernatural. The family is holy inasmuch as it is a co-operation with God by procreating children who are destined to be the adopted children of God and by instructing them for His kingdom.[16]

Family is designated to be and, indeed, is the source of all vocations. This assertion carries much truth in it, although, to the contrary, family conflicts have been a source of priests' failures in their ministry. Conflicts in families "adversely affect priests in their openness to the ministry and lead to distortion of the true meaning of their call to the priesthood."[17] In the midst of family adversity, priests may find themselves over involved in the fortunes of their own families and forget that their call is divine.

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[15] Cf. CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, *Catholic Meaning of Family*, https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm, Accessed on 15.04.2024.

[16] Cf. CATHOLIC E*NCYCLOPEDIA*, *Catholic Meaning of Family*, https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm, Accessed on 15.04.2024.

[17] Cf. S. KIZHAKKEYIL, *The Priest: Theological Reflections on Priesthood and Priestly Spirituality in the Light of Church Teachings,* 168.

"Today young priests have often grown up in families where their parents almost always loved them but often did not also educate them."[18]

This has brought about an educational void for many children who are born into these Christian families. Children are left to look after themselves without proper care and supervision. The point here is that they choose bad company, which eventually ruins their future. These are the same children who will later on join the seminary in order to be prepared to become future priests. Because they have been educated by their peers and the help of the internet and television due to the absence of parents, "the importance of sacrifice is not understood by them."[19] The absence of parental education automatically denies children the opportunity to be corrected and helped to mature into noble human persons.

As the seedbed of all vocations, the family plays a crucial role in preparing and forming priests within the Church. A priest is expected to learn from his family as a primary level of knowledge. Every priest needs to be fully aware that he is, first of all, a man of God and a man of prayer. A priest exists exclusively for God and for divine worship. "He must not let himself be taken in by the world, as though the time dedicated to Christ in intimate, silent prayer was wasted time. They get to know that the most wonderful fruits of our ministry are born in silent prayer in front of the Tabernacle."[20]

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[18] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 20.

[19] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life*, 21.

[20] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent*, 54.

A priest who is not raised in the faith from an early age struggles largely in exercising the ministry that Christ has entrusted to him through the Church's competent authority. This can also be the reason why we see many priests aging towards fifty who do not know how to resist temptations through penance.

The bitter truth is that there is every day an increase in the number of priests who lead an undisciplined way of life. This characterizes their typical day-to-day schedule to the point when they forget the responsibilities given to them. This is a shared experience of a certain bishop who happened to pass by one of his parishes only to find that it was closed and it was almost noon because the priest was asleep.

"With the advancement in science and technology, priests waste much time in social media posting and commenting on Facebook, ending up retiring late at around four to five in the morning to bed. Priests can spend two to three hours posting videos and texts on social media, most of which are ridiculous, and gossiping with fellow priests."[21]

Because a priest's life has no schedule, he finds himself nowhere with nothing to do. As an outcome, we witness a great number of frustrated priests. Nevertheless I acknowledge the fact that not all priests live such a kind of life. Many, even young priests, are committed to living a moral and decent life.

1.4.2. Wastage of Time and Procrastination

This is another big problem that is slowly affecting many priests. St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, knowing the depth of the sin of wasting time, vowed not to waste time at all, for "wasting time is truly a sin. It can be compared with the

[21] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 22-23.

attitude of the man in the Gospel parable who, instead of working to multiply the talent, went and buried it." [22] Knowing that idleness is the father of vices, many priests nowadays live this sin, the sin of wasting time. This "often depends on their totally disorganized and truly mistaken schedule."[23] May God forbid that many priests may not find themselves in the pit of idleness, which leads to the destruction and death of priests.

1.4.3 The Crisis of Identity

Excessive and improper usage of Internet materials and modernity are quietly shadowing the identity of priests. The Church, through the Second Vatican Council, wants to remind her sons and daughters of the usefulness of technology. Contrary to the wishes of the Church, many of her priests are slowly shadowed by the ghost of modernity. They have forgotten that they were set apart for the sacred mission. This is seen even with the manner adopted by some priests for dressing up and their shaving styles. As followers and ambassadors of Christ, priests are to follow him who did not put a premium on imitating everything when he involved himself with the life of the world. He was in the world but not of it. There are some issues that Jesus contradicted in order to change for the good. Speaking about this, one priest was saddened by a Nigerian candidate to diaconate who shaved in a manner that seemed to reduce him to the level of people who tried to thrive on worldly fashions.

Sometimes, priests' ways of living tarnish their identity, though some may defend it by saying that it is a sign of humility and simplicity. But in a real sense, simplicity

[22] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 24.

[23] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 24.

does not mean in any way to distort one's identity to the point of failing to distinguish between clergy and lay people.

The advances in science and technology we witness today are meant to be a helping tool for evangelization. But what happens now to many priests is a chaotic life plan that is not worth mentioning. They have been engulfed by the internet and the uncontrollable influx of mass media. Instead of being helpful tools, they have dissipated their energies and motives for commitment to their vocation. They are tools of destruction and shame. We want to point out clearly that "there is nothing against the internet itself because if it is well used, it is indeed a great source of knowledge and information to the people including of the Church."[24] Any slight misuse of the internet is harmful to people, including priests who are now fond of it.

The Internet has developed websites, blogs and social media platforms that have contributed largely to cultural chaos. At this point, one should not think only of those who post evil content and materials because if that is the case, then a person can choose to avoid them so that he or she does not sin.

"The true danger of the internet lies elsewhere, in its potential to destroy our brain. If one allows the internet to replace reflection, our conscience and our responsibility to discern in the light of revelation, then we become like automatons in the hands of others."[25] In this modern era of the internet, we have found ourselves with data and information that our minds cannot and should not digest. This has led to improper decision-making based on what we

[24] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 24-25.

[25] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 25.

read and see on the internet. Many priests have come to be like puppets in somebody's hands. Consequently, "we follow sensations instead of right reason."[26]

1.4.4 The Question of Power and Authority

Brought about by modernism and rationalism, the question of power and authority is a growing crisis affecting priestly ministry nowadays. In its original sense, "rationalism is still very widespread, and in the name of a reductive concept of science, it renders human reason insensitive to an encounter with revelation and with divine transcendence."[27] Many priests have found themselves in this trap to the point of compromising their ministry. One no longer feels the taste of what he has received from Christ. They join the seminary in order to prepare to become rulers and managers of big projects and not to render faithful service to the people of God.

> Priests have been deployed of a desperate defense of personal subjectivity which tends to close them off in individualism, rendering them incapable of true human relationships. As a result, many, especially children and substitutes of various kinds, engage in more or less acute forms of hedonism or flight from responsibility. Prisoners of the fleeting moment, they seek to consume the strongest and most gratifying individual experiences at the level of immediate emotions and sensations, inevitably finding themselves indifferent and paralyzed as it were when they come face to face with the summons to embark upon a life

[26] R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 27.

[27] JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 7.

> project which includes a spiritual and religious dimension and a commitment to solidarity.[28]

This understanding makes a priest to lose that initial and, of course, essential meaning of priesthood: it is "a call to joy and a gift for the glory of God."[29] In an interview we conducted, one mentioned the case of a certain religious congregation based in Nairobi, Kenya, where a member is believed to have used charms to blackmail his colleagues to elect him as the superior. Of course, he won the election, but afterwards, all members rejected him. It attracted the attention of the Holy See, and the congregation was under surveillance for some time. This shows how some priests seize these responsibilities, not in the name of service to people but for merit and self-glorification. These are malicious leaders of the Church who see others as social entities to be manipulated instead of co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

1.4.5 The Crisis of Wealth and Finance

Through his life and ministry, a priest is expected to bring relief to the people he serves. "The real relief that a priest must bring to the poor and to afflicted people is not just material but spiritual. It is necessary to reveal to them the love, the compassion and the closeness of God. God is with us in every trial. He walks with us along the road to Emmaus, the road of disappointment, suffering, and discouragement."[30]

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[28] JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 7.

[29] Cf. G. AUGUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood,* 13.

[30] Cf. R. SARAH, *God or Nothing: A Conversation on Faith with Nicolas Diat*, 80.

Contrary to this call to mission, some priests are "ashamed and refuse to manifest their faith. They no longer want to talk about God in their charitable activities."[31] Priests have immersed themselves into business and other matters outside their priestly ministry. Totally embracing materialistic ideologies, some priests have not subscribed in the inner depths of their souls to those facets of his identity that would place him within the parameters of "a priest as a man of God, a man of faith, a man of the Church,"[32] and consequently has forgotten his primary duty of teaching his people how to organize their lives in God and not worldly allurements.

Material possessions among priests introduce tension and unrest in the priest's everyday life because wealth has been accumulated in his hands, and now comes a danger of him forgetting who he is and what he is supposed to do as he is ordained to. Upon delving into the challenges of priesthood today, one respondent said, 'It is very sad to see that priests in some areas of their apostolate have taken priesthood for granted and treat it just like any other professional. Priests have reduced themselves to the level of accountants, farmers and teachers who are working to be paid huge amounts of money and promising salaries. To them, priesthood is a source of money, not service; this has hurt the spiritual aspect of the Church.

We also witness priests who are doing retreats and days of recollection not to help the dying souls but to raise personal funds for self-satisfaction. What is happening is that where they do not give huge amounts of money, a priest will never go to give the retreat or day of recollection. This

[31] Cf. R. SARAH, *God or Nothing: A Conversation on Faith with Nicolas Diat*, 80.

[32] G. AUGUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood*, 41.

only tells us that priests have forgotten their role of teaching and sanctifying the people of God.

1.4.6 The Crisis of Celibacy

It is unfortunate, however, that nowadays, the crisis of celibacy is making itself felt in the life and ministry of priests. "We hear every day from all corners of the world the most terrifying news being reported from different sources of information. Not a week goes by without the revelation of a case of sexual abuse. Each one of these revelations comes to rend our hearts as children of the Church."[33] Sexual scandals have become like the smoke of Satan which has invaded the Church, her ministers, and the priests. Many priests have turned into agents of the evil one and "have sought to defile the pure souls of the littlest ones. They have humiliated the image of Christ that is present in every child."[34]

Sexual scandals are caused by the crises that many priests suffer in the evangelical counsel of celibacy. "The priesthood is a state of life that involves an existence given and consecrated in truth."[35] A priest who holds this special and singular gift, then, is required to live it to the fullest and most honest manner. But if he lives "a life led according to the world" it can produce in his soul only a feeling of inconsistency, incompleteness and being torn apart. "No one can serve two masters" (Matt 6:24).

It is nowadays no longer surprising to find in some Catholic dioceses, priests who do not live their vow of

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[33] Cf. R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 11.

[34] Cf. R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent*, 11.

[35] Cf. BENEDICT XVI – R. SARAH, *From the Depth of Our Hearts,* 55.

celibacy faithfully. They have turned into womanizers and behave like sexual instruments. They construct houses in order to live with their concubines freely without any fear, like any other lawfully married couple. Because this practice is being done in public, it causes scandal among the faithful. It hurts the Church and her people, and it really drags back efforts of evangelization, which was initiated by the Holy Family in Egypt and then practiced by the pioneers among the first devout missionaries.

It becomes a noticeably widespread phenomenon how challenging celibacy can be for many priests. In another separate interview we did with a seminarian from one of the Archdioceses in Nigeria, he shared a story of a certain priest who failed to complete his further studies in Rome because he could not stay for so long without having sex. He cheated in his exams so that he could be expelled from the university and go back home. Another respondent from one of the dioceses in Uganda said that there are priests who come from a certain tribe, which has its customs and traditions, that a man should not die without leaving an heir. So, priests who belong to that tribe must have kids, even in secret, in order to fulfill this cultural demand. For them, it is very hard to keep the vow of celibacy, although they have priestly vocations. As missionaries in our own land, we still have a big task to do, especially teaching the true and sound doctrine of the Church.

1.4.7. Doctrinal Crises in Priestly Ministry

The crisis of priesthood "ultimately has to do with the contemporary God crisis and the crisis of the Church that is its effects."[36] As a man, a priest sometimes finds himself in the same crisis of God, which means he is not convinced by

[36] Cf. G. AUGUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood*, 40.

what he does. He is not accepting who God is. To him, this is a doctrinal crisis, a failure to believe and to proclaim God properly. "Contrary to what we may think, the greatest difficulty of men is not in believing what the Church teaches at the moral level; the most difficult thing for the postmodern world is to believe in God and in his only Son."

This is why Benedict XVI defends the thesis of the crisis of God. The absence of God from our lives is a tragedy of unfathomable proportions.[37] There are many examples of priests who seem to forget that their life is centered solely on God. They devote only a little time to him during the day because they are swamped in what could be called the heresy of activism.[38]

As soon as "we focus on God, it becomes utterly clear that the ultimate meaning of priestly life consists in the fact that we, as creatures of God, are God-dependent beings. We therefore owe honor and worship to God."[39] With regard to this, St. Benedict would beautifully state in his rule that "let nothing be preferred to the work of God."[40]

Accordingly, "the preparation of many priests today exposes them more easily to sin."[41] This statement may sound too harsh, considering the fact that "solid preparation is in itself not enough to avoid sin."[42] There are a number of

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[37] Cf. R. SARAH, *God or Nothing: A Conversation on Faith with Nicolas Diat*, 108.

[38] Cf. R. SARAH, *God or Nothing: A Conversation on Faith with Nicolas Diat,* 108.

[39] Cf. G. AUGUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood*, 40.

[40] Cf. ST. BENEDICT, *The Rule,* 43.

[41] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 28.

[42] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 28.

doctrinally well-grounded priests who are nevertheless, morally not sound.

It must be said, on the other hand, that sound doctrine, combined with a discipline of intellectual virtue, is necessary and greatly helps a priest to avoid occasions of sin.[43] What is happening nowadays with some priests is quite disgusting. In interviews we conducted, some lay men and women we met were astonished by the practice of priests who have been endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit but still believe in animism, witchcraft and superstition. They said priests go to witchdoctors to be given charms to remain in the parishes where they have been posted, most especially the rich parishes, and some to be elected superiors or appointed by the bishops in good leadership positions in the diocese. This pagan practice has left the faithful in dilemma, for they do not know what to hold on to: is it faith in Jesus Christ or witchdoctors?

2. The Root of the Priestly Crisis

It is true that priesthood seems to be suffering an invasion by the smoke of Satan as we have said earlier. Priests throughout the world have felt humiliated and betrayed by so many abominations. Following Jesus, the Church is experiencing the mystery of the scourging. Her body is lacerated. Who is inflicting the lashes?[44] We may all ask, "what is the root of the disordered and even sinful life of certain priests?"[45] The following could be possible answers.

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[43] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 28.

[44] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 11.

[45] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 31.

2.1.1 Lack of Zeal for the Pastoral

Priests are concerned with the salvation of men and women in body and soul. The principal task of a priest is the salvation of a complete man within the glory of God. "In the name of Christ, priests carry out their task with enthusiasm. No one should ever have the impression that they work conscientiously when on duty, but before and after hours, they belong only to themselves. A priest never belongs to himself. People must sense priestly zeal, through which priests bear credible witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[46]

On the contrary, we now witness many priests living life against their calling, and they have lost interest. One is doing apostolate because he has no other option. "A person is zealous when someone or something really interests him. Zeal for souls is, therefore, the interest that the shepherd must take in the eternal salvation of the sheep entrusted to his care."[47]

When a priest is interested in his ministry and apostolate, no obstacle can stop him from doing what he is called upon to do. There is no weariness that can slow down a priest, and there is no habit that can bore him. "A priest does all he can, strain every fiber of his being in order to obtain that original and pure zeal for soul. A priest with a burning zeal for souls does all he can to obtain eternal salvation."[48] A priest is a curate if we are to borrow the experience of Cure of Ars, meaning that the one who cares for souls.

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[46] R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 32.

[47] R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 32.

[48] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 32.

"The curate is the one who takes care of the faithful. He is the good shepherd who stands front and center looking after the interests of the flock."[49] He does all this if he is upright and steadfast and faithfully embraces the divine call as a gift of love from God.

"It is sad to see that some priests seem to have no interest in the eternal salvation of the faithful. They focus entirely on the horizontal plane trying to solve certain political, economic, social, immigration or environmental problems."[50] Such priests bring a great danger of losing many souls because they show coldness and indifference toward those who have been entrusted to them so that they may serve them for God as their salvation.

Some priests "want only to receive from souls and not to give. They want the faithful to respect them, esteem them, acclaim them, always back them up, never speak against them and give everything necessary to support them."[51] All these issues speak right away about the face of a priest and his life. A priest is always supposed to ask what he is giving to his faithful. Of course, the answer should be that he is administering Sacraments or preparing people to receive them. This is the most important and vital gift a priest could give to the people. Administering the Sacraments is at the apex because it is Christ who saves and not the priest.[52]

The figure of a priest has been known to be a mysterious and majestic representative of God. More often than not, the

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[49] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 33.

[50] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 34-35.

[51] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 35.

[52] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 35.

present-day priest cuts the figure of an administrator who handles public institutes, not a servant of God. "Some priests want their actions to be efficient, assessed and recorded on a ledger in a worldly way. But the only action that should be necessary to quantify is prayer. A priest's work finds its sole measure in God. Being a priest is not primarily an office; it is a participation in the life of Christ crucified."[53]

With the spiritual disease of modernity, priests have found themselves deep in the worship of their ego. Ego deletes the memory and the mind of a priest, thus making him forget the sole purpose of his call and instead concentrate on self-glorification. The ego tends to push a priest to think more of who loves or hates him than who needs his service. A priest must not be preoccupied with knowing whether he is appreciated by the faithful. He must ask himself whether he proclaims God's Word, whether the doctrine he teaches is God's, and whether he fully carries out God's will. The invisible, i.e., the spiritual are most important. Certainly, "he must satisfy completely the expectations of the faithful. But the faithful ask nothing of him but to see Jesus, to hear his Word, to experience his merciful love in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to enter into communion with him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Priests have expectations concerning where they are going to be posted by their bishops or superiors. Some of them live to meet the expectations of those who have authority, while some do not remain in the places where the Bishop has wanted them to be. This creates an obvious disappointment and lack of zeal for apostolate among many priests.

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[53] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 59.

In the interview the researcher conducted, he came to notice that in such a situation, many priests do apostolate only because quitting is not an option for them. It is because they do not have somewhere else to go. Otherwise, many could have left the ministry. The consequence of this is that priests fall into laziness and drunkenness as apparent antidotes to stress, depression and frustration in life. Excessive drinking leads to ruin.

Failure to accept appointments from bishops and religious superiors leads to loneliness whereby a priest is physically at the parish or a religious community, but his thoughts and feelings are far from where he is. What happens, according to one respondent, is that these priests sink into addiction to pornography and self-isolation in order to fill the gap which is brought about by loneliness. Alcoholism is seen as a remedy for loneliness, stress and frustration. It has ruined many priests to the point that some bishops are thinking of sending addicted priests back home to stay with their parents. For sure, some priests affected by alcohol have destroyed their destiny and apostolate. The cause of all this chaos among priests is simply the failure to accept their appointments. What we see here is that excessive drunkenness is a pitiful and thoroughly miserable existence for priests.

2.1.2 Poor Spiritual Life among Priests

Spiritual dryness is another challenging factor in the lives and ministries of many priests. Although this has been a perennial issue, it is growing rapidly in the modern world.

> Modernity can be used as the signpost for a general attitude adopted by many of our intellectuals. This attitude is the result of the extraordinary conquests of modern science and the equally great disillusions that follow upon great dreams of progress and man's self-deification. In this

> case, one can say that the ultimate origin of modernity is the refusal of all faith, which follows the refusal of mystery. Modernity refuses mystery. It will always know more, explain more. But it will not really understand anything anymore, because it has refused mystery.[54]

The crises the priesthood is going through are in large part due to the "repercussions of social changes, new forms of behavior, the loss of moral and religious values and a widespread consumeristic attitude.[55] The image of a priest is like that of a man who sees priesthood as great and beautiful and demonstrates enthusiasm for the mission of the Church. A priest's calling "is to serve his fellow men, and it is here that he will find joy and equilibrium."[56] A risk for priests in modern society "is that of neglecting their spiritual life or allowing it to become weak. The heavier the burden, the more important it is to be close to the Lord in order to find in Him the grace necessary for their pastoral service and their welcome by the faithful."[57]

A priest's lack of strong spirituality brings contempt and pride, which threatens his existence. "Our pride as modern men sometimes leads us to a ridiculous blindness."[58]

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[54] Cf. R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 47-48.

[55] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *"Renewal of Priestly Identity,"* https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/521/renewal-of-priestly-identity-is-antidote-to-alarming-lack-of-priests, Accessed on 18.04.2024.

[56] Cf. G. AUGUSTIN, *Called to Joy: Celebrating Priesthood,* 67.

[57] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *"Renewal of Priestly Identity,"* https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/521/renewal-of-priestly-identity-is-antidote-to-alarming-lack-of-priests Accessed on 18.04.2024.

[58] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 48.

Our pride refuses to let God speak to us in human words. We cannot accept the fact that God should make himself so close by being an infant. We cannot bring ourselves to accept the fact that God wants to give himself through the Church by means of the Sacraments.

The priestly vocation is a call to follow Jesus by leaving the world behind. It is compared with the act of following Christ done by the Apostles. "The apostles left their boats, their occupations and their friends. Like them, to follow Christ is to renounce the world, its criteria and its approval."[59]

In the world's eyes, a priest will always be a sign of contradiction. Similar to worldly odds, "Some priests have a fear of appearing like strangers to the world. They are worried about being open to the world and understanding it. They are immersed in the world and end up drowning in it."[60] Some priests want their actions to be efficient, assessed and recorded on a ledger in a worldly way. But the only action that should be necessary to quantify is prayer. A priest's work finds its sole measure in God. Being a priest is not primarily an office; it is a participation in the life of Christ.

Conclusion

The signs of the times in the life and ministry of priests always develop within a particular historical context, at times replete with new problems and unforeseen changes in which the pilgrim Church lives. This is the reason why the contemporary life of priests may find itself exposed so much

[59] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 58.

[60] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 58.

to sin. But again, the priesthood is not born of history but of the immutable will of God. However, it corresponds with historical circumstances; and to remain faithful to its nature, it is configured in specific choices through a critical relationship to Jesus and a demand for evangelical harmony with the signs of the times. Therefore, priests have the duty to interpret these signs in the light of faith and subject them to prudent judgment. In any case, they cannot ignore them, especially if they wish to effectively orient their own lives in a way that will make their service and testimony more fruitful for Jesus and for the kingdom of God.

In the current era of the life of the Church and society, priests are called to live their ministry with depth, anticipating the ever more profound, numerous and sensitive demands not only of a pastoral nature but also psychosocial and cultural, which they must face. Today, priests are engaged in diverse areas of apostolate, which require complete dedication and generosity, intellectual preparation and, above all, a mature and deep spiritual life rooted in prayer and pastoral charity, which is their specific way to holiness and which also constitutes an authentic service to the faithful through a ministry conducted according to the Father's will and the superabundant love that fills the Sacred Heart of Jesus.[61]

In order to avoid sin, a priest should be prudent. "Prudence is the virtue of using a good means to reach a good end. Our good end is that of being worthy and holy priests of Jesus."[62] A prudent priest will always ask himself whether the means he uses to carry on the mission are truly

[61] CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests,* 34.

[62] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 29.

justified by the end, which is the salvation of his soul and other people's souls. This is like once again reciting the act of contrition 'that I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.' The good end is to sin no more.

But this is possible if one cooperates with the grace of God. "The priest, then, must be prudent; he must use good means to keep from getting close to sin. Because sin is like a chained dog: it is scary even from far away, but it bites you only if you come within striking distance."[63] Thus, priests should keep away from sins' striking distance lest they perish.

In her sentiments, one respondent said that to reduce problems befalling priests, bishops and major superiors should also inculcate the spirit of sending priests for further studies. Philosophical and theological courses which all priests undertake may not be enough, especially in this modern world. Some other basic skills and knowledge should be added in order to help priests cope with the new waves and demands of the ministry. This will add exposure and new experiences for them. Indeed, 'an empty mind is the workshop of the devil.' There is a great danger for priests to enter into crisis if they are left idle with nothing to do.

> Christ left to us a terrible, magnificent responsibility. We continue his presence on earth…. Our hands, consecrated by the sacred chrism, are no longer our own. They are his for the purpose of blessing, forgiving and consoling. They must be pierced like his so as to keep and hold nothing greedily.[64]

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[63] Cf. R. SARAH, *At the Service of the Truth: Priesthood and Ascetic Life,* 30.

[64] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 59.

A priest who ceaselessly runs from his responsibilities "without bearing in his flesh the Paschal Mystery that he proclaims" is a dying man. Activism atrophies the priest's soul and prevents him from leaving space within himself for Christ.[65] A priest is an ambassador of Christ who has the obligation to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel, in other words, to make Jesus Christ known and to work to invite those who wish to know him into a true, intimate relationship with him. He must also watch to make sure that the faith remains authentic, a rocklike foundation that does not fail, that it is neither altered nor rendered lifeless.[66] His mission is to form all Christians into disciples and missionaries who are willing to die for Christ and his Gospel. It is his responsibility to give substantial spiritual nourishment that strengthens faith and the interior life.

[65] R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 59.

[66] Cf. R. SARAH, *In Conversation with Nicolas Diat: The Day is Now Far Spent,* 62.

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THEOLOGY (DOCTRINAL UNDERSTANDING)

BELIEVING IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY: A CHALLENGING QUEST IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

The present research focused on the Catholic Creed, specifically on the part that deals with the culmination of the faith journey, in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come". The intention of the research was to address the reality of the destiny of humanity and the fate of the world. Understanding the truth about life after death, the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the resurrection of the dead enables individuals to live vigilantly.

The article also aimed to correct the misconception that resurrection and everlasting life are only relevant after death. Instead, it proposes that everlasting life begins on earth through the sacramental experience of the eternal life given

as a gift by the risen Lord in the sacraments. Consequently, this research has the potential to inspire many individuals to consider the best approaches for learning and teaching faith, particularly to children and young people. It can also encourage a reexamination of the small catechisms used for catechesis in various dioceses within the Catholic Church. Moreover, this study can kindle an interest among believers to delve more deeply into eschatological matters, enabling them to grow spiritually and live out the Creed they profess.

This study will benefit the entire Church, including ministers and laypersons. It offers a genuine approach to teaching catechesis on topics related to eschatology. The study used a qualitative research approach with participants grouped into men, women, young women, young men, and choir members (female and male). It also uses a hermeneutical method to interpret the thoughts of Ratzinger on the "resurrection of the body," falling within the theological area of eschatology.

Key concepts: The resurrection of the dead, the end of the world, eschatology.

Introduction

In this article, "Believing in the Resurrection of the Body: A Challenging Quest in Tanzania", I explain how believers face a challenge when it comes to belief in the resurrection of the body. I wrote this article when a book of Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, was still fresh in my mind. In this book, Ratzinger offers a theological reflection on the relationship between the immortality of the soul and the resurrection. Ratzinger inspired me to research how faithful people think about these two issues. In this article, I report the results of research conducted in the manner of a sociological survey in two parishes with the

aspiration to gain insight into how the respondents thought theologically about the issues that constitute the core of this article. The study uncovered a lack of belief in the concept of the resurrection of the body. So, I offer thoughts that can help to overcome this reluctance to believe.

The Nature of the Challenge

A study conducted in 2024 in both the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam and the Diocese of Morogoro indicates that there might be a challenge for some Catholic Christians to believe in the resurrection of the body. The challenge is surprising because many of them believe in life after death but do not believe in the resurrection of the body. Most of them believe that Jesus Christ will return, but they do not believe in either the resurrection of the body or in the end of the world[121].

This lack of belief contradicts the Catholic faith. The fundamental challenge is not knowing whether belief in life after death is based on biblical or traditional teaching. They believe in life after death and in the second coming of Christ, but at the same time they deny the resurrection of the body.

It is more probable that the belief in life after death is not fundamentally based on the Catholic faith or biblical teachings but on personal African traditional beliefs. The founding of the research on the matter of the resurrection of the body is like what Thomas P. Rausch writes in his book *Eschatology, Liturgy, and Christology* when he says:

> At the heart of Christian eschatology is the idea of the resurrection of the dead, based on the resurrection of Jesus. The 2006 Faith Matters survey found that 70 percent of Americans believe in the afterlife, but for many of them, their idea of life beyond death is vague and undefined, more of a cultural idea about spiritual survival than something based on

[121] Cf. T. P. RAUSCH., *Eschatology, Liturgy and Christology,* xiii.

> the biblical idea of the resurrection of the body and all its implications. Even many Christians think of the resurrection solely in personal terms. Salvation has been understood individualistically; we speak of "saving my soul," "going to heaven," or "being saved"[122].

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[122] T. P. RAUSCH., *Eschatology, Liturgy and Christology,* xii; he refers to the book of Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, Am*erican Grace* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 71. Karl Rahner says that eschatological salvation is complete when it is collective, cf. Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, New York: Seabury, 1978, 444-445.

The editor notes that Rahner clouds the issue by his attempt to assert that when a person says that "Jesus is God" with the ordinary meaning of the word "is", the resulting statement is both monophysite and mythological. This casts into doubt Rahner's perceptions of complete eschatological salvation. He does not find the grace of this salvation in the hypostatic union of the Word made flesh. "For in and according to the humanity which we see when we say 'Jesus,' Jesus 'is' not God, and in and according to his divinity God 'is' not man in the sense of a real identification" (*Foundations of Christian Faith*, 290).

In contrast to Rahner, it is important to note here that "seeing the humanity" of Jesus is not seeing a human "nature"; rather it is seeing the Person of Jesus in his human visibility as the Word made flesh. Similarly, seeing Jesus according to his divinity is not seeing the divine nature; rather it is seeing Jesus – as St. Thomas the Apostle did in John 20:28 – in his divine Personhood as the one whom the Father has sent into the world. Salvation, in other words, is entirely according to the will of the Father in complete unity with the will of the Son. This unity is eternal and embraces the human will of Jesus – entirely one with the Father's will in a relationship of free personal interdependence that remains a hypostatic union.

Cardinal J. Hoffner, in debate with Rahner, confesses the faith of the Church that Jesus *is* the Son of God, God from God, light from light, true God from true God. Jesus' identity, therefore, is that of a divine Person, the Word of God, who has united to himself a fully human nature. What the Cardinal said brings to light an important salvific fact: God acquired the Church by his own blood (Acts 20:28). With

What Thomas P. Rausch explains, referring to Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, reflects the results of a study conducted in Tanzania that showed the same disposition. Some Tanzanian believers probably believe in life after death, although not much according to the Creed, because it aligns with their cultural stance vis-à-vis the dead. Laurenti Magesa (1946-2022) writes in his book entitled *African Religion, The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* that Africans naturally, regardless of Christianity, believe in life after death[123]. The African tradition honors ancestors beyond their death. They believe in the communion of life with them because they believe that life continues beyond physical death[124]. The African eschatology of recognizing life after death does not contradict the Catholic faith. However, the challenge persists because it seems that the way of perceiving life beyond death does not have its foundation in the resurrection of Christ.

In many African cultures, particularly in Tanzania and the rest of Africa, the deceased person is always counted as a family member. The ancestors become protectors of each member of the family or clan[125]. Even though the Catholic faith asserts life beyond death as Africans do, the Catholic faith differs from the African tradition about what this means. For Catholics, life after physical death, or as Ratzinger calls it, "bios death,"[126] is not a mere survival of the spirit but the new life that emerges from the mystery of

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that acquisition eschatological salvation is complete. For the utterances of Rahner that seem quite problematic, see especially pages 290-292 of *Foundations of Christian Faith.*

[123] Cf. C. NYAMITI., *African Tradition and the Christian God,* Eldoret, Gaba Publications, 18.

[124] Ecclesia in Africa 43.

[125] Cf. JOHN MBITI., *African Religions and Philosophy,* 2nd ed. 160.

[126] J. RATZINGER., *Introduction to Christianity,* 304.

the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A person continues to exist after the physical death when he/she is completely in the Risen Christ. True life beyond death presupposes resurrection. The hope of the resurrection of the body is what seems to be a challenging quest for Tanzanians, even if they are already Catholics.

The Resurrection Recapitulates the Hope of Salvation

The Christian faith in the resurrection of the body, based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the center of the eschatology that recapitulates the hope of salvation[127]. But despite this theological truth, it seems that many believers hope for a kind of salvation that does not consist of resurrection but rather of an immortality of the soul that carries a sense of life beyond death but nothing more.

They miss the important point that the immortality of the soul intended as salvation is made possible by the resurrection of Christ, which is at the foundation of the eschatological hope of the continuation of life.

In contrast, believers normally mistake hope for immortality with resurrection. Christologically, immortality has its origins in the paschal mystery of Christ. Since many believers fail to associate immortality or life beyond death with the resurrection of Christ, they do not believe that there will be a resurrection of the body. They fail to understand the affinity between the Resurrection of Christ and hope for the resurrection of the body. Their way of understanding the conception of resurrection is more empirical and influenced by human experience rather than faith in the mystery of the resurrection of Christ. The hope of life after death, which for

[127] T. P. RAUSCH., *Eschatology, Liturgy and Christology,* xii.

Christians is understood as salvation, is fundamentally recapitulated in the resurrection of Christ.

The Conflicting Faith

The results of the research that was conducted point to a grave discrepancy between personal faith and the faith of the Church.

The participants in the research were given survey questions when they had come for their customary liturgical prayer at the church. They prayed, sang hymns, and recited the Creed; but at the end of the Mass, after the final blessing, when they were asked about their faith in eschatological matters, they hesitated to confess what they had professed in the Creed a few hours before.

For this reason, it is necessary to focus on finding the source of the discrepancy. Indeed, there appears to be an urgent need to find a solution to this big problem. This study creates the hypothesis that some believers do not know nor understand what they profess as their faith. The reasons for the paucity of knowledge and understanding of the faith rests squarely in the sphere of the bishop and his collaborators, namely, priests and deacons.

As a corrective measure to such a situation, Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) proposes the use of systematic theology to find answers. He says: "Indeed, offering an account of how theological theses are to be converted into preaching has become one of the tasks of a dogmatic treatise".[128]

There is a great need and responsibility to spread the truth about the faith in all its integrity among believers. Ratzinger declares that the baptismal confession "highlights the inseparable togetherness of faith and life – of faith, prayer

[128] J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 268.

and worship".[129] The language and explanations of eschatology should help the common Christian to live the faith with the hope of salvation.[130]

Ratzinger says that the way eschatology is understood and preached can be an obstacle for many. He says this from the experience of the language that was used in the primitive Church and the language that was used in the Church of the Middle Ages. The language of the early Church gave hope of salvation, while the language of the Middle Ages caused fear of the Last Day, known as the Parousia. The way of understanding the message and meaning of the Parousia or the Second Coming of Christ differed between the early Church and the Church of the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, eschatology was not well received because it lost its salvific attraction, which is the intrinsic nature of eschatology.

Ratzinger says that eschatology encountered challenges because men have changed its essence, which is hope, and have made it the theology of the last things only: death, judgment, heaven, and hell, which generated weakness. Indeed, the classical themes of death, judgment, purgatory, hell, and heaven are notions that fall within the scope of eschatology, but it is not necessary to reduce eschatology to these notions.[131] They should not be considered as if they were the only eschatological themes to be taught.

What Ratzinger says is probably what continues to be taught in seminars and in teaching sessions about the faith in catechetical classes in parishes. Many believers do not understand the content of eschatology because it is a challenging area to teach adequately. Deacons, parish

[129] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology,* 242.

[130] SS 2.

[131] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 4.

priests, and the priests that assist them are expected to enlighten the faithful on the content of the faith, but the truth is that they are often overwhelmed by administrative demands and end up assigning the teaching of catechism to volunteer catechists who are not very well prepared.

Systematic theology must keep its eyes open to pursue the goal of eschatology, that is, the hope that is visible in the early Church. The passage from the essence of eschatology to the last things is manifested in two expressions. The early Church had the invocation of "Maranatha"[132], while in the Middle Ages, they brought the saying "Dies Irae."[133] The *Maranatha* saying of the First Church was one of hope and joy. They wanted Christ to come soon. Unlike the hope and joy evoked by *Maranatha*, the second sentence of "Dies Irae" is full of anxiety and judgment. So, the Last Day was seen as a day of fear, a day of wrath instead of an invigorating hope for salvation. It did not feel like a day of salvation for the soul. Ratzinger also says that another was saying, "Save your soul". It is clear from this phrase, "Save your soul", that the salvation brought by Christ had been torn down and seen as if salvation were just only the work of an individual. The hope of seeing the Last Day as an event of salvation for the world had thus disappeared.[134]

The best way to understand and teach eschatology is to consider its essence as the hope of salvation, which has its root in the resurrection. Ratzinger analyzed the expressions and explained how they negatively affected the understanding of eschatology. This gives us the opportunity

[132] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Introduction to Christianity,* 326; Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Jesus of Nazareth, Holy Week,* 216.

[133] J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 5.

[134] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 5.

to rethink how the entire eschatological message is presented to people.

Living the Faith in the Eschatological Dimension

Living the faith in an eschatological dimension means centering oneself on the hope of the new life in the world of the resurrection, i.e., the life that is to come. The questions of the immortality of the soul or life after death, the end of the world, the return of Christ, and the resurrection of the body are not problems of the past but, above all, problems of today for contemporary Christians.

On May 5, 2024, I did some research in a parish of Morogoro. The believers were divided into four groups. In the first group were 22 men (UWAKA),[135] the second group consisted of 34 women (WAWATA),[136] the third group was made up of 27 youths (VIWAWA),[137] and the last group was composed of 22 members of the Choir.

I conducted research in the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam on May 19, 2024, in the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Bunju, in the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam together with its outstations. Four groups were involved: women (WAWATA), men (UWAKA), youths (VIWAWA), and members of the choir. Each group was asked the same question.

All four groups were asked if they believed in life after death, the return of Christ (the parousia), and the resurrection of the body. The answers had to be either yes, no, or I do not know. Upon conducting this research, I discovered that belief in the resurrection of the body is still difficult to understand and accept. The participants did not give reasons

[135] UMOJA WA WANAUME KATOLIKI

[136] WANAWAKE WAKATOLIKI TANZANIA

[137] VIJANA WAFANYAKAZI WAKATOLIKI

for their answers because the research did not aim to find the reasons for not believing in the resurrection of the body. All those who almost agreed with the belief in life after death expressed disagreement about the resurrection of the body. It seems that this doctrine was still difficult for many.

The Results of the Study

The research included 627 believers. Six hundred twenty-seven believers were asked the same three questions which were:

Do you believe there is life after death? (Q1)

Do you believe that Jesus Christ will return? (Q2)

Do you believe that people will be resurrected in the flesh? (Q3)

Answers to the Questions

Those who responded yes to the first question were 593, constituting 95% of the participants. Those who said no were 8, comprising 1% of the respondents. Those who declared that they did not know were 26, equaling 4% of the respondents. From these figures, it is clear that many believers believe in life after death.

The third question concerned the resurrection in the flesh. One hundred fifty-eight said yes, equal to 25%. Two hundred forty said no, equal to 38%. The remaining 229 declared that they did not know, constituting 37% of the respondents. In fact, from these observations, one can surmise that many Catholics do not believe in the resurrection of the body. Of the 627 believers, only 158 admitted the existence of the resurrection of the body.

Out of 627 believers, 522 were asked one more question than the others regarding the Parousia, the return of Jesus

Christ. The question was: Do you believe that Jesus Christ will return?

Four hundred forty-nine believers were convinced that Christ will return, constituting 86% of the respondents. Those who said no to the return of Christ were 22, which is equal to 4% of the respondents. In contrast, 51 believers said that they did not know, constituting 10% of the respondents. This result bears great resemblance to the responses concerning the issue of life after death – everlasting life – in which many believe. It is the same in the case of the return of Christ. Many Catholics seem to believe very strongly in the second coming of Christ.

These results raise numerous theological and pastoral questions. One is persuaded that a serious investigation into the method of transmitting the faith is necessary. Awareness of this problem should be instrumental in the education of the ministers of the Church - bishops, presbyters, deacons - and the parents and lay collaborators who act as teachers of the faith. There is a need to re-examine the entire structure of catechesis that the Church offers to the faithful. From the answers, one may conclude that many Catholics do not believe everything in the Creed.

A Full Belonging to the Church: What is it?

Ratzinger says that those who do not believe in the entire Creed impair their relationship with the Church. Since the early Church, the Creed has been established as the fundamental synthesis of the correct teachings of the Christian faith. It is usually professed during baptism as a commitment to pursue life in God[138]. Ratzinger explains the consequences of the Creed by using the Letter to the Romans of the Apostle Paul for what he calls the Baptismal

[138] BENEDICT XVI, *The General Audience, on "I believe in God",* Wednesday, 23 January 2013.

Confession. The plan of God is contained in the formula of Baptism which begins with creation and finds its fulfillment in the resurrection of the body.

Ratzinger says that the baptismal confession makes it impossible to separate a professed faith from the life of faith lived in practice; the prayer that adores God, thanks Him, expresses true contrition for sins, and brings one's personal and collective needs into his presence; and the worship that devotes the whole mind, heart, soul and strength to God in acts of unceasing love. One becomes a Christian through baptism.[139] Baptism is entering voluntarily into the form of an ecclesial faith in the Triune God. He writes:

> Membership in the Church is achieved in the concrete order through the common prayer of the confession of faith which is at one and the same time the presence of the baptismal mystery and access to the present Lord.[140]

Not believing in some aspects of the Creed damages the belonging to the Church. He writes about those who do not believe the whole Creed:

> If I cease to be able to give real assent to the Creed, or to any part of it, the content of baptism, my belonging to that community of faith and confession which is the Church, cannot remain unimpaired[141].

According to this point of view of Ratzinger, those who say they do not believe in the resurrection of the body mean that they do not believe in a part of the Creed, and therefore, by way of conclusion, their belonging to the Church as a

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[139] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology,* 242; BENEDICT XVI, *The General Audience, on, "Saint Paul (16): Theology of the sacraments",* Wednesday, 10 December 2008.

[140] J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 242 – 243.

[141] J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 243.

community of believers is compromised. The Confession of Faith is not the truth that one fabricates as a collection of propositions,[142] but, rather, is:

> A structure whose inner coherence, the unity of what is believed, comes to expression as the coherence and unity of a single whole. One cannot obliterate a part without losing the totality.[143]

From a theological and hermeneutic point of view, one who has accepted life after death but has rejected the resurrection is asserting life after death unrelated to the resurrection of Christ. Ratzinger says their belonging to the Church is compromised.

Does this not affect their salvation? The question may arise: Do these deniers doubt the power of God? On the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, the Collect prayer reminds us that our humanity is exalted to glory[144]. Now, what kind of humanity is it if they deny the resurrection of the body? To what extent does this impairment affect believers on the whole issue of salvation? These are challenges brought by Ratzinger with implications for systematic theology.

Contradictions on Some Eschatological Aspects

The study results show that many individuals harbor a faith that contradicts the faith of the Church as expressed in the Creed. The respondents for the research in Morogoro were attending the liturgical celebrations because it was a Sunday, May 5, 2024. Their answers contradicted what they had confessed in the Creed during Mass.

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[142] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Introduction to Christianity,* 96 – 97.

[143] J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 243.

[144] Cf. The Roman Missal, 411; CCC 659.

Those from Dar es Salaam were also in church because it was Pentecost Sunday. That day, they also recited the Creed. Both groups recited the Creed in their respective locations, therefore, but what they said at the end of the Mass as part of the research was different from what they professed during the Mass as part of the liturgical prayer.

Ratzinger says many have the empirical experience of seeing corrupted corpses in the grave. Perhaps that is why it is difficult for them to believe in the resurrection of the body. This difficulty can also ensue when the method used to teach the doctrines for newcomers to Christianity, the Real Presence in the Eucharist, and the nature and purpose of Confirmation do not give a complete picture of the eschatology of the resurrection.

Teaching Eschatology Coherently

The difficulty of not believing in some fundamental truths of faith, such as the resurrection, reminds us that teaching eschatology with a coherence of language and content is necessary. I mentioned before that Ratzinger stated that there was a difference in the eschatological understanding of aspects of the Parousia between the early Church and the Church of the Middle Ages because of the language they used. While the primitive Church saw the Parousia as an event to be awaited with enthusiasm and hope so far as to say *Maranatha* because it was an event of salvation, the Middle Ages announced it as a terrible event of judgment, saying that it was the "Dies Irae."[145] For this reason, the faithful lost their desire for it and did not await it with a ready heart. Ratzinger suggests that eschatology should not limit itself to teaching only the things of death, judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory, and immortality but to bring the entire

[145] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology,* 4.

message of salvation, whose center is the resurrection, into the centrality of eschatology. Since the research results have shown that the two motifs of the end of the world and the resurrection of the body are the most challenging, it is necessary to propose a new approach to elucidating these realities.

The Challenge of the Resurrection of the Body

It seems that one difficulty in accepting the resurrection comes from thinking that the resurrection is the recovery of the original body, that is, the resurrection of the corpse. In examining and questioning whatever it is that may cast doubt on the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the issue arose of the correctness of the concept of "resurrection of the body". Perhaps people think that the resurrection of the body means the resuscitation of the corpse.[146] Ratzinger explained that the resurrection of the body does not mean the resuscitation of the corpse.[147]

Why does Ratzinger say that the resurrection of the body is not the same as the resuscitation of the corpse? The basic reason he gives is that the resuscitation of the corpse is a return to the previous life where nothing changes in humanity, as happened to Lazarus (John 11: 43-44), the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), and the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:39-43).[148] These people had to die again.[149]

The resuscitation of the corpse is the soul returning from the dead: the person returns to the former life. This is not the

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[146] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology,* 169.

[147] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Jesus of Nazareth, Holy Week,* 184, 240; Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 169; Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Introduction to Christianity,* 350.

[148] BENEDICT XVI, *Angelus*, Sunday, 1 July 2012.

[149] BENEDICT XVI, *Angelus, Fifth Sunday of Lent,* 9 March 2008.

resurrection that happened to Christ. In this context, the resurrection of the body taught in the Catholic Church is not of this kind, i.e., of the resuscitation of the corpse, but it is the resurrection of the body. If believers understand the resurrection by comparing it to the resurrection of corpses such as that of Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain, and especially through the experience of seeing how the corpses decompose in the tomb after death, perhaps this is why they are confused and led not to believe in the resurrection of the flesh. It is, therefore, important to teach correctly that the resurrection of the body is not the same as the resuscitation of the corpse. The resurrection of the body is accomplished through the transformation of the bodily dimension of existence (1 Cor 15:42-44, Phil 3:21).[150]

What Ratzinger describes is what needs to be taught more insistently in catechesis. Ordinary people seem to have an image of the resurrection of corpses rather than bodily resurrection. Because of this confusion, they find it very difficult to accept the resurrection. When Ratzinger emphasizes that the resurrection is not a return to this life, he means that the resurrected body is not this earthly body.[151] The basic fact is that the resurrection involves the corporeality of being man. To speak about corporeality does not mean that it is an earthly body. Ratzinger holds:

> … that even in the formula of the Creed, which speaks of the "resurrection of the body", the word "body" means, in effect, "the world of man" (in the sense of biblical expressions like "all flesh will see God's salvation", and so

[150] BENEDICT XVI, *Angelus, Second Sunday of Lent,* 28 February 2010.

[151] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Jesus of Nazareth, Holy Week,* 214.

> on); even here the word is not meant in the sense of a corporality isolated from the soul.[152]

The way to understand what Ratzinger says can be difficult for many, especially for insufficiently trained catechists. Because of the difficulty of understanding the truth of the resurrection, even in burials, the language has changed against faith, so much so that the tomb is called the "eternal home" of the deceased. This tendency to call the grave the "eternal home" has emerged in recent years and undermines the Creed. Those entrusted to the pastoral care of the faithful do not normally correct the erroneous formulations either out of propriety or out of a lack of understanding that it is important. I am convinced that silence is no longer an option; teachers of the faith must cultivate the courage to change and teach correct doctrine.

Sayings like these gradually penetrate the thoughts of the people and damage their faith in the resurrection. To eliminate confusion, it is essential to subscribe to Ratzinger's proposal and carefully teach the meaning of the resurrection. The state of resurrection incorporates corporeality but not that of the corpse itself, which St. Paul calls perishable. In this regard, Ratzinger writes:

> One thing, at any rate, may be fairly clear: both John (6:63) and Paul (1 Cor 15:50) state with all possible emphasis that the "resurrection of the flesh", the "resurrection of the body", is not a "resurrection of physical bodies". Thus, from the point of view of modern thought, the Pauline sketch is far less naive than later theological erudition with its subtle ways of construing how there can be eternal physical bodies. To recapitulate, Paul teaches not the resurrection of physical bodies but the resurrection of persons, and this not in the

[152] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Introduction to Christianity*, 350. BENEDICT XVI, *"Regina Cœli",* Sunday, 22 April 2012.

> return of the "fleshly body", that is, the biological structure, an idea he expressly describes as impossible ("the perishable cannot become imperishable"), but in the different form of the life of the resurrection, as shown in the risen Lord.[153]

Magisterium of the Church

The Magisterium of the Church teaches that the resurrection will involve "the whole person".[154] The Fourth Synod of Toledo of December 5, 633, states:

> Cleansed by his death and blood, we have attained remission of sins in order to be resurrected by him in the Last Days in that flesh in which we now live and likewise in the form in which the Lord was resurrected.[155]

The Synod of Toledo rejected the idea of granting the status of another new body other than this one. Because doing so would be equivalent to creating another human being different from the current one, continuity would be missing from the person redeemed by Christ. The Synod states:

> (59) Thus, according to the example of our Head, we confess that there is a true resurrection of the flesh for all the dead. (60) And we do not believe that we shall rise in ethereal or any other flesh, as some foolishly imagine, but in this very flesh in which we live and are and move. (61) After having given an example of this holy resurrection, our Lord and Savior ..."[156].

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[153] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Introduction to Christianity,* 357.

[154] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter on Certain Questions*
Concerning Eschatology, (May 17, 1979) in DH 4652.

[155] DH 485.

[156] DH 540.

The Fourth Lateran Council (Twelfth Ecumenical) of November 11–30, 1215, explained the nature of a person's state before and after the resurrection – without change of personhood – as follows:

> He shall come at the end of time to judge the living and the dead and to render to each one according to his works, to the reprobate as well as to the elect. All of them will rise again with their own bodies, which they now bear…[157]

Small Catechisms for the Teaching of the Sacraments

After obtaining the research results, I thought it would be good to read some catechisms of some States that are used to teach the faith for the Sacraments of the Church so that I can see how they speak about the eschatological themes. I saw eschatological questions with answers.

However, I think the answers are too short for anyone to understand them well. Even if the explanation is given by those who teach, the catechism also needs to add a few words to enlighten catechumens. Due to their cognitional experience, especially in the environment of Tanzania, where many people participate in funeral rituals by digging graves until burial, it may be difficult for many to understand the concept of the resurrected flesh.

In the context of Tanzania, I looked at the Catechism of the Archdiocese of Songea and the Catechism written by Fr. Deusdedit P.M. Rubamba. In these two volumes, I observed that both have the same question related to the resurrection of the body and eternal life. To maintain the accuracy of the question, I will quote it in its original language, Swahili, and then try to translate it into English. The questions and their answers are:

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[157] DH 801.

100. Ufufuko wa miili maana yake nini?

Ufufuko wa miili maana yake, mwisho wa dunia, kwa enzi yake Mungu, roho ya kila mtu aliyekufa itarudi mwilini mwake na watu wote watafufuka (Ayu 19:25-26, Matt 22:30-32, Yoh 6:28-29).

101. Baada ya kifo cha mtu hutokea nini?

Baada ya kifo cha mtu roho yake inafika mbele ya Mungu kwa hukumu ya mtu binafsi. [158].

Below, I present an unofficial interpretation

100. What does the resurrection of the body mean?

The resurrection of the body means, at the end of the world, in the reign of God, the soul of every dead person will return to his body, and all people will be resurrected (Job 19:25-26, Matt 22:30-32, John 6:28-29).

101. What happens after a person's death?

After a person's death, his soul comes before God for individual judgment.

Considering the statement of Ratzinger and the teaching of the Church that the resurrection is not a return to this life, it is best to avoid language that is imprecise as to generate distortion and incomprehension. Saying, "The soul of every dead person will return to his body", can be understood as if he returns to earthly life. Although the content of the resurrection is accurate, language can still be an obstacle to correctly understanding the meaning of the resurrection. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of a mortal body

[158] Katekisimu, 2nd Ed. Jimbo Kuu la Songea, 2020; Cf. D. P. M. RUBAMBA., *Katekisimu Rahisi, Mafundisho ya Komunyo ya Kwanza na Kipaimara,* Dar es Salaam: Eternal Word and Charity Publishing CO. Ltd, 2023.

that will return to life. But obviously, it is not the life of this world, but the new life. The physical dimension of the resurrected body cannot belong to this current body but to the spiritual body.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains very well the whole concept of resurrection of the body. It asserts that in death, there is a separation between the soul and the body where the human body decays and the soul goes towards God, awaiting reunion with his glorified body. Just as the Virgin Mary was born to parents who shared the sinful nature of humanity, but she was born without sin, so from a corruptible body comes a glorified body.

It is here, where lies the best language that should be used in catechesis. The soul and a glorified body are reunited in the unity of the single person whom God has created. It strikes me that the more correct expression is one that speaks of the reunification of the soul and body rather than the expression that uses returning in the body. The question is: is the soul returning to the earthly body or corpse? The Catechism avoids this misconception by saying, "Christ is raised with his own body ... but he did not return to an earthly life."[159] People will be resurrected with their bodies, but they will be changed. The clarity of the language will help many understand the faith in the resurrection. The Church teaches that when this earthly body decays, the glorified one is rediscovered by the power of the risen Christ. That is, it passes from a perishable body to an incorruptible body.[160] The resurrected body is transformed so completely, that we can say for the limitedness of language, it becomes a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:35-37, 42, 52, 53).

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[159] CCC 999.

[160] LEO XIII, *Encyclical Letter "Arcanum" on Christian Marriage,* February 10, 1880.

The Role of Theologians

The document reminds us of the pastoral and theological responsibility that addressing this issue entails. It is necessary to continue tirelessly to remind believers of the teachings of the Church, which are the basis of Christian life and theological research. Theological research should prove to be an invaluable aid for helping develop Christians' faith in their everyday life.

Those who are responsible for catechesis must have sufficient knowledge of the matters covered. It is necessary to be careful in teaching so that images that are not compatible with the truth of faith are not used. In this regard, it is crucial for knowledgeable persons to supervise the editorial responsibilities of publishers of ecclesiastical literature. This calls for training and sensitizing authors of religious literature and publishers to adhere to certain guidelines that ensure that the faith of the Church is preserved. At the same time, it should be expressed in accessible language. The task of interpreting the truth requires fidelity, as Ratzinger says:

> Only the person who makes the truth accessible once again, who actually mediates it, and remains true to it: only the one who remains true to it interprets it correctly.[161]

It is necessary to consider professionally and carefully what this text says. Theologians bear the vocation and responsibility to research and develop the content of the faith in accessible language for persons of each generation and culture. The Augustinian dictum that reads *fides quaerens intellectum* is applicable here; indeed, it is the vocation of the theologian to welcome the theological virtue of faith and to seek to understand it and express it according to its proper

[161] J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology*, 242.

God-given parameters. They do not create their own object. Theologians must be committed to exploring the fundamental truths of faith as put forth by Ratzinger in his work, *Eschatology*. From the point of baptismal confession, the book grew from his reflection on the Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Romans.

Conclusion

Many Catholics today in Tanzania are second or third-generation believers. Some are new converts to the Catholic faith coming from their own cultural religious traditions or from Islam. With its beginnings in the arrival of the Holy Family, the evangelization of Tanzania is several hundred years old, but the faith was not readily accepted. Those who received the faith often did not break away from traditional cultural and religious practices.

This situation continues to happen to this day. With such a background of multi-ethnic religious practices, the growing influence of Islam and Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations, and a growing laxity in the transmission of the Catholic faith, many Catholics perceive their own inability to articulate their faith. Living in a pluralistic religious milieu, it is up to Catholic religious leaders to devise ways to respond to the challenges if they do not want to lose those who have embraced the faith.

One of the greatest challenges that confronts the Catholic faith in Tanzania today is to pay attention to language as a means of communicating and transmitting the truth of faith. A language that cannot convey the content of the faith risks creating doubts in those who are introduced to the faith. Religious language is cast in many different genres: prayer, praise, petition, thanksgiving, confession, and exhortation. When we talk about communicating the truths of faith, we are talking about confessional language. As illustrated in

this article, expressing faith by means of traditional language has a long history. Talking about the resurrection, a supernatural event, requires an appreciation of the limitations of language. In approaching the matters of faith concerning the resurrection, we need to be guided by the Scriptures, Tradition, Magisterium, Reason, and our own experience.

I think that it is important to use a language that teaches the transformed bodily dimension of the resurrection without creating the idea that the resurrected body is purely the creation of the new man, different from the current one. But also, we should refrain from using complex language that attempts to sustain the idea that the resurrection of this body is the same as the resuscitation and remodeling of what was a corpse.

Here lies the great challenge of teaching faith in the resurrection. The mystery of the bodily resurrection aims to protect the truth of the indivisibility of the person but also the truth of who the person is with a particular God-given identity. In explaining the resurrection of the body, some things must be considered of greater importance, such as the glorified body and the changed body. This will help many overcome the challenge of understanding and accepting belief in the resurrection.

It seems that the meaning, relevance, usefulness, and applicability of some words in religious books leave much to be desired for a deep understanding. The Large Catechism uses the word reunite of the soul and body in the resurrection. The small catechisms in use in various parishes use the word “return” of the soul to the body. Theologically, there is a big difference between “return” and “reunion”. The verb “return” becomes positive when it aims to maintain the concept of the same person. That is, it eliminates Luther’s

concept of the creation of a new person, a point upon which Ratzinger challenged Luther.

Ratzinger believes that when Luther said that the soul does not exist but at the same time proposed the notion of a sleeping soul that will be resurrected together with the body, he was bringing into consideration the creation of a new person that through the resurrection would be created as different from the historical one.[162] This creates the image of a return to the world with the body that dies: according to the catechism, this is the earthly body. This is what Ratzinger rejected. Therefore, using the word return to the body is theologically dangerous in explaining the resurrection.

The advantage of using the word "reunite" could not be clearer. First of all, it gives the right idea that there is a continuity between the resurrected person and the one who lived on earth. It also gives a picture of the person's integrity. When the catechism uses "reunite", it adds terms, like changed or transformed body. The small catechisms in the vernacular used for teaching the faith do not have this definition. It depends on who teaches the theme of the resurrection and how they might include these pertinent issues. It is not easy for all catechists and even for priests to communicate adequately this eschatological truth. These words must be included in small catechisms. It is very important to keep the language of the resurrection correct to ward off religious doubts and uncertainties.

Another challenge I mentioned concerns the common language used during funeral and burial rites. There has been a tradition of having masters of ceremony in the funeral and burial process. Many of the masters of ceremonies are chosen based on their oratorial capabilities rather than their understanding of the faith. Many of them have no

[162] Cf. J. RATZINGER., *Eschatology,* 106.

background in theology or doctrine of the Church. They instruct the funeral attendants to utter words that can harm the faith of believers. Because of ignorance, some use words that contradict Church doctrine. However, the challenge comes when they fail to be corrected by those holding responsible positions.

There is a strong culture of shame in Tanzania: people are often given free rein to speak because correcting them publicly could humiliate them. Not correcting them in front of the believers, on the other hand, can harm the faith of the people. One example: there has been a tendency to call the grave an eternal home. For a Christian, the eternal home is heaven in union with God. Is God a grave so that the grave should be called an eternal house? Does this notion not undermine the hope of resurrection? The grave cannot be an eternal home for a Christian who believes in the resurrection. Perhaps allowing such language to be used is why many believers do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Everywhere, always, everyone is welcome to accept the gift of Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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THEOLOGY/BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

"ON THE MOUNT OF THE LORD IT SHALL BE SEEN" (GEN 22:14B): SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM'S STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR CHILDLESS COUPLES

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Abstract

There are many crisis-provoking incidents in life. Barrenness or infertility, volcanic eruption, tsunami, road accidents or fire outbreak, are just a few. Their presence in the lives of the people, cause crises of faith especially in the intellectual attempt to grasp the nature of God and his operations. In times of problems and suffering, it is difficult to experience the presence of God. During the moment of suffering, despair and giving up in the matters of faith are not uncommon for many people. However, the statement of faith which also is the answer that Abraham gives his son, to instruct him to be patient to inform him concerning the

nature of God, sheds some light on how to behave during the time of crisis.

Key words: Childlessness, Statement of Faith, the Mount of the LORD

Introduction

The Holy Scripture confirms that in the institution of marriage and family, the LORD blessed the male and the female to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28). Experience, however, shows that there are some families which lack children of their own. Therefore, in an attempt to shed light on this challenge, this paper will make a pragmatic analysis of Abraham's statement of faith in the narrative of Aqedah [1] (Gen 22:1-19) and apply its theological message to the situation of childlessness.

1. The Aim of the Study

The study intends to make use of a pragmatic analysis of biblical genres of the narrative of Aqedah. The intention is to focus on its socio-historical background and its distinctive features in order to help people in their crises, especially in the reality of childlessness in marriage and family life. Accordingly, this study aims at helping to raise the level of faith and trust for people who live within this situation of suffering to be able to see God's accompaniment in their life.

2. Meaning of Terms and Phrases Used in the Title

In this section, we intend to clarify the phrases and clauses used in the title, "On the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Gen 22:14b), in order to bring to the attention of the reader the precision of the terms used.

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[1] *Aqedah* is the Hebrew title of the story of Abraham's sacrifice in Genesis 22:1-19.

2.1 The Phrase "On the Mount of the LORD"

The term LORD translates the Hebrew personal name of God, יהוה (*YHWH*), the self-existent and eternal God. Subsequently, the phrase "on the Mount of the LORD" refers to a divine chosen place for worship (Gen 22:2, 13-14; Pss 15:1; 24:3). Several passages in the Bible refer to Mount Moriah as the mountain of the LORD (Ps 24:3; Isa 2:3; Zech 8:3), but the book of Numbers connect it with Mount Sinai (Numb 10:33). [2] Psalm 24:3-6 clarifies the state and condition required for the worshiper in ancient Israel to ascend the mount of the LORD.

The key conditions are clean hands and a pure heart (Ps 24:3). The mention of hands and heart calls for a metaphorical interpretation. "Hands" and "heart" are figures of speech: the hands are instruments for doing things and so refer to actions, and the heart is the localization of the will and refers to intentions and choices.[3] By clean hands, the worshipers are supposed to avoid dangerous actions towards the other, while by purity of heart, the worshipper is to have clear, upright thoughts which must be seen in his/her deeds. The figure of clean hands also refers to external purity while the pure heart refers to internal purity.[4]

2.2 The "Statement of Faith"

There are two key terms in this phrase: "statement" and "faith." The term "statement" refers to a definite or clear expression of something in speech or writing.[5] It can also mean a declaration, an opinion, a comment or summary of a thing conveyed by nonverbal means. For instance, a

[2] Cf. R. W. L. MOBERLY, *Genesis,* 47.
[3] A. P. ROSS, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1 – 41*, 580.
[4] Cf. H. J. KRAUS, *Psalms 1 – 59,* 314.
[5] Cf. C. SOANES – A. STEVENSON, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary,* 521.

financial report for a particular period of time. On its side, the term faith derives its meaning from the Hebrew term אֱמֶת (*'əmet*) and its Greek equivalent term πιστις (*pistis*). They are often translated as faith or trust; reliable, true or faithful. That means, faith is all about giving credence to the message or the giver of the message.[6] It shows sincerity of the intention, which elicits reliability of the message or the bearer of the message (1 Kgs 10:6). Faith in God, therefore, may mean simple trust in God or in the Word of God.[7] The *'əmet* is always connected with either steadfast love, justice or righteousness (Isa 59:14).

Therefore, "the statement of faith" is an individual declaration reflecting the reliance on God's omnipotence and benevolence. It is a sentence conveying a complete message, originating from one's personal disposition towards God.[8]

3. Preliminary Information about the Text of Genesis 22:1-19

This section explains the delimitation of the text, the setting, and the issues of literary criticism involved in the pericope of Aqedah.

3.1 Delimitation of the Text

The story of Abraham's sacrifice is a narrative which falls between the text which brings to the foreground the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen 21:25-34), and the

[6] Cf. R. W. L. MOBERLY, "אמן" in *The New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology,* 427-428.
[7] Cf. H. R. BALZ – G. SCHNEIDER, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 93.
[8] Cf. O. MICHEL, "Faith" in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*, 600.

toledot[9] of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen 22:20-24). The preceding text, that is, the story about the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech was grounded upon the conflict between Abimelech's servants regarding the well of water which Abraham had dug and so the latter wanted Abimelech to be witness that his servants may no longer disturb Abraham from making use of the water from that well.[10] That pericope is self-contained.

Thematically, the narrative of Genesis 22:1-19, is about God who is testing Abraham. It is introduced by the change of time with the clause "after these things" (Gen 22:1) which acts as a bridge between the previous pericope and the current one. The pericope in Genesis 22:20-24, is a completely new story. Since this pericope begins with the change of time (Gen 22:20) and introduces a new theme, a narration about Abraham's brother, Nahor, and his descendants. Its main content is the *toledot* of Nahor, Abraham's brother; and there are present new characters, which are not there in Genesis 22:1-19.

All these are a clear indication that a new pericope has appeared in the text. The narrative is no longer dealing with Abraham's sacrifice of his son, Isaac. Therefore, by considering the differences in the characters among these texts, their content and theology, the three pericopes are completely disjointed from each other and therefore self-autonomous. Thus, the center of this paper will be the story of Abraham's sacrifice in Genesis 22:1-19.

[9] The term *toledoth* (תולדות) is a Hebrew term for genealogy, generation or family line.
[10] Cf. E. NOORT, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, 3.

3.2 Source or Textual Criticism

The few textual problems observed in this passage include the name of the place in verse 2. While the text uses הַמֹּרִיָּה *(hammoriyyah*), a compound of the divine name, some scholars have tried to connect it with the verb to see, רָאָה (*ra'ah*), which renders *hammoriyyah* to mean the LORD will appear or will see. Some other people, including the Anglican churchman Moberly – whose Scriptural expertise is not necessarily influenced by a Eucharistic perspective – linked it with the term for fear יָרֵא (*yare'*). Subsequently, the term land could symbolically, mean the "land of seeing," "land of provision" or "land of fear."[11] However, the term הַמֹּרִיָּה (*hamoriyyah*) lacks an aleph (א), though in some other manuscripts, including the Samaritan Pentateuch it does appear. [12] In the latter, the name of the place is הַמַּרְאֵה (*hammar'eh).*

3.3 Redaction Criticism

The story of the sacrifice of Abraham in Genesis 22 is not one of the pre–Israel Patriarchal oral traditions, but a theological response to the various events which took place in the life of the Israelites.[13] It caters for three main aspects

[11] Cf. R. W. L. MOBERLY, *Genesis 12 - 50*, 47.
[12] Cf. R. W. L. MOBERLY, *The Bible, Theology and Faith,* 111.
[13] Cf. the Lutheran scholar C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis,* 162. Westermann, by examining the text, gives three points to cement his position given the hypothesis that this text is a later addition. The first one is the selection of the place for the burnt offering, an idea which implicitly denotes Jerusalem as the only place chosen by God for sacrifice. This gives rise to the idea of a centralized cult being in place. The second one is the reinforcement of the promise in verse 15-18, which presupposes the development of prophecy. This is peculiarly seen in the use of the Oracle of the LORD, characteristically marked by the phrase, "says the Lord". Lastly, is the description of the promise as a reward for human conduct. This

of Israel's faith. First, it responds to the crisis of the decreased population in the province of Judah during the time of the Persian Empire, in the sixth century, when the promise of an increase in population given at Genesis 12:1-3, was at stake. Consequently, the story of Abraham's sacrifice catered for it, since Abraham who at the beginning in Genesis 12, received a promise of a child sincerely from God, was able to give the child back to God and accept God's use of his own freedom in dealing with his promise.[14]

Secondly, it is a polemic against Deuteronomist child sacrifice. The Swiss Reformed Church theologian, Konrad Schmid, like Moberly, noted that, in the ancient world as well as in Israel, a father could make life and death decisions about his child.[15] Generally, the function and role of a child was relative to and dependent solely on the father.

In Genesis 38:24, Judah, the son of Jacob (Israel), commanded his daughter in law named Tamar to be burnt alive. In Genesis 42:37, Reuben pledges the life of his two sons in return for Benjamine's life. Specifically, Schmid sees the wayward custom of child sacrifice in 2 Kings 17:17, whereby Israel kings made their sons and their daughters pass through fire; they used divination and augury; and they sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. In 2 Kings 21:6 Manasse's practice of child sacrifice, served as explanation for the downfall of Israel and Judah.[16] Therefore, the story of Genesis 22, responds with full force to the situation,

implies the hypothesis that the text is fashioned in the Deuteronomist theology which quite often seems to be conditional while the patriarchal promises are unconditional.

[14] K. SCHMID, "Abraham's Sacrifice: Gerhard von Rad's Interpretation of Genesis 22," *Interpretation*, Vol. 62 (3), 273.

[15] Cf. R. W. L. MOBERLY, *Genesis 12-50,* 43.

[16] Cf. K. SCHMID, "Abraham's Sacrifice: Gerhard von Rad's Interpretation of Genesis 22," *Interpretation*, Vol. 62 (3), 274.

that God does not demand child sacrifice. Instead, people may offer animals.

Lastly, the issue of centralized cult. Genesis 22:2 identifies the place as Moriah. The Second Book of Chronicles 3:1 maintains that Solomon built the Temple of Jerusalem on mount Moriah. Thus, in order to situate the story in the patriarchal history, the author of Genesis 22 did not make reference to Jerusalem. It is probable that Moriah is a veiled reference to Jerusalem if the author of Genesis 22 knew the account of 2 Chronicles 3. Critical study of these texts hints that the author of Genesis 22 may have known 2 Chronicles and not vice versa. Otherwise, if the author of 2 Chronicles knew Genesis 22, he would not have missed the chance to make reference to Abraham's test by God at this place. Rather, 2 Chronicles 3 sees the foundation of the Temple's site in the period of David and Solomon, a reference made to 1 Chronicles 21 and 22. But Genesis 22:2, extends this notion to Abraham and so affirms that, the site of the temple in Jerusalem is founded on the obedience and faith of Abraham to God. This is another way of saying that it is founded on Abraham's fear of God.[17]

3.4 The Context of Abraham's Statement of Faith

The context of Abraham's statement of faith is the narrative of Aqedah (Gen 22:1-19), which expounds upon the test of Abraham. Abraham was commanded by God to offer his only beloved son Isaac as a burnt sacrifice (Gen 22:2). In the progression of the story, Abraham uttered sentences which actually defined his habit of heart and mind

[17] Cf. K. SCHMID, "Abraham's Sacrifice: Gerhard von Rad's Interpretation of Genesis 22," *Interpretation*, Vol. 62 (3), 275. The faith of Abraham is that of unwavering obedience to God even at times when the future hope seems to be ultimately endangered. Thus, Israel has to acquaint herself in and through this attitude.

before God. In order to understand how they came about, the following study is important.

3.4.1 The Genre of the Narrative of Aqedah

This narrative exhibits eight distinct literary forms, notably: (1) the cultic journey, in as much as Abraham ascends the mountain to worship (Gen 22:5); (2) the dialogue, exemplified by the talk between God and Abraham (Gen 22:1-2), (3) the nature of the conversation between Isaac and Abraham (Gen 22:7-8), (4) the dialog between the angel of the LORD speaking from heaven and Abraham from his position on earth (Gen 22:11-18); (5) the call with its response: Abraham responds to God's command to sacrifice his son (Gen 22:1-2); (6) the etiological reference in accordance, e.g., with Abraham's naming the place "on the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Gen 22:14b); (7) the test as introduced by the narrator (Gen 22:1); (8) the tragedy since the divine command threatens Abraham's future and happiness (Gen 22:1-2, cf. Gen 21:12).

3.4.2 The Structure of the Narrative of Aqedah

The story of the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:1-19) is structured differently by various interpreters of the passage. The Jewish rabbi, J. Jacobs, for instance, structured it into nine scenes, taking into consideration the changing of time, place and introduction or disappearance of a character.[18] For the ordained Baptist minister, K. A. Mathews, the structure of the story of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22 is in chiastic form. His main focus is on the use of the term *hinneni*. This term appears three times in the story: the first time it appears at the beginning when Abraham uttered it when he was responding to God's call (Gen 22:1b), then at the center of

[18] J. JACOBS, "Willing Obedience with Doubts: Abraham at the Binding of Isaac," *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010), 549.

the story when Abraham's son Isaac called him (v. 9), and lastly, at the moment when the angel of the LORD called Abraham (v. 11). The German Lutheran Pastor who was identified with the Confessing Church during the Nazi Era in Germany, C. Westermann, suggests three scenes less than the structure presented by J. Jacobs.[19]

However, based on the conversations in the story, I – a Roman Catholic scholar – structured it into five parts. I did not fail to make provision for the introduction and conclusion.[20] The presentation of these scenes seems to show a parallelism which displays some sort of chiastic structure. The center of the story, nevertheless, is Abraham's response (vv. 3-10). The following is my proposed structure:

a) The Prologue (Gen 22:1a)
b) Divine Call and Commission (Gen 22:1b-2)
c) Abraham's Response (Gen 22:3-10)
d) Divine Call and Blessing (Gen 22:11-18)
e) The Epilogue (Gen 22:19)

4. Exegesis of Abraham's Statements of Faith in Aqedah

In this narrative, the statement of faith appears three times, albeit there are slight differences from each other. Abraham utters it directly once on the way (Gen 22:8) and twice indirectly through the narrator in reference to God's action and the place of Abraham's sacrifice (Gen 22:14).[21] The theological significance of these utterances is their depiction of human trust aligning with divine providence, emphasizing that God, in his omnipotence, can achieve anything he wills.

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[19] Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis 12 – 36,* Translated by, D. E. Green, 159-162.
[20] A. P. ROSS, *Creation and Blessing,* 393-394.
[21] Cf. V. P. HAMILTON, *Genesis Chapters 18 – 50*, 113.

4.1 General Phrases Used by the Three Statements

The statements are: "God will see to himself the lamb for burnt offering, my son" (Gen 22:7-8a), "the LORD will see" (Gen 22:14a) and "on the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Gen 22:14b). Therefore, four phrases and clauses form the essential elements of these three statements.

4.1.1 The Seeing

The Hebrew verb רָאָה (*ra'ah*), translated as "see", "have vision", "look at", "appear" or "make oneself visible", has a number of meanings. Its appearance in different forms indicates that it possesses more than a single meaning.[22] In its active (*qal)* form, *ra'ah* denotes the act of seeing, perceiving, watching, or looking with one's own eyes (Gen 3:6; 6:2; 16:4-5; 27:1). It can mean the act of taking care of (Gen 39:23), the act of visiting (1 Sam 20:29), of selecting (Deut 12:13; 33:21; 1 Sam 16:1 and 16:17), of providing (Gen 22:8, 14), of experiencing (Deut 11:2), of distinguishing (Mal 3:18), or an act of despising (Canticles 1:6).

It expresses both mental awareness, as in the case of the LORD's seeing, i.e., taking note of Israel's distress (Ps 106:44). It can also denote an experience, or state of experiencing. Accordingly, the psalmist declares that the LORD will not allow the faithful to see the dread of sheol (Ps 16:10). *Ra'ah* in its active form also entails an act of enquiring, inspecting or investigating something. This form of ra'ah was used in the case of Jacob when he sent Joseph after his brothers (Gen 37:14).[23]

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[22] Cf. R. L. HARRIS – G. L. ARCHE – B. K. WALTKE, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* Vol. 2, 823.

[23] Cf. J. A. NAUDE, *"ראה" in New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* 1007-1008.

In its *hithpael*, תִּתְרָאוּ (*titra'u)*[24] it denotes a reflexive act, as expressed by Jacob's question that his sons are "looking at each other" (Gen 42:1). The *hiphil* הֶרְאֶה (*her'eh)* denotes the act of showing. Hence, God promised to show Abraham the land which will be given to him (Gen 12:1). It is used in the case when the LORD showed Zechariah a vision (Zech 3:1), and in expressing the state of Habakkuk when God made him experience the presence of injustice in Israel (Hab 1:3). In its passive from (*niphal)*, *ra'ah* is denoted as נִרְאָה (*nir'ah*). It denotes a reflexive of the causative, such as "to present oneself," "to let oneself be seen," or "appear" (Gen 12:7; Lev 13:19). The *hophal* הָרְאָה (*hor'ah*) denotes a passive of the causative, to be shown (Exod 25:40).[25] The subject of the verb is also important!

In Aqedah, the seeing is attributed both to God and to human beings. God sees the anguished Abraham and his son Isaac and responds to them; and on the other hand, Abraham and Isaac see the working of God in that critical moment by his provision of the ram (Gen 22:14).

4.1.2 Burnt Offering

Burnt offering in Hebrew is known as עֹלָה (*'ôlâh*).[26] It is a kind of animal sacrifice in which a victim is completely exposed to fire to be consumed whole in order to produce a pleasant smell to God. It is one of the oldest kinds of sacrifice known to primeval history (Gen 8:20) and

[24] תִּתְרָאוּ (*titra'u*) is an imperfect of hithpael second person plural.
[25] Cf. J. A. NAUDE, *"ראה" in New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* 1007.
[26] Cf. R. E. AVERBECK, *"עֹלָה"* in *The New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology,* Vol. 3, 405.

patriarchal narratives (Gen 22:2, 10-13).[27] The whole sacrificial victim is incinerated to produce a sweet fragrance ascending to God. It is known as a whole burnt offering (Deut 33:10; Ps 51:19). The sacrifice of a burnt offering signifies individual dedication to the will of God. In Job 1:5 and 42:8, burnt offerings are connected to atonement. The produced fragrance of the sacrifice functions as a token of divine acceptance.

Therefore, by sacrificing his son as a burnt offering Abraham connotes a full dedication of himself to God. He does not reserve for himself anything in front of God's commandment.

4.1.3 The Lamb

The term שֶׂה (*seh*) is translated as lamb,[28] sheep כֶּבֶשׂ (*kebes*) or goat עֵז (*'ez*) refers to members of a flock which belong to clean animals (Deut 14:4).[29] As a clean animal, the lamb can be offered and eaten as a sacrifice to the LORD. "[It] is suitable for a guilt offering or a burnt offering (Lev 5:7; 12:8)."[30] Metaphorically, the image of a lamb carries a number of symbols. "The lamb was often seen by Israelites as a symbol of innocence and gentleness, as opposed to

[27] Cf. P. J. ACHTEMIER, *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, 1223. T. D. ALEXANDER – B. S. ROSNER, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Electronic Edition, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2001.
[28] Cf. R. L. HARRIS – G. L. ARCHE – B. K. WALTKE, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* Vol. 2, 871. It may refer to either ram or a he goat.
[29] Cf. R. L. ALDEN, עֵז in *The New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology,* Vol. 3, 362.
[30] Cf. J. A. NAUDE, *"ראה" in New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* 871.

cunning and viciousness."[31] The docile and peaceful nature of a lamb also stands for humility and meekness. The prophet Isaiah compares the Suffering Servant of God to a lamb. The Messiah is led like a sheep to the slaughter (Isa 53:7), echoing the humble submission of the Messiah.

The psalmist compares himself to a lost sheep which has gone astray but since he has not forgotten the law, he desires that God search for him (Ps 119:176). The lamb stands for Israel in the prophecy of Ezekiel who describes restoration of Israel as gathering of the scattered flock of sheep (Ezek 34:11-16). In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:5-6).[32] Indeed in the Book of Revelation, Jesus is declared to be the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who alone can open the seals, but then what is seen is not a Lion but a Lamb who is as one slain.

Therefore, the profound meaning of the expression "God will see the lamb" could signify that God will gaze upon the sincerity of the one who is obedient and whose faithfulness lays the groundwork for obedience; and God will see the humility and innocence of the worshiper who submits himself to his divine Will.

4.1.4 The Mount of the LORD

Earlier in this paper the phrase on the mount of the LORD has been defined as the divine chosen place for worship. It is worthy of note that while the Hebrew Scripture emphasizes the significance of worshipping in the Temple, Jesus brings a new aspect to worshiping God. In his dialogue

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[31] T. D. ALEXANDER – B. S. ROSNER, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Electronic Edition, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2001.

[32] Cf. J. GESS, "Lamb, Sheep, αμνος" in *New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*, 410.

with the Samaritan woman, he says that already the time has come when the true worshipers will no longer worship God in particular locations, but in spirit and truth because God is Spirit (John 4:23-24). The power of the Holy Spirit to be omnipresent as the one who is Truth, Spirit, Light and Life establishes the atmosphere of faithful prayer for ascending to the mount of the LORD.

The presence of Jesus renders real the adoration of God in spirit and truth prompted by his act of giving the Spirit.[33] The reason for adoring God in spirit is because in adoration, God deals with people spiritually.

Therefore, worshiping God on the Mount of the LORD is a reminder to the worshiper that God is worshiped in a manner that he himself designates. It is God who states how and where to worship him.

5. The Implications of the Statements of Faith

Each statement of faith uttered in the narrative of Aqedah presents a certain theological import as shown here below.

5.1 The First Statement (Gen 22:8)

The first statement of faith was uttered in the context of the journey within a dialogue between Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22:5-8). After instructing his boy to remain with the ass, Abraham revealed the goal of his journey, namely, that he and his son would worship God at a designated place on that mountain (Gen 22:5). As Abraham and Isaac were advancing toward the place, Isaac made a tally of the necessary things for the act of worship. Noticing that something was missing, he logically addressed the issue. Listing the essentials for a burnt offering, Isaac realized that, one important element was missing, the lamb. Thus,

[33] Cf. R. E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John*, Anchor Bible 4, 172.

breaking the silence, he asked, "My father! …. The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" In response to that question, Abraham replied, "God will see to himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Gen 22:7-8a). It is to be noticed that in interpreting this statement the call, the journey, the dialogue and the cult each hold a certain significance as discussed here below.

5.1.1 The Call

It is only in this section, that Isaac speaks to his father by means of a call that deserves a response: "My father!" אָבִי (*'abi*). Abraham replies, "Here I am my son!" הִנֶּנִּי בְנִי (*hinneni beni*). This kind of conversation demonstrates the filial relationship that exists between the two. The call of Isaac to his father was demonstrably lovely and not surprisingly carries the tone of the loveliness that shows Isaac's recognition and acknowledgement of who Abraham is – his father. Within this context, it is not difficult to take into consideration that "a call is a point of contact."[34]

Unlike the first part of the journey which was presumably very long, measured by a three-days walk (Gen 22:4), this part of the journey seems to have been characterized by silence. Notably, in this short journey, both Abraham and Isaac are active. They communicate with each other. The father-son relationship enters even more reverently into the spotlight. Isaac addresses his father with most tender tones and a great sense of filial respect as he recognizes and acknowledges Abraham as his father.

Abraham is going to offer his son not because of any familial derangement, but out of reverence to God. His close affinity to his son is not impaired. But he understands that God is an absolute commander. Thus, he obeys God's commandment to sacrifice his son.

[34] Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis 12 – 36,* 356.

5.1.2 The Dialogue

The call of Isaac opened a new page in their journey: a dialogue between father and son. A dialogue is an exchange of words between two people or parties for the sake of arriving at a consensus.[35] In the dialogue, one speaks and the other listens attentively in order to respond to the words at the end of the one speaking. The story of the binding of Isaac is set in the dialogical manner.[36] Before uttering the statement of faith, Abraham was silent but listened keenly to the talk of Isaac which actually demanded his response regarding the missing sacrificial victim (Gen 22:7-8). Isaac's question, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" carries a double function: one is to admit his ignorance regarding his role as designated sacrificial victim and secondly, to draw forth the faith statement.[37] Thus, Abraham said, "God will see to himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (Gen 22:8a).

It is God who is responsible for the provision of children, health and temporal goods. Therefore, even if human effort is required, the person in obedient action cannot override the truth that, it is God who gives and empowers people. Therefore, the anxiety of the childless couples on how to live their childless situation is to be cast upon God as one who knows about their future.

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[35] Cf. G. BRUNO et al, Eds., "Dialogue", http://www.britannica.com/topic/rhetoric, 10.07.2025.

[36] Cf. J. R. DOUKHAN, "The Center of the Aqedah: A Study of the Literary Structure of Genesis 22:1-19," in *Faculty Publications,* http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/old-testament-pubs/78, 26.

[37] Cf. M. S. SMITH, "Genesis," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century,* 226.

5.1.2.1 Acknowledging the Facts

Sometimes dialogue involves a variety of perceptions. For instance, in the narrative of Aqedah, Abraham sees the place from afar and instructs his boy (Gen 22:4), but Isaac sees that the sacrificial animal is missing and questions his father (Gen 22:7).[38] The question posed by Isaac to his dearly beloved father challenged Abraham and complicated the situation: "The fire and the wood are here but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וְאַיֵּה הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה (Gen 22:7).

The Wesleyan minister Hamilton sees a distinction between Abraham and Isaac concerning the act of worship. Isaac knows the necessary things for the burnt offering, that is, an animal must be involved. However, he is surprised that his father has said that they are going to worship while he himself does not see the animal for that worship. It must be remembered that in the Wesleyan religion an influx of grace enters into the already-converted soul which can influence a person's perceptions of what God wills and what he requires. This would be true even before the historical event of the Incarnation. In Isaac's case this seems to render the specific need for the animal to be offered. Abraham speaks from a quite different perception of the inner soul.

The phrase "God will see" is future oriented, hence it calls for trust and patience. Abraham's answer to his son, therefore, carries with it an instruction to be patient and at the same time a teaching about the nature of God in the act of worship. That is, the proper worship does not depend on human initiative (pro-vision) but on God's pro-vision. Because Abraham has opened his eyes, Isaac's anxiety dissipates and the two walk together (Gen 22:8b).

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[38] Cf. V. P. HAMILTON, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18 – 50,* 109.

The things that trouble human minds in view of fulfilling our duties to God are easily understood when we surrender to God and patiently waiting for God's timing. God will reveal his plans and make them plain in his due time.

5.1.2.2 The Use of Prudence

Just as in the beginning of the dialogue, Isaac calls Abraham "my father" in answering his question. Abraham used the term *beni*, which implies that he speaks with tender love to his son Isaac. It is used to describe the relationship that existed between Abraham and his son, Isaac. Cohering with this relationship, the answer which Abraham gave to Isaac, "God will see to himself the lamb for burnt offering, my son" (אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה־לּוֹ הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי) did not reveal to Isaac that, tentatively, you are the one; instead, he invited Isaac to trust. Abraham presumably increased his own anguish as he invited his son to trust in God, yet he puts himself to the task of proving to his son that God is to be trusted.

On the surface, Abraham seems to be in trouble, because Isaac trusted entirely in his father and the two walked together (Gen 22:8b).[39] By faith, however, Abraham held the undying conviction that the God who promised him many descendants through Isaac could and would bring Isaac back from the dead. Figuratively speaking, this is what happened; and Abraham was sure that a resurrection was involved (Heb 11:17-19). This is how Catholic theology measures the event of the sacrifice of Isaac.

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[39] Cf. G. WENHAM, *Genesis 16 – 50*, Word Biblical Commentary, 108. By looking closely in this section, we see that Isaac displays a real faith in trusting his father's words fully. He knew that they did not carry an animal for a burnt offering, however, the answer he got from his father, that "the Lord will see to himself" was enough for him. He did not continue with questions, but he complied with his father's assertion and went with his father to worship God.

Faith in Good needs a total surrender of one's will and constellation of choices to God. An analogy is in order here: Childless couples really need babies, yet they are also called to surrender their will and constellation of choices to the magnanimous disposition of God.

5.1.3 The Journey

Superficially speaking, the question of Isaac about the missing sacrificial victim for worshipping God seems to let Abraham stop the journey. It shows that, if they continue like that with their journey it is only a waste of time and allowing themselves to be worn for nothing.

However, the answer Isaac received from Abraham calms him by urging him to be patient and look forward, because God knows what is missing and he himself can provide for it for he is the omnipotent God. Thus, trusting in his father as the first and best teacher, Isaac really took his father's words and made them his own and silently[40] the two walked together to the mountain (Gen 22:8b).

"And the two walked together" (וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו). This statement implies that the father and the son are in agreement (Amos 3:3). The Holy Bible has numerous nuances of walking in connection to the obedience to divine law and instruction. For instance, God speaks to King Solomon about walking in the path of the LORD, which is synonymous to keeping God's commandments and statutes, as a criterion for

[40] Cf. M. LEFEBVRE, "Confessing Christ with the Aqedah," *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology*, 38. In Hebrew scripture, we come across many situations in which silence is considered willingness or consent. For instance, in Isaiah 53:7, the Servant of the LORD does not open up the mouth just to show his consent. Also, in the case of adultery, if the woman was caught in adultery and claims that she was forced against her consent, the law demands that she should have cried loudly to seek assistance, but if she kept silence, it means that she consented (Deut 22:24).

gaining divine favour (1 Kgs 3:14). It is all about keeping away from idolatrous practices. The psalmist qualifies the person who walks in the way of the LORD as a God-fearer (Ps 128:1). Consequently, the walking together of Abraham and Isaac towards the place of sacrifice as God has instructed, seems to mean that, though Abraham did not reveal everything to Isaac, the two held fast to that divine instruction. Analogously speaking, the walking together especially for a married couple is important in their spiritual and marital journey.

5.1.4 The Cult or Worshiping God

The first statement of faith uttered by Abraham illustrates the human-divine relationship which intersects in the act of worship. Abraham's statement of faith is very important at this moment because the father and son are climbing to the mountain of the LORD for worship. The content of this statement of faith is associated with provision of the lamb by God.[41]

This statement of faith uttered by Abraham on the way provides an occasion to clarify the requirements for worship, which is the individual reliance on God's plan rather than human understanding. In as much as this statement was uttered on the way, the statement of faith provides a setting for the purpose of the journey (Gen 22:5). In worship we need to rely on the LORD's plan rather than our own vision.

5.2 The Second Statement of Faith

The second statement of faith comes from the report of the narrator, "So Abraham called that place 'The LORD will see'" (Gen 22:14a). The narrator makes this report in the context of Abraham's actions on the mountain, the divine

[41] Cf. K. A. MATHEWS, *Genesis 11:27 – 50:26*, New American Commentary, 297.

intervention and the events that followed (Gen 22:9-13). The climax of the narrative of Aqedah is explained in this context.

Abraham really fears God for upon reaching the mountain, he builds the altar, sets the wood, binds Isaac, lays him on the wood, reaches out his hand, takes the knife.

One needs to remember that, at the beginning of the narrative, the command from God demanded that Abraham should go to the divinely chosen place for the purpose of offering Isaac his beloved son as burnt sacrifice (Gen 22:2).

Now this section is the narration of Abraham after he has reached the place. The command to leave his home to the divinely chosen place could be said to delay the process and the fulfillment itself of the demands of God who wanted Abraham to have Isaac offered as a burnt sacrifice. Following the distance already covered, now Abraham is at the point of fulfilling the command in its entirety.

He had taken Isaac with him (Gen 22:3). Now he has him bound and laid on the wood ready a fire that would be lethal (Gen 22:9). All these events were set, but the angel of the LORD intervened, only to stop Abraham from killing the son. On raising his eyes, Abraham saw the ram and went ahead to offer it as a substitute of his son Isaac (Gen 22:13), which culminates in offering a faith statement in respect to the place where these life-touching events took place. Hence, he named the place, “the LORD will see” (יְהוָה יִרְאֶה).

The content of the name he gave to the place, corresponds to the answer he gave to his son in verse 8, “God will see to himself a lamb for the burnt offering.” However, this naming comes after the provision of the ram; it comes with a calculated number of words with a myriad of meanings.

First of all, he reaffirms his answer to Isaac that God sees. It also expression his inner joy at his release from the depth of any doubt that God can raise from the dead.

Indeed, the naming identifies God as the unrestricted act of understanding (St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, chapter six). This is not different from saying that God's nature is one who sees and acts. This is not unlike the statement in verse 8, where God is called the one who sees the lamb with the purpose of providing it for the burnt offering.

In verse 14a, God is simply the one who sees [with the intention of providing]. The lack of a specific type of vision in the second statement of faith is purposely meant to give a wide range to God's multifocal manner of seeing and gazing – always in a contemplative mode – and his manner of acting, always in a divinely complete harmony with what he sees. God does not see a ram for burnt offering only, but a variety of forms of provisions. All of this is explained wonderfully in the last chapters of the first volume of *Summa Contra Gentiles* (St. Thomas Aquinas).

God sees the Abraham's encounter with a mystery that transcends the limits of human understanding; but God also sees Abraham's will to accept God's decision to give him descendants through Isaac and therefore raise Isaac from the dead if he actually dies as a burnt offering. God provides joy by sparing the life of Isaac (Gen 22:11), he sees the obedience of Abraham and confirms his faith as one who trusts God (Gen 22:12), he sees the helpless Isaac on the sacrificial altar and intervenes by providing a ram to substitute his life (Gen 22:13), and he sees the plunge of Abraham's faith into the mystery of God's promises and his way of accomplishing them.

All these provisions qualify Abraham's answer without further explanation that, God sees first. Therefore, the seeing of the LORD is the reason for entering into the mysterious depth of God's manner of providing. Indeed, the divine seeing is here referred to as an intervention at the critical

moments in life and his Will to provide for appropriate and necessary needs.

Childless people are reminded that God sees and knows when they fly unto him.

5.3 The Third Statement of Faith (Gen 22:14b)

The third time that the statement of faith is mentioned is nothing other than a commentary and personal witness from the narrator. He says it in reporting the experience of the people regarding the place. The key statement: "… it is said to this day 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be seen'" (Gen 22:14b).

5.3.1 The Report of the Narrator

The phrase "as it is said to this day" (אֲשֶׁר יֵאָמֵר הַיּוֹם),extends the significance of the place where Abraham offered his sacrifice to the people after him. Thus, the significance of the statement of faith is that it extols the primacy of the place, "on the mount of the LORD." It extends the seeing of the LORD beyond Abraham's experience to the present experience of the people.

5.3.2 The Naming Itself

The statement, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאֶה (*be hari YHWH yera'eh*), is specifically meant to portray the significance of the place. The verb to see (יֵרָאֶה) is in a passive form. Seeing the verb in a passive form, Hamilton sees three possible translations of the name given to the place.

The first, "on the mountain of the LORD, he is seen," the second, "on the mountain of the LORD he shall be seen," and the last one, "on the mountain of the LORD it shall be provided."[42] The three possibilities that Hamilton wants us to understand are that on the mount of the LORD, either God

[42] Cf. V. P. HAMILTON, *Genesis Chapters 18 – 50,* 114.

will be seen by the human being (the worshiper) or the human quest will be seen by God, and in turn God's provision in response to that quest will be seen by the human being. It is the place where anyone who wants to see God has to make a journey to that place. Therefore, those who are in search of God, are given the answer to their search, that on this mountain, God is seen or themselves will be seen. It is only required of them to make a journey to this place.

God is perpetually present on the mount of the LORD. The second possibility of the translation of the statement "on the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" is that, God will be seen. This kind of translation points to the future possibility that God will be seen. Hence, it calls for patience, for God will surely be seen in this place.

The last possibility concentrates on God's action on the mount of the LORD, that is, he will provide. The needs and the quests that people have towards God shall find their response in this place.

Different from the second statement of faith which attributes to God the act of seeing, the third statement accounts for the significance of the place (בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאֶה). The narrator wants to emphasize that the LORD's contemplative, unrestricted act of the understanding that sees everything within its divine scope is superabundant on his holy mountain. The place where God appeared in that critical moment in both Abraham's and Isaac's lives, has become a sacred site for all future generations: it becomes a cultic center. It is the place where people of all times are called to flock together with their anxieties and sufferings, in their quests, and in their joys and acts of adoration. On this place, God sees them all, receives prayers and sacrifices from the

people, both of the present and of the future generations and acts on them.[43]

6. Relationship between Aqedah and Childlessness in Families

Through the use of pragmatic analysis of biblical genres, focusing on socio-historical background and the distinctive features of both the narrative of Aqedah and the experience of childlessness in marriage life intersects in the styles that was used by the narrator. The narrative of the binding of Isaac used various literary forms which can also be used to present the reality of marriage and family. Undeniably, the Aqedah is presented in multifaceted literary forms: as a call narrative, a journey narrative, a worship narrative, a tragedy narrative, a divine test, as well as a dialogue.

6.1 The Narrative of Aqedah and Marriage Life as a Call

The Hebrew term קָרָא (*qara')* is translated to mean to call, to cry, to summon, to invite, to pray, to read or to recite.[44] It refers to the process of drawing attention (Jer 31:6) in order

[43] Cf. G. VON RAD, *Genesis,* The Old Testament Library, 237. The editor notes that G. Von Rad, a Lutheran member of the Confessing Church, i.e., that branch of the Lutheran Church that worked to preserve the Christian Faith in its resistance to the Nazi regime, academically resisted the Augustinian notion that all of human history lies within the divine plan of salvation (called by many theocentric Catholic theologians as the "consequent will of God"). Von Rad did not consider the Bible to be a revelation of timeless truths but rather a historical account of a series of divine interventions (the sacrifice of Isaac is an example; the exodus is another example) that culminated in the historical intervention of the overarching saving deed of Jesus on the cross. Faithful Jews would recall these divine acts of providence in their prayer and worship.

[44] Cf. G. BOTTERWERCK – H. RINGGREN – H. J. FABRY, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 13, 109. It entails a loud speech that facilitates communication among distant peoples.

to establish communication. Its equivalent in Greek is καλεο (*kaleo).* Theologically, calling or invoking is the action of God in summoning people to specific tasks or roles.[45] It is all about divine election and commission as in the case of Bezalel in the work of making the tent (Exod 31:2) and the raising of Cyrus to deliver Israel (Isa 41:25; 42:6).[46] In as much as the verb *qara'* is concerned, there are two dimensions: one is general, whereby the call invites all people to believe in God as Lord and Savior and to follow his instructions for living. In this kind of call, we come across the call of Israel as the people of God to live a covenantal life. On the other hand, the verb *qara'* has an individual dimension that refers to God's election which leads a person to specific tasks and roles in life.

This kind of call in the Hebrew tradition includes the call of Moses (Exod 3–4), the call of individual judges such as Debora (Judg 4), the call of individual prophets such as Jeremiah (Jer 1:4-12). In the New Testament, we come across the call of the twelve apostles (Mark 3:13-19) and in the tradition of the Church we come across various calls: the call to religious life, marriage, and to particular work or service.

In Genesis 22:1-19, Abraham was called by God purposely for the test for which he was commissioned to take his only beloved son, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah to sacrifice him there as burnt offering (Gen 22:1-2). Obedient to this call and commission, Abraham did as he was instructed by God. The narrative of the binding of Isaac fits the call

[45]Cf. RYKEN et al, Eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 133. Those who are called or chosen are set to represent the community (Num 1:15; 16:2).

[46] Cf. G. BOTTERWERCK – H. RINGGREN – H. J. FABRY, Eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 13, 122.

narrative in a way that resembles the call to marry and raise a family.

Marriage is a call by which husband and wife are commissioned to be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth with its created beings (Gen 1:28).[47] The Catechism of the Catholic Church underscores the matrimonial call when it states: "God who created man out of love also calls him to put his/her love into action, the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who himself is love" (cf. 1 John 4:16; CCC, 1604).

The Catechism emphasizes the matrimonial vocation which is built on the fundamental social virtue of love. The man and woman were created for each other (Gen 2:18). This love is not only limited to the husband and wife but extends to all creatures by the virtuous acts that the human being puts into practice when he takes care of them on behalf of God.

Therefore, a wife is given to a husband by God as his helpmate and so is joined to him in all things. The two become one flesh, to be configured to God from whom comes our help (CCC, 1605). In this sense therefore, husband and wife are called to live a partnership of life which carries the image and likeness of God within the world.

6.2 The Narrative of Aqedah and Marriage as a Spiritual Journey

The Aqedah belongs to the genre of journey narrative in which the details about the preparation and the purpose of the journey are documented. Important in that journey

[47] K. A. MATHEWS, *Genesis 1 – 11:26*, 175. The commission gives married couples responsibility to care for life and welfare of the world.

narrative genre is the fact of being driven by a goal. In the Aqedah, Abraham rose early in the morning, prepared everything needed for his journey and while on the way he told his boy the goal of his journey, i.e., that he was making it for the purpose of worship, adoration of God (*hištāḥăwâ)* on the mountain (Gen 22:3-5).

"The term *hištāḥăwâ* denotes an act of prostration, bowing to present oneself before an authority. It is a Hebrew technical term used for an encounter with the LORD."[48] In the journey made by Abraham from Beersheba to the land of Moriah, in response to the divine commission, he did not know the exact place. Only God knew it (Gen 22:2). Therefore, Abraham had to rely solely on the divine instruction to reach the place.[49]

Attentiveness to the divine instruction, which Abraham exhibited on the way, is what in turn facilitated him after the third day of the journey to be able to see the place from afar. Secondly, Abraham knowing that he was required to make a tiresome trip in order to reach the mountain top to be with God, needed a group of people to accompany him, and an ass to carry the cargo.[50] Lastly, Abraham accepted the responsibility entrusted to him. Without denying the fact that seeing the place from afar renewed Abraham's strength, that he could now separate himself from his convoy, carry the cargo and walk with his son to the place of worship, the

[48] M. LEFEBVRE, "Confessing Christ with the Aqedah," in *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology*, 34. The term *hištāḥăwâ* appears in Genesis 22:5 connoting the veneration of God, similar to Exodus 34:8 where it appears in describing Moses who bowed down to worship God. The psalmist invite people to worship God in Psalm 95:6, using the same term.

[49] Cf. D. GOTTLIEB, *Second Slayings*, 97.

[50] Cf. P. J. ACHTEMYIER, *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary,* 84.

journey now was truly wearisome.[51] He and his son Isaac had to leave the company of his boy and the ass, and carry the cargo by himself to the mountain top (Gen 22:4-6).

Likewise, marriage and family life represent a significant journey, with its own unique phases, milestones, and obstacles. It is a journey of companionship, love, commitment, growth, and a yearning for the gift of God made visible in the child. Every couple and family experience this journey differently, influenced by their values, cultures, and personal circumstances. Important in this journey is trust in divine providence.

Similar to Abraham's journey, the couples know only the starting point and the purpose. For them to reach their destination, they need prior preparations which continue to coalesce into an order that manifests openness to divine instruction. This means that the journey has two complementary parts. One lies in individual foresight, and the other is individual trust in God.

Foresight is required of the husband and wife when they make prior preparations before they wed (CCC, 1622). They seek accompaniment from holy and virtuous people. Because of the possibility of becoming childless in the marriage due to infertility or some other cause, it is better for the male and female preparing to enter into the marriage covenant to go for a fertility test prior to their commitment to courtship and making suitable arrangements for a dowry. As soon as they set out on the journey as husband and wife, the second aspect which is trusting in divine providence becomes paramount without neglecting the former one. The two are inseparable, i.e., prior preparation for married life and perpetual trust in divine providence. It is from the soil

[51] Cf. D. GOTTLIEB, *Second Slayings*, 96.

of this trust that they will be able to grow in their capacity to see their destiny from afar.

The reality of marriage fortifies the husband and wife to respond daily to the divine call, which implores them to live a family life that by its very nature leads them to meet God. Hence, "obedience matters more than sacrifice" (1 Sam 15:22).[52] In as much as they keep listening to the voice of God and holding fast to the divine instruction, they will walk together until they reach the Mount of the LORD, a place where their faith will be confirmed, by seeing the glory of God and by receiving the blessing that God has desired to give them.

6.3 Childlessness in Marriage and the Aqedah Test

The opening of the narrative of Aqedah sets the tone for the entire story as a test for Abraham (Gen 22:1). A test always involves putting a person into a difficult situation. The divine command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac threatened his hope for the future.[53] Abraham was at the crossroads to decide whether he should obey the divine commandment out of faith or deny him out of love for his only beloved son. Comparing them on the scale, Abraham's obedience to the divine commandment outweighed his love for Isaac, his beloved son. Therefore, he obeyed God without missing his paternal affection to his son. Even as he and Isaac are climbing on the mountain, he still recognizes Isaac as his son. Thus, he responds to the question raised by Isaac in a tender voice, "God will see to himself a burnt offering, my son" (Gen 22:8).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks about a test in the marriage as an experience of suffering, which

[52] Cf. A. A. ANDERSON, *The Book of Psalms (1 – 72),* The New Century Bible Commentary, 137.
[53] Cf. R. W. L. MOBERLY, *Genesis 12 – 50*, 44.

threatens the relationship between husband and wife. The matrimonial bond is always under the threat of various discords including a spirit of dominion, infidelity, jealousy and conflicts which can escalate into hatred and separation (CCC, 1606). The issue of crisis in the family which attacks health, finances, self-realization as father and mother due to either's barrenness, infertility or other factors, destabilize the matrimonial and family unity and expose it to a difficult situation, which can be termed as a test.

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, so that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing" (Jas 1:2-4).

The completeness at issue here is the selflessness that characterizes a true human person, i.e., a true image and likeness of God. God's love is that of one who is selfless. As Hans Urs Von Balthasar put it, God's incarnate love reaches into the inner depths of the human person where it seeks to draw forth the responding love that reveals the human person as one who loves God as God loves him (her). God's selfless gift of love, however, is always kenotic:

The voice of Truth, the One who shines in the darkness, seems to invite everyone to entrust themselves to the Love that is capable of suffering with the sure conviction that this is the love of the Holy Spirit, the love that drives out all fear, and thus plants its roots in grace and freedom. Von Balthasar spoke of this entrustment in a memorably dramatic moment of literary history when he described the mystery of love's suffering in all its redemptive ramifications:

> "Father!", cries the Heart in its vertiginous plunge, "into your hands – which I do not feel, which opened to let me fall, which will catch me at the bottom of the abyss – into your

> hands I entrust my Spirit. Into your hands I breathe out my Spirit. My Holy Spirit."
>
> The Heart became Spirit, and from the travails of the Spirit the New World was born. A great roar filled the house, windows and doors flew open, and eyes and ears as well. The heavy armor was burst open from within and the cover removed from the face. This Heart's love loved even to annihilation, and since it had become invisible in itself, it now emerged in the hearts of the redeemed. Once it had been one sun, alone in the cold night of the world; now the light is scattered in a firmament of stars. It had seemed to struggle with the darkness, had seemed to sink down into the mire, overcome by the chaos; but no enemy is mightier and no night more night-filled than the radiant darkness of love.[54]

The Catechism goes further to state the nature of those challenges as coming from the reality of sin. Just as the sin of Adam brought rupture to the original communion between man and woman (CCC, 1606), the whole of humanity continues to experience this effect. Following the example of Abraham who chose God in such a frightful situation, from the initial moment of the test posed by the divine will to the moment when his faith was confirmed, so the couples are invited to look on God who has called them, and to place their trust in him. They are to walk with Jesus, their Lord and their God. Their willingness to obey God's will brings them en route to Jesus.

Human suffering is one of the many mysteries in life. Childlessness is one of those many and varied forms of human suffering. It is also a mystery. As mystery, there are

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[54] H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Heart of the World* (transl. by E. S. Leiva). San Francisco: Ignatius, 1979, 72. In this passage, Von Balthasar refers both to the events of Good Friday and those of Pentecost Sunday.

facets which can be known with certainty by our efforts and others which remain hidden to us but open in the wisdom of God. It is true that the divine test of Abraham brought with it an experience of suffering. The faith which Abraham displays in the Aqedah narrative, especially in surrendering to God those matters which he did not understand well, by living his life through the lenses of God, that is, through divine pro-vision and not human pro-vision – all of this is worthy of imitation. Thus, the childless couple needs to surrender to God their situation and accept his will as he allows it to unfold in their lives.

6.4 Abraham in Aqedah and Childless Couples as Worshipers of God

The test of Abraham was centered on the worship of God in which the offering of a sacrifice was not inappropriate (Gen 8:20; 2 Kgs 3:27). "The widespread belief in the ancient Near East, shared also by Israel, was that the first of all new life belonged to God. The underlying assumption was that, because God was the giver of life, so he had the right to receive back the first and best of what he had given (Exod 13:2)."[55] This accords with a central theme of Von Balthasar: God is love; and his love by nature is selfless. The human being is truest to his nature as a human person when he/she is selfless. It is essentially human to give selflessly to God according to his nature.

Therefore, the command to Abraham to offer his beloved son as a burnt offering (Gen 22:2) did not miss the mark in striking at the center of ancient forms of worship. The purpose of worshiping God is to acknowledge his presence and bridge the distance between God and humanity, and create the environment for divine human relationship. In accomplishing this task, Abraham as worshiper, was

[55] R. W. L. MOBERLY, *Genesis 12 – 50*, 44.

required to make a journey to a specific place chosen by God in one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. His journey to the land of Moriah, brings with it the issue of place of worship.

It is not a human wish but is chosen and willed by God himself. In this kind of worship, it is God who instructed Abraham on *what to offer*, that is, his beloved son Isaac; *where to offer*, that is, on the mount which will be shown to him and the last thing is *how to offer*, simply as burnt offering (Gen 22:2).

The analogy between childless experience and the experience of Abraham in response to divine command in Aqedah points to the idea that, obedience to God's will is important no matter how painful it may be; it leads to his glorification and the glorification of both him and his son within the milieu of their faith in God. Therefore, married couples as worshippers of God are vis-à-vis their marital status and are instructed to worship God, not according to their own vision but in the vision of the LORD, that is, divine pro-vision. The question of what is the best that they will offer to God, where and how they should offer, depends not on their own wish but on God. If God wants them to offer him their situation as childless couples, like Abraham's own beloved son, they do so. They are to accept God's will through the lenses of trust and fear of God.

7. Application of Abraham's Statement of Faith to Childlessness

The significance of Abraham's statement of faith to childless married couples seeks to bridge the gap between human limitation and God's operation.

7.1 The Love that is Capable of Suffering

Right from the book of Genesis, we get the foundation of human marriage and family, where it says, "Therefore a man

leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). The Yahwist[56] brings to our attention that marriage involves the acquiring of a new status which demands a complete change of the former one in order to acquire a new one, by forming a partnership of life. This change of status is described by two Hebrew terms עָזַב (*'azab)* and דָּבַק (*dabaq)* which mean, "leave," "cling" or "unite with" respectively.[57] Therefore, by '*azab'*, a man and wife should abandon their former life as son and daughter in order to start a new relationship as husband and wife.[58] The new status of husband and wife demands a union of the two.

The term *dabaq* in the Hebrew Bible is linked with the sense of loyalty and affection. However, it also has a sense of commitment as in the case of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:14), as in the case of the men of Judah who remained faithful to David during Shebna's rebellion (2 Sam 18:13). The Prophet Isaiah uses the term *debeq* to mean soldiering (Isa 41:7).[59] Subsequently, marriage is like soldiering of husband and wife, forming an enduring union.

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[56] The Yahwist is one of the four traditional sources of the Pentateuch proposed by the Lutheran J. Welhausen (Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomists and Priestly sources). It is the oldest sources which goes back to 10-8th Century BC.

[57] Cf. V. P. HAMILTON, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1 – 17*, 181. The Hebrew verb '*azab* means to depart from, leave behind or abandon something. It has a sense of set loose or let go (Exod 23:5). This term *azab* has frequently used to describe Israel's rejection of her covenantal relationship with God (Jer 1:16; 2:13). On the contrary, *dabaq* often denotes the maintenance of the broken relationship (Deut 4:4).

[58] Cf. J. K. LANEY, "No Divorce, No Remarriage," in *Divorce and Remarriage,* 18.

[59] Cf. G. J. BROOKE, *"דבק"* in *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* Vol. 1, 911. While *dabaq* is a verb, its noun is *debeq*.

In order to live well in this new status, as husband and wife, those who were sons and daughters, were under the authority of their parents; now they must leave this former life and exercise their freedom and power as husband and wife.

Right from the fact that children in the family help to strengthen matrimonial bond, its vice versa is also true (CCC 2225). Childlessness in the family, sometimes tends to weaken this reality. This is because, children have a very special place in the family life, not only as the greatest gift of God (Ps 127:3), but also as source of hope for the future of the parents and society. Cities and nations were built up through the sons.[60] Abraham for instance, being childless, discounted all the favour that God had told him that he should not be worried for God will be to him as a protective shield and rewards (Gen 15:1). The promise for him was as good as nothing at all, if he would not get a progeny (Gen 15:3). Commenting on this issue Hamilton claims, "No gift, whatever its nature, would be adequate compensation for Abraham dying without a son. Nor would it be useful or meaningful."[61] Therefore, the only solution that will calm Abraham in his situation is the assurance that he will not die childless. Undeniably, Abraham's wish to have children limited him to some extent not to see the greatness of the promise. This experience extends to almost all married couples.

It is here once again that we turn to Hans Urs Von Balthasar. For him God in his selflessness is the true God: we are truly human when we entrust ourselves to him in a manner that is entirely selfless (St. Teresa of Kolkata would call this "total surrender"). The selflessness of God, however, reveals itself in the principal manner of a form that

[60] Cf. M. FALLON, *Praying the Psalms with Jesus,* 446.
[61] V. P. HAMILTON, *Genesis Chapters 1 – 17,* 420.

is more valuable because it is more transparent for the light of absolute being.

This transparent, selfless nature of God's love, however, is also kenotic. This form of transparency within the initiative of the absoluteness of God's freedom reveals another dimension of God's essential, selfless love. God himself reveals that the One whose name is Jesus Christ, must sink into the absolute contradiction of the glory of the Lord, into the night of the abandonment by the Father and the formless chaos of Hell, so that beyond everything that the human person can see as form, he may exist as the imperishable and indivisible form which joins God and the world in a new and eternal covenant.[62]

These divine intrusions into the mystery of human suffering are meant to draw forth from the suffering a new sense of being human, precisely through selfless love. There are other things to be said about the love – and the selflessness that defines the human person as an image and likeness of God.

St. Augustine put it this way: "the vision of the form with the eyes of faith" (Vol. I of *The Glory of the Lord*). St. Thomas: *oculata fides*, "faith that has eyes". Ephesians 1:18: "enlightened eyes of the heart". Matthew 6:22 par.: only a simple eye is able to perceive what is simple from within its fullness of light as it reaches out to all multiplicity in the final form of revelation. Hence the "poor in spirit" and the "pure, emptied hearts" are blessed most of all in the new covenant, for only they will see God in this form and possess his kingdom.

The act of living obedience is the basis of the act of seeing. The absolute Trinitarian love of God which discloses itself and offers itself in Jesus Christ, in the words of Von

[62]VON BALTHASAR, H. U., *The Glory of the Lord, VII. Theology: The New Covenant,* Introduction.

Balthasar, disarms by its humility and simplicity every stronghold of would-be "mastering" thought. Jesus brings to the forefront the despised child so that what thought attempts to fabricate as the "greatest" (Mk 9:34), and the way that leads to Jesus and the Father who sends Him is in fact the acceptance of this "least one" "in my name".

The simplicity of God, therefore, judges all human thoughts and requires of them something that they can accomplish only in the love that is entirely selfless: "To know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge" (Eph 3:19). Von Balthasar concludes this section by explaining that this knowledge knows something that is finally unknowable, because it is beyond the scope of knowledge in its boundlessness. In other words, it is the love that is entirely selfless and can only be a true formation as a human person within the reach of that selflessness.

Childlessness is one of the mysteries of life, which sometimes hinders human beings from seeing the greatness of God in their lives – the God who is by nature selfless. The theological messages derived from Abraham's statement of faith can be used to strengthen and repair the matrimonial bond that has been rendered weak by the desire to place the self at the center.

7.2 The Nature of God

Abraham's statements of faith are highly centered on his understanding of the nature of God according to the revelation given to him so far. He understands God as the absolute authority who is to be obeyed, as the teacher to whom one listens and as the Almighty who is to be trusted. He is the omnipotent and providential God, Saviour and restorer. On top of all, he is the omniscient God. He sees and knows everything. Below are only a few of these divine epithets suitable for discussion.

7.2.1 The Omniscient God

Quite often the Bible describes God as one who sees and watches. He saw that the light was good (Gen 1:4a), he saw (וַיַּרְא) the corrupted earth (Gen 6:12), he looked (וּרְאִיתִיהָ) at the rainbow he had set as the guarantee of a divine-human covenant and a reminder of God's omnipotence as protector of the world (Gen 9:16). He came down to see the building of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:5), he saw Moses who turned to look at the burning bush (Exod 3:4), he saw the blood smeared on the lintels of doors and windows (Exod 12:13, 23).

God's tender mercy is expressed as his looking down from heaven (Lam 3:50).[63] Sometimes, God allows himself to be seen. Thus, Isiah sees the glory of God (Isa 6:4-5). However, there is no human process, whether prayer, sacrifice or specific technique that can be used by a person to bring about a theophany. It is God himself who allows himself to be seen for a particular goal. Thus, in the burning bush, God identifies himself to Moses as the God of his ancestors, who has observed and has seen the misery of his people in Egypt. Now he has come down to deliver them from the hands of their oppressors and bring them to the land which he promised to give their forefathers (Exod 3:6-8). Deriving from this context and in connection with the binding of Isaac, the Lutheran Pastor Westermann makes the assertion that "God sees human suffering," [64] including that of childlessness.

Divine seeing is connected with judgement and salvation. The statement "God will see" invites the sufferer to look forward to the divine judgment and vindication. It shifts attention from an anthropocentric process of seeing by oneself

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[63] Cf. J. A. NAUDE, *"ראה" in New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* 1009-1011.

[64] Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis*, 162.

and instead create within a person the hope and eager patience engendered by the waiting for God's gaze of selfless, boundless love.

As one who sees, God saw the anguish of Abraham and his faith and so he came down to confirm his faith and preserve his future by enlarging his heart to such an extent that he could believe in the resurrection of the dead and so fortify his heart to believe that, yes, he would receive the descendants promised him through Isaac (Heb 11:17-19). In this sense therefore, the suffering childless couples are reminded to calmly wait for God to see them and their anguish. He will surely bless them with abundant grace.

7.2.2 God is the Restorer, the Redeemer, the Saviour and the Provider

In the statement "on the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen (בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאֶה)" (Gen 22:14b), the verb to see רָאָה (*ra'ah*) is used in its passive voice (*niphal*), hence rendering it to mean, "it will present itself, will appear, or will allow itself to be seen". It is a neutral statement to allow a wide range of interpretations. Thus, it could mean that the "thing sought" will be seen or "God" will be seen. Noting that, this appearance is made in respect to the great events that took place on the mountain: Isaac's life was spared (Gen 22:12), the future of Abraham was restored (cf. Gen 21:12), and finally, Abraham's faith in the resurrection received its anchor point from the redemption of the promise through Isaac.

The seeing on the mount of the LORD is the cause of superabundant joy. The childless couple may share in this vision and not lose hope or lose their ability to see; rather, they should obediently hold fast to God's word and his commandment, for God will surely come for the restoration of those who are mindful of his will.

The connection between Abraham's answer to Isaac, "God will see" (Gen 22:8) and the affirmation "on the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Gen 22:14b), shows that, the seeing comes from God's action. Hence, the two statements of Genesis 22:8 and verse 14b, affirm that God takes care of those who draw towards him on his holy mountain. As in the case of Isaac (Gen 22:12), God will show himself to those who approach him with a disposition of adoration in the liturgy by providing for their need as in the case of Abraham (Gen 22:13).

Abraham's telling Isaac that God will see to himself the provision of the lamb, literally meant that God will provide a lamb for sacrifice. Yet, in the spiritual sense, because the lamb stands as symbol of innocence and gentleness which are also criteria for worship, we can interpret this divine seeing as God's attentive care, his regard for those who appear before him in innocence and gentleness of heart.

The lamb may refer to an ignorant animal: if left alone, it liable to stray; therefore, "God sees the lamb" could also mean his attentive care, protection and guidance so that the lamb reaches its end. Let the childless couples allow themselves to surrender to God in faith, that he himself may see them in their faith and take care of them in their situation as childless couples. Let them also place their entire milieu as childless couples within God's eternally selfless love that manifests itself in the grace of the resurrection.

7.2.4 God is the Evaluator and Discerner of the People's Faith

Abraham's faith was confirmed on the mount of the LORD, by the solemn utterance from the angel of the LORD, "Now I know that you fear God" (Gen 22:12). Thus, God distinguishes people as God fearers or not (Gen 22:12; cf. Gen 37:17; Mal 3:18), taking note of the distressed and

wiping away all of their dreads (Gen 22:11-13; cf. Ps 16:10 and 106:44). Only after the long journey of suffering in love for God and for his son Isaac, the faith of Abraham became a subject for praise. Therefore, childless couples are encouraged to consider their suffering not as a divine judgement but as a bridge to attain divine affirmation. Patiently waiting for God's timing is their main means to arrive at this stage.

Von Balthasar summarizes what has happened in the transformation of the gentle heart, entirely transparent to God's will, and God's overabundant love for those who suffer:

> The decisive point now is the transparency of the expropriated heart to the origin, simplicity, the new location of the heart with God, relinquishing of cares to God, letting oneself be expropriated, not hitting back, not refusing a request. It is here that the "mild" and "not difficult" quality of Jesus' teaching lies; … The loving impartiality of God the Father, which had to present itself first in the old covenant as a kingly freedom of election, goes to its end in Jesus' partiality for the sinners, tax collectors and harlots, the lost and the rejected. In the kingly freedom of his love, he *is* the synthesis that makes a choice from the elements of the law and the prophets that were *en route* towards him: he leaves behind him what he wishes, and refers what he wishes back to the origin.
>
> The works of love and neighbor must certainly remain, but within the framework of the disposition of the Father and the Son: deriving from the heavenly simplicity of the Son's transparency to the Father, which leads us to the simplicity of his Cross in which it is made concrete – for it is there that Jesus does not resist the one who is evil, it is there that he lets himself be struck on the right cheek, gives even his cloak, goes two miles, and loves his enemies.

And certainly self-love will remain too, but only "on the margin" and unaccented, or else as the challenge to cross boundaries that have been set unconsciously and arbitrarily. The limits that belong to pure and impure creatureliness (which can no longer be neatly separated from each other *in concreto*) are nonchalantly abolished in the divine crossing over to the enemies, and in this an unconditional imitation is demanded.

And certainly the human (and Old Testament) expectation of the "reward" for so superhuman a deed is not simply done away with as something superseded, but the way in which the reward grows with the deed beyond measurement and seems to take on the dimension of infinity (Lk 6:38a), and indeed becomes proportionate to the boundlessness of the deed of love (6:37, 38b), and the limited merits attached to limited love are brushed aside as irrelevant for the Christian (6:32-34), arouses the suspicion that the true reward of endless love can be only such love itself: not my love, but God's love, on the basis of which I dare to cross over the boundary in its company.

The unwavering spontaneity with which Jesus goes forward remains the decisive thing in his life; the internal and external boundaries that had been set for love (sabbath ordinances, laws of purification) are very deliberately broken, the solidarity with sinners is provocatively stressed (Mt 9:11; 11:19; 21.31f.), and Jesus goes towards his death without averting his gaze, in order to live out his motto, to serve rather than to be served, to the end and "to give his life as a ransom for all" (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28. He wills to bring home the very last of the lost sheep of the Father. Whatever may become of his disciples on this way "to the end" (Jn 13:1), and however the Church may later describe their role, their understanding or lack of comprehension, their following or abandoning of Jesus, it is certain that he has succeeded in pouring out his blood of the new covenant for all (Mk 14-24).

> This changes everything, for from now on, one's fellow-man – whether friend or foe – is "the brother for whom Christ died" (1 Cor 8:11; Rom 14.15), and whoever sins against his brother sins against Christ (1 Cor 8:12). Now the early Christian catechesis can and must complete the equation in explicit terms (putting the words into the mouth of the "king"). "Whatever you have done (or not done) to one of the least of my brothers, you have (or have not) done it to me" (Mt 25: 40.45). The protological, apparently impartial love of the "chosen", "beloved" Israel, to its eschatological end: each individual who can be addressed humanly as "Thou" is raised to the status of a "Thou" for God, because God's true "Thou", his "chosen" and "beloved" only Son has borne the guilt of this human "Thou" and has died for him, and therefore can identify himself with every individual at the last judgment…
>
> This can only be Christian, because it presupposes both the "I-Thou" of the Father and the Son within the Godhead in the unity of the Spirit, and the eschatological extension of this to every human "Thou". Israel is the indispensable transition to this eschaton, but in a remarkable manner the original amazement at the reality of the "I-Thou" is generated and kindled when God first says "Thou" to a human person, Abraham.

Conclusion

Attentively reading the narrative of Aqedah and following the itinerary that leads from Abraham – from his faith – to the divinely selfless love that eternally disposes Jesus to the Father's will, one comes to the point of understanding faith as a courageous, radical decision which entails a full expropriation (i.e., "handing over") of one's hope to the mysterious workings of Divine Providence. This expropriation of the love that is entirely selfless involves a total surrender to God even in the matter of one's reputation and the I-Thou relationship that God initiates with the one

who has faith. Von Balthasar's substantially kenotic description of what Jesus suffers on the cross – as we cited above – is the suffering love that establishes the childless couple in their faith, in the faith that coalesces with their trust that God has a future in mind for the couple that far surpasses what the couple can hope for themselves.

In obeying God's command, Abraham dared to sacrifice his future hope (Gen 21:12) and his relationship with both Isaac and Sarah (Gen 22:2, 7), that is, he was able to detach himself from all relationships in order to give God the boundless space to address him, Abraham, as a Thou.

His choice to be with God opened his eyes that he might see, and in turn God planted within his soul a vision that brought restoration to everyone within Abraham's life space and increased him with blessings superabundantly (Gen 22:16-18). As we have noted in this essay, in accord with Hebrews 11, Abraham's vision also opened his interior gaze to a true faith in the resurrection. This is similar to Job's dramatic story of trust in God that went against all odds. On the day of the wedding, the married couples certainly knew that God was promising them and blessing them to have children (Gen 1:28). God structured the having of children into the very fabric of the creation.

As time passed, one could analyze their marital journey and discover that they might be childless and so might ask, "What is happening here?" The thought of seeking a child in an unprecedented way as King Henry VIII of England did, who opted for divorce in order to remarry; polygamy for the begetting of children; or surrogating for the purpose of having a child even if it is not one's own are neither the best options nor God's will. Thus, childless couples are reminded to be patient and cultivate trust in the LORD. Abraham's answer, "God himself will see" (Gen 22:8) is enough. Let

their trust in God fill out the missing of a child and let the two continue together their journey.

Just as Abraham would have his son know that their journey to worship God would be fruitful provided they trust in him, so do the childless couples. Let them not waste time in discussing the void that seems to have visited their marriage, b ut rather let them keep on trusting in the LORD. The lack of a child should not stop or delay their spiritual journey which they have started as husband and wife; rather, let trust in God draw forth from them a selfless love that keeps them entirely expropriated to the One who chooses to draw forth from his infinitely selfless love the intention to communicate to them and to each one of us as an unrepeatable, irreplaceable, irreducible, indispensable, unique Thou – a person after his own heart.

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