

**THE CHALLENGES OF EVANGELIZING THE AFRICAN  
CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN THE LIGHT OF  
*'FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO'***

**MICHAEL D. BHASERA**

**Submitted in fulfillment for the Master of *Theology* Degree  
in the School of Theology, University of Natal,  
Pietermaritzburg,  
2003.**

**SUPERVISED  
BY  
DOCTOR STUART C. BATE.**

## ABSTRACT

This thesis falls under Missiology. Its main objective is to investigate the challenges of evangelizing the African Christian Family in the light of '*Familiaris Consortio*.' The thesis is unique by virtue of its contextualization. It targets the people who occupy Gokwe diocese, one of the eight dioceses in Zimbabwe.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The First Chapter looks at the location and family life in Gokwe diocese. In this chapter, special attention is given to the inhabitants of Gokwe diocese themselves, their social life, marriage, the influence of modernity on marriage and family life, the economic life of the people, their political life and some rituals which include belief in the veneration of ancestors and the *kurova guva* (bringing home) ceremony. It is in this same chapter that most of the challenges to evangelizing the African (Shona) Christian family in Gokwe diocese come out. Some of these include: polygamy, divorce, bridewealth, poverty, belief in ancestors and the *kurova guva* ceremony.

The Second Chapter gives what the Church teaches on the theology of marriage and family life. It is in two main sections. The first section highlights some important points on God's plan for marriage and family life. The second and largest section emphasizes the role of the Christian family which is realized by fulfilling four main tasks, namely: forming a community of persons, serving life, participating in the development of society and sharing in the life and mission of the Church.

The Third Chapter is an evaluation of the similarities and disparities between the theological/ ecclesiological stance and the real family situation in Gokwe diocese. In a nutshell, it compares and contrasts the first and second chapters, bringing out the similarities and differences existing between the two. Community spirit, value of life, communion between the living and the dead, ethics and morality are among some notable similarities, whilst polygamy, divorce, position of women and attitude towards health and sickness are among the major disparities.

The Fourth Chapter is practical in the sense that it seeks to offer some envisaged pastoral solutions and proposals to the already highlighted challenges and problems. Closest attention to the solutions is given to the available resources in the diocese of Gokwe especially in the areas of stages, structures and agents of pastoral care for the family.

The Fifth Chapter is a conclusion of the whole thesis. Basically it looks at what I have discovered throughout the whole thesis and offers some general conclusions according to '*Familiaris Consortio*.'

## **DEDICATION**

This humble work is dedicated to my parents Phillip Muzorori Bhasera and Theresa Bhasera and all the Christian families in the Diocese of Gokwe.



**DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, is my own original work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed.....*m. Bhasera*.....

**MICHAEL D. BHASERA.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely indebted to God for his goodness and love to me during these years of studies and work. Without his helping hand and strength this work could not have been finalized taking into account my other pastoral duties, commitments and responsibilities.

I am also indebted to many people who generously contributed to the realization of this work. First and foremost, I thank Sr. Aleta Dube (STL) who belongs to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, for assisting me in the study of Missiology. My profound thanks and loving gratitude go to my secretary, Fr. Misheck Mudyiwa for his invaluable assistance and typing as well as Fr. Macdonald Masvosva, Fr. Charles Machida, Fr. Walter Nyatsanza, Rev. Dr. Fredrick Chiromba of Mutare Diocese, Rev. Dr. Tarcisio Jakata and Fr. Robert E. Ndlovu of Gokwe Diocese for their support and encouragement.

I thank particularly my supervisor, Professor Stuart C. Bate (OMI) for his fatherly advice, observations, support, encouragement and constructive criticisms. I owe also special thanks to Dr. Susan Rakoczy who initially encouraged me with the spirit of inspiration for embarking on this programme

Finally I thank all who gave me an opportunity to interview them. May the good Lord bless and reward all who helped me with their prayers and support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Dedication</b>	iii
<b>Declaration</b>	iv
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	v
<b>Abbreviations</b>	x
<b>GENERAL INTRODUCTION</b>	xiii

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE LOCATION AND FAMILY LIFE IN GOKWE DIOCESE

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	1
<b>1.1 The Location of Gokwe Diocese</b>	1
1.1.1 General Features	2
1.1.2 Geological Features	2
1.1.3 Climate	3
<b>1.2 The Inhabitants of Gokwe Diocese</b>	4
<b>1.3 The Social Life of the Family</b>	4
1.3.1 Education	5
1.3.2 Health	9
<b>1.3.3 Marriage</b>	12
1.3.3.1 The Shona Marriage	12
1.3.3.2 Bridewealth	13
1.3.3.3 Traditional Forms of Marriage	14
1.3.3.4 The influence of modernity on marriage	18
1.3.4 Polygamy/polygyny	20
1.3.5 Fertility	25
1.3.6 Divorce	26
<b>1.4 The Economic Life of the People</b>	29
<b>1.5 The Political Life of the Family</b>	31

<b>1.6 Shona Rituals</b>	34
1.6.1 <b>Ancestors</b>	35
1.6.2 <b><i>Kurova Guva</i></b> (Bringing home ceremony)	37
<b>1.7 Conclusion</b>	39
Notes to chapter One	41

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE CHURCH'S TEACHING ON THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

<b>2.0 Introduction</b>	43
<b>2.1 Marriage and Family Life</b>	44
2.1.1 <b>God's plan for marriage and family life</b>	46
<b>2.2 The Role of The Christian Family</b>	54
2.2.1 <b>Forming a Community of persons</b>	55
2.2.1.1 The position of Women	59
2.2.1.2 Men as Husbands and Fathers	62
2.2.1.3 Rights of children and the elderly in the family	63
2.2.2 <b>Serving Life</b>	65
2.2.2.1 The transmission of life	66
2.2.2.2 The importance of education	68
2.2.3 <b>Participation of the family in the development of society</b>	71
2.2.4 <b>Sharing in the Life and Mission of the Church</b>	74
<b>2.3 Conclusion</b>	77
Notes to Chapter Two	79

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AN EVALUATION OF THE SIMILARITIES AND DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE THEOLOGICAL/ECCLESIOLOGICAL STANCE AND THE REAL FAMILY SITUATION IN GOKWE DIOCESE**

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	80
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	81
3.1.1	Community Spirit	82
3.1.2	Value of Life	85
3.1.3	Communion between the living and the dead	90
3.1.4	Ethics and Morality	93
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Some Salient Disparities</b>	96
3.2.1	Polygamy/polygyny	97
3.2.2	Divorce	101
3.2.3	Dignity of women	103
3.2.4	Attitude towards sickness and health	105
3.2.4.1	The Etiology of sickness	106
3.2.4.2	How the people of Gokwe respond to illness	108
3.2.4.3	Catholics and Traditional Healers	109
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	111
	Notes to Chapter Three	113

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE ENVISAGED PASTORAL SOLUTIONS AND PROPOSALS**

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	114
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Stages of Pastoral Care for the Family in Gokwe Diocese</b>	115
4.1.1	The Church of Gokwe's role in journeying together with the family	116
4.1.2	The significance of the preparation for marriage	117
4.1.3	Liturgical celebration of marriage	120
4.1.4	The Church's role in fostering pastoral care after marriage	123
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Effective Structures of Family Pastoral Care in Gokwe Diocese</b>	127
4.2.1	The active participation of the ecclesial community/parish	127
4.2.2	The dynamic involvement of the family	130

4.2.3	<b>The role of various associations</b>	134
4.2.4	<b>Schools and Hospitals</b>	136
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Pastoral Agents of the Care of the Family in Gokwe Diocese</b>	138
4.3.1	<b>The responsibility of the bishop and priests in pastoral care of the family</b>	139
4.3.2	<b>The participation of men and women religious to provide care for couples and Families</b>	141
4.3.3	<b>The involvement of catechists in promoting family life</b>	143
4.3.4	<b>The role of the diocesan bulletin</b>	144
4.3.5	<b>The role of Small Christian Communities</b>	146
4.3.6	<b>The role of Shingai Training Centre</b>	148
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Gokwe Diocese Special Targets for the next Ten Years</b>	151
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	153
	Notes to Chapter Four	155
	 <b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	 157
	<b>5.0 GENERAL CONCLUSION</b>	157
	References	161
	Appendix	172

**ABBREVIATIONS****Books of the Bible****Old Testament**

Gn	Genesis
Ex	Exodus
2 S	2 Sammuel
1 K	1 Kings
Ps	Psalms
Pr	Proverbs
Ecl	Ecclesiasticus
Is	Isaiah
Jr	Jeremiah
Ez	Ezekiel
Hs	Hosea

**New Testament**

Mt	Matthew
Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Acts	The Acts of the Apostles
Rm	Romans
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Gal	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Col	Colossians
Hb	Hebrews
Jm	James

1 Jn	1 John
Rv	Revelation

### Church Documents

AA	Apostolicam Actuositatem
AG	Ad Gentes
CA	Centesimus Annus
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCL	Code of Canon Law
DH	Dignitatis Humanae
EIA	Ecclesia in Africa
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
FC	Familiaris Consortio
GE	Gravissimum Educationis
GS	Gaudium et Spes
GS	Gratissimam Sane
HV	Humanae Vitae
IL	Instrumentum Laboris
LG	Lumen Gentium
MD	Mulieris Dignitatem
MM	Mater et Magistra
RH	Redemptor Hominis
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium
SRS	Sollicitudo rei Socialis

### Other

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Cf	Confer
CYA	Catholic Youth Association



Fr	Father
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LCBL	Little Children of the Blessed Lady
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
Mr	Mister
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
St	Saint
UN	United Nations
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity (EN 1). Looking at the people who occupy Gokwe diocese in Zimbabwe, especially Catholics, and seeing what has been happening during my time as shepherd to these people, I may not be wrong in saying that these people stand in-need of evangelization. That being the case, the fruits of such an endeavor cannot be achieved on a silver platter. There are challenges and problems that always hinder that much desired effective evangelization. And this is precisely what I want to highlight in my thesis. I intent to examine the challenges of evangelizing the African Christian family in the light of '*Familiaris Consortio*'.

It is true that Catholics are not the only Christians who occupy Gokwe diocese but since I have stayed with these people as their bishop from 1991 to 1999, I have come to understand them and their problems much better. Thus with every respect for other Christian families in Gokwe diocese who have more or less similar problems, my thesis shall centre mainly on the challenges of evangelizing these Catholic families with whom I stayed for seven years.

## FIELD OF INVESTIGATION

This research aims to investigate the fundamental problems and difficulties that are encountered in trying to evangelise the African Christian Family. By identifying these basic problems (like polygamy, divorce, poverty, Christian couples living without the sacrament of marriage, cultural practices and so forth), I hope to lay my contribution in the Missiological sphere. It is through the study of these challenges in evangelizing the African Family that solutions can be sought. *Familiaris Consortio* throws some light in giving some direction towards responding to the problem identified. Further, the Christian family lays the basis for survival not only of humanity but also of the Christian family of God. Thus, it is through the family that the Church of Christ is established and that the Kingdom of God can be achieved. My area of investigation will, therefore, be limited to one diocese, that of Gokwe and focus on the family within that particular diocese.

## **MOTIVATION**

Three factors have strongly motivated my interest to make this research. Firstly, as a former pastor to these people, I came to realize that many families were finding it difficult to practice their Christian faith. They continued to live double standard lives. In one context they acted as Christians and in another they resorted to traditional practices. I therefore want to go into the root causes of these difficulties, so that evangelisation of the African family can be done with success. Secondly, the Catholic population in Zimbabwe is between 12 and 15% and therefore there is a lot of evangelisation that needs to be done so that the Catholic population increases as well as remain stable even in the face of difficulties. The third motivation follows from the stability of family life. When families are stable, we create a good society and also have more people offering themselves to priesthood and religious life. Thus, these factors have primarily motivated me to take this important area of research.

## **OUTLINE STRUCTURE**

The outline structure of my thesis is intended to have five main sections with a general introduction, which gives an overview picture of the area of work and a conclusion that draws some recommendations from the study done. The First Chapter deals with the concrete life-situation of the family in Gokwe diocese. This chapter enables me to go into the problems and difficulties as encountered by most families in the rural diocese of Gokwe. In entering the life-situation, this study will lay the basic elements and trends that are found in families so that working towards some solutions becomes possible.

Chapter Two deals mainly with the Theology of Marriage and family life. The teaching of Christ and the Church on the family gives us light of what family life should be like. In this chapter I hope to make clear what the Church teaches on marriage and family life. I also hope to give some proper guidelines of the ideal Christian family. Thus Scripture and its teachings become relevant here.

From the previous two chapters I am led in the Third Chapter to evaluate and assess the life of the family in Gokwe diocese. By comparing the theological stance with the real findings of the life-situation, disparities and similarities will emerge from the study. This assessment

helps me investigate and propose some of the solutions that will assist in answering the challenges of evangelizing the African family in order to consolidate the very same African families. At the same time some of the challenges may not have immediate answers, but the attempt made to investigate them will further the understanding of these problems and provide material for other research towards real solutions. This evaluation adds to the studies already made by others on the African family and becomes part of the whole thrust in trying to understand how to evangelise families on the African continent.

The Fourth Chapter encompasses most of the answers to the problems raised in previous chapters. And in this, *Familiaris Consortio* shades the necessary light in giving the way forward. This Fourth Chapter will be followed by the Fifth Chapter which is a brief conclusion whose main purpose besides giving a summary of the research done, is also to highlight my recommendations that I obtain from the study made. This is meant to **complement** the efforts already made to strengthen the African Christian family, not only in Gokwe diocese but elsewhere in Africa.

### METHODOLOGY

I intend to utilize two main ways in carrying out my research. I will use the traditional method of investigating literary works already done by others. Thus, I will use the library and archives. Relevant key words on evangelisation as well as on the family will be necessary sources for my study. Secondly I will also use interviews particularly on the families themselves and the various agents for evangelisation. These should provide enough material for my investigation and possible solution. Magazines, newspapers and other sources of information will be utilized should they be relevant.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE LOCATION AND FAMILY LIFE IN GOKWE DIOCESE**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This First Chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the location of the Diocese of Gokwe, which highlights the geographical place and features of Gokwe in Zimbabwe. The second part mentions the people who occupy Gokwe diocese who are the target of this study. The last part treats of the family life in its social, economic, political, cultural and religious aspects. In this study, I am going to confine myself to Gokwe North and Gokwe South Districts, which I term Gokwe District because the Shona people who are mainly the target of my study are in this area. Thus I shall exclude the areas of Kariba District, which is predominantly occupied by the Tonga and Shangwe peoples, as well as Nkayi Districts where the Ndebeles are found. I shall not cover the whole diocese of Gokwe but the bigger part of it, which is occupied by the Shona peoples. But before that we need to look at the location of Gokwe Diocese, its general and geological features as well as its climatic conditions so that the reader may have a clear picture of what we are talking about.

#### **1.1 The location of Gokwe Diocese**

The Diocese of Gokwe in Zimbabwe, cut off from the Diocese of Hwange, was established on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1991. The Diocese comprises the Civil Districts of Gokwe North and Gokwe South, the area of Omay between Sengwa and Sanyati rivers in the Kariba District, and the area of Nkayi District north of the Shangani river. It is bounded on the north by Lake Kariba, on the east by Kariba and Kadoma Districts, on the south by Kwekwe and Nkayi Districts, and on the west by Lupane and Binga Districts. The total surface area of the Diocese is approximately 26,000 square kilometres, with a total population of about half a million inhabitants of which 62,914 are Catholics (ZCBC Catholic Directory 2002/2004:54). Map (i) shows the boundaries of the eight dioceses of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe (see appendix).



### 1.1.1 General Features

Gokwe District is located between latitude 28 degrees east and 30 degrees east and longitude 17 degrees south and 19 degrees south. It covers an area of 18,384.35 square kilometres (Central Statistical Office:1992). Map 2 (see appendix) shows the location of Gokwe District in the context of the Zimbabwe map (Department of Surveyor – General: 1984a, 1985). The district falls in the Sanyati – Sengwa river basin sub-region, mainly at elevations between 500 metres and 900 metres above sea level (Surveyor General: 1998). It has broken terrain of many low ridges, hills and flat valleys. Within this terrain are dramatic plateaus of Mupfungautsi and Chizarira.

### 1.1.2 Geological Features

The district is dominated by three geological formations – the Kalahari, the Karoo and Sijarira stems. The Kalahari system is the oldest system in Zimbabwe, dating back from the Quaternary and Tertiary geological eras. The dominant rock types in this system are aeolian sands and alluvium and other spherical deposits. The Sijarira is a group of red beds that occurs in a long strip of country stretching south west from the Urungwe area into Hwange District. This group of rock is unfossiliferous and is not metamorphosed. The Karoo system is formed by vast fissure of eruptions of basaltic lava. The main rock types are sandstones, siltstones, conglomerates, shale and coal. The Karoo system has gone through further metamorphosis creating a further variety of sandstones, mudstones and grits. Other than coal, all the rocks in these systems have no high economic value (Stagman 1978:80). Map 3 (see appendix) shows the geology of Gokwe District (Department of Surveyor-General: 1985).

It is important to understand these geological features in Gokwe district because, having known the type of soils, it will be clear to the reader that most of the people of Gokwe are basically farmers and their production every year depends very much on the arable and fertile land according to these soils.

### 1.1.3 Climate

Gokwe District lies in the Zambezi Valley and experiences very high temperatures in summer ranging from 28 to 35 degrees celsius. In winter, nights tend to be cooler because of loss of heat due to a combination of the sand cover and clear skies. Rainfall is variable. The average rainfall in millimetres recorded at Gokwe Growth Point between 1931 and 1991 is as shown in the table below:

#### **GOKWE DISTRICT: DISTRIBUTION OF RAINFALL**

October		November		December		January		February		March		April	
Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
121	0	233	0	385	29	650	17	405	4	335	0	171	0

However, for the same months, the probability that it would rain is 17% for October, 77% for November, 89% for December, 97% for January, 92% for February, 64% for March and 35% for April. Reliability of rainfall is very important in these dry parts of Zimbabwe. Gokwe has generally suffered more frequent droughts than other parts of Zimbabwe (Climatic Handbook of Zimbabwe:1992).

Since the people of Gokwe are basically farmers as I indicated earlier, their production depends not only on the type of soil in that particular area but also the type of climate. If we get to know the type of climate and the amount of rainfall received, we may also come to the understanding that with high rainfall, the people of Gokwe are likely to produce enough cotton, maize, millet, groundnuts and monkeynuts for selling as well as to feed their families. Without enough rainfall, they may suffer a severe drought and this may affect the family to a great extent as families would run around buying maize or else be at the mercy of charitable organisations for them to survive.

Now that we have seen the location of Gokwe Diocese, its general and geological features as well as its rainfall pattern, let us now look at the people who occupy this area. What type of people are they?

## **1.2 The Inhabitants of Gokwe Diocese**

The main ethnic group found in Zimbabwe is the Shona, constituting almost 80 percent of the total population (Weinrich 1982:1). These people are said to have arrived in the country about a thousand years ago (Mudenge:1988:22). The other dominant group is the Ndebele who constitute about 15% per cent of the population and is said to have come into the country in the middle of the nineteenth century (Weinrich 1982:1).


The Shona peoples occupy the Eastern, Central, Northern and Southern parts of the country whereas the Ndebeles are found in the Western area. There are four dialects of these peoples, which comprise the Zezuru-speaking Shonas occupying the central part; the eastern part is occupied by the Manyika-speaking Shonas; the Karangas are found in the Southern part; while the Northern part is occupied by the Korekore (Gelfand 1965 :5). All these diverse dialects form what we call today the Shona language and its peoples (Weinrich 1982 :xii). The Shonas are all patrilineal<sup>1</sup>, a characteristic that is extremely strong among them. In the Diocese of Gokwe, the ethnic distribution closely follows the percentage apportioned to the entire country and has a mixture of diverse cultures, beliefs and practices. Zimbabwe: Shona 80%, Ndebele 15% other groups 5% (Weinrich 1982:1). Gokwe: Shona 80%, Ndebele 12%, Tonga and Shangwe 8%. The majority of the people occupying Gokwe District are the Shonas who migrated to this territory since the fifties (Report to Rome:1992-1997 :1). In the Diocese of Gokwe, the Catholic percentage among the Shonas is much higher than the Ndebele, Tonga or Shangwe population (1992-1997: 2) but the social life of them all is just the same. They all emphasise the aspect of family spirit.

## **1.3 The Social Life of the Family**

The social life of the people who occupy Gokwe Diocese is a very important section in this First Chapter. It is in this section that most of the challenges of evangelising the Gokwe people are highlighted. In this section I shall look at how education and health affect family life. In addition to that I shall look at the



Shona marriage, traditional forms of marriage, influence of modernity on marriage, polygamy, fertility and divorce. All these are at the centre of the social life of the people who occupy Gokwe Diocese.

 In the book *Changing Africa: An Introduction to Sociology*, Bloom and Ottong state that the Shona society in Zimbabwe, like any African society, considers the family as a major social, economic and political institution. The family is the focus for most major social activities (Bloom & Ottong 1987:106). It can be defined in general 'as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household, interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister; and creating and maintaining a common culture' (Odetola 1983:15).

The families can take diverse forms such as conjugal<sup>2</sup>, nuclear<sup>3</sup> and extended<sup>4</sup>. Whilst the first two forms are found among the inhabitants of Gokwe, the most emphasised aspect is that of extended family (though now also affected by modernity). This is reflected mostly in education, both formal and informal, health of other family members, marriages as well as other family rituals. Having seen that the inhabitants of Gokwe emphasise family spirit so much, let us now look at how education affects family life in general and in particular.

### 1.3.1 Education

The family plays a significant role in the education of children both informally and formally. It is the primary and strongest influence in early socialisation.

Bloom and Ottong confirm this understanding when they state:

socialisation of the children is one of the most important functions of the family in all societies. It is the term used for the many ways in which individuals learn to become members of their society: acquiring its culture, learning how to take their place in society, and developing an identity, a unique sense of being a person (Bloom & Ottong: 1987:111).

It has to be noted that children are not born into society but into a family. And this being the case, it is the duty and responsibility of all family members (even

extended) to make sure that all children born into the family learn to become members of their society, acquire the culture of the society and learn how to take their places in that particular society. This is done mostly by elder members of the family. In the context of Zimbabwe as a whole, education is therefore considered a basic human right essential for social and economic development as stated in the book, *Zimbabwe Report to the UN* of 1997:

At the age of 3 years children attend Early Child Education and Care centres<sup>5</sup> until they turn 5 years when they begin their primary education. At 13 years of age, children proceed to secondary education until they turn 18 years old (Zimbabwe Report to the UN 1997:50).

So the general aim of Education in Zimbabwe is to provide basic and secondary education to all children and individuals requiring formal and non-formal education in order to ensure the physical, intellectual, economic and cultural development of individuals and facilitate the creation of a self-sustaining, peaceful and internationally competitive nation. To this end the Zimbabwe curricula include:

Academic learning in Primary and Secondary schools  
Vocational Education in Secondary schools  
Physical Education in Primary and Secondary Schools  
Education with Production in Primary and Secondary Schools  
Education for living in Secondary Schools  
Cultural Education in Primary and Secondary Schools  
Guidance and Counselling in Schools (1997:60).

Again, this view is expressed by Ochiagha who said:

The ultimate aim of each form of education is to fit us into the world of work. Acquisition of educo-vocational values begins from the family, peers, through socialisation, exposure to schooling, acquisition of skills or professional training in a field. Thus, vocational education entails the attainment of career goals in accordance with one's ability, interest, aptitude, personality and values in order to fit into the world of work and to contribute meaningfully to national manpower needs and development (Ochiagha 1997:39).

The strongest and primary influence in early socialisation is the family, followed by schools. In general, Bloom and Ottong state that education has three social functions which are:

To train useful citizens who will obediently conform to society's norms, and who will accept the roles and status that society will confer upon them when they have finished their schooling.

To train pupils and students in skills that suit their talents and interests provided that this does not conflict with the function of preparing them for their places in society;

To concentrate upon offering young people whatever opportunities for intellectual, emotional and social growth as do not conflict with young people's changing place in society (Bloom & Ottong:1987:166).

This, however, applies to functions of education in Gokwe especially to the Shona children. The family remains the strongest and primary influence in early socialisation, then followed by schools. It is in formal schools that children acquire knowledge, skills, values and norms implemented by informal socialization through the family. Throughout Gokwe Diocese, there are several such schools that try to impart children with the necessary knowledge, skills and values so that the young are prepared to take their places in society. And this has proved to be so effective. The young are intellectually, socially and morally prepared through these formal schools.

In the past, most Shona families preferred the boy-child to girl-child to do formal education because they thought the male-child would perpetuate the family kinship, whereas the female child would be married and go to her husband's family. This understanding has changed to a certain extent even among the Gokwe people probably because of the western influence on equal opportunities for both girl and boy child and also government policy, which encourages all children to be educated irrespective of their sex. In one of my interviews with Mr Muchimwe<sup>6</sup>, who is the Vice Chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and a former District Education Officer, he also discovered that the majority of parents send both children to school except for some polygamous husbands and some members of African Independent Churches (Mr Muchimwe, Interview: 15/03/2004).

He added that apart from the acquisition of values and skills through formal education, the greatest problem that the people of Gokwe do have is financial.

This was also confirmed by Mr. R. Marega<sup>7</sup>, a farmer by profession who said: ‘whilst some families cannot afford sending their children to school others can afford but seem not to see the value of formal education. They prefer having all their children work in the farm so that they can produce more cotton for sale to the Cotton Marketing Board’ (Mr R. Marega, Interview: 15/03 2004).

It has to be admitted that generally in the whole country the number of educated young people has risen drastically but the supply of jobs is inadequate to absorb them after leaving school, and the education they receive sometimes does not immediately fit them for employment. This may be as a result of the educational system that was recently introduced in the country. It is a system of localising the examinations that are written by Ordinary Level students. Examinations are set and marked locally not by Cambridge as before. As a result, certificates which are given to students are only recognised locally. More still, whilst the number of schools in most parts of Gokwe has risen to a point where building further classrooms is no longer necessary, the number of students failing examinations, especially at secondary level is a cause for anxiety (Berridge 1993:12).

It is also a pity that to those who are lucky to finish their education especially up to University Level, the majority lose some traditional values and begin to question the traditional beliefs and customs especially issues of ancestor veneration and bringing home ceremony (*kurova guva*). Mr. R. Marega gave an example of his own son who went as far as University level. According to him, even if they invite their son to come for some traditional ceremonies at their rural home, the boy seems to be indifferent (Mr. R. Marega, Interview: 15/03/2004). Not only do children who go as far as Advanced Level just question traditional beliefs and customs, the fact is that they get developed themselves as Pope Paul VI noted:

Basic education is the first objective for a nation seeking to develop itself. Lack of education is as serious as lack of food; the illiterate is a starved spirit. When someone learns how to read and write he is equipped to do a job and to shoulder a profession, to develop self-confidence and realise that he can progress with others. Literacy is the first and most basic tool for personal enrichment and social integration; and it is society’s most

valuable tool for furthering development and economic progress with others. Literacy is the first and most basic tool for personal enrichment and social integration; and it is society's most valuable tool for further development and economic progress (PP 1967).

### 1.3.2 Health

Now that we have seen both the positive and negative impact of education upon the family, we now focus our attention on how the inhabitants of Gokwe take the issue of health. In this section I shall look at the situation of the health delivery system of Gokwe district, the common diseases, the scourge of AIDS and the impact they have upon the family.

The issue of health is of paramount importance among the people who occupy Gokwe district. This is so because under the communal mode of production, it is normally the family that provides health services to all the members of the family, even extended. It is always the case that every member (elder) in a family would know most if not all the traditional medicines that deal with common ailments. With these traditional medicines, the family members are kept physically and mentally fit. This is in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) that defines health as '...not merely the absence of diseases and infirmity but complete physical, mental and social well being' (WHO : 1996).

As a way of curbing and controlling the various diseases common in Gokwe district, the government, together with some non-governmental organisations have tried to provide some health facilities. 'The two districts have about 61 Health Institutions, which include 39 health centres, 19 Government District Clinics and 3 Mission hospitals' (Gokwe District Records:1999).

These health facilities provide most of the rural care for the sick; home based care programmes for those who are sick and dying at home. It is rather shocking to note that more than half of the beds in these hospitals are taken up by people with HIV/AIDS (Catholic Church News: July/August 1998:7).



In spite of the mentioned health facilities put in place to curb the problem of health in Gokwe, there is still a great need to have more health centres and a skilled human resource in such a disease-riddled district like Gokwe. The scourge of malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, diarrhoea, sleeping sickness, tuberculosis, reported and unreported AIDS cases continue to make the place not a better place to live. Foot and mouth diseases and tsetse flies are frustrating planned human settlement in productive land (Gokwe District Hospital Records: 1999).

In one of my interviews with Dr. Chemhuru<sup>8</sup> (medical doctor), he was convinced that the immediate causes of infection of children with HIV are the sexual practices of their parents and in a few instances, the use of contaminated blood, needles and other surgical implements (Dr. Chemhuru, Interview: 15/02/99). He also added that some children are infected in their mother's womb while others through breast-feeding. Still others acquire it due to lack of knowledge about the disease through unsafe sexual practices. The immediate causes, however, he concluded, are lack of knowledge of HIV infection, modes of prevention, strategies for dealing with sexual desires and lack of availability of prophylactics for teenagers in the existing reproductive health facilities (Dr. Chemhuru, Interview: 15/02/99).

Sharing the same sentiments with Dr. Chemhuru, Dr. Shamu<sup>9</sup>, who is a medical doctor at Masvingo General Hospital added that, 'In addition to lack of knowledge about the disease, there is also lack of seriousness in tackling HIV as a national disaster' (Dr. Shamu, Interview: 20/05/2000). Fr. C. Machida<sup>10</sup> (Masvingo Diocese Health Co-ordinator also added that, 'Implementation of the National Policy on Aids is rather relaxed' (Fr. C. Machida, Interview: 02/05/2000). As a result, prevention strategies and messages are sometimes mixed and in most cases misleading to the youth. There is also lack of emphasis on fidelity, chastity, abstinence in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes (Epidemiological Fact Sheet-June 1998).

The impact of AIDS is so clear in Gokwe. This was confirmed by Dr. Chemhuru when he said:

Due to AIDS, families disintegrate. Breadwinners are snatched; children die while others take to the streets. As a result, there are no stable families, which are male headed where children feel secure and to which they can be loyal. When breadwinners are taken away, families are impoverished. They fail to guarantee food, shelter, clothing and affection. And this is sad and pathetic (Dr Chemhuru: Interview: 15/02/99).

Even though more and more Shona people living in Gokwe are relying on the proven success of western medicine to cure specific and clearly defined physical complaints, traditional and faith healers are numerous even at Gokwe centre. The tensions and uncertainties of modern life readily provoke within families suspicions of invisible forces, especially witchcraft. As a result, very few people resist going to traditional and faith healers when their health deteriorates even due to HIV/AIDS. This happens also among Catholic families.

In his book, *The Shona people: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with special Reference to their Religion*, Bourdillon states that there are also cases whereby some doctors occasionally refer patients suffering from psychiatric cases to a *n'anga*, traditional healer (Bourdillon 1998: 167). Thus in July 1980, at the suggestion of the Minister of Health, the more significant of the traditional healers association dissolved themselves in order to form a single National Union, 'The Zimbabwe African Traditional Healers' Association' (:168).

To conclude, the issue of health is of paramount importance to all the people who occupy Gokwe district but sometimes shortages of staff in most clinics and hospitals is one of the major problems. Fr. R. Ndlovu<sup>11</sup>, one of the most senior priests in the Diocese said a lot about Gokwe clinics and hospitals from his own experience. He said:

Both Church and Government clinics have no enough vehicles. Sometimes vehicles of priests are used as Ambulances in most Catholic clinics and hospitals since there are no emergency vehicles to take

critically ill patients to nearest hospitals. Sometimes these same clinics and hospital have no enough drugs. More still, most of the clinics do not have maternity provisions for pregnant women and most of them go on foot to some nearest hospitals. Thus there may be a need to further upgrade local clinics to cater for most of the basic primary health care needs (Fr. R. Ndlovu, Interview: 20/02/99).

It is however interesting to note that the people of Gokwe's attitude towards sickness and health is sometimes very different from the teaching of the Church. In cases of serious illnesses, they do not go to hospitals but look for traditional healers. This I discovered on my own when I was still the Bishop of Gokwe Diocese. I shall however come to this section in my Third Chapter when I will be highlighting the similarities and differences between the theological stance on marriage and family life and the real life situation on the ground in Gokwe district.

### **1.3.3 Marriage**

In the social life of the inhabitants of Gokwe, apart from the value that is given to education and health, marriage deserves a special mention. It is one of the key elements. In this section I am going to deal with five major essentials that come under marriage. These include what Shona Marriage is all about, namely; bridewealth, the traditional forms of marriage, polygamy, divorce and fertility.

#### **1.3.3.1 The Shona Marriage**

According to the tradition of the Shona, marriage is essentially a contract between two families (Bourdillon 1998:36). As regards the choice of the spouses, it used to have negotiations made formally by senior representatives of each family. This has changed tremendously because now this involves the persons themselves. The process of marriage has always been regarded by Weinrich as quite slow,

a steady growth, beginning with the first acquaintance of the young people, the gradual involvement of their families, the transfer of bridewealth to the woman's father and the transfer of the bride to the husband's family, the birth of children and finally the establishment of a new and independent household (Weinrich 1982:43).



Although marriage is still regarded primarily as a family contract, it is further expressed in the relationship terminology employed. The entirety of each family group becomes “affined” to the entirety of the other. In this marriage the *tezvara* (father in-law) of the groom or any male of the bride’s family becomes the *tezvara* (father-in-law) to the whole of the groom’s family. So all the members accord the appropriate service and respect to him till the marriage is dissolved (Bourdillon 1998:37). And the relationship is further cemented by bridewealth.

#### 1.3.3.2 Bridewealth

The subject of *roora* (bridewealth) is one of the prominent features of African customary marriage (Phillips & Morris 1971:18). In the context of the Shona peoples, it is also one of the social values in any marriage. The question that I would like to pose is: what are the functions and importance of bridewealth in the customary marriage? Among the Shona people, standard marriages are established in a common way by marriage payment given to the bride’s family by the groom. On this score the bride’s uxorial services<sup>12</sup> are transferred to the groom and thus establishing and validating a marriage with the payment of the bridewealth. That is why Phillips and Morris concluded that a union in which the bridewealth had not been paid, is looked down on as immoral and the children of such a union have no recognised status in the Community (1971:19).

In other words, bridewealth accords a woman a value to a man. Where bridewealth has been paid, Gelfand states that every one says, ‘Here is a person who has a value; someone who cannot just be taken’ (Gelfand 1973:173). Thus he adds that bridewealth legalises and validates the social status of the marriage’s children in the eyes of the people. Although the issue of bridewealth is so important, there are a considerable number of abuses such as charging exorbitant prices thereby reducing women to marketable commodities. I shall come back to this when discussing the influence of modernity on marriage and family life. But before that let us look at the various traditional forms of marriage that are more common in Zimbabwe and Gokwe in particular.

### 1.3.3.3 Traditional Forms of Marriage

There are so many forms of marriage that have been held in the past in our country Zimbabwe. In this section I shall, however, pay attention to only four, which are more common in Gokwe area. These include: marriage by negotiation, marriage by elopement, marriage by child – pledging and marriage by widow inheritance.

#### (a) Marriage by negotiation

Marriage by negotiation is one of the most common forms of marriage in Gokwe. According to this way of procedure, the negotiations that take place are opened by the young man's family. Once the family has resolved to marry a suitable partner for their son, it engages a person who will act as an intermediary. What he does is to get in touch with the person responsible for the other family on behalf of the girl to explain to him the purpose of his visit. Later the spokesperson of the girl's family reports the issue to the father or guardian of her family. The father or guardian assembles the other members of the family in connection with the matter brought by the spokesperson. Negotiations will begin and demands will be made mainly in the form of cash, livestock and clothes. There is a lot of bargaining in the whole exercise till an agreement is reached. The process takes some time till the groom is brought into the family of the bride. The bride will then be taken to the home of the groom for marriage (Holleman 1952:99-109).

This is the commonest form of marriage amongst the Shona as shown on Table XII in *African Marriage in Zimbabwe* of Weinrich 1982: 57.

<u>Form</u>	<u>Shona</u>	<u>Ndebele</u>	<u>Tonga</u>
Negotiation	63.0	39.8	76.6
Elopement	35.6	60.2	18.9
Child Pledging	0.8	–	0.4
Widow Inheritance	0.6	–	4.1

**(b) Marriage by elopement**

The second form of marriage is by elopement. Apart from the regular proposal form of marriage I have cited above, there is amongst the Shona people another way of introducing their marriage procedures commonly called *kutizisa* (elopement). This way is exclusively a prelude to formal marriage negotiations. Let me briefly examine the procedures taken.

The boy first falls in love with a girl and when he is satisfied that he wants to marry her, instead of making an affirmation agreement, they elope. He arranges with his girlfriend to meet at a certain place on an appointed date and time (usually at night). The arrangements made are kept secret from the family of the girl. The girl is escorted to the village of the young man by one or two of her sisters. It is common that before the journey begins, small gifts can be given to the girl's sisters as farewell. According to Holleman, 'the girl herself, who must act as an unwilling and hesitating party, must be given *rusimudzo* (from *kusimudza*, to cause to stand up)' (Holleman 1952:110).

On the way the girl moves slowly and is given some small gifts by the relatives of the boy and these gifts are prepared well before hand. Out of respect for the home and parents of the boy, the elopement party may go to the relatives of the boy, from where a spokesman is send to report the arrival of the elopement party. If the father of the boy is annoyed by the report, he may ask his son to pay him in form of either a sheep or a goat. If he accepts, word is then send to all the village people to come and meet the girl. They will be dancing and ululating. More gifts are given to the girl by the village people. Finally, the village people would then lead the elopement into the village and the boy's father will provide meat to celebrate the occasion (1952:109). Thus, the girl would have been accepted. This, however, is quite different from child-pledging.

**(c) Child -pledging**

Child-pledging is the third form of marriage common to the inhabitants of Gokwe area. In this form of Marriage, the preliminaries imply the conclusion of an

affiliation agreement in connection with a usually very young, sometimes growing up, in exceptional cases, as yet unborn girl (Holleman 1952:11). This is always without the girl's approval. The common Shona term is *kuzvarira* (to bear a wife for someone) (1952:11). This term is based on the circumstances that one family, for some reason or other, such as debt or close friendship, undertakes to "bear" a daughter who when grown up will become the wife of a member of the other family (:121). According to Bourdillon, child-pledging still takes place occasionally in spite of legal prohibitions 'even though now such promises are made rarely and only in dire need' (Bourdillon 1998:44).

The decline of child-pledging is largely due to legislation. Section 10 of the African Marriages Act of 1951 states that 'any contract or arrangement made under which any girl is in consideration of any payment, loan or gift promised in marriage to any man shall not be enforced in law unless the girl is of marriageable age and consents to the union' (Weinrich 1982: 62).

The question that I would pose is: what are the reasons for child -pledging? In one of my interviews with Mr. Chemhere<sup>13</sup>, a farmer by profession, he emphasised the fact that people pledge their children due to poverty. He stated that particularly after a bad harvest, a family without enough to live on tries to relieve the situation by marrying off a small girl and using the bride price to buy food for the family. In such a case the young girl stays with her parents until she reaches marriageable age. Thus according to him, 'economic hardship was and still is the major cause of child-pledging' (Mr Chemhere, Interview: 15/03/2004).

Another respected village man in Gokwe added that it is common that owners of big farms together with some African Independent church members favour such marriages. He argues that these people rely mostly on agriculture and self-employment and thus take advantage of poor families (Madzibaba Calisto Nyandoro<sup>14</sup>, Interview:15/02/03). He added: 'Most of them want this type of marriage in order to meet their labour problems. To them child-pledging has a double advantage, namely, promise of future wives. Secondly such a marriage

draws all the family members of their bride wives for cheap labour' (Madzibaba Calisto Nyandoro, Interview: 15/02/03). According to Weinrich, 'From a poor man's point of view, child-pledging stabilises their own families, for in giving away their daughters, they guarantee the cohesion of their households' (Weinrich 1982:63). This practice however as I mentioned earlier on is going down due to African Marriage Act and partly due to influence of modernity and education. Whilst this form of marriage is going down, widow inheritance is still very far from being phased out.

#### **(d) Widow inheritance**

Widow inheritance is the fourth form of marriage and is still common in Gokwe. Some call this form of Marriage *kugara nhaka* (succession marriages) whereby a man inherits the widow of his brother or close relative. In some cases, women who are already old oppose this form of marriage preferring to live with their sons and daughters. According to Chief Makore<sup>15</sup> (Author's Chief), there are also instances whereby young widows oppose this form of marriage preferring to live alone or marry a man of their own choice (Chief Makore, Interview: 20/06/00).

According to traditional rules, marriage is not terminated by the death of a husband but wives together with the property of the deceased are inherited by the heir. The Shona people call the ceremony at which decisions about inheritance are made, *kugadzira* (to settle things) (Weinrich 1982: 65). This ceremony normally takes place one year after the death of the householder and the widow is not supposed to sleep with any man before this ceremony as this might offend her deceased husband who is believed not yet joined with his ancestors before the ceremony. Individual rites of this ceremony emphasise the value of lineage continuity and of stability of the kinship group. The central rite of *kugadzira* takes place when the widow hands over to the heir her husband's weapons. Through this transfer, the heir officially is recognised as the successor of the deceased. In accepting the weapons, according to Weinrich he 'becomes' the social person of their former owner (1982:66). Thus the continuity of the family is preserved.



The widow then takes a bowl of water. If she accepts the heir as her new husband, she hands him the bowl and once the heir has washed his hands with water, the widow becomes his wife and *nhaka* (inheritance) has taken place. If she refuses to accept him, which is normal, she puts the bowl of water down (Chief Makore, Interview: 20/01/02).

Even though some oppose widow inheritance saying it gives rise to witchcraft, wives killing their husbands to be married by someone “better”, husbands also killing their brothers to take their wives, other people, however, approve of this marriage for they see it offering security to the children of a first marriage because it keeps them united with their mother.

Above all the validating of widow inheritance was recognised as early as 1917 when the Native Marriages Ordinance (no. 15) (as amended by no. 16 of 1929) provided that when under any prevailing native law or custom a man entitled to take to wife the widow or widows of any deceased relative, he should as soon as the inheritance ceremony has been completed, appear before a Marriage Officer, with such of the widows as he may desire to take to wife, and register a marriage with each of them (Weinrich 1982:66).

Now that we have seen the various traditional forms of marriage, with marriage by negotiation being one of the most common, we now want to see whether or not modernity has had any impact on marriage and family life.

#### **1.3.3.4 The influence of modernity on marriage**

Culture is dynamic. Since we have seen the traditional life of the Gokwe people, together with the four major traditional forms of marriage which are to some extent still enjoying their presence among these people, it is also important at this time to talk about the influence of modernity on marriage and family life. This influence of modernity can thus be traced back to the coming of colonial governments, Christian religion, establishment of school education, introduction of cash economy as well as the infiltration of Western culture into the Shona culture. These have changed to a great extent the traditional Shona way of life. The peace and tranquillity that formally characterised the traditional life has been

either weakened or replaced by new ones (Blum 1989:166) and the Christian teaching on the indissolubility of marriage is now being considered a great stabilising factor of marital unions among the Shona people (Weinrich 1982:88). This is also true of the Shona people of Gokwe.

The influence of modernity has affected so many areas of the people of Gokwe district. It has first and foremost affected their way of life, attitudes and beliefs. It has also affected the structure and organisation of the whole community. In Gokwe, educational change, for instance, has led to a great social change in the sense that children go to school, young adults go to colleges and universities even though there is not yet even one college in Gokwe district. Bloom and Ottong would argue that:

By so doing they are taken out of the pool of available labour. The tasks they would traditionally have performed now have to be done by other people... Thus, a change in educational institutions gives rise to a series of changes, bringing into being new social organisations, ideas and values (Bloom & Ottong 1987:236).

According to Blum, conjugal and family life have not escaped the tension and conflict resulting from the meeting of the Western and Shona cultures. In addition to the new and economic social forms that have come up as a result of this coming together of cultures, new forms of marriage also have arisen (Blum 1989:166). Due to modernity, most features of Shona marriages, especially the practice of polygamy (which is our next topic), are being abandoned by many. Traditional forms of marriage have also been challenged.

The introduction of a cash economy has also, to a great extent affected the Shona traditional forms of marriage. This change to a cash economy has had strong and lasting repercussions upon the need for establishing marriage alliances like what the Shona traditional forms of marriage used to do. To begin with, some of the reasons for marriage alliances such as the need to secure peace between warring groups is no longer in existence. Even the sense of solidarity that the Shona people used to enjoy has been to some extent affected. Young men can, without

any assistance raise their own bridewealth, marry a wife of their choice and buy a decent house in town, away from the parents. In addition to that, the substitution of money for cattle or for other Shona traditional objects that they used to give as bridewealth is now making the whole aspect more of 'brideprice,' in which attempts are made to acquire the greatest possible amount of money in the exchange' (Blum 1989:128). Mair calls it 'a commercialisation of the bridewealth' (Mair 1969:19).

It is crucial on this section to note that the coming of Western culture and the introduction of a cash economy have affected the Shona traditional beliefs and practices but still, traits of these, especially polygamy and divorce are still evident.

#### 1.3.4 Polygamy/Polygyny<sup>16</sup>

Polygamy and polygyny basically mean the same thing in the sense that in any case polygyny is a form of polygamy. The word polygamy only came to be popularly used for what is really polygyny. Thus I shall be using the word polygamy in place of polygyny.

Many people have since asked the question: how polygamous is contemporary Africa, what are its causes, advantages and disadvantages? In his book, *Polygamy Reconsidered*, Hillman states: 'plural marriage or polygamy is found throughout the world though in a variety of forms that are culturally determined' (Hillman 1975: 10).

Like in most parts of Zimbabwe, the most common type of polygamy in Gokwe district is simultaneous or contemporaneous polygamy. According to this type, Weinrich states that one man has more than one wife at the same time (Weinrich 1982:137). This is different from consecutive polygamy whereby a man divorces and remarries. This type is not very common in Gokwe area. Simultaneous polygamy according to Hillman 'is a culturally determined, socially accepted and legally recognised form of permanent marriage' (Hillman 1975: 11).



It is also a historical reality and a fact that in the Shona traditional society, chiefs had large families, some of which were very large indeed. Some had five to ten wives while others like chief Makoni in the Eastern Districts of Zimbabwe had in the early years of the century 110 wives, all of whom were married according to customary law and thus were not concubines. Chief Chinamora, who died at the end of the 1960s, had 27 wives (Weinrich 1982:138). In modern context, especially in Gokwe area, this same principle still operates though now at the level of certain progressive ordinary men, headsmen and businessmen.

What then are the causes of polygamy, one may ask? It is true that in the past polygamy was confined to chiefs and the majority of some respected elders who had two or three wives. This, however, according to Chief Nembudziya has changed in the past due to time and different social, economic and political changes and demands. According to him, 'In Gokwe area, like in most parts of the country, the causes of polygamy are many and varied. Chief and more common among them is wife inheritance. A man inherits the wife or wives of his deceased brother' (Chief Nembudziya<sup>17</sup>, Interview: 02/05/2000). Hillman also highlights this same point when he says, 'This arises from the death of a husband whose wife had not passed the age of childbearing or when the deceased has not left a surviving male heir' (Hillman 1975:120). The widow however for the sake of name and continuity remains the legal wife of the deceased. Thus family continuity is moreover as important for maintaining cultural traditions as it is for the propagation and stability of society.

The other cause for taking more than one wife is economic necessity. A man may inherit livestock that must be cared for or land that must be utilised. Like most businessmen in Gokwe, whenever they intent to open another shop, they marry a new wife and then place her in charge of the shop. Wives are seen as more suitable as shopkeepers than children or brothers. This was also supported by Weinrich who added that wives are seen as more honest and less likely to divert large sums of money for their personal stocks (Weinrich 1982:139). Thus wealth and polygamy, like in the past are mutually reinforcing for most affluent people

could marry wives and thus accumulate even more wealth and prestige (1982:137).

Among the causes of polygamy, we can also talk of social obligation. This may be in response to particular pressures especially such things as the need for more children or the need for a male heir. To assure himself of his own remembrance after death, the polygamist aims at surrounding himself with many children. Even Weinrich had the same idea when she stated 'polygamy provides an excellent means of enlarging a household and of making it more prosperous' (Weinrich 1982:137).

In some cases, the man can get pressure to take another wife from his own wife (i.e first wife). Eugene Hillman also supports this when he says 'since the wives, together with their children share in all the benefits of belonging to the polygamous family, they themselves can sometimes pressure their husband into seeking additional wives' (Hillman 1975:120).

Again one may ask: What are the advantages of polygamy? The institution of polygamy in Gokwe District is certainly not merely a means of satisfying male lust, as many people would think. Apart from some few disadvantages, it has however a number of well-defined sound functions and advantages within its socio-economic and cultural context. According to Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter, polygamy helps to stabilise the institution of marriage and to integrate the family with society (Kitembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:85). This view was supported by Hillman who added that 'not only does this custom serve as a dynamic principle of family survival, growth, security, continuity, and prestige but it has also an integrating function within the kingship system' (Hillman 1975:114). He further accords a number of ways through which polygamy can contribute to the solidarity and prosperity of groups on different levels of society.

According to Hillman,

a number of offspring is regarded as a matter of socio- economic urgency in an area where subsistence food production depends on labour force that each

family provides for itself, where average mortality rate of children is very high, where the continuation of the family through male heirs is a grave responsibility, where each marriage contract multiplies the number of mutually helpful relatives, where leadership qualities are developed only through the good management of large families, where personal relationships are always regarded as more valuable than the possession of things and where a number of well brought up children is looked upon as the greatest human achievement (Hillman 1975:114-115).

On account of malaria, the mortality rate of children is extremely high in Gokwe area (Gokwe Health Statistics: 01/2002 to 04/2002).

Blum also gives some very important advantages of polygamy when he states that an additional wife can attend to the needs of the husband especially when his other wives are away or sick. If a man is working far away from his rural home, having a second wife is an advantage for him because he will among all other advantages, have someone to continue taking care of the rural property and household, as well as having a free spouse and housekeeper at the work-place residence. This, however, has a disadvantage of the husband losing control and grip over his rural wife and children because he is obliged to stay away from home for a longer period of time. Blum also emphasises the aspect of prestige on the part of women married to a polygamist especially when that particular man is rich and successful (Blum 1989:164).

Traditionally, polygamy had and still has the function of catering for the sexual needs of men and of minimising the chances of promiscuity and prostitution. More importantly, according to Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter, polygamy helps to satisfy the need and the desire of having a large family, while at the same time it keeps the fertility rate of women at a low level (Kitembo Magesa & Shorter 1998: 86). It also caters for the childless union and offers a better solution than of divorce when a wife is barren. It was and still is a form of security and a guarantee of prosperity when a large family community is necessary to exploit the environment and provide for basic needs. In a polygamous system, all operations of rural life are rendered more efficient: clearing land, building,

making artefacts and utensils, guarding the fields against marauding birds and animals, and so forth (1998:90).

Polygamy, however, is not without its dark side. Even though we have seen so many advantages, there are also disadvantages. That is why Weinrich argues that great skill is required by a polygamist (Weinrich 1982:139). This is mostly in connection with the general management of his household in all aspects and to provide his wives and children especially with bodily, educational, social, religious and moral values. Under the capitalist mode of production, a considerable number of household fathers have given up their responsibility of educating children to their wives (1982:140).

In addition to that, larger herds and flocks are required to meet the bridewealth payments of the many wives. And once the man fails in this regard, the family becomes difficult to maintain especially today due to high cost of living, poor wages, unemployment and many other things. According to Weinrich this is where great skill is required on the part of the husband (Weinrich 1982:138). Because whether the co-wives are living with their husband in a single place or whether they are dispersed in several homesteads or settlements, tensions are bound to rise (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1977:93). The most frequent cause of tension according to Blum is jealousy between the co-wives. It can be caused by unequal distribution of land, money, or any other favours but the most significant cause is the resentment the wives feel from sharing the right of sexual access to a husband (Blum 1989:111-112).

The other point to be noted in Gokwe area is that in case of unfaithful wives or men, sexually transmitted diseases are shared leading to the death of innocent people. In situations and cultures whereby the husband is permitted to have relations with a woman who is not his wife, or is not fair in visiting his wives or does not satisfy them, this may lead to wives going out to seek satisfaction elsewhere and this again is a danger to the family.

It is however important to note that with the changes in traditional status of African women today, gained especially through their participation in cash economy, freedom regarding their sexuality and the introduction of other forms of marriage such as the Christian one, has produced nothing less than a revolution in the traditional way of life especially the practice of polygamy. The majority of educated women prefer monogamous unions where they can achieve some degree of independence and freedom but if such unions are childless, they are bound to collapse.

#### 1.3.5 Fertility

Family as an institution has been significant in all historically recorded societies. All people, whether engaging in communal or capitalist modes of production, have valued it as the smallest unit whose function is to reproduce the population and to do so with a minimum of change. According to Bloom and Ottong, 'family is a group of people, recognised by that community as related to one another by ties of marriage' (Bloom & Ottong 1987:86). The group is usually made up of husband and wife or wives and their children. In the eyes of the Shona people, if a family fails to reproduce the population, that family or marriage is bound to collapse.

In the eyes of many people especially in the area of Gokwe, fertility is seen as the basis for their survival, a value deeply embedded in the past. In the book, *African Marriage in Zimbabwe*, Weinrich argues that people consider fertility the lifeblood of its society. It is *rupenyu* (life) itself and therefore gives *simba* (strength) to each local group. Children are regarded as the greatest wealth for they guarantee the continuity of the group over time and help living members to produce daily food. Unlike in capitalist societies where children are seen as consumers rather than producers, children in rural areas, especially Gokwe where cotton growing is their major source of income are a necessity for they themselves are the producers. Even in the past as Weinrich stated, the more children a family had, the greater was its economical security (Weinrich 1982:104).



In Gokwe, like in most parts of Zimbabwe, it is an absolute necessity to have children. This absolute necessity to have children so as to perpetuate and extend the lineage and to secure it economically has given rise to customs designed to safeguard fertility. In some parts of the country, especially among the Ndebele people, early sexual intercourse is permissible to some extent for it guarantees that the union would be fruitful. This would be supported by the words of Weinrich who wrote that if a woman did not fall pregnant especially during this period of experimenting, the engagement was dissolved. This is true of the people living in Gokwe area. Even though they do not encourage pre-marital sex, they value children so much. If no child is born, even if a marriage has already been formalised within the courts or in church, in most cases it is dissolved. If not dissolved, the man can take an additional wife hoping that he will get what the first wife failed to produce. Thus, Weinrich had to say, 'women must bear children or be rejected' (Weinrich 1982:105). Aschwanden further states that 'children are the very symbol of a person's identity, an essential part of a man's own being' (Aschwanden 1982:33). Thus, infertility and divorce have a certain affinity.

#### **1.3.6 Divorce**

Many scholars have varied views on divorce. Some have linked it inversely with polygamy implying that where polygamy is frequent, divorce tends to be rare. Weinrich citing Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter argues that in traditional African society, the possibility of divorce was reduced by the possibility of polygamy (Weinrich 1982:160). Hillman also writes that polygamy by its very nature tends to exclude divorce. Still other scholars argue that areas with very low polygamy rates have very high divorce rates. Whilst this may be true in some parts of the country, in Gokwe diocese it is not the case. According to the interviews I carried out amongst some chiefs in Gokwe diocese, it was pointed out that while polygamy rate is going down, the rate of divorce is still very high (Chief Nembudziya, Interview:20/03/2002).

Of all the many reasons for divorce in the area of Gokwe, the chief one is inability to beget children. Hillman argues that if the primary end of marriage which is procreation cannot be achieved, there follows a strong tendency toward divorce (Hillman1975:183). Inability to beget children undercuts lineage continuity and also reduces the lineage's labour force especially in Gokwe where cotton is grown at a very large scale. Thus labour is seen as a necessity (Chief Nembudziya, Interview:20/03/2002).

Mr Marega added that most of the marriages contracted are between young people. He says:

Being young and restless, normally they do not choose properly. Once a young man of 17 or 18 years has managed to own a piece of land where he gets 2 to 3 bags of cotton, the next thing he thinks is getting a wife. These young people lack experience and act hastily, cohabiting before negotiations are completed or even begun (Mr. R. Marega, Interview: 15/03/2004).

This was also supported by Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter when they argue that most divorces occur among young partners (Kitembo Magesa & Shorter 1998:56). Among the elders it is not very common even though there are some few instances here and there.

According to Holleman, in his book *Shona Customary Law*, one of the main reasons for divorce among the Shona people is failure of sons in law to meet their bridewealth (Holleman 1952:267). According to Weinrich, this reason contains in itself a direct threat to the values of traditional society and therefore to the smooth functioning of the communal mode of production. Failure to provide the *roora* (bridewealth) may be a reason for the family of the wife to take back their daughter leading to marriage breakdown (Weinrich 1982:161).

In Gokwe area, cases of misbehaviour of men or women leading to divorce are very common. Such cases may include the refusal of the wife to carry out her domestic or marital duties, disobedience or laziness. On the part of the husband it can be neglect, arbitrariness and cruelty. Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter also give



a similar list, '...it is personal incompatibility, husband's drunkenness, violence, infidelity, desertion or refusal of support' (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:161).

Among the Shona people, a wife's adultery is taken as a serious social stigma on a man's honour and deprives the husband of respectability, which is so highly valued in society. In Gokwe, divorces caused by a man's adultery are frequent, but more frequent are divorces caused by wife/women adultery. Gelfand argues that for the Shona people adultery is a disgraceful act. He argues that should a woman commit adultery, it is tantamount to destroying the whole village (Gelfand 1965:170). In the case of adultery, Weinrich goes even to the extent of categorically stating that there is no negotiation (Weinrich 1982:160).

In addition to the above mentioned reasons leading to divorce, we can also talk of inability of husbands to support their wives and children. In such situations, some wives can opt out of marriage. According to Chief Makore, 'Among the reasons leading to divorce, we can also talk of impotency or sterility of husbands, accusations of witchcraft, lack of virginity on the part of the wife and many other things' (Chief Makore: Interview: 20/02/02).

Even though statutory and customary divorce procedures are foreseen by legislation today, comparatively few divorces especially in Gokwe come before the courts. The normal and most common procedure is based upon agreement between the two families who originally concluded the affinitive agreement, to terminate their relationship by a liquidation of the assets involved in the marriage. It is on rare occasions that a marriage is dissolved by a unilateral action of one of the families or individual spouses. In this connection it should be noted that the Shona term for divorce is *kurambana* (to refuse each other) (Holleman 1952:265). If, however, families fail to reach an agreement amongst themselves they may approach the court but in Gokwe it is rare (Chief Makore, Interview: 19/01/2003). Most of the cases have no legal standing due to fear of formal

atmosphere of the courts and lack of knowledge of what is to be done in case of dissolution of marriage.

To conclude, this section on marriage is very important. It is central to understanding the people of Gokwe and it also brings key points which are of great use in my Third Chapter when I talk about the differences between the real life situation and the theology of the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life. Practices such as bridewealth, forms of marriage, polygamy, divorce and fertility are therefore central in making such a comparison. They are also among the top challenges to evangelising the inhabitants of Gokwe Diocese, with both the economic and political life of the people not being taken for granted.

#### **1.4 The Economic life of the family**

The consideration that I am addressing in this section falls under the following aspects: the economic function of the family, type of mode of production in Gokwe district and the impact they have upon the family today.

First and foremost I would like to mention how the structure was economically organised traditionally. Economic activity among the Shona people of Gokwe, like the rest of Zimbabwe, was organised within the family and kinship. The traditional economic unit has been the family. On the part of the land and its utilisation, land was always controlled by the family or the community. As generally found in most parts of Africa, the economy in Gokwe district is still within peasant communities who have for the past years moved from subsistence farming to cash crop.

The second point is that a differentiation has to be drawn between the communal mode of production and the capitalist mode of production. On the part of the communal mode of production, the family guarantees the material needs of its members' continuity as essential, with social structures and values providing for this continuity (Weinrich 1982:34). The other factor is that family units, which are large and permanent, are also needed to enable kinship groups to fend for the

sick and the elderly, widows and orphans and so forth. On the other hand under the capitalist mode of production 'the family belongs almost exclusively to the superstructure. It remains a consumption unit, but it is no longer the production unit. Its members live out their labour power to work in economic enterprises owned by members of society or by society itself' (1982:33). The majority of the Gokwe people however fall under the communal mode of production even though some leave their labour power to go and work for others in order to get some cash.

The people of Gokwe district have some distinct characteristics. Firstly, they are relatively self-sufficient or enclosed communities and are sometimes wealthy, especially those on good soils and an average amount of rainfall. Secondly, with good rains they can produce and sell some of their foodstuffs and other goods such as cotton and maize to the Grain Marketing Board and Cotton Marketing Board respectively. The important point on this third area is that, even though the people of Gokwe district are sometimes rich and have moved from subsistence farming to cash crop, they have for the past few years experienced serious economic problems. Inflation rose to 220.9 per cent by February 2003. This has had adverse effects on the people at grassroots level as they have to grapple with price hikes of almost everything. We can talk of things like the price of seed, chemicals, fertilizers, packaging and transportation of cotton by farmers. In addition to that we can also talk of the current drought which has contributed seriously to the economic hardships for the people of Gokwe district and Zimbabwe at large. This has led to low production of cotton and maize which are commonly grown in Gokwe. As a result, thousands of people are in need of emergency food aid, which the cash-strapped government cannot provide (Financial Gazette 3-9 April 2003:10). It has to be noted, however, that the social welfare institutions that are generally funded by taxation or other contributions, do support the sick people, the elderly and the disadvantaged persons and are effected or organised by the state.

In all these problems, cash economy has had some significant changes in the social, cultural and economic life of these people. Most people have hived off and established themselves in town. They begin to aspire after things and ways of life, goals and aspirations unknown to their ancestors as Blum noted (Blum 1989:125). To some extent, cash economy has also changed and modified the traditional statuses and roles of both married and unmarried people of Gokwe as well as affecting the traditional forms of marriage. It also opened the way for many more types of employment than were available in the past. All the needs of people are now being met through the expenditure of money, which makes life difficult for those who cannot afford. This also touches the area of bridewealth. Cattle and traditional objects that were used in the past to some extent have also been substituted by cash (1989:129). Thus, we see a complete change in the way of life of the people as a result of cash economy.

### ✶ 1.5 The Political life of the family

Problems of power and authority are present in all kinds of social groups and organisations. Every group and organisation has its own form of political relations, sharing of power and authority. Wherever decisions have to be made, power is shared and authority to a great extent exercised. Like the economic system, or religion, the political system is a part of the total social system (Bloom & Ottong 1987:180). Thus there is a political framework, in every family, village, ward, chiefdom, district, province and nation and this political framework to some extent has an impact upon the family.

Among the Shona people, the husband is head of his family and where a number of extended families live together in a village community, they live under the village headman. The role of the village headman as tax-collector has been institutionalised to the extent that his title has changed from *samusha*, (owner of the village or home) to *sabhuku*, (owner of the book) (Bourdillon 1998:59).



The duties of a village headman are broadly similar to those of a family head, adapted for the larger community with which he has to deal. According to Gelfand, the headman has certain duties such as settling of any minor civil matters, but anything more important must be referred to the chief (Gelfand 1965: 8). He must see to the sustenance of all members of the village and that every family gets land to cultivate. He also performs rituals to ensure rain and good crops. 'He is *baba*, (father) to all the village and they are *vana*, (children) to him' (Bourdillon 1998:60). He further states that chiefdom is a tract of land under the jurisdiction of a traditional ruler. Chiefdoms, especially those in Gokwe area vary greatly in size, population and significance. The smallest may have no more than a couple of thousand inhabitants, whose ruler may be subordinate to a neighbouring paramount chief, whereas the largest accommodates tens of thousands of subjects (1998:103).

There are eleven Chiefdoms in Gokwe according to Chief Nembudziya. Shangwe chiefs are seven, namely: Njelele, Chireya, Nembudziya, Nemangwe, Sai, Makore and Jahana. Shona Chiefs are four, namely Jiri, Huchu, Mukoka and Gumunyu (Chief Nembudziya, Interview: 20/03/2002). He added that chiefdoms are subdivided into wards which are under headmen and these wards are divided into kraals or villages which are under kraal heads.

A traditional ward, like a chiefdom has clearly defined boundaries which give it permanence that villages do not have, yet, contains a smaller and more closely knit community than the chiefdom as a whole (Bourdillon 1998:105). Sometimes the chiefdom is divided into wards whereby each ward is ruled by a branch of the Chiefly family, in which case the chieftainship is likely to alternate. It is also common in Gokwe that wards may be assigned to branches of the Chiefly family excluded from succession to the Chieftainship. Many modern wards, however, were traditionally independent Chiefdoms, which have been grouped together under one chief for administrative convenience. The hereditary role of a ward headman is therefore similar to that of a chief. It includes both religious and similar function, the precise definition of which depends on the status of the ward

and its particular traditions (1998:105). The chief is traditionally guardian of the fundamental value, of *rupenyu*, (life) and *simba*, (strength), vitality, well-being (:111).

For many years in colonial times, the authority of the chiefs was not questioned and were supported by government policy with all the forces behind it. It is also true that chiefs came under government jurisdiction in such things as the use of land. Nevertheless, the official power of chiefs was being increased in the years immediately prior to independence. They were given, for example in 1967 jurisdiction over the distribution of their land and the right to try some criminal offences (Tribal Trust Land Act No 9: 1967).

For some time, in independent Zimbabwe, the political power of the chiefs has been diminished. In most parts of the country especially Gokwe area, ZANU PF Party<sup>18</sup> network has been established and it took over the consultative role of the chief and communication administration. It was only in the year 2000 that chiefs were given back their authority and they are now being paid by the government. Some of them were elevated to the position of Members of Parliament as a way of cementing the force of the ruling party in various parts of the country and the government makes sure all chiefs are Zanu PF members. Thus, chiefs are answerable to their Members of Parliament who also in turn are answerable to the government. This system came as a response to the threat especially from the strongest opposition party (MDC)<sup>19</sup> in the country which had sent some shock waves to the ruling party.

Because of this network system of the ruling Party, politics in Gokwe is no longer democratic. It leaves many questions unanswered. There is very little political freedom and violence in most cases dominates leading to the death of innocent souls. This makes life difficult for the people and very unpredictable. Families are compelled to be members of one political party and sometimes are forced to participate actively in politics. It can happen that politics, instead of uniting families can to a greater extent divide them. This is common when one family has



both supporters of ZANU PF as well as those of MDC. Because of this people have witnessed violence and fighting within families, children beating up or even killing their own parents for supporting the conservative ZANU PF party. In most cases the Daily News rightly puts it, 'It is the horror of bad politics that you see first in people's faces. Hunger, discontent and mostly fear of death' (The Daily News: 19/08/2002:11). Such politics eats up the family from the roots and destroys all values; bodily, social, educational, religious and moral.

What needs to be emphasised on this section is the fact that the political life of the people of Gokwe to a greater extent is still under control due to the fact that traditional chiefs are still very powerful. This has been like this for quite sometime even though sometimes you may find supporters of some opposition parties trying to cause some discord and disharmony here and there. Thus, talking about evangelisation, the social, economic and political life of the people need to be favourable for evangelisation to take root. Noone can preach to a hungry community, neither can one evangelise when the political climate is unfavourable. These and many others stand as great challenges to evangelisation but these challenges are not complete if we do not talk about the traditional Shona rituals.

## **1.6 Shona Rituals**

When one studies the Shona people of Gokwe district, one is immediately struck by their ritual practices which give them an identity. They believe in a world of spirits whose special duties are the welfare and the protection of a group or of the whole tribe. But to understand these people more clearly, one has to understand and grasp their culture first.

The term culture is popularly used in a variety of different ways. For sociologists and anthropologists the term culture is defined 'as all of the beliefs, behaviors and products common to members of a particular group' (Appelbaum & Chambliss 1995:54). These include the values and customs that particular group

shares in common, the language that they speak, rules followed, tools and technologies used. In Gokwe district, people lived and still live in their tribal set ups, according to their cultures but there has been a lot of sharing of cultures whereby the different tribes intermarried and exchanged cultural elements. All the same, however, this situation has not created one single homogeneous culture. One can still see and trace some cultural elements that are typically Tonga, Ndebele or Shona. Common among these different tribes, however, is the belief in ancestors and the bringing home (*kurova guva*) ceremony.

#### 1.6.1 Ancestors

The Shona term for ancestors is *vadzimu*<sup>20</sup>. These are the spirits of one's deceased fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers and great grandfathers and mothers who were decently buried (Chief Makore, Interview:20/01/03). Mbiti calls them 'living dead' (Mbiti 1975:118) and Parrinder calls them 'shades' (Parrinder 1969:48). The Shona people of Gokwe call them *vadzimu* and so do the Shangwe. They are always seen as mediators between the Supreme Being and the people, protectors of their descendants, peacemakers, health and rain givers. According to Onyeocha, ancestors 'know the needs of men and have full access to the channels of communicating with God directly' (Onyeocha 1983:25).

Vincent Mulago (J. Olupona 1991:119) explains that in the African world view there are four essential elements namely:

1. Belief in two worlds visible and invisible,
2. Belief that both worlds involve community and hierarchy,
3. Belief in the intersection of the two worlds, the transcendence of the visible, world in a way contradicting its immanence,
4. Belief in a Supreme Being, Creator and Father of all that exists,

The vital unity between the mundane and the extra-mundane world is the link between the ancestors as the living dead and their living descendants. According to Charles Nyamiti (1984:15-16), in their death ancestors as close to God have acquired supernatural powers, and with this they can protect or punish their descendants with illness or in extreme cases, death.

Among the Shona people, it is believed that after death, the spirit of every married person is always concerned with the living members of the family left on earth. There is a strong belief that the spirit of a deceased mother and father hovers round their own children protecting them and showing a constant concern with their welfare and with what they do and say. Thus Gelfand argues that 'ancestral spirits of the individual family are held in high esteem by parents, children and grand children of that unit' (Gelfand 1973:75). These ancestors are expected to care mostly for those who are their own descendants. In other words, the family ancestors guard the interests and welfare of the family-nuclear unit or small lineages. They know and have interest in what is going on in the family. They are the guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities (Onyeocha 1983:25).

The living and the dead are seen to be one family. The kinship system forces them to be together in all their problems and difficulties, for if one member offends against the ancestors, the others must know for it affects them all. The Shona people are clear when they state that the ancestors are their protectors who possess power of preventing evil from entering their midst. These spirits are always on guard, so to speak, around and in the midst of their living quarters. In this way no evil or witch can enter their homes and villages. Thus according to Gelfand, 'in order to keep well and healthy the family must remember and respect the ancestors' (Gelfand 1965:114).

The Shona people consult their ancestors in times of trouble, when an important decision has to be taken, and in sickness or death when the cause has been recognised by the traditional healer. Thus from time to time the living brew some beer to appease the ancestors. This is so because there is a belief among the Shona that when annoyed the ancestors can bring misfortune upon the individuals of the guilty family by withdrawing this particular vital protection and so permit the evil influence. The ancestors are to be remembered and no requests or demands made by them is to be disobeyed. The simple act of forgetting one's

ancestors will be followed by severe punishment in form of sickness or death (Gelfand 1973:119).

✱ In many ways ancestors are spirits who are more feared and respected than loved. It is this fear of the power of the ancestors which has the opposite effect of spurring on the individual. According to Gelfand 'he is rather forced to conform, not to change, and to line in the same way as his father and forefathers before him' (1973:114). It is only for the head of the family to pay respect to the spirit on behalf of the family unit. It is normally the father who prays on behalf of his children, both married and unmarried, no matter how old they are. If the father is dead, his elder brother or his eldest son will take his place.

To conclude this section, it is therefore a known fact that the ancestors play an important role in the lives of many Bantu peoples. This is in particular the case among the Shona people of Gokwe. While they are strictly monotheistic like all other Shona people in Zimbabwe, yet their religious-social and private life is fundamentally moulded by ancestor veneration. And nothing, in the past or the future, has shaken this cult violently, not even Christianity or modernisation. On the contrary, the cult has shown remarkable adaptability to modern life. Therefore, for a living Church in Gokwe diocese, the integration of ancestor veneration and its observance in the life of the Church is a matter of life and death as we shall see in my Third Chapter.

#### 1.6.2 *Kurova Guva Ceremony*<sup>21</sup> (Bringing Home Ceremony)

*Kurova guva* literally means "beating the grave". Its English equivalent is "bringing home ceremony". The names of the ceremony vary from place to place. In the southern and central part of Zimbabwe the following terms are used: *Kurova guva*, (beating the grave), *Kugadzira munhu*, (to prepare a spirit), *Kuchenura*, (Cleansing) or simply *Magadziro*, (making or fixing). In the North we have terms like: *Kutamba mombe* or *kutamba mudzimu*, (dancing to the sacrificial beast or Spirit), *Kutora Mudzimu*, (to bring the spirit home). In spite of

the difference in names and performance of the ceremony in all areas of Gokwe, the ceremony has a common pattern and function.

In the district of Gokwe, the most important funeral rituals for a deceased person takes place a year or more after burial. It is only after a year when the spirit of the deceased receives full status of a family guardian (Bourdillon 1998:209). The ceremony however is not usually performed for children and the unmarried (Chief Makore, Interview, 20/01/03).

The first stage of the ceremony involves consulting a *n'anga*, traditional healer (Chief Makore, Interview: 20/01/03). It is only after consulting a traditional healer that the family responsible is told how to go about the ceremony. When all is done, on the day of the ceremony, a number of relatives and friends gather to sing and dance in honour of the spirit throughout the night. In the morning a procession is made to the grave of the deceased or some other spot outside the homestead where various rituals are performed including libations of millet beer and the spirit is requested to come home (Bourdillon 1998:209).

Sometimes the spirit is symbolically brought home. On the evening before the main ritual, the Shangwe people tie a black cloth on the neck of a goat, which is then taken to represent the deceased. It is then tied to a tree in the bush where some appropriate functionary addresses are made. The goat is finally taken home and led into a relative's house (Chief Nembudziya, Interview: 1/02/03). The Korekore use a branch which they pull on their way back home from the grave. The severed end of the branch is immediately covered to prevent the spirit from escaping. It is then dragged into the homestead with frequent pauses to rest the spirit and cool it by pouring millet beer over the branch (Bourdillon 1998:211).

In most areas, the ceremony is followed and associated with the final dissolution of the deceased's estate and the re-marriage of his widows (:210). In his book *The Genuine Shona* Gelfand agrees with Bourdillon. He states that the wife, and all the unmarried children, as well as property are taken over by the members of the



family. The paternal aunt takes part in the sharing out of her brother's possessions among his children (Gelfand 1973:28). Holleman sums it all when he says that 'the deceased's eldest son will be invested with his father's own name and he becomes the head of his father's house' (Holleman 1952:236).

Once the spirit has become a guardian, it is believed to remain with its descendants. When it is established among its deceased relatives, the spirit may be honoured and venerated by all family members. In an interview I made with chief Makore, he pointed out that 'the *Kurova guva* ceremony unites all family members from the beginning. People work as a team. You cooperate and see to it that you do exactly what is required for the good of your family' (Chief Makore, Interview:20/01/03).

To sum up this section on the Shona rituals, it has been underlined that the Shona people of Gokwe strongly believe in the veneration of their ancestors and they take the issue of *kurova guva* (bringing home ceremony) seriously. This being the case, we already foresee a problem in evangelising these people. People want to bring their loved ones who have died back home, but Christianity teaches that here on earth we live only in temporary shelters while we look forward to our real home founded, designed and built by God (Hb 11:10). The big question is therefore about the relationship between their ritual practices and the teaching of the Church.

## 1.7 Conclusion

As a conclusion to this First Chapter, it is very important to note that this Chapter provides the necessary basis for understanding all the coming chapters. In this chapter I have tried to give a broad life situation of the family in the district of Gokwe. I have looked at the location of Gokwe District, its general and geological features as well as the various factors that affect the family from such aspects as social, economic, political, as well as the area of Shona rituals. In this same chapter I have also highlighted some of the problems that might hinder effective evangelisation of the people of Gokwe. Some of these include,



polygamy, divorce, poverty, Aids orphans, influence of Western culture, ancestor veneration, *kurova guva* and not forgetting the bad roads in the area of Gokwe. Education, health and marriage continue to be at the centre of the social life of the people of Gokwe. This is why the traditional family had to be large in order to guarantee the material and spiritual well-being of all its members, of children, of the sick, the disabled and the old. Like in the case of marriage, every person has a moral obligation to marry in order to contribute to the social reproduction of his/her kinship group. And this value is seen as basic. Just as one has a moral obligation to marry and beget children, so also is one obliged to participate in the religious and cultural life of the people for it gives them an identity.

In my Second Chapter I shall give the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life. It shall also highlight the fact that some of the practices mentioned in Chapter One might in a way stand in opposition to the teaching of the Church. These same practices of the people of Gokwe are going to be evaluated in Chapter Three to see whether they are evil or not in the eyes of the Church. Again, some solutions to some of these problems are going to be offered in the Fourth Chapter. Thus, this First Chapter provides the necessary points and areas needed for all the coming chapters for it gives an analysis of all the challenges that might hinder effective evangelisation.

## Notes to Chapter One

- <sup>1</sup>Patrilineal – Means that kinship through males is emphasised over kinship through females (Bourdillon 1998:23).
- <sup>2</sup>Conjugal – something to do with marriage or the relationship between a husband and wife.
- <sup>3</sup>Nuclear family- This is the smallest family unit that consists of husband and wife and their children. For the children, this is their family of origin before they are integrated into a much broader family society.
- <sup>4</sup>Extended family- any grouping broader than the nuclear family which is related by descent, marriage or adoption (Haralambos & Holborn 1995:318). Thus the extended family goes beyond the narrow boundaries of mother- father children to include grandparents and other relations.
- <sup>5</sup>Early Child Education and Care Centre- These are pre-schools introduced by the Government in 1980 soon after independence. These equip small children not old enough to go to school with the necessary knowledge and skills.
- <sup>6</sup>Interview: Mr Muchimwe on 11/09/03, 15/03/04 at Muchimwe Village, Gokwe. Mr. Muchimwe is a farmer by profession and former Gokwe District Education Officer. Currently he is the Diocesan Pastoral Council Vice Chairperson.
- <sup>7</sup>Interview: Mr R. Marega on 15/03/04 at Gokwe Centre. Mr Marega is a family man and a farmer by profession. He has been in the teaching field for years but has since retired. He holds a certificate in Agriculture.
- <sup>8</sup>Interview: Dr. Chemhuru on 15/02/99 at Gokwe Centre. Dr. Chemhuru is a medical doctor and Former Gokwe District Hospital Superintendent.
- <sup>9</sup>Interview: Dr. Shamu on 20/05/00 at Masvingo General Hospital. Dr. Shamu is a medical doctor. He did his studies in Russia and is currently working at Masvingo General Hospital.
- <sup>10</sup>Interview: Fr. C. Machida on 02/05/00 at Gokomere Mission Masvingo. Fr Machida is a Catholic priest ordained in 1998. Currently he is the Financial Administrator of Masvingo Diocese as well as the Diocesan Health Co-ordinator.
- <sup>11</sup>Interview: Fr. R. Ndlovu on 20/02/99 at Gokwe Centre. Fr. R. Ndlovu is one of the most senior priests in the Diocese of Gokwe and is the Chancellor of the Diocese.
- <sup>12</sup>Uxorial Services-These are services given by a wife to her husband especially after the payment of bridewealth to show that the wife is excessively fond of her husband.

- <sup>13</sup>Interview: Mr. Chemhere on 15/03/04 at Chemhere Village, Gokwe. Mr Chemhere is a retired primary teacher. He is a widower but a well respected man in the village.
- <sup>14</sup>Interview: Madzibaba Calisto Nyandoro on 15/02/03 at Nyandoro village, Gokwe. Calisto Nyandoro is the author's kraal head who has four wives and is a member of an African Independent Church.
- <sup>15</sup>Interview: Chief Makore on 20/01/02, 19/01/03 Makore village, Gokwe. Chief Makore is author's chief.
- <sup>16</sup>Polygyny – The marriage of one man to a number of women. I was using this word interchangeably with polygamy.
- <sup>17</sup>Interview: Chief Nembudziya on 02/05/00, 20/03/02 at Nembudziya village, Gokwe. Chief Nembudziya is one of the most influential chiefs in Gokwe North District.
- <sup>18</sup>ZANU PF- Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Ruling Party).
- <sup>19</sup>MDC- Movement for Democratic Change (Strongest opposition party in Zimbabwe)
- <sup>20</sup>*Vadzimu*-The spirits of the deceased adults. When it is one it is called *mudzimu*, plural *mudzimu* or *vadzimu* ( a honorific term).
- <sup>21</sup>*Kurova guva*-This practice of bringing back home the spirit of the deceased is common among the Gokwe people. Sometimes they call it *kuchenura* or simply *magadziro* (cleansing or making).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE CHURCH'S TEACHING ON THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

We have seen from the First Chapter that marriage is one of the oldest social institutions, existing in one form or another in all cultures. As a human institution, it has existed in several forms such as polyandry, polygyny, as well as the most common monogamist model. Marriage has, however, undergone significant changes throughout the centuries and over the past centuries has been beset by many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture. A considerable number of families are living this situation in fidelity to those values that constitute the foundation of the institution of the family. Other families 'have become uncertain and bewildered over their role or even doubtful and almost unaware of the ultimate meaning and truth of conjugal and family life' (FC 1). But one may ask: what is so unique about marriage and family life? Are they of any divine origin and significance? This also raises some further interesting questions about our perception of marriage and family life and the theology thereof.

Undoubtedly marriage and family life constitute one of the most important and fundamental human institutions and precious of human values. These two form the foundation of human society. The Church, therefore, wishes to speak and offer that much needed help 'to those who are already aware of the value of marriage and the family and seek to live it faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and searching for the truth, and to those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives' (FC 1). Healthy marriages and good family life are a great contribution to the building and sustaining of a healthy society. Not only does marriage and the family contribute to the quality of the life of society, but it also helps society by providing it with new members that keep it in being. It goes without saying that marriage is the honourable institution in which the sexual needs of humankind are provided for honourably. According to

McDonald, although marriage is looked down upon today by many as a purely secular contract that can be made and unmade by the State, it is in fact something sacred and religious because it has been instituted by God (cf Genesis 2:22-24) and from the dawn of creation has been part of God's plan for man. On this point Cardinal Gasparri says that even those marriages between unbaptised people are sacred and religious because apart from their divine institution they reflect in some way the union of Christ with the Church of their very nature (McDonald 1983:136).

The beauty of Christian marriage and the Christian family is a beauty embraced by mystery. It is a mystery of the love of God for his people and the mystery of God's life itself as a Trinity of persons. This mystery should inspire Christian couples and families to express it in their lives by the way they live with each other and in relationship with God and all others. In my treatment of this Second Chapter, therefore, I shall divide it into two sections. Since marriage presents one of the most discussed topics in the church today, there is need for a theological precision that demonstrates God's plan for marriage and family life, a reality sanctified by the grace of God himself. I shall firstly but briefly highlight what God has planned for marriage and family life. The second and largest section will focus on the role of the Christian family and its participation in God's great plan of salvation as reflected in the Apostolic Exhortation '*Familiaris Consortio*'.

## **2.1 Marriage and Family Life**

It is true to say that marriage and family life constitute one of the most precious of human values. 'According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community and of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning' (GS 50). Thus, the Church is always ready to offer that much needed help especially to those who are aware of the value of marriage and family life and who seek to live it honestly and faithfully. The Church also seeks with all effort to assist those who are uncertain and anxious in their search for the



truth, to those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives (FC 1), as well as to those who wonder about the destiny of marriage and the family (GS 52).

As reflected in *Familiaris Consortio*, the Christian family is ‘the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth and to bring him or her, through a progressive education and catechesis<sup>1</sup>, to full human and Christian maturity’ (FC 2). The family is there to educate every human being to discern his/her own vocation and to accept responsibility in search for greater justice. From the beginning, the family also helps in interpersonal relationships that are very rich in justice as well as in love (FC 2). In affirming that the spouses, as parents, cooperate with God the Creator in conceiving and giving birth to a new human being, I am not merely speaking with reference to laws of biology. Instead, I wish to strongly emphasise the fact that God himself is present in fatherhood and motherhood quite differently than he is present in all other instances of begetting on earth. Indeed, God alone is the source of that image and likeness which is proper to the human being as it was conceived at creation. For begetting is the continuation of creation (GS 43). Thus, the Christian family is so important in the eyes of God the Creator.

‘The acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses take place are noble and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude’ (GS 49). The spouses’ union therefore achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life as already mentioned. These two meanings or values of marriage and family life cannot be separated without altering the couples’ spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family. The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and fecundity (CCC 2360-2363). ‘Willed by God in the very act of creation (Gn 1-2) as already mentioned, marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfilment in Christ (Eph 4) and have need of his graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin (GS 47) and



restored to their beginning (Mt 19:4), that is, to full understanding and the full realisation of God's plan' (FC 3). But one may ask: What is this plan God has for marriage and family life?

### **2.1.1 God's plan for Marriage and Family Life**

God's plan for marriage and family life begins with creation. He created man in his own image and likeness: calling him to existence through love, he called him at the same time for love (FC 11). It is God himself who said, 'It is not good for man to be alone' (Gn 2: 18) and 'who made man from the beginning male and female' (Mt 19:4), and He also wished to share with man a certain special participation in his own creative work. So, he blessed male and female saying: 'Increase and multiply' (Gn 1: 28, GS 50).

In our discussion of God's plan for marriage and family life, it is important to consider that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God, marriage is a communion of love between God and his people, Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church as well as the sacrament of matrimony, children are a precious gift of marriage, the family is a communion of persons and finally marriage and celibacy or virginity are also ways of expressing and living the one mystery of the covenant of God with his people (FC 11-16).

It is fundamental in our discussion of God's plan for marriage and family life to first understand that man is created in the image of God who is love (1 Jn 4:8) and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion (FC 11). The original Jewish concept of marriage found in the first two chapters of the book of Genesis is fundamental for the understanding of the origin, the meaning or purpose, the properties and the laws of marriage as intended by the Creator. In Genesis 1:27-28 we read that 'God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them saying, "be fruitful, and multiply, fill the earth and conquer it..." Thus the superiority of humanity to all other parts of creation is seen in this fact that all

other creatures are represented as the effect of God's word. Humanity is therefore deemed worthy to be spoken to by God and to be given a great task (Brown 1976:564). So, *Familiaris Consortio* teaches, 'Creating the human race in his own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation<sup>2</sup>, and thus the capacity and responsibility of love and communion' (FC 11).

Vocation does not only apply to priestly or religious life. In this sense it applies also to parenthood. Being a parent is not a status that is low. It is a very high state and responsibility for it is a call from God himself. Creating the human race in his own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion (GS 12). Christian revelation therefore recognises two specific ways of realising the vocation of the human person, in its entirety, to love, which are marriage and celibacy (FC 11). And these two ways of realising the vocation of man are equally important.

In the book of Genesis, the Creator gives as purpose of marriage: the mutual help between man and woman. With no other creature can man establish such a divine institution with such a close and personal relationship as exists between him and his wife. Many authors seeing the ideal of such a deep relationship have interpreted the text in question as implying monogamy and indissolubility of marriage. Man and woman are called to participate in the creative action of God, live in communion and complement each other in a reciprocal gift. Orsy would say 'the flesh of one is the flesh of the other' (Orsy 1988: 15). Thus God's original project should be understood in this sense: 'The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Therefore it is not merely a human institution subject to human free will. God himself is the author of marriage (CCC 1603). Wilhelm also agrees with this when he states that marriage is God's way of bringing new human persons into existence (Wilhelm 1998:336).

According to *Familiaris Consortio* 'The communion of love between God and people, a fundamental part of the Revelation and faith experience of Israel, finds a meaningful expression in the marriage covenant which is established between a man and a woman' (FC 12). By expressing their conjugal love, the spouses clearly demonstrate the love of God, which is the central word of Revelation. Thus, sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage, the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. 'Their bond of love becomes the image and symbol of the covenant which unites God and his people' (Hs 2:21; Jr 3: 6-13; Is 54). *Familiaris Consortio* continues to underline the fact that the same sin which can harm the conjugal covenant becomes an image of the infidelity of spouses to their God (FC 12). And in this case, idolatry is viewed as prostitution (Ez 16: 25). Disobedience to the law is a clear abandonment of the spousal love. The infidelity of Israel (Hs 1-3) does destroy the eternal fidelity of the Lord. The marriage of Hosea to the prostitute Gomer (Hs 1-3) was symbolic. The prophet used this gesture to explain God's love for unfaithful Israel and Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant with God (Hs 3:1-5). The ever-faithful love of God is put forward as the model of the relations of faithful love that should exist between spouses (FC 12; Hs 3). Tertullian has also well expressed the greatness and symbolism of this conjugal love:

How can I ever express the happiness of the marriage that is joined together by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels and ratified by the Father?... How wonderful the bond between two believers, with single hope, a single desire, a single observance, a single service! They are both brethren and both fellow servants; there is no separation between them in spirit or flesh; in fact they are truly two in one flesh, and where the flesh is one is the spirit (FC 13).

Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church and the sacrament of matrimony. This is emphasised by John Paul II when he states: 'The communion between God and his people finds its definitive fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom who loves and gives himself as Saviour of humanity, uniting it to himself as his body' (FC 13). Thus Christ is taken as the paradigm for matrimony in his relation to the Church. Through his Church, Christ sanctifies the institution of marriage. It is from this understanding therefore that St Paul draws up some moral and ethical

principles relevant to conjugal life. The letter to the Ephesians contains an important section on marriage which, some commentators believe, hints at the sacramental nature of marriage. On this section St Paul teaches:

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is the head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is the husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy (Eph 5:21-25).

In John 3: 16 we hear that God so loved the world and gave his only begotten Son. He assumed human nature and sacrificed himself on the cross for his bride, the Church and by so doing he revealed that plan which God has imprinted on the humanity of man and woman since their creation (Eph 5: 32-33). Spouses are therefore the permanent reminder to the Church of what happened on the cross. They are for one another and for their children witnesses to the salvation in which the sacrament makes them sharers (FC 13). In this a certain sharing by humanity in God's Lordship is evident in the specific responsibility that he is given for human life as such. It is a responsibility that reaches its highest point in the giving of life through procreation by man and woman in marriage as well as that of teaching their children about the redemptive work<sup>3</sup> of Christ.

As the Second Vatican Council teaches, God himself wished to share with humanity a certain special participation in his own creative work. By speaking of a certain special participation of man and woman in the creative work of God, the Council wishes to point out that having a child is an event which is deeply human and full of religious meaning. The Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* teaches that 'the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, to actualise in history the blessing of the Creator, that of transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person' (FC 28). This great task of God's plan for the family flows from its very nature as a community of life and love as well as from its mission to guard, reveal, and communicate love (:17). And this is what we find in *Humane Vitae*:

Marriage is a real symbol of the event of salvation, but in its own way. The spouses participate in it as spouses, together, as a couple, so that the first and



immediate effect of marriage is not supernatural grace itself, but the Christian conjugal bond, a typical Christian communion of two persons because it represents the mystery of Christ's incarnation and the mystery of his covenant: The content of participation in Christ's life is also specific: conjugal love involves a totality, in which all elements of the person enter- appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, the unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility (HV 9).

Thus we see a matter of God's love, of which parents are co-workers and, as it were, interpreters when they transmit life and raise it accordingly to his fatherly plan (GS 50). Such is God's plan for marriage and family life, as reflected in the scriptures and finding its definitive fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom who loves and gives himself as the Saviour of humanity, uniting it to himself as his body (FC 13).

According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning (FC 14). I did mention in the introductory part that love is a gift and reciprocal knowledge of the spouses that makes them one flesh. The conjugal love does not end with the spouses but is also realised in them (couple) being co-operators with God in life-giving. Here it is a matter of God's own love, of which parents are co-workers and, as it were interpreters when they transmit life and raise it according to the fatherly plan (GS 50). The couple therefore, 'while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity, and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother' (FC 14).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church also teaches that fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfilment (CCC 2366). Called to give life, spouses share in the creative power and fatherhood of God (Eph 3: 14). And they fulfil this great duty

with a sense of human and Christian responsibility (GS 50). This human and Christian responsibility is given by God himself. Spouses as it were become living signs to their children of that love of God, 'from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named' (Eph 3: 15).

*Familiaris Consortio* also brings a very crucial point on children as special gifts of marriage. It clearly states:

It must not be forgotten, however, that, even when procreation is not possible, conjugal love does not for this reason lose value. Physical sterility in fact can be for spouses the occasion for other services to the life of a human person, for example, adoption, various forms of educational work, and assistance to other families and to poor or handicapped children (FC 14).

It is also very important in this section to underline the fact that the family is always and everywhere a communion of persons. The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children in the faith, it reflects the Father's work of creation (CCC 2205). The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realisation of ecclesial communion (LG 11). It is a community of faith, hope and charity. 'In matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up- married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity- through which each human person is introduced into the "human family" and into the "family of God," which is the Church' (FC 15).

The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affection and interests, arising from the members' respect for one another (CCC 2206). Thus the family is a privileged community called by God to achieve a sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing (GS 11). Children are not only introduced by means of education into the human community, but by means of the rebirth of baptism and education into the faith, the child is introduced into God's family, which is the Church. This role of parents in the education of faith is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate



substitute (GE 3). Through their education of children into the faith, the great family of God continues to grow. In this way, the commandment to grow and multiply that was given to man and woman in the beginning reaches its whole truth and fullest realisation. And finally the Church finds in the family, born from the sacrament, the cradle and the setting in which she can enter the human generations, and where these in their turn can enter the Church (FC 15).

There is again another aspect that needs special attention in God's plan of marriage and family life. This is the aspect of marriage and virginity or celibacy. According to *Familiaris Consortio* 'virginity or celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God not only does not contradict the dignity of marriage but presupposes it and confirms it. Marriage and virginity or celibacy are two ways of expressing and living the one mystery of the covenant of God with his people' (FC 16). This is also supported by the Scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Christ is the centre of all Christian life (CCC 1618). The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, filial or social (Lk 14:26; Mk 10: 28-31). This is so because right from the beginning of the church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the bridegroom who is coming (Rev 14: 4; 1 Cor 7: 32; Mt 25: 6). It is Christ himself who invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he himself remains the model: 'For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this let him receive it' (Mt 19:12).

Both the sacrament of matrimony and virginity for the Kingdom of God come from the Lord himself (CCC 1620). It is him who gives them meaning and grants the grace which is indispensable for living them out in conformity with his will (Mt 19:3-12). Esteem of virginity for the sake of the Kingdom (LG 42) and the Christian understanding of marriage are inseparable, and they reinforce each other. This is clearly demonstrated by John Paul II when he cited Saint John

Chrysostom who said: 'Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. The most excellent is something even better than what is admitted to be good' (FC 16). One who has taken up celibacy or virginity is said to be waiting in a bodily way that great eschatological marriage of Christ with the Church, giving himself or herself totally to the Church. Thus the celibate person anticipates in his or her flesh the new world of the future resurrection (Mt 22:30).

It is the right of Christian couples therefore to expect from celibate persons a good example and a witness of fidelity to their vocation until death. Just as fidelity at times becomes difficult even for married couples and requires a lot of sacrifice, mortification and self-denial, the same is also true of those who embrace the celibate life. The fidelity of celibate life in a way is supposed to strengthen the fidelity of married couples (FC 16).

To conclude this section on God's plan for marriage and family life, we have highlighted six key points. Humanity is the image of God who is love, marriage is a communion between God and people, Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church, and the sacrament of matrimony, children are a precious gift from God, the family is a communion of persons and finally marriage and celibacy are two ways of expressing and living the mystery of the covenant of God with his people. These once again strongly underline the fact that willed by God in the very act of creation, marriage and family life are interiorly ordained to the fulfilment in Christ and should be restored to their beginning, that is to the full understanding and full realisation of this great plan of God (FC 3). It is therefore the duty and responsibility of the Church as a family of God, the Christian family, a family of believers to make sure that this great plan of God is realised. Thus let us now look at the role of the Christian family in fulfilling God's great plan of marriage.

## 2.2 Role of the Christian Family

I mentioned in the introduction that the section on the role of the Christian family is the most important part of my Second Chapter. It is very important in the sense that it is a pointer to the Third Chapter of similarities and disparities between the theological stance and the traditional family stance on marriage and family life. Most of the similarities therefore are going to be enumerated in this Second Chapter. Thus for the sake of clarity I shall treat this section under four main headings. First and foremost it is the duty and responsibility of the Church as the Domestic Church to form a community of persons, to serve life, to fully participate in developing the society and finally share with redoubled energy in the life and mission of the Church.

According to the Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, the family finds in the plan of God the Creator not only its identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it can and should do. By vocation, the family is a point of love and communion<sup>4</sup> (FC 17). It is basically founded on an alliance between man and woman, based on love that is open to life. This is a joint endeavour to love and support one another, establish a home and have children who would grow up to live independent lives. This union and lifelong promise is marriage, a divine institution that gives rise to the family, the first and fundamental structure for human ecology 'in which man receives his first formative ideas about truth and goodness, and learns what it means to love and to be loved, and thus what it actually means to be a person' (Sirico 2000:41).

From a traditional and cultural point of view, it is within the family that man receives the first experience of living in society. It is the family that is the source and cradle of education, a school for human enrichment as well as the first important unit of society. A Christian family is more than this. It is seen as an important unit of the Church, the first place where man learns about God and a place where he is helped to decide his destiny. In the light of this, the family, whose source and destiny is God himself, has the great mission, meaning and message of guarding, revealing and communicating the love of God the Father.

By so doing it lives a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church, his bride (FC 17) and strives towards forming a community of persons.

### 2.2.1 **Forming a Community of Persons**

Under this part of forming a community of persons are many points that need explanation. In forming a community of persons, love is always the principle and power of communion, the conjugal unity between husband and wife is indivisible<sup>5</sup> and indissoluble<sup>6</sup>, and the conjugal communion constitutes the foundation on which is built the broader communion of the family. Under this same section, mention should be made of the rights and roles of women, position of women in society as well as the various offences against women. In addition to that, the role of men as husbands and fathers is very important, the rights of children as well as the need to care for the sick and the elderly. Most of these points are not new to the Shona traditional life. Thus, we shall come across them in the Third Chapter.

According to the Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, the family, which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity and reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons. Thus love is always and everywhere the principle and power of communion for without love the family cannot live, grow and perfect itself as a community of persons (FC 18). This same point is also brought out clearly in the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (On the Redeemer of Man), 'Man cannot live without love. He remains a thing that is incomprehensible for himself; his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not participate intimately in it' (RH 10).

Already by marriage, man and woman become one flesh and every child born of this union becomes 'bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh' (Gn 2:22). A close bond between the members of the family on the natural level has already

been established. But their unity as a Christian family must go beyond that level. The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form in the sense that everyone is called by God to enter into the divine beatitude and it also concerns the human community as a whole. Since all people are called to the same end, who is God, there is always a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that they establish among themselves in truth and in love. Love of neighbour is therefore inseparable from the love of God. Anyone who says, 'I love God, and hates his brother is a liar, since a man who does not love the brother that he can see cannot love God whom he has never seen' (1Jn 4:20). This is what it means to belong to a community. Thus, Henslin defined community as 'a place people identify with, where they sense that they belong and that others care what happens to them' (Henslin 1998:426). That special love between members of the same family is therefore given life and sustenance by an unceasing inner dynamism leading the family to an ever deeper and more intense communion, which is the foundation and soul of the community of marriage and the family (FC 18).

It is true to say that true communion is the foundation and soul of the community of marriage and family life. This is so because in every family, the very first communion is that which exists between husband and wife. This is what God willed from the beginning: 'There are no longer two but one flesh' (Mt 19:6). Through love and fidelity to each other, they continue to make this communion a reality. Thus God himself originated marriage as the basic way of giving and growing in love and together attaining salvation (Wilhelm 1981:336). The conjugal love of the spouses sinks its roots deeply in the natural complementarity that exists between them and is nurtured through their personal willingness to share their life project. By life project I mean what they are and what they have. And this communion is the fruit and the sign of a profoundly human need (FC 19). This human need is taken up by God in Christ, purified and elevated by him and then led to perfection through the sacrament of matrimony. Then, the Holy Spirit will give the Christian couples the gift of a new communion of love that is



the real image of that unique unity which makes of the Church the indivisible Mystical Body of Jesus the Lord (FC 19).

In that sense the unity of conjugal communion is indivisible. Polygamy and divorce therefore directly negate the original plan of God for marriage and family life. They are also contrary to the equal personal dignity of the spouses whose love is total, unique and exclusive (FC 19). A man cleaves to his wife and they are one flesh (Gn 2: 24). Thus, as already mentioned, marriage is a covenant, of its nature monogamous and permanent (Wilhelm 1981:337). 'Firmly established by the Lord, the unity of marriage will radiate from the equal personal dignity of husband and wife, a dignity acknowledged by mutual and total love' (GS 49).

Conjugal communion is characterised not only by its unity but also by its indissolubility (FC 20). It is an indissoluble communion. Citing the pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), John Paul II emphasises that, 'As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them' (GS 48). Thus the Church is asked to strongly reaffirm the doctrine of the unity and indissolubility of marriage. This doctrine is fundamental. When explained properly, it may help those who think it is not possible to be bound to one person or most importantly those who are still caught up in cultures and traditions that reject or scoff at the indissolubility of marriage.

The unity of marriage, distinctly recognised by the Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity that must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection (CCC 1645). Through the sacrament of matrimony, Christ renews the very original plan that the Creator himself inscribed in the hearts of man and woman and in the celebration of this same sacrament of matrimony offers a new heart to the couple (FC 20). The couples therefore are not only able to overcome the hardness of heart (Mt 19:8) but above all are able to share the full and definitive love of Christ, the new and eternal Covenant made flesh. In a



special way they are called to participate truly in the irrevocable indissolubility that binds Christ to the Church his bride (FC 20), loved by him to the end (Jn 13: 1).

As already mentioned, for Christian couples, matrimony is a vocation and a life-long commitment. Couples are called upon to remain faithful to each other until death, in fulfilment of the words of Christ: 'What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder' (Mt 19: 6). The Church therefore is also encouraged to recognise in a special way the value of the witness of those spouses who, even when abandoned by their partners, with the strength of faith and of Christian hope have not entered a new union. Such couples also have that authentic witness to fidelity, something of which the world today need greatly (FC 20).

*Familiaris Consortio* also teaches that marriage shapes the broader communion of the family, linking the natural with the supernatural. The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses and the transmission of life. Such a union 'constitutes the foundation on which is built the broader communion of the family, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, of relatives and other members of the household' (FC 21). These are continually shaped and moulded into a much bigger family, namely the Church. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) adds:

The Holy Spirit, who is poured forth in the celebration of the sacraments, is the living source and inexhaustible sustenance of the supernatural communion that gathers believers and links them with Christ and with each other in the unity of the Church of God. The Christian family constitutes a revelation and realisation of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called "the Domestic Church" (LG 11).

In the broader communion of the family, all members, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day in day out, the communion of persons (FC 21), making the family 'a school of deeper humanity' (GS 52). This school of deeper humanity is achieved where there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, the aged; where there is mutual service every day;

when there is a sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows (FC 21). It is also achieved through educational exchange between parents and children (Eph 6: 1-4), through a ready and generous openness to each and all to understanding, to forbearance, to pardon and to reconciliation (FC 21). By means of love, respect and obedience towards their parents, children offer their specific and irreplaceable contribution to the construction of an authentically human and Christian family (GS 48). In the last analysis, that fullness of communion willed by Jesus: 'That they may be one' (Jn 17: 21) is made a reality.

For any Christian community to be fully realised, there has to be a willingness of the different persons to belong to one another in love. A true Christian community is always mutual society. By this I mean that human need is always and everywhere the criterion of behaviour. Members of that particular community act only to fulfill a human need, their own and that of others. Everyone in that particular community must feel accepted and supported so that this Christian Community becomes accepting, supporting and caretaking. This is perhaps the greatest value in every community. In such a Christian community, it is not only a question of mutual admiration or of making mutual demands, but of mutual acceptance and of going through things together (Shorter 1978:27).

The Christian family must in the last analysis become Christ's own family, bound to each other and to Christ not by ties of flesh and blood alone, but by obedience to the will of the Father (Lk 8:21) through the Holy Spirit who is the unifying Spirit. This unity is nourished by prayer and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity and love and communion. And such is a community of persons. This community of persons however cannot be fully realised unless the position, rights and roles of women are clarified and respected.

#### 2.2.1.1 The position of women

The position, rights and roles of women in the Church deserve a special mention. This section on the position of women again needs attention in the sense that we shall come across it in the Third Chapter. In this Third Chapter the rights and

roles of women in the Church and society are going to be well explained and contrasted with the Shona traditional family.

The African Synod devoted special attention to women, to their rights and roles within the Church and society. In the same perspective are also to be considered men as husbands and fathers, and likewise children and the elderly. *Familiaris Consortio* teaches: 'In that it is, and ought always to become, a communion and a community of persons, the family finds in love the source and the impetus for welcoming, respecting and promoting each one of its members in his or her lofty dignity as a person, that is, as a living image of God' (FC 22). Thus, the Synod Fathers put it rightly: 'The moral criterion for the authenticity of conjugal and family relationships consists in fostering the dignity and vocation of the individual persons, who achieve their fullness by sincere self-giving' (GS 63).

To begin with there is need to underline the equal dignity and responsibility of women with men (FC 22). God did not create man a solitary being. From the beginning, 'male and female he created them' (Gn 1: 27). This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons (GS 12). It is important to note that man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman (CCC 369). So, being man or woman is a reality which is good and willed by God himself and they possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator (Gn 2: 7, 22). It is true therefore to say that the history of salvation, in fact, is a continuous and luminous testimony to the dignity of women (FC 22).

When one looks at the position of women in society, one cannot but simply observe that in the specific area of family life, a widespread social and cultural tradition has considered women's role to be exclusively that of wife and mother, without adequate access to public functions, which have generally been reserved for men (FC 23). This is common in most traditional African (Shona) families. That being the case, women in some cultures and traditions are denied access to

some public functions, roles and professions. There is need therefore for the Church to tirelessly insist that the work of women in homes be recognised by everybody as an irreplaceable value.

According to *Familiaris Consortio*, while it must be recognised in every society that women have the same right as men to perform various public functions, the society must as well be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are not in practice compelled to work outside the home and that their family can live and prosper in a dignified manner even when they themselves devote their full time to their own family. In addition to that, that mentality which honours women for their work outside the home than for their work within must be overcome. And this only requires men to love women with that total respect for their personal dignity and what they are and that society also has to create and develop conditions favouring work in the home. Lastly, the Church is called upon with due respect to the different vocations of men and women, to promote as far as possible their equality of rights and dignity for the good of all, meaning family, Church and society. But one thing has to be taken note of. This is not as it were a renunciation of women femininity or rather an imitation of the roles of men, but the true feminine humanity which should be expressed in their activity, whether in the family or outside it, without disregarding the differences of customs and cultures in this sphere (FC 23).

Still on the rights and roles of women in society, mention should be made of offences against the dignity of women. Offences against women's dignity need to be addressed directly. It is a pity that the Christian message about the dignity of women is today being contradicted by the persistent mentality that considers the human being not as a person but a thing, an object of trade, always at the service of selfish interest and mere pleasure. And the fruits of such a mentality are very bitter. We can talk of contempt for men and women, slavery, oppression of the weak, pornography, prostitution as well as other forms of discrimination available in the field of education, employment, wages and so forth. Since many forms of such degrading discrimination are still prevalent in our societies today,

the Church is therefore called upon to take a vigorous and incisive pastoral action (FC 24), with men in the Church playing seriously their role as husbands and fathers in order to make a true and loving community of persons.

#### 2.2.1.2 Men as Husbands and Fathers

The role of men as husbands and fathers also need to be underlined in this section on forming a community of persons. By all means men should be challenged in their roles as husbands and fathers. Within the conjugal and family communion-community, the man is called upon to live his gift and role as husband and father (FC 25). This is so because the divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood (Eph 3: 14), and this is the foundation of honour owed to all men. Thus the respect of children to their fathers is nourished by that natural affection born of the bond uniting them.

All men should see the fulfilment of God's intention in their wives. For it is God himself who said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him' (Gn 2: 18). Thus authentic love presupposes and requires that a man must have a profound and lasting respect for the equal dignity of his own wife. This is clearly said by John Paul II, citing Saint Ambrose: 'You are not her master, but her husband; she was not given to you to be your slave, but your wife...Reciprocate her attentiveness to you and be grateful to her for her love' (FC 25). That being the case, men should live with their wives 'a very special form of personal friendship' (HV 9). Saint Paul adds that, as a Christian the husband is called upon to develop a new attitude of love, manifesting towards his wife a charity that is both gentle and strong like that which Christ has for the Church (Eph 5: 25).

The place and task of all men as fathers and husbands in and for their families is unique and irreplaceable. All men are called upon to love their wives as mothers of their children. In addition to that, the love for their children is for all men the natural way of understanding and fulfilling their own fatherhood. Their absence

from their homes according to John Paul II causes both psychological and moral imbalances as well as some notable and indelible difficulties (FC 25). The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) also adds that a man is called upon to ensure the harmonious and united development of all the members of the family. He is called upon to perform this task by exercising generous responsibility for the life conceived under the heart of the mother, by a more solicitous commitment to education, a task he shares with his wife (GS 52), by work which is never a cause of division in the family but promotes its unity and stability, and by means of the witness he gives of an adult Christian life which effectively introduces the children into the living experience of Christ and the Church (FC 25). Such children who are introduced into the living experience of Christ and the Church have also their rights which should be respected. The same applies to the elderly in the family. In forming a community of persons, the rights of children and the elderly also need special attention.

#### 2.2.1.3 Rights of children and the elderly in the family

Jesus himself placed the children at the heart of the Kingdom of God: 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of heaven' (Lk 18: 16; Mt 19: 14; Mk 10: 14).

The rights of all children in the family should be upheld. The Church is called upon to accomplish this mission of promoting and sustaining the rights of children. When we talk of the rights of children, we are talking of children of all age groups including the smallest child, the sick and those who are healthy. Thus, *Familiaris Consortio* teaches that, 'In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children, by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity and a great respect and generous concern for their rights' (FC 26). While children grow 'in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man' (Lk 2: 54), they are also able to offer their own precious contribution to building up the family community and even to the sanctification of their parents (GS 48).



Children must therefore be accepted and loved and be given material and emotional support, educational and spiritual concern. Thus, in his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1979, Pope John Paul II said of children:

I wish to express the joy that we find in children, the springtime of life, the anticipation of a future history of each of our present earthly homelands. No country on earth, no political system can think of its own future otherwise than through the image of these new generations that will receive from their parents the manifold heritage of values, duties and aspirations of the nation to which they belong and of the whole human family. Concern for the child, even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another.

In addition to fostering the rights of children, respect and care for the elderly is also very essential. According to *Familiaris Consortio*:

There are cultures which manifest a unique veneration and great love for the elderly; far from being outcasts from the family or merely tolerated as a useless burden, they continue to be present and to take an active and responsible part in family life, through having to respect the autonomy of the new family; above all they carry out the important mission of being a witness to the past and a source of wisdom for the young and for the future (FC 27).

These important words of the Pope also find great support from the book of Ecclesiasticus:

Respect your father in deed as well as word, so that blessing may come on you from him; since a father's blessing makes the houses of his children firm...My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life. Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins (Ecl 3: 9, 12-14).

If the elders are not taken care of, this causes a lot of suffering to them. As a result, many families are impoverished spiritually. Thus, Pope John Paul II summarised the role of the elderly in his address to the participants in the International Forum on the Active Ageing (5 September 1980):

In fact, the life of the ageing helps to clarify the scale of human values; it shows the continuity of generations and marvellously demonstrates the interdependence of God's people. The elderly often have the charism to bridge generation gaps before they are made: how many children have understanding and love in the eyes and words and caresses of the ageing! And how many old

people have willingly subscribed to the inspired word that ‘the crown of the aged is their children’s children (Pr 17: 6).

In a nutshell, this section on forming a community of persons as one of the roles of the Christian family has ten points to be noted. We should note that love is always the principle and power of communion, the unity of conjugal communion is both indivisible and indissoluble, conjugal communion constitutes the foundation on which is built the broader communion of the family. In addition to that, the rights and roles of women, position of women in society as well as offences against women are highlighted. Emphasised also on this section are the roles of men as husbands and fathers, the rights of children and the elderly in the family. As I mentioned earlier, this section is very important and we are going to come across some of these points in the Third Chapter.

### **2.2.2 Serving Life**

Apart from forming a community of persons, the Church is also called upon to serve life. This section on serving life, like that of forming a community of persons is very important in this chapter and the next. To make things clear, I shall treat it under two main headings. The first part talks about the role of the family in serving life through transmission of life itself. Under this part I shall highlight that through transmitting life, parents are co-operators in the love of God the Creator, the Church herself stands for life, she stands as teacher and mother for couples in difficulty as well as providing moral progress of married people. The second part emphasises the point that the Church also serves life through education. The right of parents to give education is essential. They provide education in the essential values of human life and about the dignity of marriage. They can achieve this through making some relations with some other educating agents and by so doing, fruitful married couples will serve life in many different ways.

### 2.2.2.1 The Transmission of Life

*Familiaris Consortio* teaches that ‘With the creation of man and woman in his own image and likeness, God crowns and brings to perfection the work of his hands; he calls them to a special sharing in his love and in his power as Creator and Father through their free and responsible co-operation in transmitting the gift of human life’ (FC 28). Thus, the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, to actualise in history this original blessing of God the Creator—that of transmitting through procreation the divine image from person to person (Gn 5: 1-3). Without belittling other purposes of matrimony, ‘the true practice of conjugal love, and the whole meaning of the family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couples be ready with stout hearts to co-operate with the love of the Creator and the Saviour, who through them will enlarge and enrich his own family day by day’ (GS 50).

The family therefore is indeed sacred. It is the place in which life, the gift of God can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life...(CA 39). Thus, in every family, whether Christian or non Christian, parents are the ministers and servants of life with children remaining the most precious gift of marriage. Their conjugal love is not only limited to the procreation of children. It is also enriched by the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that is passed on by parents to their children.

Sacredness of life is shared by both Christian and non Christian families. It is also one of the strengths of the African family. This sacredness of life is not only of the individual but of the family as a whole. The family, because it is made up of participants yet to come, those here and now, and others hereafter, has a sacred origin, even a mysterious essence. Thus Pope John Paul II confirmed that the African family loves life and is at the service of life. In his own words, the Pope said, ‘In African culture and tradition the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental. Open to this sense of the family, of love and respect of life, the

African loves children, who are welcomed as gifts of God. 'The sons and daughters of Africa love life...' (EIA 43). In fact, that call for a civilization of love and a culture of life by the Pope is present in African families and these values can best be fostered in the Church understood as the family of God. Thus, we see that the Church's teaching and norm on the purposes of marriages are constant. The Church knows that she has received this special mission of guarding and protecting the lofty dignity of marriage and the most serious responsibility of the transmission of human life (FC 29).

Life must be born in marriage, as the suitable place, the most excellent place where life is wanted, loved, accepted and in which a whole process of integral formation takes place (Pontifical Council for the Family 1997:23). Thus, that love between husband and wife must be fully human, exclusive and open to new life (HV 11). The Second Vatican Council also states that 'by its very nature the institution of marriage and married life is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory' (GS 48). In a more expressive way it says, 'Indeed children are the supreme gift of marriage and greatly contribute to the good of the parents themselves' (GS 50). It should be noted that Pope Paul VI personally wanted this vigorous statement included in the text. Children are a gift that grows out of the same reciprocal gift of the spouses as an expression and completion of their self- giving. This is a wonderful interrelation of gifts which the Catechism of the Catholic Church highlights so clearly: 'Fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment' (CCC 2366). Hence, the Church, which stands for life- rejects contraception, sterilization and abortion.

That being the case, the Church loudly condemns as a grave offence against human dignity and justice even those activities of governments or other public authorities which attempt to limit in any way the freedom of couples in deciding about children (FC 30). She, however, does not hesitate to highlight the fact that a

personalistic approach to this issue is required (FC 31). In addition to that, the unitive and procreative meanings of conjugal loving cannot be separated; Natural Family Planning is therefore a tool to assist couples (FC 32). The Church herself takes the responsibility of assisting and teach those couples struggling with this. She never tires of proclaiming the moral norm that must guide the responsible transmission of life (FC 33), and she is convinced that there can be no true contradiction between the divine law on transmitting life and that on fostering authentic married love (GS 51).

The Church teaches that ‘each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life’ (HV 11) and man on his own initiative may not break the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act’ (CCC 2366). The Catechism quotes *Humanae Vitae* again: ‘By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its orientation toward man’s exalted vocation to parenthood’ (CCC 2369). The Church therefore should be supported in living out this ideal (FC 34). This is what Pope Paul VI emphasized: ‘Uniquely important is unity of moral and pastoral judgement by priests, a unity that must be carefully sought and ensured, in order that the faithful may not have to suffer anxiety of conscience’ (HV 28). The Church’s role therefore on this score is to instill conviction and offer practical help (FC 35). To them the Lord entrusts the task of making visible to people the holiness and sweetness of the law that unites the mutual love of husband and wife with their co-operation with the love of God the author of human life (HV 25).

#### 2.2.2.2 The Importance of Education

The right and duty of parents regarding education of children is paramount. *Familiaris Consortio* teaches that the task of giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God’s creative activity: by begetting in love and for love a new person who has within himself or herself the

vocation to growth and development, by that very fact take on the task of helping that person effectively to live a fully human life (FC 36). The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that:

Parents must regard their children as the children of God and respect them as human persons. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfil God's law. Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgement and self-mastery (CCC 2222, 2223).

Children are seen as a common good of the future of the family and therefore to be well taken care of. As the Second Vatican Council recalled, 'Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children...Hence the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs' (GE 3). Thus, the right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life. It is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others. It is irreplaceable and inalienable and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by them. Most importantly is parental love, which is the source, the animating principle and therefore the norm that inspires and guides all concrete educational activity, enriching it with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruit of love (FC 36).

The family educates the members in the essential values of human life (FC 37). This is well supported by the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) that teaches that children must grow up with a correct attitude of freedom with regard to material goods and must be fully convinced that 'man is more precious for what he is than for what he has' (GS 35). As the first community of love, parents should enrich the children not only with a sense of true justice but a sense of true love, a love that manifests itself in a disinterested service of the poorest of the poor. In addition to the knowledge of



true and disinterested love, faced with a culture that reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, parents must therefore give their children a clear and delicate sex education as well as education for chastity which is absolutely necessary for it develops a person's authentic maturity and makes them capable of respecting and fostering the nuptial meaning of the body (FC 37).

For Christian parents, the mission to educate is directly linked to the sacrament of marriage. Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelising their children (CCC 2225) and the family becomes the first place where children experience the Church (FC 39). Parents are called upon to associate their children from their tenderest years with the life of the Church (LG 11). The sacrament of marriage calls upon the spouses to share in the very authority and love of God the Father and Christ the shepherd and in the motherly love of the Church, and it enriches them with wisdom, counsel, fortitude and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit so as to help children in their growth as human beings and as Christians (FC 38). Thus, 'Fatherhood and motherhood represent a responsibility which is not simply physical but spiritual in nature' (GS 10).

It is true to say that the family is the primary but not the only and exclusive educating community (FC 40). The family agrees to work collaboratively with other educating agents in the education of children. These agents can both be civil and social. Such agents are very necessary, even though each can and should play its part in accordance with the special competence and contribution proper to itself (GE 3). Thus, there is need for parents, Christian communities, various educational groups, pastors of souls, the Church and State to co-operate in the formation of a perfect educating community.

Lastly, married couples serve life by caring for others in many ways. 'Of these ways, begetting and educating children are the most immediate, specific and irreplaceable' (FC 41). This same love is later transmitted to other people and

families, 'giving them support and love, not as outsiders but as members of the one family of God's children' (FC 41). Christian families spread this love beyond the boundaries of flesh and blood to cater for the less privileged. In most cases, they can adopt and foster children who have lost their parents or have been abandoned by them. They do this as a way of showing the level of their love. They open wide their eyes and ears and begin to be more sensitive to the needs of the society.

In brief, serving life includes; combating the persons and organisations that foster the culture of death thereby rendering procreation impossible. It includes valuing children and welcoming every pregnancy even if it is unplanned. It includes the provision of an environment of love, and care which enables the child to achieve a human and Christian maturity. And the right and duty of parents to educate their children still remains fundamental. Finally serving life also includes remedying the ills in the society which induce women to undergo abortions, violence being chief among them. Thus the value of children once forgotten becomes a reality and always high on the agenda.

### **2.2.3 Participation of the family in the development of Society.**

Not only is the Church being called to form a community of persons and serve life. It is also called in a special way to participate actively in the development of society.

The Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* dedicates chapter three to Participating in the Development of Society (42-48), because 'since the Creator of all things has established the conjugal partnership as the beginning and basis of human society, the family is the first and vital cell of society' (AA 11). It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of love... (CCC 2207). 'The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and nourishes it continually through its role of service to life. Thus, far from being closed in on itself, the family is by nature

and vocation open to other families and to society, and undertakes its social role' (FC 42).

Since family has vital and organic links with society, it goes without saying that it is from this same family that citizens are born and bred. It is also in this first school that the same citizens equip themselves with educational, social, religious and moral values. Guided and directed by the spirit of 'free giving' (FC 42), members of such a family live a life of love and sharing, a life of respect of personal dignity with a heartfelt acceptance of each other, dialogue, disinterested availability, general service and deep solidarity. There is that firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. This commitment for the good of all has a certain readiness, in the gospel sense, to 'lose oneself' for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to 'serve him' instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage (Mt 10:40-42; 20:25).

In his address on the World day of Peace in 1986, Pope John Paul II summarised the importance of living together in solidarity. In his own words he said:

In the spirit of solidarity and with the instruments of dialogue we will learn: respect for every human person; respect for the true values and cultures of others; respect for the legitimate autonomy and self-determination of others; to look beyond ourselves in order to understand and support the good of others; to contribute to our own resources in social solidarity for the development and growth that come from equity and justice; to built structures that will ensure that social solidarity and dialogue are permanent features of the world we live in (World Day of Peace Message, 1986 5).

Having lived a life of solidarity, the family has the duty to take up both political and social roles. It must think positively and participate actively in the transformation of the society. This is so because man is not an island. He lives and works with others and by nature is a political being. Families should be the first to come up in the open in ensuring that family rights are supported and positively defended by the State (FC 44). The social role is summarised in the law of love 'For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never

visited me' (Mt 25: 42-44). Even St Paul also urged the Romans to practice hospitality (Rm 12:13). 'Whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward' (Mk 10:42).

It is not only the duty of the family to support society. Society should also be seen to be in the forefront in serving the family. These two according to *Familiaris Consortio* 'have complementary functions in defending and fostering the good of each and every human being' (FC 45). But the society, the state specifically, must always recognise that 'the family is a society in its own original right' (DH 5). The State should make sure that 'families have all those aids- economic, social, educational, political and cultural assistance- that they need in order to face all their responsibilities in a human way' (FC 45). So the State, with redoubled energy and accuracy must defend the rights of the family as listed by the Synod Fathers. I am sure it is of great significance that I enumerate them:

- the right to exist and progress as a family, that is to say, the right of every human being, even if he or she is poor, to found a family and to have adequate means to support it;
- the right to exercise its responsibility regarding the transmission of life and to educate children;
- the right to the intimacy of conjugal and family life;
- the right to the stability of the bond and of the institution of marriage;
- the right to believe in and profess one's faith and to propagate it;
- the right to bring up children in accordance with the family's own traditions and religious and cultural values, with the necessary instruments, means and institutions;
- the right, especially of the poor and the sick, to obtain physical, social, political and economic security;
- the right to housing suitable for living family life in a proper way;
- the right to expression and representation, either directly or through associations, before the economic, social and cultural public authorities and lower authorities;
- the right to form associations with other families and institutions, in order to fulfil the family's role suitably and expeditiously;
- the right to protect minors by adequate institutions and legislation from harmful drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.;
- the right to wholesome recreation of a kind that also fosters family values;
- the right of the elderly to a worthy life and a worthy death;
- the right to emigrate as a family in search of a better life (FC 46).

Once these family values are everywhere fostered and recognised, the new international order is restored, the whole world unites, the values of truth, freedom, justice and love once lost are restored and humanity is transformed and recreated. Considering the needs of every family and the gravity of the attacks on it in the modern world, families need to band together to promote a pro-life politics. 'They should unite to get pro-life and pro-family people elected to public office and placed in appointive positions (like cabinet secretaries). They should work towards the formulation and passage of bills that are beneficial to families' (Bacani 2003:38-39). Each and every family member therefore becomes not only of his/her family or country but of the whole human family.

What has been said in this section is that, the family as the first and most vital cell of society and family life is an experience of communion and sharing. In matters that pertain to social and political life, the family is called upon to actively participate. Thus, society should be at the service of the family through respecting the family rights, serving the poor and the needy as well as working for a new international order where issues of justice, freedom of peoples, and the peace of humanity can be dealt with and solved (FC 48).

#### **2.2.4 Sharing in the Life and Mission of the Church**

The last role of the Christian family according to *Familiaris Consortio* is that of sharing in the life and mission of the Church. The Christian family is called to evangelise and to make Christ known. It is the image of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Just as the Church is not complete without its mission, so also the Christian family cannot be complete unless it carries out its mission. The Trinity, however, does not have only an intra-Trinitarian life. There is also a Trinitarian outreach. The Father sends the Son to redeem the world, and the Father and the Son together send the Holy Spirit. Because the Church is the product of this mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the Church is by nature



missionary (AG 2). Since the Christian family is the Church in the home it follows then that it is essentially missionary.

According to the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, 'among the fundamental tasks of the Christian family is its ecclesial task: the family is placed at the service of the building up of the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church' (FC 49). Such a reflection came as a resurgence of interest in the importance of Christian marriage and family life in the post-Second Vatican Council. Since this Council, various official documents and theological writings have described the family as a 'domestic Church' (LG 11) or 'the church of the home', the foundational Church where holiness is nurtured and lived out (LG 12). In its own way and state of life, the family is called upon not only to receive the love of Christ in order to be saved but it is called to live this love of Christ, communicate it 'to all the nations' (Mt 28:19) for the salvation of all souls (CCL 1752). To make this a reality, the Christian family must fulfil three major tasks, namely, being a believing and evangelising community, a community always in dialogue with God and a community at the service of man.

The Christian family is a believing and evangelising community. By so doing it participates in the threefold ministry of Christ who is Prophet, Priest and King. The faith of the spouses and parents that is passed on to the children is of great importance. Faith education to the children therefore has to be constant and intense. This ministry carried out by parents to their children is 'original and irreplaceable' (FC 53). 'The parents not only communicate the gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangeliser of many other families and of the neighbourhood of which it forms part' (EN 71). Like the Church, the Christian family cannot be closed in on itself. The members must be very close to each other, but the family cannot be a closed family. It must open up and reach out to the world to the whole humanity to which it is sent.

The Christian family is viewed as a Community always in dialogue with God. The Word of God is proclaimed in the Church, and it must have its place in the family which is the Domestic Church- a house of prayer as emphasised by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops when they state: 'Let every family truly be a domestic Church, a community where the Lord Jesus has a central place, where the children know and love God, where prayer is the binding force. In this community of love and life, the future of society is decided and the peace of the world is built' (ZCBC 7).

As the smallest realisation of the Church, the Christian family, the domestic Church, must be a place where the word of Christ finds a home (Col 3:16). Every member must learn to enter into a personal communion and dialogue with God through individual and liturgical prayer, without neglecting contemplation. The family must also pray to fulfil the saying 'The family that prays together stays together'. The Christian's life of prayer should find its climax in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. This same life should express itself also in the celebration of other sacraments. Even though the Christian family can be transformed through celebrating the sacrament of the Eucharist and other sacraments, these do not take the place of family prayer. It has its own significant qualities. It is prayer offered in common, husband and wife together with their loved children. This prayer has its own object, namely 'family life itself' (FC 59).

Taken seriously, with love and devotion, family prayer transforms the family into a community at the service of man. Through prayer and experience of loving service in the home, the children learn to serve others as well, and participate in the Church's great apostolate of service especially to the poor and the less privileged. By so doing the family members become a serving community which manifests a servant Church, a Church that emphasizes the care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust (EIA 63).

Three main points have been said on this section. In order to share in the life and mission of the Church, the family must always be a believing and evangelising community. It must be a community in dialogue with God. Finally, it must be a community at the service of humanity, being guided by the law of love, which is the greatest of them all (Lk 10: 27).

## **2.3 Conclusion**

As a way of concluding this Second Chapter, we have seen various points that help us understand the theology of marriage and family life. I have tried to trace this theology right from the beginning so as to discover God's plan for humanity. I have come up with several points that will help us especially in the Third Chapter where I shall make a comparison of the First and Second Chapters to find out similarities and disparities between the ecclesiological stance on marriage and family life and the real family situation in Gokwe diocese.

The very first truth established in this chapter on the teaching of the Church on the theology of marriage is that marriage and family life have a divine origin. God himself originated marriage as the basic way of giving and growing in love between man and woman so that together they may attain salvation. It is a God – designed sign of his faithful love for his people and of the sacrificial love of Christ for his Church. Because marriage is meant to portray the love of God for his people, it is 'from the beginning' indissoluble by God's design. Marriage is God's way of joining two people in love and fidelity and of bringing human persons into existence and throughout the history of his dealings with men, God shows his constant regard for the marriage union. Thus as confirmed by Wilhelm, marriage is taken as a covenant, of its nature monogamous and permanent (Wilhelm 1981:336-337). The communion of love between God and people therefore becomes a fundamental part of the revelation and faith experience of Israel that finds its meaning in the marriage covenant which is established between a man and a woman (FC 12).

Thus, there is a plan of God for marriage and the family. Marriage is a reflection of the communion between God and people. And this point is very important in our understanding of the mission of the Christian family which is fulfilled by accomplishing four tasks namely; forming a community of persons, serving life, participating in the development of society as well as sharing in the life and mission of the Church (FC 17).

The Christian family in this sense mirrors the traditional family since what it aims to accomplish, especially its untiring effort in serving life and forming a community are also central in the life of the Shona people. This is what we are going to discuss in the next chapter of similarities and differences between the First and Second Chapters.

## Notes to Chapter Two

- <sup>1</sup>Catechisis- It is the education in the faith of children, young people and adults that includes also the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted in an organic and systematic way with a view to initiating the members into the fullness of Christian life (cf CCC 5).
- <sup>2</sup>Vocation- By this I mean that universal call by God to know him, love him, and live his faith in fraternal sharing.
- <sup>3</sup>Redemptive work-Redemption means deliverance from some evil by payment of a price. In this case it was Christ who through his blood saved humanity. We read of 'redemption through his blood' (Eph 1: 7).
- <sup>4</sup>Communion-It is that coming together of individuals, that fellowship, that unity for a common cause and in this sense it is the love of Christ.
- <sup>5</sup>Indivisible-This term emphasises the unity of marriage. Once the spouses have entered into a marriage, that union cannot be divided.
- <sup>6</sup>Indissoluble-It is one of the essential properties of marriage and it concerns the exclusivity and permanence of the sacrament. No human power can put an end to it.



## CHAPTER THREE

### AN EVALUATION OF THE SIMILARITIES AND DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE THEOLOGICAL/ECCLESIOLOGICAL STANCE AND REAL FAMILY SITUATION IN GOKWE DIOCESE

#### 3.0 Introduction

This Third Chapter is an evaluation. It aims at highlighting the similarities and disparities between the theological/ ecclesiological stance<sup>1</sup> on marriage and family life and the real life situation in Gokwe diocese. In other words, it underlines major and salient similarities and differences between the First Chapter and the Second. Thus, basically it is going to be in two equally important parts. The first part looks at the similarities and the second and last part focuses on the differences. I shall reserve solutions to some of these problems to the Fourth Chapter.

As we saw in the First Chapter, not all is dark and gloomy in the diocese of Gokwe. The families in Gokwe diocese offer a good prospect for evangelization. In some cases the cultural settings of the family are already a preparation for evangelization (*preparatio evangelica*), offering a good promise for a fruitful dialogue with Christianity. On the other hand, disparities are also evident and these need to be challenged by the Gospel message pertaining to Christian family life.

The African families in Gokwe portray many rich aspects of family life and these include, the major objects of belief, especially God the Creator and Almighty, fundamental rights in their African traditional religion, like sacrifice, priesthood, prayer, marriage, the human soul, communion between the living and the dead, religious and moral life. Values such as the sense of the sacred, respect for life, sense of community, family spirit, a spiritual vision of life as well as good family cultural values (Okure 1990:49), are key among the similarities shared between the real life situation in Gokwe and the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life. I shall, however, limit myself only to those similarities that have been

clearly articulated in my previous chapters and these include; community spirit, value of life, communion between the living and the dead, and finally ethics and morality.

There are also some negative elements that need to be spelt out. These include, understanding of the nature of marriage, divorce, polygamy, dignity of women, human rights, sickness and healing. Here again I shall discuss four major disparities, namely, polygamy, divorce, position of women and finally the Shona people's attitude towards sickness and health. I shall try to make this study objective and factual so that both the positive and negative elements may be seen more clearly as a way of preparing for effective evangelization in the diocese of Gokwe. As I discuss these negative and positive elements as a preparation for effective evangelization, I put all my hope in the mind of the Second Vatican Council that recalls:

The Good News of Christ continually renews the life and culture of fallen man; it combats and removes the error and evil, which flows from the ever-present attraction of sin. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples. It takes the spiritual qualities and endowments of every age and nation, and with supernatural riches, it causes them to blossom, as it were, from within; it fortifies, completes and restores them in Christ (GS 58).

### **3.1 Similarities**

Like what is mentioned in the introduction, the first part of this Third Chapter looks into the similarities that exist between the real life situation in Gokwe diocese and the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life. Looking at this one diocese of Gokwe, even though the family set ups can be very different depending on the ethnic background, the truth is that no matter which family you look at, there are always a considerable number of similarities between each concrete life situation and the demands of the Gospel. Thus, what was said by Okure will be of great use: 'the Church respects the religions and cultures of various peoples, and wishes in her contact with those peoples, to preserve all that is noble, true and good in her religion and culture' (Okure 1990:48). What Okure said is what we call paying closest pastoral attention to African traditional religion. If we pay closest attention to the religion of the people, such noble, true

and good elements in those family set ups, will in the long run enrich Christian catechesis and worship, and find in them their deepest fulfilment. To identify elements which Christianity could adopt or adapt, ennoble and purify; or elements which it must reject, study is therefore necessary (LG 13) and the following are some major elements which Christianity can adopt.

### 3.1.1 Community Spirit

Both the ecclesiological stance and the real family situation of the Shona people in Gokwe diocese emphasize the importance of community life, spirit of love, unity, sharing, oneness and a spirit of belonging. According to *Familiaris Consortio*, the Christian family is the first community where the members receive, give and share Christian service. In a spirit of love, parents serve each other, and together serve their children, who in turn serve the other members of a much larger family of God. It is a community of persons (FC 18). Where community life is concerned, Mbiti has aptly described the African family as ‘a corporate body of kinsmen, to which everybody belongs and without which one does not exist...It is a body where whatever happens to the individual happens to the group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, “I am because we are; therefore I am” (Mbiti 1969:108).

This aspect of communion is also supported by the scriptures, especially the writings of St Paul. In his writings, he compares the unity of the parts of the body with that of the people. And he says: ‘As it is, the parts are many but the body is one...If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it’ (1 Cor 12:20, 26).

According to this formulation, for the Shona people, human existence makes sense primarily in the communal context. Simon Bockie describes the process of embodying the individual in a web of communal relationships in the following very striking terms: ‘No one speaks of ‘my life’ separated from ‘our life.’ Consequently, the community is seen as the *raison d’être* of one’s being. When

the community is, I am; when it is not, I am not. In other words, I am because the community is; without it my existence becomes dull and meaningless' (Bockie 1993:10). According to Orobator, 'life epitomizes a shared experience' (Orobator 1966: 154). Even though he is not writing about the people of Gokwe, his statement also applies to them. The context of this sharing is therefore the extended family, the clan, the village, and the wider community, which in the Christian understanding is the Universal Church. Thus, the African says: 'I belong, therefore I am' (:154). Individualism has no place among the Shona people. The cardinal principles are all related to solidarity and the collective consciousness. There is sharing and caring. Clan members share both blessings and difficulties. There is love and affection, especially for the sick, both in hospitals and at home, the disabled and the aged. Duties are distributed and accepted just as much as rights (IL 57).

Added to this concept is the fact that there are clearly defined roles and relations for all members within the Shona family in Gokwe. Hence, one is a brother, sister, father or mother, son or daughter, cousin, nephew, or niece and relative of all members within the extended family. This is also supported strongly by John Paul II when he says that women contribute to society through their work in the home and workplace. Men should be challenged in their roles as husbands and fathers (FC 23, 25). Thus, like the Christian family, the traditional Shona family also keeps on extending especially through marriage. Within the village, parents for instance, fulfil that role not only for their own children but also for all children. So too the youth are expected to honour all elders as they would their own parents as is demanded by the Sacred Scriptures, 'Children be obedient to your parents in the Lord- that is your duty' (Eph 5:1).

In the Shona proverbs we also find similar formulations of the interconnected nature of life in community. For example, there is a Shona proverb which is similar to many African proverbs, especially Sotho people, Tswana and Nguni. The proverb says '*Munhu munhu navanhu*' (a person is a person only with other persons). There is also a Kiswahili proverb which is also common among the

Shona people. It says, 'A person is persons' (Mugambi 1995:199). The underlying ideas that we can discern in these proverbs point to the same reality. In much simpler terms, it only means, for the Shona people, relatedness confers authentic identity on a person.

In Mbiti's description of family, it is clear that the word 'family' itself is much wider than the nuclear family and the bond of relationships goes beyond. 'Indeed, the African family is a community that extends itself beyond even those we remember or with whom we are conscious of being connected' (Ogbonnaya 1994:4). In this sense, family can be seen in a similar way to the early Christians<sup>2</sup>, who described themselves in a corresponding way as a body of believers, the saints, holy ones, or disciples (Acts 9: 9, 13, 32, 41; Rom 15:25). Thus, among the Shona people, like among Christians, solidarity or togetherness is a phenomenon that is coherent and unmistakable, which always and everywhere binds members of the family together. This solidarity and togetherness is cemented through communal meals in Shona families 'at which pacts are concluded, cases are settled and broken relationships are mended' (IL 129).

It is therefore correct to say that solidarity expresses one of the constitutive dimensions of the Shona sense of family. Logically, this solidarity becomes an operative element in the Church's self-understanding and mission. Thus, anything that affects the Shona peoples affects also the life of the Church- as- family. This also fulfils the words of the Nigerian theologian, Okolo who says, 'If, indeed, nothing inhuman is alien to contemporary Africans, nothing inhuman against Africans should be alien to the (African) Church' (Okolo 1978:56). Saint Paul, in chapter twelve of his first letter to the Corinthians, makes an extensive use of the corporate imagery to demonstrate in an analogous way the essential nature of the Church as a community of solidarity, the body of Christ (1 Cor 12: 26). 'Solidarity therefore underlines collaboration, which also impels the Church- as- family to seek to work closely with all other constituents of civil society that are committed to the well-being and dignity of the human family' (SRS 148).



Solidarity breathes as it were hospitality and this hospitality can be said to be part and parcel of the existence of the Shona people. One discerns a readiness to welcome and help everyone in spite of abject poverty and sickness in some cases. This hospitality is rooted in the awareness of life as a gratuitous gift from God and through the ancestors.

What is being emphasized here is that the Shona people in Gokwe are characterized by a deep sense of community, which is often seen in many ways like, celebrations of rites and rituals, festivals and funerals. The entire family or community celebrates every event of life. When the entire family celebrates every event of life, a deep sense of communion is fostered, a communion which according to the Pastoral Letter on the Gospel of life, *Instrumentum Laboris*, is a very prominent Christian virtue (IL 186). And for this reason, one can conclude that the Shona family mirrors to a certain extent the Christian family.

### 3.1.2 Value of Life

The second major similarity is that of valuing human life. Apart from living a life of the Trinity, which is of love, unity and communion, the Shona people in Gokwe value life and are always at the service of it. 'The family is the place where the deep African value of life comes to be, is protected and nourished, a place of belonging where sharing and solidarity are at the heart of daily life and where each one feels himself or herself to be truly at home' (IL 172). Even Pope John Paul II had the same sentiments when he stated that 'In African culture and tradition the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental. Open to this sense of family, of love and respect for life, the African loves children, who are welcomed as gifts of God. The sons and daughters of Africa love life' (EIA 43). The Church also stands for life, rejects contraceptives and abortion (FC 30). What is true of African family is therefore true of the Shona people in Gokwe Diocese. They value and cherish human life to be sacred.

This same love for life, Pope John Paul says, is the underlying principle for the veneration of ancestors in Africa. For the African family as I indicated earlier, comprises the dead, the living, and yet to be born. The love of life is such that euthanasia, abortion and contraception are alien to the African family, the Shona in particular. The Church, which is understood as the family of God will therefore engender deep and profound respect and love for life from conception, through old age into the communion of saints (IL 176-7). This will be in total accord with the teachings of the Magisterium on the sacredness of human life. 'From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way because man is the only creature on earth that God has "wished for himself" (GS 24) and the spiritual soul of each man is "immediately created by God" (HG 42), his whole being bears the image of the Creator. Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God (MM 111) and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end (GS 24). God alone therefore, 'is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being' (DR 191-192).

In the light of this, human procreation requires on the part of the spouses responsible collaboration with the fruitful love of God (GS 50); and the gift of human life must be actualised through the specific and exclusive acts of husband and wife, in accordance with the laws inscribed in their persons and in their union (GS 51). Acknowledging this, Pope John Paul II had this to say: 'Africans have a profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, of existence of God the Creator and of a spiritual world' (EIA 42). Adding to this, the Pope said, 'The people of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life...Africans show their respect for human life until its natural end, and keep elderly parents and relatives within the family' (EIA 43). Whatever the Pope said of the African people in general also apply to the Shona people in Gokwe. They have that sense of respect for human life from the moment of birth until its end.

In his book, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, Magesa writes: 'For African religion, all principles of morality and ethics are to be sought within the context of preserving human life and its "power or "force" (Magesa 1997: 31-32). He continues: 'This is why all life forces, that is, all creation, are intended to serve and enhance the life force of the human person and society... The soul purpose of existence...is to seek life, to see to it that human life continues and grows to its full capacity' (1997:51-52). Magesa continues to argue that in keeping with this fundamental logic of life, the Shona worldview of life, like the rest of the African world-view, defines the ethically good as those actions which give and affirm life. The ethically bad, on the contrary, denotes all those actions which undermine human life. The responsibility devolves therefore on the community to struggle constantly to overcome the menace of evil to its corporate life (:161-6).

All this continues to highlight the idea that traditional Shona society is portrayed by love, growth and protection at all costs. Thus, there are all sorts of taboos which aim at protecting and reinforcing life. In the traditional Shona context, there is a taboo that no one should take away life. If a person is killed or deliberately poisoned, his/her spirit is aggrieved and carries this grievance into the spirit world. This is what they call *ngozi* (avenging spirit). It will seek revenge from the guilty family until full compensation for the misdeed has been made (Gelfand 1962:69). This compensation was often paid in the form of a human being (young girl). It was to be a girl child so that she will bear children for the other family (1962:71) and by so doing, life, and more life is promoted. In addition to this taboo, no one among the Shona people of Gokwe is allowed to take away his/her life or kill one's mother. In the event of someone killing a mother, 'the avenging spirit of the mother may require the offending child to humiliate himself by dressing in rags and begging grain for a feast in her honour, at which a beast should be killed and from which the offending child must be absent' (Bourdillon 1976:234). A person who takes away his/her life is buried not in the normal way. This is done in order to discourage other people from taking away their lives and it is done to make it a lesson for others who might also think

of committing suicide. Thus, the traditional Shona people view human life as sacred and not to be tampered with.

In addition to the taboos, the traditional Shona family in Gokwe, through marriage reflect that they are for life. In the traditional Shona family, names must be kept and passed on. In any case, whether patrilineal or matrilineal societies, the family is not allowed to die out but to continue (Bourdillon 1976:46). A person who is unable to procreate commits what is tantamount to genocide. A person useful to the clan must contribute to the permanence of the clan by giving birth. And that is why African families cherish life so much. They want to communicate life (IL 64). This is one of the reasons why some people in Gokwe Diocese marry more than one wife. It is not that they want their sexual desires to be fulfilled but rather their names not to be forgotten. Even in the event of a childless union, or the death of wife, the husband is given his wife's young sister to be his wife for the reason that the union may be fruitful or else the marriage will be dissolved with the return of the bride-price (Bourdillon 1976:47). All this, in a way, though in sharp contrast with the teaching of the Church, point to the fact that, the Shona people love and cherish life.

The Church teaches that God is the Father of life. This life is received in fullness from eternity by His only begotten Son, whom He sent to give life and give it to the full (Jn 10:10). Thus serving life means more than avoiding taking away life. In its totality, it includes doing away or combating all those people who pursue and foster the culture of death. Those who render procreation impossible, those who close the wellsprings of life, and kill the conceived human being in the womb (Bacani 2003:33). 'Life once conceived must be protected with the utmost care; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes' (GS 51). These two are also abominable crimes even among the Shona people. Valuing life means valuing children, welcoming even unplanned pregnancies and making sure that every baby conceived will also be given a chance to be born. Serving life also includes providing the child with that environment of love, and care that will in the long run enable him/her to achieve human and Christian maturity. Thus, the right and

duty of parents regarding education is paramount and this education also extends to essential values of human life (FC 37). Christian parents are reminded that it is not enough just to have children, those children must be assured of a good moral upbringing at home so that they may become good adult Christians and good citizens.

In addition, being at the service of life also means doing away with all the ills in society which induce women to undergo abortions. Among such ills is poverty and domestic violence. Valuing life means caring for the less privileged and the poor which among the Shona people are well taken care of through the extended family system. Thus, the Church as God's Family encourages its members to respect and protect the life and dignity of street children, by adopting them or ensuring that they are well integrated (Bacani 2003:33-34). She also urges the Christian leaders to set up structures and infrastructures geared to welcoming such children and giving them the opportunity of a decent living. The Church as the family of God shows the preferential option for the poor<sup>3</sup> and the disadvantaged (FC 47). 'The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities' (Is 58: 6-7). The Church's love for the poor is therefore part of her constant tradition (CCC 2444).

What is being emphasized on this section is the fact that love of life is cherished by both the traditional Shona family and the Christian family. In traditional Shona society, love for life is manifested in many various ways but chief among them is the desire to have many children, discourage abortion and artificial methods of birth control. The teaching of the Church on the value of life also hinges on this: 'every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and the holy God' (CCC 2319).

### 3.1.3 Communion between the living and the dead

The third major similarity is the belief in the communion between the living and the dead. The Apostles' Creed states the relationship between the living and the dead where it says 'we believe in the communion of saints'. The understanding is that the living and the dead are one through sharing one and the same light and life of God. The dead are not dead and lost, but must be called the 'living dead' (Mbiti 1975:118) insofar as they come alive in God who is 'the God, not of the dead but of the living' (Mt 22:32). The wall between the living and the 'living dead' is therefore not impenetrable since, as members of the Church, the Body of Christ, all Christians share in the life of him who is the 'first born from the dead' (Col 1:18). Thus, there is a strong belief in the solidarity of the living and the dead, who, if they are alive in Christ, continue to care for one another and love one another (ZCBC 2).

This understanding is not foreign to the Shona people who occupy Gokwe diocese. In his book, *African Earthkeepers*, Daneel says, 'A cornerstone of the Shona understanding and ordering of community is the pervasive interaction between the living and the dead. Existentially this is the most consistent and demanding, and ritually the most comprehensive component of the Shona- if not all African-religion' (Daneel 1998:249). It is therefore true that the Shona community, like the whole African community embraces the living, the unborn and the dead, and what is true of the African religion in general is also true of the Shona religion. This is also supported by Kalilombe who writes: 'African religion is essentially a way of living in the visible sphere in relation with the invisible world. This relationship pervades the whole life, of individuals as well as of the community-or rather, of individuals in the community' (Kalilombe 1999:212). This relationship, like that of the Christian family is strengthened and cemented by sacrifices and prayers communicated with the spirit world. On the other hand, 'the Christian family is continuously vivified by the Lord Jesus Christ and called and engaged by him in a dialogue with God through the offering of one's life, and through prayer (FC 55). Such also is the spirituality of the Shona people.



Spirituality has been described generally as:

those attitudes, beliefs and practices which animate peoples' lives and help them to reach out toward the super-sensible realities (Gordon 1983:549). It is the relationship between human beings and the invisible, inasmuch as such a relationship derives from a particular vision of the world, and in its turn affects the way of relating to self, to other people, and to the universe as a whole. In this sense, spirituality is not restricted to any one religion, but can be found variously in all religions and cultures. It is determined in the first place by the basic world of the persons or people concerned. It is also shaped by their life context, their history, and the various influences that enter a people's life (Kalilombe 1999:212-3).

The spirituality of the Shona people therefore is centered upon the veneration of ancestors (EIA 43). The belief is that it is they who have passed on life, the gift of God, as well as the moral and cultural standards. They are the guardians and protectors of this life and this patrimony with their descendants. Belief in the ancestors and their veneration constitute the cultural background in which the life, the thought, the action and behaviour of the Shona people are rooted. These are taken to be on a better position in terms of knowledge. As the standard Shona saying goes, *Vafi havana kufa, vari pakati pedu* (the dead are not dead; they are still around and are part of the families and the community). They understand fully what is going on, and share in the preoccupations and projects of the living members and are interested in what is going on. Having passed through death, they have become prominent members of the invisible world, whereby they share in mystical powers not ordinarily available to those presently alive. This is a position of tremendous power. They are nearer to God, the invisible par-excellence, with whom they are to communicate and to whom they can present effectively the needs of those still alive (Kalilombe 1999:225). Any contact with these ancestors is done through prayer and invocation, and accompanied by offerings of foodstuffs. All this is done to create, maintain and sustain the relationship between the living and the dead. Daneel explains the indispensable role of the ancestors:

Without the ancestors, life, in all its passages, joys and vicissitudes, is just not possible. The ancestors, like their living descendants, play a vital role in society and have a definite impact on community life. Theirs is an extension of life here and now. The two spheres of life- the seen and the unseen- are interdependent. If the ancestors' benevolence and protection against evil

forces are forfeited, the meaning and stability of the societal group are at risk. By the same token the equilibrium of ancestral existence in the spirit world is disturbed or spoilt if they are not remembered, honoured and respected by their living kin in prescribed rituals (Daneel 1998:249).

Even though there are some significant differences, there is a strong parallel between this notion of the spirits of the dead and the belief in the communion of saints. Firstly we discover that for any relationship to be effected between the living and the dead, there must be some ritual offerings (*miteuro*). In his book, *The Genuine Shona: Survival values of an African Culture*, Gelfand discusses this topic at length. According to him, the Shona people place great stress on ritual ceremonies when they pray or make an offering to a particular spirit. Depending on the occasion, the Shona may want to contact the *Mhondoro* (tribal spirit), the *mudzimu* of the family, the *shave* (alien spirit) or those grateful may wish to thank one of these spirits for a special service rendered (Gelfand 1973:135). The basic requirements for such a ceremony is the preparation of beer and the slaughter of a beast when necessary. The beer that is prepared from millet (*zviyo*) is drunk by all the participants in the ceremony (1973:135). When the prayers (*minamoto*) are made, beer is offered to the spirit by the eldest male, half kneeling and clapping his hands. The beer is then shared amongst those present after having poured some on the ground for the spirit to drink. The beer has the further purpose of raising the spirit of those present as well as bringing a feeling of joy and unity to the gathering. Thus the I – Thou relationship is promoted (:135).

The ritual offerings of the Shona people to a certain extent are similar to what we find in the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches. In the Catholic Church, the Eucharist is the very source and summit of Christian living. It is a sacrament of love, unity and communion, and for the Catholic Church, it is only a priest who can say Mass, just as prayers in the Shona offerings are offered to the spirits by the eldest male (Gelfand 1973:135). The Eucharist is therefore considered as ‘thanksgiving and praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial of Christ and his body and the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his Spirit’ (CCC 1358). ‘The Eucharistic sacrifice, in fact, for the married, represents Christ’s

covenant of love with the Church, sealed with his blood on the cross. In this sacrifice of the New and Eternal covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, is interiorly structured, and continually renewed' (FC 57).

Prayer also takes an important part in the life of the Christian family. It can be prayer of adoration, praise, petition or any other purpose. And with these prayers, like in the Shona ritual offerings, there is always hope of forgiveness and restoration of protection (Gelfand 1973:136). Transformation of the Christian family is achieved through celebrating the Eucharist and other sacraments and through offering themselves to the glory of but also through a life of prayer, through prayerful dialogue with the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit (FC 59). Thus the Christian family's actual participation in the Church's life and mission is in direct proportion to the fidelity and intensity of the prayer with which it is united with the fruitful vine that is Christ the Lord (AA 4).

The key point on this part is that, the Shona people in Gokwe are always in communion with their living dead. Not only is this communion vertical. It is also horizontal as indicated on the first similarity of community spirit. It is a communion between members with each other, and between the earthly and the other worldly. Christians also can be in communion with their departed brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents, not by being hosts to their spirits, but by bringing them home into the peace of God and sharing in this peace themselves and through ritual offerings. Thus, a firm belief in life after death is very clear in both the Christian and the traditional understanding of the African (Shona) family, and such is the spiritual life of the Shona people.

#### **3.1.4 Ethics and Morality**

The fourth major similarity is about ethics and morality. Coming now to the issues of ethics and morality of the Shona people, one may ask, how does the Shona family view the world and humanity's place and role within it? What

elements make up the universe and how do they influence human life? What is the purpose of human existence, and what implications does this have for the practical order of things? In the religion of the Shona people of Gokwe, the answers to all these questions delineate the conception of morality in the universe: the understanding of the good that sustains life and the bad that destroys it. The world as a sacred abode of the life forces of God, the ancestors and diverse spirits is what gives human action its necessarily sacred character (Magesa 1997: 59) and this understanding of the content of morality is not different from the Christian understanding. *Familiaris Consortio* shares some thoughts about moral order:

Since the moral order reveals and sets forth the plan of God the Creator, for this very reason it cannot be something that harms man, something impersonal. On the contrary, by responding to the deepest demands of the human being created by God, it places itself at the service of that person's full humanity with the delicate and binding love whereby God himself inspires, sustains and guides every creature towards its happiness' (FC 34).

Like the rest of the African people, the Shona people's conception of morality is steeped in tradition. It comes from and flows from God into the ancestors of the people. God is seen as the Great Ancestor, the first Founder and progenitor, the Giver of Life, the Power behind everything that is. He is the first Initiator of a people's way of life, its tradition (Mbiti 1970: 53-56). The ancestors are however the custodians of this tradition. They are its immediate reason for existence, and they are its ultimate purpose and because of this they impinge on human life in one way or another and in that sense they are all moral agents (Magesa 1997:41-42). It is therefore a fact beyond any reasonable doubt that the Shona family shares a considerable number of features with the Christian family, or even the Israelite family in the Old Testament.

This is so because the African (Shona) family is endowed with a wealth of cultural, ethical, moral and human qualities and values which it can offer to the Churches and to humanity as a whole. We can talk of the understanding of what it means to be a good person, right and wrong, truth, goodness, humility, love, sympathy, self discipline, rectitude, purity and many other virtues. This point is

also strongly emphasized by John Paul II when he taught that children must be taught the essential values of human life (FC 37). The African Synod Fathers also highlighted some of these ethical and moral values 'which are truly a providential preparation for the transmission of the Gospel. They are values which can contribute to an effective reversal of the continent's dramatic situation and facilitate that worldwide revival on which the desired development of individual nations depends' (EIA 42).

In line with this same understanding, Gelfand says:

The Shona have clear concepts of the virtues and vices and they have much to say about aberrations of personality. So they have a definite idea of what constitutes correct behaviour in their society and of its importance. Good relationships between one man and another are bound to suffer if one should commit an antisocial act (Gelfand 1973: 52).

In this regard, elders are seen as the ethical and moral conscience of society. They are to be the spiritual, religious, moral, economic and political guardians of the communities in which they live. Thus, as in Christian families, the Shona clansman is directed at social justice, obligation and responsibility, but what stands out most is the emphasis placed on character, respect, love and compassion (1973: 53-5). The African Synod Fathers again emphasized this when they said 'evangelization stands for many of those essential values which our continent lacks: hope, peace, joy, harmony, love and unity' (EIA 40). It is therefore interesting to note that what the world lacks, the Shona people who occupy Gokwe diocese are ready to provide.

The African (Shona) family, like the Christian family is opposed to vices. It sees them as threats to the rights of the individual. Some of the vices include acts like stealing, lying, adultery, violent quarrelling, aberrations of personality, covetousness, revenge, ingratitude and many others. A similar list is also recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, 'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that Yahweh your God has given to you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour...' (Ex 20: 12- 17).

As a way of curbing some of these vices, the Shona people have designed so many different types of sanctions to ensure proper and ethical behavior amongst themselves. They have evolved an elaborate and uniform system of punishment through their local courts (Gelfand 1973: 52-3). Gelfand continues to say,

But it is not only with a criminal offence, like stealing or assault, with which the local court is concerned but also with moral misbehaviour and this aspect of its function is perhaps the more important. We regularly meet the case in which a man is charged with despoiling an unmarried girl or with adultery, or the disrespectful of a son-in law towards his father-in-law...Its proceedings are never held in camera but in the open before the public (1973:54).

To sum up, this small section talks about the ethics and morality of the Shona people in Gokwe diocese. It has been seen that the Shona understanding of morality is not different from the Christian understanding. What is being promoted by Christianity was for a long time ago being promoted by the Shona people and what is today condemned by Christianity was again long ago condemned by the Shona people. It is therefore true to say that both the Shona people and Christianity share a common understanding of a variety of similarities. Some of these similarities that have been discussed in this chapter include; community spirit, the value of life, communion between the living and the dead as well as the knowledge of what is good and bad, right and wrong to a greater extent.

Now that we have seen some similarities, we need also to underline the major disparities between the theological/ecclesiological stance and the real family situation among the inhabitants of Gokwe Diocese.

### **3.2 Some salient disparities**

‘Experience shows that, because of circumstances, it is sometimes difficult to harmonize culture with Christianity’ (GS 62). This is true because even though the traditional Shona family of Gokwe shares quite a number of similarities with the Christian family, there are also some salient difficulties that may hinder progress of evangelization. What makes these problems salient is the fact that



they are more common in Gokwe and can easily be noticed. The Shona families in Gokwe, like most families elsewhere in Africa, therefore need the Gospel message to overcome some inherent tendencies if they are to realize the beauty of the Christian family. We have seen that the Shona people have a profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, of the existence of God the Creator and of a spiritual world. The reality of sin in its individual and social form is also very much present in the consciousness of these people, but this does not mean that there are no disparities that exist between the traditional and the Christian family. There are quite a number of disparities. Of the many differences, I shall discuss in detail four main ones, namely, polygamy, divorce, dignity of women<sup>4</sup> and attitude towards sickness and health.

I could have discussed quite a number of such disparities but I limit my discussion to these four for the reason that as I was carrying out my interviews, these four featured most. I also observed the same from the time I became pastor to these people to the time I moved to Masvingo diocese in the year 1999.

### **3.2.1 Polygamy/Polygyny**

The first major disparity between the traditional and Christian understanding of marriage is polygamy. Polygamy is a common phenomenon among the Shona people in Gokwe and this topic of polygamy was discussed at length in the First Chapter whereby I highlighted the reasons for polygamy, its advantages and disadvantages among the Gokwe people. What I have to make now is a Christian and pastoral evaluation of polygamous marriages. I intent to offer a detailed account of the position of the Church regarding the practice of polygamy. In doing this, I do not intent to focus my attention on a number of loose sexual relationships that might be common in Gokwe, 'but of simultaneous unions contracted under a form of law, recognized as marriage by the people of that tribe, entered upon with a lifelong intention, and providing both a permanent home and legitimate state for the offspring' (Hastings 1973:73).

It is important however to make ourselves clear of these two terms first: polygamy and polygyny<sup>5</sup>. Like I said in the First Chapter (Section 1.3.4) the two terms can be used interchangeably. The reason is that the word polygamy only came to be used for what is really polygyny. In any case, polygyny is a form of polygamy.

We have already seen from the First Chapter that societies may differ in the statuses and roles that are assigned to individual members, particularly regarding acquisition of position within the society. In his book *Forms of Marriage: Monogamy reconsidered*, Blum writes: ‘Many varieties and forms of the institution of marriage found in different societies, not only reflect the effect of various environmental conditions of the different peoples, but also the values they cherish and the attitude they share’ (Blum 1989:119). In addition to that Blum goes on to argue that in many African societies, there are basically two marks that traditionally characterized relationship between men and women in general, and in particular the relation between husbands and wives. In the first place, it was generally accepted that males should enjoy a social superiority, and also exercise authority over females. Women lived in a state of dependence, not only before their marriages but also afterwards (1989:119). This reality that characterized traditional society is to a great extent the reality on the ground in Gokwe diocese.

From the First Chapter, we have also seen that polygamy is still evident among the Shona people and this practice exemplifies the survival imperative that calls for many children and a big family group (Gelfand 1973: 176). I also mentioned in this same chapter that this practice is more common among chiefs, headmen, businessmen, leaders of some African Independent Churches as well as some ordinary men (Madzibaba Calisto Nyandoro, Interview: 15/02/2003). Blum sees it as a form of marriage favoured by some rich Africans (Blum 1989:73). This practice is not only common among the Shona people of Gokwe but is a widely recognized and socially valid form of marriage in many regions of the world

(Hillman 1975: 109) and the reasons for polygamy are everywhere the same as outlined by Kisémbó, Magesa and Shorter:

Polygamy also traditionally had the function of catering for the sexual needs of men and minimizing the chances of promiscuity and prostitution. More importantly, polygamy helped to satisfy the need and the desire of having a large family; while at the same time it kept the fertility rate of women at a low level. Polygamy also catered for the childless union and offered a kinder solution than that of divorce when a wife was barren. Polygamy was a form of security and a guarantee of prosperity when a large family was necessary to exploit the environment and provide for the basic needs. Finally, polygamy helped to stabilize the institutions of marriage and family through multiple marriage alliances with several families. It helped to tighten the bonds of society and broaden the circle of relatives and associates (Kisémbó, Magesa & Shorter 1977:86).

Even though some of the reasons for polygamy are quite reasonable, it is said to be in contrast to God's plan of marriage by the teaching of Christianity. Marriage is taken to be a union of a man and a woman, embracing an undivided communion of life (Lawler & Roberts 1996: 30). The communion of love between God and people, a fundamental part of the Revelation and faith experience of Israel, finds its meaningful expression in the marriage covenant, which is established between a man and a woman. The Church teaches that polygamy 'directly negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to equal personal dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive' (FC 12, 19).

In his book, *Christian Marriage in Africa*, Hastings pointed out that there are, it would seem, four basic positions that can be taken by theology regarding polygamous marriages and these are:

- (a) Polygamy is simply a sin, comparable with adultery.
- (b) Polygamy is an inferior form of marriage, not sinful where it is the custom but always unacceptable for Christians.
- (c) Polygamy is a form of marriage less satisfactory than monogamy and one which cannot do justice to the full spirit of Christian marriage, but in certain circumstances individual Christians can still put up with it, as they put up with slavery, dictatorial governments, and much else.
- (d) Polygamy is one form of marriage, monogamy another. Each has its advantages and disadvantages; they are appropriate to different types of

society. It is not the task of the Church to make any absolute judgement between them (Hastings 1973: 73).

In order to arrive safely at the position of the Church regarding polygamy, it is of significant importance that we pay attention to the Scriptures, tradition and the teaching authority of the Church. Even though the Old Testament presents us with a number of polygamous unions, notably the cases of Jacob (Gn 29:15), David (2 Sam 16:20), and Solomon (1 Kings 11:1), the New Testament, tradition and the teaching authority of the Church affirm the monogamous nature of marriage. Looking however at the meaning within the wider scriptural teaching upon marriage, and in particular the central thrust of that teaching, one can certainly find that which highly comments monogamy especially the teaching of Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church (FC 13) and that of St Paul. The New Testament teaching of marriage is one in which despite the very real inequality between husband and wife there is a fundamental thrust towards equality and full reciprocity (Hastings 1973: 75).

The spouses participate in marriage as spouses, together, as a couple, so that the first and immediate effect of marriage is not supernatural grace itself, but the Christian conjugal bond, a typically Christian communion of two persons...(HV 9) 'So they are no longer two, but one flesh' (Mt 19:16). The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by Jesus Christ, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection (GS 49). This unreserved affection can only be given to one person at a time. By virtue of the sacramentality of marriage, spouses are therefore bound to one another in the most profoundly indissoluble manner, 'and are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self- giving' (FC 19).

Because marriage is meant to portray the love of God for his people, it is indissoluble. As a portrayal of the love of God for his people and Christ for his Church, Christian marriage must be monogamous. This is so because there are only one people of God, which is his bride, there is only one bride of Christ,

which is the Church. Thus, marriage, the image of the union between God and his people, between Christ and his Church, can only be between one man and one woman (Bacani 2003: 18).

Even though some Gokwe people are paying attention to the teaching of the Church on marriage and polygamy, the diocese is still facing the problem of those polygamists who converted to Christianity together with their many wives. The biggest problem is on administering of sacraments to such people. For the meantime I however reserve this area to Chapter Four that deals with solutions and proposals.

### 3.2.2 Divorce

The second major disparity is that of divorce. 'Several writers on African marriage and family have linked divorce inversely with polygamy, implying that where polygamy is frequent, divorce tends to be rare' (Weinrich 1982: 160). Other writers go even further and write that polygamy by its very nature tends to exclude divorce. They also argue that where divorce and polygamy co-exist, polygamy at least does not lead to greater divorce frequencies than does monogamy (Hillman 1975: 145). Whilst what is being said is true to some extent, this however does not apply to all situations, and the fact still remains; divorce stands in sharp contrast to the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life.

Again this topic of divorce was discussed at length in my First Chapter (Section 1.3.6), whereby I underlined the causes and effects of divorce among the people of Gokwe diocese. And among the causes were; infertility on the part of the wife, adultery on the part of the wife, economic hardships, accusation of witchcraft and lack of virginity, family neglect, cruelty and drunkenness, on the part of the husband, failure of the groom to pay bridewealth and the tendency among young people to rush into marriage without proper preparation. Writing in his book *The Shona Peoples*, Bourdillon mentions the Shona view of marriage as a family contract. He says, 'for the traditional Shona, marriage is essentially a contract between two families' (Bourdillon 1976). The two families become related as

wife providers and wife receivers. There is no bondage that binds the two parties (husband and wife) in conscience. A contract in our modern understanding can be terminated anytime. It is only valid insofar as the two parties in marriage are in good terms.

Even though there are so many cases of divorce in Gokwe, the Christian stance on marriage and family life does not accept it, basing her teaching on the Scriptures and Christian tradition. The Old Testament presents a beautiful passage that talks about the love and mercy of God. The prophet Hosea receives an order from God to marry the young prostitute, Gomer, who shortly afterwards abandoned him and began to live with another man. However, at a further order, the prophet took Gomer back again (Hs 1-3) and cared for her with great love. The prophet used this gesture to explain God's love for Israel and Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant with God. From this we see that 'it is mercy, stretching far beyond all law, which causes God not to annihilate or cast off his people, as the law of marriage demanded, but to turn to them again and again in spite of all their disloyalty' (Brown 1971: 577).

Divorce was not only discouraged in the Old Testament. Even in the New Testament, Jesus never allowed it. He says, 'from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide' (Mk 10:6-10). He goes on to say, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she is guilty of adultery too' (Mk 10: 11). Thus based on the Sacred Scriptures, the position of the Church regarding divorce has never changed.

*Familiaris Consortio* teaches that, 'conjugal communion is characterized not only by its unity but also by its indissolubility' (FC 20). 'As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of the children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them' (GS



48). This means that marriage reveals simultaneously the intimate union of a husband and wife and the union of Christ and his Church. A sacramental marriage therefore is more than a contract or a loose relationship. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ, the Church maintains that,

a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are married civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence (CCC 1650).

Because of this ruling and teaching of the Church, quite a number of Catholics in Gokwe diocese only attend Holy Mass but do not receive Holy Communion and this affect the family very much. They feel they are not full members of the Church if they do not partake of this Holy meal and the other sacraments. Again I leave this important area of what the Church should do or propose to curb the problem of divorce. I shall come back to it in my Fourth Chapter.

### 3.2.3 Dignity of Women

The third major difference is on the position of women in society. From what we have seen in the First Chapter that deals with the real life situation in Gokwe diocese, there is still a misconception that women have little or no status in traditional society. Their position as compared with that of men is taken to be very low. They are counted by some among a man's wealth and there is still that idea in Gokwe that the more wives and daughters a man has, the more rich and famous he is (Mr. R. Marega, Interview: 15/03/2004).

There are various reasons in Gokwe diocese that make people think that the position of women is lower and inferior than that of men. In his book, *The Shona Peoples*, Bourdillon summarizes these reasons:

Women are said to be bought and sold in marriage like chattels; at the death of a husband, his widows are inherited with his estate; since women could not represent themselves in traditional courts but had to be represented by senior

male relatives, it is said that legally they were minors all their lives; wives are said to be completely subject to their husbands who have the right to beat them within limits; women do most of the work in the fields and in the home while the men spend much of their time sitting in idle chatter. So some conclude that the traditional position of Shona women is little better than the position of a slave (Bourdillon 1976: 68).

In the diocese of Gokwe, some families still take girls as sources of income for the reason that bridewealth will be paid upon their marriage. This bridewealth can be paid before the actual marriage through child- pledging (Weinrich 1982:62), though this practice is slowly fading away. There are still some who take education for the girl child not as a priority for they say she will belong to another family upon her marriage (Mr. R. marega, Interview: 15/03/2004). In the traditional Shona family, the father is clearly in charge. In particular, all family property belongs to him and his wife can claim nothing in the case of divorce or of the death of the husband (Bourdillon 1976:70). Thus, because of such practices, the teaching of the Church about the dignity of women still has to be emphasized in most parts of Gokwe diocese.

According to the teaching of the Church, the dignity of man and woman derives from the fact that when God created man, 'in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them' (Gn 1:27). This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons (GS 12). Both man and woman are created 'in the image of God, that is, endowed with intelligence and will and therefore with freedom (EIA 82). The account of our first parents' sin confirms this. Even the Psalmist sings of man's incomparable dignity: 'Yet you have made him little less than a god; with glory and honour you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hand, put all things under his feet' (Ps 8: 6-7). Having been both created in the image of God, man and woman, although different, are essentially equal from the point of view of their humanity. 'From the beginning, both are persons, unlike the other living beings in the world around them. The woman is another 'I' in a common humanity' (MD 6), and each is a help for the other (Gn 2:18-25).

The Africa Synod also affirms strongly the rights and duties of women in building up the family and in taking full part in the development of the Church and society (IL 88). And the Pope also condemned customs and practices, which deprive women of their rights due to them. Above all, he underlined the equal dignity and responsibility of women with men. ‘This equality is realized in a unique manner in that reciprocal self-giving by each one to the other and by both to the children which is proper to marriage and the family’ (FC 22). The woman is not just something, but someone (CCC 357). *Familiaris Consortio* sums up the teaching of the Church regarding the dignity of women:

In creating the human race “male and female,” God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with the inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person. God then manifests the dignity of women in the highest form possible, by assuming human flesh from the virgin Mary, whom the Church honours as the Mother of God, calling her the new Eve and presenting her as the model of redeemed woman. The sensitive respect of Jesus towards the women that he called to his following and to friendship, his appearing on Easter morning to a woman before the other disciples, the mission entrusted to women to carry the good news of the Resurrection to the Apostles- these are all signs that confirm the special esteem of the Lord Jesus for women (FC 22). The Apostle Paul will say: ‘In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3: 26, 28).

Even though the general attitude of men to women in the diocese of Gokwe has made women in many cases unable to take their rightful place as competent human beings even in the Church, with the advent of Christianity and civilization, there has been an evolution in the place of women in the family as well as in the society. Such an understanding and evolution will contribute immensely towards the proper understanding of the rightful position of women intended from the beginning by the Creator.

#### **3.2.4 Attitude towards sickness and healing**

The fourth and last major disparity is the inhabitants of Gokwe’s attitude towards sickness and health. Although the issue of health is of paramount importance among the people who occupy Gokwe diocese, the area of sickness (illness) and healing remains a complex one. Bate in his book *Inculturation and healing* has

written extensively on illness and healing. He highlights that ‘both sickness and health are holistic phenomena involving the whole of humanity, body soul, spirit, person, family, community and society’ (Bate 1995: 281). Thus, in my treatment of this section, I shall pay attention to three main areas. The first area looks at the etiology/causes of sickness. The second part looks at the responses or attempts made by the people of Gokwe to curb illness. Lastly I intent to give the position of the Church regarding illness and healing as given by Bate.

#### 3.2.4.1 The Etiology of sickness

The Shona people of Gokwe diocese are not perturbed by small illnesses such as coughs, influenza, colds and slight fevers. These according to them are just natural and they know that these normally affect children. There are also more serious ailments like venereal diseases whose origin or cause is known. Again the Shona people are not afraid of such. But, according to Bourdillon, ‘should an ailment linger, or should it become serious and threaten life, it requires an explanation beyond the natural causes... A prolonged serious illness is presumed to have some invisible cause and a diviner should be consulted to determine it and to state the necessary remedy’ (Bourdillon 1976: 171). In support of this, Magesa also adds that ‘whatever the cause of an affliction, it must be placed into the category of an enemy of life’ (Magesa 1997: 163).

The etiology of illness cannot be limited only to some supernatural causes as most of the Gokwe people think. Bate noted that the etiology of sickness can be so wide (Bate1995:281). He divides illness causes into four causal categories which are often interrelated. These are: Psycho-medical factors; Cultural factors; Socio-economic factors and Spiritual factors (1995: 6). Bate goes on to explain more on these causes of illness. According to him, on psycho-medical factors, the following have been identified as operating in illness causation: organic factors, psychogenic factors, psychosomatic factors and stress. When talking of organic factors, Bate includes all the diseases that are diagnosed and treated within the

medical model. Psychogenic factors link illness directly to a person's psychological make-up: personal psychological history, arrested psychological development and other psychological problems. All these can lead to illness or illness susceptibility which manifest itself in organic symptoms such as ulcers, rashes, colds, depressed immunity, skin disease, certain forms of deafness and lameness as well as some types of arthritis and rheumatism (1995: 6).

Apart from psycho-medical causes of illness, we can also talk of cultural factors in illness causation. Landy wrote that whilst it is true that research has shown that many diseases affect people without regard to culture, economic status, or other social, geographical and historical factors, it has also become clear to anthropologists that the question of sickness has a strong, often determinant, cultural component. This component according to Landy influences the etiology, understanding, diagnosis and remedy as well as the form and content of the curing and healing process (Landy 1977: 1-9). In addition to cultural factors, social-economic factors also cause illness. In this respect sociology recognizes the source of illness to be bound up with deviance (Bate 1995: 9). Illness is seen as the deviance from normal social behaviour patterns when people are no longer able to fulfil their social responsibilities in the normal way. Thus all societies develop therapeutic structures and systems to provide legitimate, accepted ways of helping a person identify the illness and return to active social responsibility (1995: 9). In this way, as noted by Schoffeleers, 'the sick role can be made into a convenient tool to maintain the *status quo*, ...doctors, being the gate keepers who regulate access to that role, become, thereby, agents of social control' (Schoffeleers 1991: 13).

Still on the etiology of sickness, mention should be made of spiritual causes. Theologians have recognized physical, emotional and psychological etiologies of illness whose treatment may benefit from physical, emotional and psychological remedies (Bate 1995: 11). However they are unanimous in also attributing theological categories to illness etiologies. In line with tradition, the major theological causes of sickness are expressed as sin and evil. And evil is often

expressed as demons, evil spirits or Satan (1995: 11). Francis Macnutt describes four basic types of sicknesses namely; sickness of spirit, emotional sickness caused by emotional hurts of our past, physical sickness caused by disease or accidents as well as demonic oppression which can cause any of the above. Thus in a way sin and sickness are linked but not just in a simple way (Macnutt 1974: 162).

#### 3.2.4.2 How the people of Gokwe respond to Illness

I did mention in my First Chapter (1.3.2) that the issue of health is of great significance among the people who occupy the diocese of Gokwe. This is so because under the communal mode of production, it is normally the family that provides health services to all the members of the family. You find out that most of the elders in each and every family would know most if not all the traditional medicines that deal with some common ailments. And with such traditional medicines, family members are often kept physically fit.

I also mentioned in the same section (1.3.2) that as a way of curbing and controlling the various diseases common in Gokwe such as malaria, sleeping sickness, tuberculosis, diarrhoea, cholera and many others, the government, together with some non-governmental organizations have tried to provide some health facilities. There are 19 government district Clinics, 39 health centers and 3 mission hospitals (Gokwe District Records: 1999) Mission hospital include Kana, Nembudziya and Chireya (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). These health facilities provide most of the rural care for the sick; home based care for those who are sick and dying at home (Shingai Programme for 2002).

It is true that the people who occupy Gokwe diocese are relying very much on the proven success of western medicine to cure specific and clearly physical complaints. In addition to the western medicine people get from hospitals, African Independent Churches<sup>6</sup> traditional healers and herbalists<sup>7</sup> are also numerous even at Gokwe center. And these are consulted in times of sickness and misfortune. People do not care very much whether the cause of the illness could



be psycho-medical, cultural, socio-economic or spiritual. As Boudillon argues, 'should an ailment linger,...it requires an explanation beyond the natural causes' (Bourdillon 1976: 161). Thus what he continues to argue is also true. He argues that it is also very common that a Shona person, after having been treated by western medicine in any clinic or hospital, may still consult a diviner, whose function is to communicate with the spirit world (1976:171-2). It is not that the Shona people of Gokwe say western medicine is useless. No. In one of my interviews with Dr. Chemhuru, he pointed out that 'tensions and uncertainties of modern life readily provoke within families suspicions of invisible forces, especially witchcraft. And western medicine knows nothing about witchcraft. Hence the need for a different type of medicine that is traditional' (Dr. Chemhuru, Interview: 22/07/99). But one may ask: What is the position of the Catholic Church on traditional healers? Bate's article on Catholics and Traditional Healers will be of great help on this very important topic.

#### 3.2.4.3 Catholics and Traditional healers

The relationship between Catholics and traditional healers is a complex one and needs explanation. In his article on Catholics and Traditional Healers, Bate highlighted that when people talk of the relationship between Catholics and traditional healers, they should bear in mind how the term catholic has changed in the 2000 years of Christian tradition. Traditions have come and gone but the Catholic Church is no different. It has lived through its history in these widely differing communities, cultures and contexts, responding to the prevailing conditions in terms of its understanding of the requirements of the Gospel usually as expressed in terms of its own ecclesial priorities. And one of these social conditions is the context of sickness and healing (Bate 1999: 51).

Bate begins by shedding more light on the term Traditional healers. The term has come to have a rather specific meaning in the African context referring to those healers who work within the context of "traditional" African culture that is understood as African culture. According to him, all healers work out of a tradition even though they may not refer to themselves as traditional healers.

They are cultural healers while other healers are called religious healers. Thus he adopted this wide understanding, letting it refer to all healers who are working out of a particular healing tradition with its own understanding of sickness and health. In such an understanding, since modern medical profession work out of a particular tradition (Western medical tradition), medical doctors and nurses can as well be referred to as 'traditional healers' (1999:52).

Bate also emphasized that evangelization in this contemporary period has great respect for the cultures of the people being evangelized and this has been a missionary theme right from biblical times (Bate 1999: 59). It also formed the basis of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and was an important theme in the writings of St Paul. This dimension of the missionary process has of late been given the name 'inculturation' and theologically the term is linked with incarnation. The Word takes on human form in order to redeem humanity (1999: 59). This means that what is good and of value in human cultures should be preserved and incorporated into Christian life and practice (EN 20). Practices must be in compatible with the Gospel and union with the Church should be maintained (EN 62). Walligo adds that inculturation makes Christianity 'enter the very blood and veins of the African; to make it answer their aspirations and anxieties; to make African Christians recover their one identity rather than live in dualism, with one foot in Christianity and the other in an African world view' (Walligo 1986: 22). Bate calls it a 'theological key' to evangelisation and healing ministry of the Church (Bate 1995: 19).

In addition to that, Bate makes it clear that on the level of healing, it is clear even to Western medicine that many traditional herbal remedies are very effective and many new drugs are today being made from traditional medical sources (Bate 1999: 60). It is also true that the therapeutic value of some medicines that was at one time dismissed as superstition and paganism have bounced back as best medicines. With regard to traditional healers, many of the ritual and herbal practices according to Bate would be acceptable and compatible with the Gospel (1999: 60). Even Jesus himself used herbs and rituals. He healed with spittle and

earth (Mk 7: 34), he sent the leper to show himself to the priest in accordance with the Jewish rituals regarding leprosy and impurity (Mk 1: 44).

Bate also sees the difficulty in discerning the powers that surrounds most of the healings (Bate 1999: 60). He goes on to argue that many traditional healers claim to heal through spiritual powers of one kind or another. In Africa, ancestors are often the source of healing powers and some healers consider themselves to be possessed by the ancestor who performs the healing. Thus Bate calls for a spiritual discernment when dealing with the issue of traditional healers (1999: 60).

To conclude this section on attitude towards sickness and healing, even though the people of Gokwe sometimes mix western and traditional medicine, it should be pointed out clearly that the relationship between Catholics and traditional healers of whatever culture is a complex one which does not admit of hurried and simplistic solutions. There is need for a spirit of discernment in order to relate well with other healers. The diocese of Gokwe had never thought of that before. The idea of inculturation only appears on the targets for the diocese but has never been executed. It is therefore the task of the diocese of Gokwe to make sure that the issues of healing and inculturation are re-visited because healing is a mission that Jesus himself gave to his Church (Mt 10: 8).

### **3.3 Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter on similarities and dissimilarities, we have seen that the Shona people of Gokwe diocese, like true followers of Christ know a lot about the idea of the Supreme Being, about sacrifice, prayer, marriage, life after death, religion and moral life. They know a lot about values such as the sense of the sacred, respect for life, sense of community and communion between the living and the dead. It is interesting to note that the Shona people share to a great extent all these values with the Christian way of life as taught by the Church.

This Chapter was not only interested in similarities between the traditional family set up and the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life. It also spelt out the negative elements that are found among the Shona people of Gokwe which need to be challenged by the Gospel of Christ. The disparities include: polygamy, divorce, position of women and their attitude toward sickness and healing. It is not so easy to change the inhabitants of Gokwe's understanding and position regarding all these, but slowly but surely through proper catechesis as we shall see in the Fourth Chapter, some of their positions may be refocused. But the area of sickness and healing however needs more attention and a lot of spiritual discernment.

It is therefore true to say that the Church solemnly acknowledges that non-Christian religions contain so many elements of truth worthy of adopting into Christianity. This should also impel us to banish our hasty condemnation of the religious elements in these non-Christian teachings and positions, as superstitious and erroneous. There is need for a prudent and critical examination of their theological status in the light of the Christian faith.

### Notes to Chapter Three

- <sup>1</sup>Ecclesiological stance- This is basically the stand or position of the Church regarding some particular issues especially those that deal with matters of faith and morals.
- <sup>2</sup>Early Christians- These are the early converts to Christianity who are often described in the Acts of the Apostles as a group of believers that was united, heart and soul.
- <sup>3</sup>Preferential option for the poor- In simpler and more clear terms, it is a special form of primacy underlined by the Church in the exercise of Christian Charity (SRS 42).
- <sup>4</sup>Dignity of women- The dignity of women derives from the very fact that both man and woman are created in the image of God (Gn 1:27). Thus, having been created in the image of God, man and woman, though different are essentially equal from the point of view of their humanity (EIA 82).
- <sup>5</sup>Polygyny- Polygamy and polygyny are sometimes used interchangeably. Polygyny is a practice among most Africans especially the Shona people of Gokwe whereby a man is married simultaneously to many wives.
- <sup>6</sup>African Independent Churches- These are the many Churches of Africa that are independent and different in their organization, leadership and religious expression from Western- oriented (also called mainline) or mission Churches.
- <sup>7</sup>Herbalist (*Murapi*)- He or she is a person who is able to heal the sick by the use of herbs without any divination.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ENVISAGED PASTORAL SOLUTIONS AND PROPOSALS

#### 4.0 Introduction

We have seen from the First and Third Chapters the concrete life-situation of the family in Gokwe Diocese together with some significant problems that hinder effective evangelisation<sup>1</sup> in this diocese. Faced with these challenges and difficulties, what should the Church of Gokwe do in order to effectively evangelise its own people?

After identifying and studying these basic challenges, I came to the conclusion that the diocese of Gokwe should try and look for concrete pastoral solutions to these challenges. *Familiaris Consortio* dedicates the whole of chapter four to envisaged pastoral solutions and proposals that include: pastoral care of the family, stages, structures, agents and situations. This Fourth Chapter is going therefore to be my chief compass in identifying some pastoral solutions and proposals to the underlined problems and challenges that hinder progress in evangelising the people of Gokwe diocese. *Familiaris Consortio* however, only gives the prescriptive part that will be supported by a more concrete and practical section based on what the diocese of Gokwe is already doing to solve some of the problems.

Having seen the reality of these peoples' lives, in my effort to highlight the solutions and proposals, I shall pay closest attention to the available resources in Gokwe diocese. When I talk of the available resources I mean what the diocese of Gokwe can offer as agents or structures for pastoral care of the family. These include; the bishop himself as the chief shepherd, the priests, brothers, sisters, catechists, Catholic teachers and nurses, Catholic hospitals and schools, social centres, various associations, the faithful themselves and more importantly the training centre (Shingai Training Centre) which is one of the strongest weapons



for evangelisation in the diocese. Such resources are at the moment available in the diocese of Gokwe (See Appendix Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002).

On each and every section, I shall try to explain the reality around that particular issue in Gokwe diocese. Having done that I will proceed to give solutions and proposals to that, based on what the diocese of Gokwe is doing. This also would be followed by some proposals. Let us now begin by looking at the various stages of pastoral care for the family that are being used in the Diocese of Gokwe.

#### **4.1 Stages of Pastoral Care for the Family in Gokwe Diocese**

I shall treat this section under four main headings, namely; the role of the diocese of Gokwe in journeying together with the family, the significance of the preparation of marriage, the liturgical celebration of marriage and finally the Church's role in fostering pastoral care after marriage. These stages are equally important and are stressed by the diocese of Gokwe because it is time for adequate religious knowledge and catechesis for marriage and family life at grassroots level. Pope John Paul II also teaches that the future of the Church and society passes by the way of the family (FC 86). And the Commentary on Canon 1063 explains to us the significance of these stages of pastoral care of the family:

Pastors of souls are obliged to ensure that their own Church community provides for Christ's faithful the assistance by which the married state is preserved in its Christian character and develops in perfection. This assistance is to be given principally: by preaching, by catechetical instruction adapted to children, young people and adults...so that Christ's faithful are instructed in the meaning of Christian marriage and in the role of Christian spouses and parents; by personal preparation for entering marriage, so that the spouses are disposed to the holiness and obligations of their new state; by the fruitful celebration of the marriage liturgy, so that it clearly emerges that the spouses manifest, and participate in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church; by the help given to those who have entered marriage, so that by faithfully observing and protecting their conjugal covenant, they may day by day achieve a holier and a fuller family life (CCL 1063).

#### **4.1.1 The Diocese of Gokwe's role in journeying together with the family**

The diocese of Gokwe is aware of its role in journeying together with the family. 'The definition of the Church as the Family of God is an expression that agrees with the Vision Statement<sup>2</sup> of the diocese. This model of the family of God 'emphasises care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue, and trust' (Gokwe Diocese Pastoral Plan 1997: 4). The inclusion of the pastoral care of the family as the pastoral priority of Gokwe diocese points to the fact that the diocese of Gokwe is making an effort to strengthen and develop pastoral care of the family. Pastoral care of the family is treated as a real matter of priority for the sole reason that future evangelisation depends largely on the domestic Church. Thus the family is never left alone but always supported and guided by the Church and the Church's pastoral intervention is taken as a matter of urgency.

Before anything else, the diocese of Gokwe is aware of this great responsibility of taking care of the family as well as the participation of all its members. This is the only way she could be in the heart and mind of Jesus Christ who said; 'I am with you always; yes, to the end of time' (Mt 28:20). The Church is with the family announcing the Good News of salvation, a word of truth, goodness, understanding, hope and deep sympathy especially with some tragic difficulties and challenges that befall the family on its journey through life. The diocese of Gokwe in this regard exercises a double role: she is the master of the natural law, therefore the guardian of the human person and secondly, the Church is the depository of revelation, therefore the sign, instrument and guarantor of the transcendent and supernatural character of the human person especially those called to the sacrament of marriage, called to establish a Christian family. Thus, the Church offers its service to everybody, believers and non-believers, because she is truly and intimately linked with humanity and its history (GS 1, 12).

At all stages the diocese of Gokwe tries to show special and unconditional love to the family as it accompanies it on its journey through life. 'Loving the family means being able to appreciate its values and capabilities, fostering them always.

Loving the family means identifying the dangers and the evils that menace it, in order to overcome them. Loving the family means endeavouring to create for it an environment favourable for its development' (FC 86).

No family can be called back to its original position and follow Christ on its own without the help and assistance of the Church. Thus, the bishop of Gokwe diocese, sometimes urges all his priests, brothers, sisters, groups, movements and associations to devote themselves to the family welfare acting in the name of the Church and under her inspiration (Presbyteral Council Minutes 19/ 02/ 2002). With faithfulness to the values of the Gospel and of the human person, this collaboration is favouring a more rapid and integral advancement of the family because various stages of pastoral care of the family are taken seriously and followed step by step.

#### **4.1.2 The significance of the preparation for Marriage**

'More than ever necessary in our times is preparation of young people for marriage and family life. In some countries it is still the families themselves that, according to ancient customs, ensure the passing on to young people of the values concerning marriage and family life' (FC 66). Today things have, however, changed. It is no more the duty and responsibility of the family alone. The Church and society are also called upon to take an active role in preparing those still growing for their future responsibilities.

Most of the problems and difficulties that affect marriage and family life in Gokwe diocese are discussed and solved at this important stage of preparation for marriage. In Gokwe diocese they do not only prepare the young for marriage. In one of my interviews with Mr Augustine Gumbo<sup>3</sup>, one of the few trained catechists who has been at Shingai Training Centre for more than fifteen years now, helping in organising and conducting workshops, it was thus discovered:

In Gokwe Diocese, all those who want to get married in Church, both young and old are taken for some marriage instructions. These instructions are done at parish level and are often carried out by the parish priest, sisters and some catechists and they take not less than three months (Mr Augustine Gumbo: Interview, 11/08/2003).

Making use of his vast experience with the Training Centre, Mr Gumbo added that even though in some cases, due to some other commitments, men may not attend all the lessons, women attend most of the lessons before their day of marriage because their own commitment to pastoral care of their families is also tested at this first stage (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Fr. C. Chibango<sup>4</sup>, the Vicar General of Gokwe Diocese also added that sometimes it is very difficult for the old men and women to grasp all the lessons before the actual day for the celebration of marriage, but the mere fact that they come for these marriage instructions at least help them enter into marriage knowing what God intended from the beginning for man and woman. He was so sure of this due to the mere fact that all the lessons are done in their local language. And he also added that from what he has gathered so far, there are more marriages between the old men and women than the youths (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

Marriage is a journey together – a journey for two people. It is a journey meant by God to be made in happiness in search of an ever-greater happiness. Before setting out on that journey one has to be kind to himself/herself, look well, think well and pray well. In doing so, one will almost certainly find the one who will bring the happiness and joy planned by him whose wish is that you find them (McGrath & Gregoire 1977 53). This touches mainly the young. Thus the diocese of Gokwe, through the Training Centre (Shingai Programme<sup>5</sup> for 2003) gives suitable and timely instruction to young people, about the dignity of marriage love, its role and its exercise, so that having learned the value of chastity, ‘they will be able at a suitable age in honourable courtship and enter upon a marriage of their own’ (GS 49).

Sr Rita<sup>6</sup> who has also been at Shingai Training Centre for the past three years being involved in arranging and giving out the various courses and workshops was very useful in my interviews. According to her, the youths who normally come for workshops are not only given information about marriage and family life but are sometimes put in groups to discuss and debate some topics and problems that affect marriage and family life. Some of the topics for debates and

discussions may include; advantages and disadvantages of polygamy, causes and effects of divorce, the dignity of women, youths and marriage, women empowerment, child abuse and behaviour change (Shingai Programme for 2003). Sr. Rita added that during such courses, videos on marriage and family life are also shown (Sr Rita Interview, 11/08/ 2003). Such discussions, debates, dramas and videos according to the Vicar General have contributed a lot to the development of the youth in Gokwe diocese for many of them enter into Church marriage having understood the dangers of polygamy, divorce, rights of women and their general responsibility of caring for their own families in future (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). He also added that sometimes such similar courses are done at centre or parish level depending on the duration of the course though he emphasised the point that for those who come to the Training Centre, 'it is an added advantage' (Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

The preparation of marriage in Gokwe diocese, for both young and old is put into practice as a gradual and continuous process (Mr. Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). The Diocese is aware of the three main stages outlined by *Familiaris Consortio* namely; remote, proximate, and immediate preparation. Explaining the three stages, the Pope says:

Remote preparation begins in early childhood, in that wise family training which leads children to discover themselves as being endowed with rich and complex psychology and with a particular personality with its own strengths and weaknesses. It is the period when esteem for all authentic human values is instilled both in interpersonal and in social relationship, with all that this signifies for the formation of character, for the control and right use of one's inclinations, for the manner of regarding and meeting people of the opposite sex and so on. Proximate preparation involves a more specific preparation for sacraments, as it were, a rediscovery of them. This renewed catechesis of young people and others preparing for Christian marriage is absolutely necessary in order that the sacrament may be celebrated and lived with the right moral and spiritual dispositions...The immediate preparation for the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony should take place in the months and weeks immediately preceding the wedding, so as to give a new meaning, content and form to the so-called premarital enquiry required by Canon Law (FC 66).

It is a diocesan requirement as well as a recommendation that there be a long period of courtship during which those preparing for marriage get to know each

other well before they enter into marriage (Gokwe Diocese Pastoral Plan 1997: 13). This according to Sr Rita has given most of the youth time to grow physically and spiritually to be able to shoulder future responsibilities (Sr. Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). She also added that there are various other courses for the youth given at the Training Centre and these include building, and carpentry for boys, sewing and dressmaking for the girls (Shingai Programme for 2003). In addition to these courses, there is also a six months course for those who want to do Computers (Sr. Pelagia<sup>7</sup>, Interview: 05/02/2004). The one who teaches this course is Sr. Pelagia herself who holds a Degree in Computer Studies. Thus, it is a well balanced preparation as reflected in *Familiaris Consortio*: ‘The preparation courses must however be balanced; doctrinal, pedagogical, legal and medical...instructing them in such a way that those preparing for marriage will not only receive an intellectual training but also feel a desire to enter actively into the ecclesial community’ (FC 66).

In his final remarks on marriage preparation, the Vicar General emphasised the fact that such a preparation for marriage in all its stages is very necessary in the sense that in real life the acceptance of the demands of Christian marriage by the community or by the individual depends to a greater extent on the firm belief in the mystery and on the appreciation of the values that it contains (Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). Such values are therefore an added advantage to all those preparing for marriage in this first stage, and according to Orsy ‘no amount of legislation can supplement for such values in the hearts and minds of the faithful’ (Orsy 1998: 71).

#### **4.1.3 Liturgical celebration of marriage**

The second stage in the stages of pastoral care of the family is the liturgical celebration of marriage. This stage involves not only the spouses but also the whole community (Parish). Whilst courses for marriage preparation in Gokwe are done at various parishes or at *Shingai* Training Centre, the celebration of marriage is normally done at the spouses’ parishes or centres according to their choice (Mr. Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Sometimes they are done in the



Church or outside, depending on the area where the spouses come from (Sr. Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). This, however, is not very important. What is important is the celebration of marriage as stated in *Familiaris Consortio*:

Christian marriage normally requires a liturgical celebration expressing in social and community form the essential ecclesial and sacramental nature of the conjugal covenant between baptised persons. Inasmuch as it is a sacramental action of sanctification, the celebration of marriage-inserted into the liturgy, which is the summit of the Church's action and the source of her sanctifying power must be *per se* valid, worthy and fruitful (FC 77).

In Gokwe diocese, the celebration of marriage, of both the young and old normally takes place during Holy Mass (Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003) simply because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal mystery of Christ (SC 61). Fr. Chibango however added that there are other marriages that take place outside Mass for other reasons (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). But before this marriage takes place, the parish priest sees to it that nothing stands in the way of its valid and lawful celebration (CCL 1066) and it is earnestly recommended even by the bishop himself (except for mixed marriages) that spouses approach the sacraments of penance and the Blessed Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the memorial of the New Covenant is realised, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself forever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up (LG 6). It is therefore fitting that the spouses should seal their consent to give themselves to each other through the offering of their own lives by uniting it to the offering of Christ for his Church...(1 Cor 10:17).

In most cases and under normal circumstances the celebration of most marriages in Gokwe diocese include the proclamation of the word of God and a profession of faith on the part of the community of believers. There is also a careful preparation of the liturgy of the word, whereby the bishop (if he is the one officiating), priest, the deacon or the catechist instructs those present, especially the couple being married, of the importance of the sacrament of marriage (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). In that liturgy of the word, couples are exhorted to embrace Christian marriage with love and trust, for Christian marriage is the foundation of a Christian family. The whole community is

therefore called upon to actively participate in this celebration: ‘the bride and the bridegroom, the priest, the witnesses, the relatives, the friends, the other members of the faithful, all of them members of an assembly that manifests and lives the mystery of Christ and his Church’ (FC 67). And at a certain point during the celebration of marriage, before the exchange of promises (especially if it is a marriage of young people), it is common that the relatives of the bride can officially present their daughter to her bridegroom and this is normally accompanied by songs, dance, ululating and some last words of advice to the bride from her aunt (Mr Gumbo, Interview, 11/08/ 2003).

According to Fr. W. Mamvura<sup>8</sup>, the celebration of marriage in most cases in Gokwe is very simple but dignified. For the majority it is just a simple Mass and a blessing. But for a few others (according to what they can afford), big celebrations after the celebration of Mass are held. They invite relatives of both the bride and the bridegroom to come and share the joys of the new life they would have begun (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). He also added that for those who can afford, they take some time to be together in hotels or some other places as a sign that they are really for each other until death do them part. This, however, ‘is very rare and due to economic hardships, this practice is slowly dying out. The majority just marry in Church and then go back to their homes’ (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003).

Fr Mamvura went on to highlight the fact that the first two stages of pastoral care for the family have not given the diocese any big problems because parties involved (man and woman) are fully in it and ready to learn marriage instructions and receive the sacrament of marriage. Serious problems according to him begin to emerge soon after the celebration of marriage, when the Church tries to foster pastoral care after marriage (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003).

#### 4.1.4 The Church's role in fostering pastoral care after marriage

From the evidence gathered so far, this stage of fostering pastoral care after marriage is the most difficult stage for the diocese of Gokwe. It is true that the Church is aware of its duty and responsibility of fostering pastoral care after marriage to couples so that they may discover and live their new mission and vocation, but the diocese of Gokwe has tried this with little success (Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). It is true what *Familiaris Consortio* teaches: 'In order that the family may be ever more a true community of love, it is necessary that all its members should be helped in their responsibilities as they face the new problems that arise, in mutual service and in active sharing in the family' (FC 69), but the reality on the ground in Gokwe diocese tells a different story.

From a pastoral point of view according to Fr. Mamvura, given the political, economic, social and cultural difficulties which affect families in Gokwe diocese as reflected in the First and Third Chapters, it is very hard for Christian families to preserve their own Christian values, especially the value of chastity (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). Some of these difficulties according to him make it very hard for couples to stick to one partner for life and the most affected group is that of young couples. As for the elderly, Fr. Mamvura sees them to be at a better position for most of them marry in Church when they have at least established themselves. But when it is a young couple, Fr. Mamvura had this to say: 'The last time you see them is on the very day of their marriage. Soon after that the majority (especially young couples, men usually) go and stay in towns or simply have nothing to do with Church affairs. And you wonder why they entered into that marriage' (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). Others, according to Mr. Gumbo, 'only want the marriage certificate for some unknown reasons. When they get what they want they disappear' (Mr A Gumbo: Interview, 11/08/2003).

Personally I have a strong feeling that separation of married couples is worsened by the influence of modernity as I indicated in my First Chapter (1.3.3.4).

Sometimes their understanding of marriage is quickly affected and twisted by modernity. In addition to that, according to Sr. Rita, 'the various media at their disposal, magazines, books, films, radios, television (especially those staying in town), challenge their spiritual and moral values' (Sr Rita, Interview, 11/08/2003). As a result, she added, 'in no time the majority get divorced, marry a second wife or the worst of it all, misbehave and get incurable diseases' (Sr. Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). It was also noted that married couples, especially men, are not very keen for any other lesson or course after marriage except when they encounter problems that need the attention of the bishop, priest, sister or catechist. 'Only then will they come for advice or counseling' (Fr. Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003).

In spite of these setbacks, Fr. Chibango is convinced that the diocese of Gokwe is doing quite a lot in fostering pastoral care after marriage for both young and experienced couples. To this effect, the diocese has intensified marriage and family apostolate through continuing with Marriage Encounter Weekends<sup>9</sup> as reflected on *Shingai* Programme for 2003. During these Marriage Encounter Weekends, married couples assemble at one place, either at the Centre or at parish level according to arrangements. Priests, Sisters, catechists and other strong and devoted Catholics are invited to come and give some talks on marriage and family life (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Mr Gumbo went on to add, 'It is interesting when men and women meet to discuss issues pertaining to family life. Many (especially women) take it as a time of not hiding anything from each other' (Mr. Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Participants according to him are sometimes put into groups in order to discuss some important topics and asked to put down in writing their findings and to report to the rest of the participants.

This arrangement, however, has had some setbacks as noted by Mr. Gumbo who has conducted most of such workshops for years. Firstly, according to him, men were seen not to be participating enough and sometimes not even coming to such weekends or workshops. Secondly, those few men who come do not want to be in the same groups with women. Thirdly and most importantly, some couples were

taking some of the discussions and contributions as referring to their own situations at home. Thus, instead of bringing unity among married couples, this practice was sending some people away (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003).

In addition to Marriage Encounter Weekends, the Training Centre organises other meetings or instructions for married couples like Bible knowledge, Women Empowerment, Child Abuse as well as Leadership Courses for women (Shingai Programme for 2003). In addition, *Shingai* Training Centre makes available printed material for marriage and family prayers in local language (Gokwe Diocese Pastoral Plan 1997: 15). This according to Fr. Chibango has to a great extent contributed to the stability of married couples in Gokwe as printed material is available in local language. In his own words, he said: 'Those who fail to attend marriage seminars and workshops, at least can have the chance to read a lot about family life whilst at their homes' (Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). More still, according to him, experienced couples, even though some of them also need direction, are being used to tactfully and in a generous way help young families overcome some marriage problems (Fr. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). This assistance of family by another family according to *Familiaris Consortio*, is one of the simplest but most effective ways of transmitting those Christian values which are both the starting point and goal of all pastoral care (FC 69).

The idea of making old and experienced families assist young and inexperienced couples is similar to the Shona traditional way of life. In the Shona traditional settings, experienced couples assist the young and inexperienced couples, even with some private matters such as bedroom secrets (Mr. Chemhere, Interview: 15/03/2004). In Gokwe diocese to some extent, according to Mr Chemhere, this method is working. Adding to this, Sr. Rita had this to say: 'Having received that much needed help, we expect the young families in future to help other families through their witness of life and contribution' (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003).

As a way of fostering pastoral care after marriage, what I would propose as a help to young couples is the idea of Young Couples' Association whereby young couples come together and discuss issues pertaining to their situation as young couples with the help of the bishop, priests, sisters, catechists and other experienced couples. I suggest that they can be given talks, watch videos, go for picnics, celebrate their anniversaries as young couples. This is working very well in other dioceses like Chinhoyi, Gweru and the Archdiocese of Harare. I was however informed in one of my interviews with some of the priests that this idea of Young Couples' Association was already discussed by the young couples themselves and in a short time it might be implemented in the diocese of Gokwe (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 2003). I am not saying such a move is the answer to all family problems but at least it might help. Financing such a group is not a big problem because once the diocese gets people who are interested, they will organise themselves and see to it that the movement moves ahead. If it means setting up a Finance committee, then it will be their own initiative.

The diocese of Gokwe therefore hopes that such a move is going to provide so many answers to the various marriage problems that affect the young couples (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). Fr. Mamvura also added that once such a group has been established counselling and marriage renewal workshops are therefore going to be effected as the diocese journeys together with the young couples (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). Through deeper communication with these young families, a new awareness and renewal not only brings greater stability to marriage but also helps the parents to share more deeply in the preparation of their own children for future marriage (ZCBC 8).

To conclude this section on pastoral care after marriage, it has been noted that each and every stage of pastoral care for the family is crucial and irreplaceable in Gokwe diocese. Preparation for marriage is intended to be thorough and to be carried out by trained personnel. The celebration of marriage also is intended to involve the whole Christian community (Parish) witnessing to this sacramental action of sanctification. Even after the celebration of marriage, couples need to be

taken care of in order to live their new vocation and mission. But these various stages cannot achieve the intended goals without the help of the various structures of pastoral care for the family available in Gokwe diocese.

## **4.2 Effective Structures of Family Pastoral Care in Gokwe**

### **Diocese**

The Diocese of Gokwe continues to foster pastoral care of the family through various structures available in the Diocese. The ecclesial community, in particular the parish, the family, various associations, schools and hospitals are among such structures of family pastoral care. *Familiaris Consortio* teaches:

Pastoral activity is always the dynamic expression of the reality of the Church, committed to her mission of salvation. Family pastoral care too-which is a particular and specific form of pastoral activity has its operative principle and responsible agent the Church herself, through her structures and workers (FC 70).

Thus, in this section, beginning with the active participation of the parish, I shall look at each and every structure and see how it is caring for the family in Gokwe Diocese.

#### **4.2.1 The active participation of the ecclesial community/parish**

According to Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics (see appendix), by the end of 2002, the diocese had a total of 65 312 Catholics and 13 Mission stations (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). Each Mission station has a resident priest and may have several other outstations where Holy Mass is celebrated. The set up of parishes whereby a priest serves only that particular parish is not common in Gokwe. The mission stations in Gokwe diocese include; Chireya, Gumunyu, Gwanyika, Gwave, Kana, Manyoni, Nembudzia, Nasingwe, Sengwa, Siakobvu, St. John's, Tongwe and Uganda Martyrs (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). These missions in the diocese of Gokwe are effective places of operation for putting the pastoral care of the family into practice in line with what *Familiaris Consortio* teaches: 'No plan for organised pastoral work, at any level, must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral care of the family' (FC 70).



The Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* highlights in principle the importance or the cooperation of the parish in caring for the family:

By its nature the parish is the ordinary place where the faithful worship and live their Christian life. In it they can express and practice the initiatives which faith and Christian charity brings to the attention of the community of believers. The parish is the place which manifest the communion of various groups and movements, which find in it spiritual sustenance and material support. Priests and lay people will see to it that parish life is harmonious, expressing the Church as Family, where all devote themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the Breaking of bread and the prayers (EIA 100).

So to each and every family, the ecclesial community 'serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society for its renewal in Christ and transformation into God's family' (GS 40).

In Gokwe diocese, every parish or mission, has a parish or mission council<sup>10</sup>, whose duties and responsibilities are those of running the affairs of the parish (Diocesan Pastoral Council Minutes 11/10/2000). It comprises of the parish chairperson, vice chairperson, the secretary and his/her vice, the treasurer and two committee members. A similar committee is also available at diocesan level and its duties and responsibilities, though similar in nature to those at parish level, differ in degree. This is known as the Diocesan Pastoral Council<sup>11</sup> or simply DPC as popularly called (The Church of Gokwe: A Diocesan Bulletin: 10). Working together with the Director of Shingai Training Centre, the Diocesan Pastoral Council organises various courses to be given to the faithful. When such courses are arranged, each and every mission sends some representatives (from all associations), who in turn will give similar courses back to their respective missions or parishes. These courses may include; workshops on the social teaching of the Church, catechetical courses, political rights, leadership courses or women empowerment workshops (Shingai Programme for 2003). In some cases, specialists in some departments especially from the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, and the Social Welfare are sometimes invited as guest speakers (Mr Gumbo: Interview, 11/ 08/2003).

Most of the important issues that concern the faithful in the diocese are discussed when the Diocesan Pastoral Council meet. The council meets twice a year but can hold extra-ordinary meetings (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). Robinson (1964:179) in his book *The Family Apostolate in Africa* highlights some very important areas that are also emphasised by the diocese of Gokwe. These include:

- the unity of marriage, implying the exclusion of polygamy and concubinage;
- the indissolubility of marriage, with the rejection of divorce and the avoidance of whatever directly threatens the stability of the family, especially long absences of husband or wife from the home and undue interference by relatives in the domestic affairs of the elementary family;
- the exclusion of illicit birth control and of abortion, though married people are not obliged to have all the children physically possible for them;
- freedom in contracting marriage, and reaction against whatever is a threat to this: abuses of the dowry system and undue pressure by parents, whatever the motive; reaction also against premature espousals;
- love in marriage, hence due preparation for marriage resulting in the right approach to it, and previous mutual knowledge of the young people;
- the spirit of co-operation between husband and wife, supposing the recognition by men of the human rights of women outside and in marriage, as well as the due preparation of women for their role of wife and mother;
- the priority of marriage bond over all bonds of kinship;
- recognition of infidelity in marriage as a legal offence against the other partner;
- the right of parents to determine the type of religious education their children are to receive;
- the right of widows to their personal liberty, to the custody of their children who are still minors, and to their own maintenance as well as that of these children from any goods left by their husbands;
- the right of children to inherit goods from their parents, especially goods left by their parents through their work.

When such courses are given at all levels especially to families, to those preparing for marriage and to newly married couples, they become part of the diocese of Gokwe's evangelising mission. And this is in line with what is stated in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 'The condemnation of evils and injustices is also part of the ministry of evangelisation in the social field, which is an aspect of the Church's prophetic role' (SRS 41). *Familiaris Consortio* also is very much in support of such courses when it states that 'Such initiatives should be encouraged, sustained, increased in number, and of course are also open to lay people who intend to use their professional skills (medical, legal, psychological, social or educational) to help the family' (FC 70).

Popular recognition of the reflections given above is not, however, sufficient to respond to all family problems in Gokwe diocese if we leave out the contributions of the family, various associations, together with schools and hospitals available in Gokwe diocese.

#### **4.2.2 The dynamic involvement of the family**

We have seen that the parish is one of the structures for pastoral care of families. This, however, is not enough when the family itself is not mentioned or left out. In order to evangelise the people of Gokwe diocese effectively, the diocese of Gokwe encourages and equips parents with a significant amount of religious education or catechesis at grass-roots level. This benefit the parents themselves together with their children.

The diocese of Gokwe, especially the bishop together with his priests are aware that evangelisation in Gokwe diocese cannot be considered complete unless the family also carries out its mission (Gokwe Diocese Pastoral Plan 1997: 4). Thus, *Familiaris Consortio* teaches that ‘it is especially necessary to recognise the unique place that, in this field, belongs to the mission of married couples and Christian families by virtue of the grace received in the sacrament’ (FC 71). On a similar note, The African Synod launched an explicit appeal for each African Christian family to become “a privileged place for evangelical witness” (EIA 92), a true “domestic Church” (LG 11), a community which believes and evangelises, a community in dialogue, with God (FC 55), and generously open to the service of humanity (FC 62). It is in the heart of the family that parents are by word and example... the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children (CCC 1656). ‘It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptised in a privileged way ‘by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life and self-denial and active charity. Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and ‘a school for human enrichment’ (CCC 1657).

Married couples and Christian families in Gokwe diocese have a duty and responsibility of instructing their families and other families as well about family apostolate. This is what is emphasised by the various courses offered at Shingai Training Centre as well as other centres and parishes. The Bishop himself often says, 'the family is the heart and foundation of Christianity' (Diocesan Pastoral Council Minutes 17/05/95). Even though parents find it very hard to teach their own children, especially adults, Mr. L. Tarugarira<sup>12</sup>, who is the current Diocesan Pastoral Council Chairperson often encourages them to do so especially on Diocesan gatherings when he gets the chance to address the faithful (Mr L Tarugarira, Interview: 11/09/200). And all this is done for the building up of the Kingdom of God in the Diocese of Gokwe. The family can care for their children in so many ways. What *Familiaris Consortio* summarises as the apostolate of the family is also the reality on the ground in Gokwe diocese:

This apostolate will be exercised in the first place within the families of those concerned, through the witness of a life lived in conformity with the divine law in all its aspects, through the Christian formation of the children, through helping them to mature in faith, through education to chastity, through preparation for life, through vigilance in protecting them from the ideological and moral dangers with which they are often threatened, through their gradual and responsible inclusion in the ecclesial community and the civil community, through help and advice in choosing a vocation, through mutual help among family members for human and Christian growth together, and so on. The apostolate of the family will also become wider through works of spiritual and material charity towards other families, especially those most in need of help and support, towards the poor, the sick, the old, the handicapped, orphans, widows, spouses that have been abandoned, unmarried mothers and mothers-to-be in difficult situations who are tempted to have recourse to abortion, and so on (FC 71).

For this family apostolate to be realised, family prayer is given first priority. When I say family prayer I mean that prayer offered in common by both husband and wife together with their children for both the spiritual and material welfare of the family. Jesus said: 'Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.' (Mt 18:19-20). These words with which the Lord Jesus promises his presence can be

applied to the members of the Christian family in a special way. It is therefore the responsibility of parents to educate their children in prayer.

In the first place, according to Fr. Chibango, the diocese of Gokwe encourages families to have a family bible, catechism book, prayer book and the rosary (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). In the second place, Mr Tarugarira also highlighted that parents are encouraged through various courses held at Shingai Training Centre and in Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings to teach their children simple prayers and then simple catechism lessons. They are also encouraged to teach them bible stories in a simplified way, to teach their children how to pray by praying together daily especially in the evening, to pray the rosary together and other prayers especially the evening prayers (Mr L Tarugarira, Interview: 11/09/2003). This was also emphasised by the Zimbabwean bishops when they wrote: 'It is unthinkable that a family of believers should not assemble in common from time to time, to raise their hearts and minds to God in prayer' (ZCBC 4).

Mr Muchimwe, who is the vice secretary of the Diocesan Pastoral Council also pointed out that parents are as well encouraged to take their children to attend Church services and should explain to their children, the meaning and purpose of Holy Mass. He also added that at some big occasions such as birthdays and wedding anniversaries, parents might invite a priest to come and say Holy Mass in the home so that children may benefit. According to him, Holy Mass could even be said in times of crises such as illness and death (Mr Muchimwe, Interview: 11/09/2003). All this is very important for the primary spiritual formation of children as John Paul II says:

The concrete example and living witness of parents is fundamental and irreplaceable in educating their children to pray. Only by praying together with their children can a father and mother – exercising their royal priesthood – penetrate the innermost depths of their children's hearts and leave an impression that the future events in their lives will not be able to efface (FC 60).

Through the courses given to families as well as in Small Christian Communities, parents are also encouraged to teach and explain to their children the prayers of the domestic Church contrasting them with the liturgical prayers of the whole Church. They are encouraged to explain and teach their children the importance of the sacraments especially the sacraments of Christian initiation such as Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). This is also recommended by the Second Vatican Council (SC 12). Private prayers and personal prayers are also recommended, for they serve to meet various needs in life situations of those who turn to the Lord in prayer (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). *Familiaris Consortio* also clarifies this:

Apart from morning and evening prayers, certain forms of prayer are to be expressly encouraged, following the indications of the Synod Fathers, such as reading and meditating on the word of God, preparation for the reception of the sacraments, devotion and consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the various forms of veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grace before and after meals, and observance of popular devotions (FC 74).

Even though the diocese of Gokwe to a great extent has managed to teach about family apostolate especially by offering various courses through Shingai Training Centre, there has been one major set back according to Mr. Gumbo: He says, 'Not all families are practising Catholics. Sometimes you find in one family children alone as practising Catholics and parents belonging to a different denomination altogether. In another, it can be the mother, father or mother and children who are Catholics' (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). That being the case it becomes very difficult for this family apostolate to be fully realised as intended by the bishop and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference that young children, who are the spouses of tomorrow should develop an awareness and relationship with God at their mothers' knees (ZCBC 5). Mr. Gumbo added that those who grow up as Catholics in non- Catholic families cannot develop such an awareness quickly because they develop that through their own efforts. According to him, 'it is a pity that nothing has been done so far about this issue but one of the prominent catechists promised to bring it up in one of the Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings' (Mr Gumbo, Interview, 11/08/2003).

#### 4.2.3 The role of various associations

We have seen that the ecclesial community and the family itself are both indispensable structures in pastoral care of the family. The diocese of Gokwe not only encourages various associations but has already some existing groups or associations throughout the diocese. Children are expected to evangelise other children and this also applies to youths, married men and women as well. These groups meet from time to time helping each other to grow in faith. What *Familiaris Consortio* says is also true of these associations or groups, 'Each has its own characteristics, purposes, effectiveness and methods in the pastoral care of the family (FC 72).

In Gokwe diocese there are two groups of the young, namely; Catholic Youth Association<sup>13</sup> (CYA) and Missionary Childhood<sup>14</sup> for small children below the age of twelve. There are also two other groups for the adults namely; Association of Saint Anne (for married women) and the association of Saint Joseph (for married men) (Gokwe Diocese Annual Programme for 2003). Throughout the whole diocese, there is a total of 7,459 members of the St Anne's association, 2,136 of St Joseph's, 4,955 youth and 5,038 Missionary Childhood (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). The idea behind all these associations is evangelisation. These groups are supposed to meet and evangelise each other, helping each other to be fully human and fully alive, living faithfully their Christian faith.

Children are meant to grow physically, emotionally, morally and spiritually in the Church. This also applies to adults. Thus, the need for these associations. It is in these associations that people in that particular group get the bulk of the information and formation they need. This type of formation should be formation in its fullest sense: 'spiritual, intellectual, intuitive, human, practical and so forth' (O'Halloran 1996:57). According to Sr. Rita, sometimes they (especially the youth) are engaged in some non-spiritual activities such as soccer, netball, drama, carpentry and building so that they may get to know each other so closely. They



also hold meetings, retreats, days of recollection, workshops and congresses at centre, parish or diocesan level, and this also applies to associations of adults. (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/20030).

*Familiaris Consortio* brings out clearly some of the work of these various associations and what it summarises is also the reality on the ground in Gokwe diocese:

Some of these associations work for the preservation, transmission and protection of the wholesome ethical and cultural values of each people, the development of the human person, the medical, juridical and social protection of mothers and young children, the just advancement of women and the struggle against all that is detrimental to their dignity, the increase of mutual solidarity, knowledge of the problems connected with the responsible regulation of fertility in accordance with mutual methods...Other associations work for the building of a more just and human world; for the promotion of just laws favouring the right social order with full respect for the dignity and every legitimate freedom of the individual and the family, on both the national and the international level; for collaboration with the school and with the other institutions that complete the education of children, and so forth (FC 72).

From what I have observed through the various interviews that I carried in Gokwe diocese, I discovered that during winter, most people participate very well in their respective groups but during summer time, the majority concentrate much on their fields of cotton and maize and Church programmes are given second priority. I have also discovered that when people meet in their respective groups, some still suffer from identity crisis. This touches those unfortunate girls with unplanned pregnancies as well as young widows whose husbands die before they are married in Church. In one of my interviews with one of these single mothers, Theresa Moyo<sup>15</sup>, she appeared to be very much worried about her status and that of those in a similar situation. In her own words she said:

I cannot join the youth because it is a group for the unmarried and single. I cannot as well join the association of Saint Anne because it is for those women who are married in Church. I have a strong feeling that we are being left out and we are not happy about it. We suffer from identity crisis (Theresa Moyo, Interview: 11/09/2003).

What I would, however, propose on this issue is that upon arrangements with the Diocesan Pastoral Council, such people may be given the green light and

necessary help to form their own group or association where they can be on their own and receive the necessary help. This has already been introduced in other dioceses such as Masvingo. An additional association (Association of St. Monica<sup>16</sup>) was introduced in the diocese of Masvingo to cater for such unfortunate girls and single mothers. These can be remarried and later join the association of Anne. In one of my interviews with a member of this association of St. Monica, she pointed out that so far, about five of their members have been remarried. According to her, 'they living happy lives with their families' (Mai Chimombe<sup>17</sup>, Interview, 10/02/2004). Thus, such a thing can also be introduced in Gokwe diocese.

From this section we have discovered that the various associations are very helpful in the pastoral care of the family. It is in such associations that issues pertaining to a particular age group are discussed. These various associations in the Diocese of Gokwe are trying their level best to care for each other through dialogue, caring confrontations, workshops, retreats and congresses. Fr. Chibango is confident that through the active participation of the Bishop himself, priests, sisters, catechists and lay leaders, these associations will reach the desired destination.

#### **4.2.4 Schools and Hospitals**

Schools and hospitals are some of the key structures in fostering pastoral care of the family. Since the diocese of Gokwe is still growing, it has very few schools and hospitals. It has a total of seven schools and three hospitals. There is Kana primary and secondary schools, Chireya primary and secondary schools, Tongwe secondary school, Gumunyu and Nembudziya primary schools (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). All these are mission schools, run by Catholic headmasters with the assistance of the parish priest and some Catholic sisters. In addition to the schools, there are also three big hospitals which are run by Catholic Sisters. These are Kana, Nembudziya and Chireya (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002).

It can be said that these schools and hospitals are proving to be of great benefit to the diocese of Gokwe especially in instilling Catholic education and Christian values into the minds and hearts of the youths. In some of the schools especially secondary schools, among the subjects offered are also religious studies, moral education and counselling (Gokwe Diocese Education Policy). Holy Mass is celebrated and days of prayers are often put on the annual programme for the schools (Shingai Programme for 2003). Thus, in this sense, what *Ecclesia in Africa* says is true: 'Catholic schools are at one and the same time places of evangelisation, well-rounded education, inculturation and initiation to the dialogue of life among young people of different religious and social backgrounds' (EIA 102). Catholic schools in Gokwe diocese are being opted for by many due to a number of well- trained Catholic teachers available: Chireya primary (21 Catholics and 2 non- Catholics), Chireya secondary (20 Catholics), Gumunyu primary (5 Catholics) (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002).

As I indicated in my First Chapter, the people of Gokwe take the issue of health very seriously. This is also indicated on the statistics for 2002. At the end of the year there was a total of 102,863 outpatients, 6,490 inpatients and 24,032 others (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). Apart from giving out medicine, Fr Mamvura added that the available Catholic nurses do some counselling to those who come especially those with cases which have nothing to do with clinical medicine. He says, 'The majority of those who are counselled are Aids patients and those looking for family planning tablets. Slowly, the Catholic nurses take their time to teach what the Church teaches on family planning' (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). In addition to that, he added that these nurses also take that opportunity to discourage some patients from seeking help from traditional healers as this would worsen some of their conditions. In most mission hospitals, he said, 'the parish priest celebrates Holy Mass once every week and visits the sick, anointing them with Holy Oils and does a bit of counselling' (Fr. Mamvura Interview: 11/08/2003).

To a great extent, according to Fr. Mamvura, the contribution of Catholic schools and hospitals in the diocese of Gokwe has been very significant especially in providing the much needed education and health. However, due to poverty, some students are said to be dropping out of school to look for employment or work in their pieces of land and never come back to continue (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). Even in hospitals, it has been noted that due to inflation and the economic hardship Zimbabwe has experienced for the past two to three years, leaving the country with 'close to eight million people in need of emergency food aid' (Financial Gazette, April 3-9: 10), Catholic hospitals in Gokwe diocese are left with no option except to raise their fees. And this has become a big problem especially to those who cannot afford. The aged, the poor, some single mothers, orphans and the underprivileged are among such people (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003).

What needs special emphasis in this section is that no single structure on its own is capable of shaping and moulding the family according to the mind of Christ. Therefore the diocese of Gokwe has seen that the parish, the family, the associations, schools and hospitals, together can contribute the necessary skills and wisdom to provide pastoral care for the family. Working hand in hand with the various structures are the pastoral agents of the care of the family. And the diocese of Gokwe has quite a number of these.

### **4.3 Pastoral Agents of the Care of the Family in Gokwe Diocese**

Apart from the various structures of pastoral care of the family available in Gokwe diocese, there are also quite a number of agents of pastoral care of the family. These include; the bishop and priests, men and women religious, catechists, diocesan bulletin, training centre and Small Christian Communities.

#### 4.3.1 The responsibility of the bishop and priests in pastoral care of the family

The person principally responsible in the diocese of Gokwe for the pastoral care of the family is the Bishop. As father and pastor, he exercises particular solicitude in this clearly priority sector of pastoral care. He devotes to it personal interest, care, time, personnel and resources, but above all, personal support for the families and for all those who, in the various diocesan structures, assist him in the pastoral care of the family (FC 73).

From the observation that I have made, in Presbyteral Council and Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings in Gokwe diocese, the bishop is always given the first chance to give his word under the title 'President's Address' (Presbyteral Council Minutes, 06/05/2003; Diocesan Pastoral Council Minutes, 10/05/2000). It is here that the bishop takes the chance to give what he wants to his flock. The bishop, together with his priests as co-workers have as their first task to preach the Gospel of God to all people, in keeping with the Lord's command. They are heralds of faith, who draw new disciples to Christ. They are as reflected in *Lumen Gentium* 'authentic teachers of the apostolic faith endowed with the authority of Christ' (LG 23, 25).

According to Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics, the diocese of Gokwe has twenty-five priests altogether for all the thirteen mission stations (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics for 2003). Together with the bishop, they are responsible for the pastoral care of the family, materially and spiritually. The responsibility of the bishop together with his priests extends not only to moral and liturgical matters but also to personal and social matters as well (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). What is reflected in *Familiaris Consortio* about bishops and priests is true about the situation of Gokwe diocese: 'They support the family in its difficulties and sufferings, caring for its members and helping them to see their lives in the light of the Gospel' (FC 73). It is the task of the teaching authority of the Church therefore to preserve the family from deviations and defections and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error.

The teaching office of the Church sees to it that the family abides in the truth that liberates (CCC 890). Thus Pope Paul VI emphasises this strongly: ‘We pastors are therefore invited to take note of this duty, more than any other members of the Church’ (EN 68).

The bishop and priests sanctify and care for the family in many ways. In Gokwe diocese, the bishop makes it a policy that apart from celebrating Holy Mass and going out for the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation, he also makes some family visits whereby he has some personal contacts with different families in all kinds of problems (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). Fr. Chibango added that the bishop also prays with the people, listens to their problems and provides some counselling when necessary. Sometimes he celebrates Family Masses, visits the sick or even buries the dead. By so doing he becomes close to the flock entrusted to his care. In his final remarks, the Vicar General pointed out that even though it is unrealistic that the bishop can visit all families, he always makes sure that he visits each and every parish, talking to the priests, parish council and the parishioners. ‘And this is the time he gets to know of the problems that affect that particular parish and the parishioners at large’ (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

In collaboration with their bishop, all the priests of Gokwe diocese are fully engaged in pastoral work. They work directly with the family and through regular interaction with families get to know most family members by name (Fr W Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). Knowing every person by name is necessitated by the idea of family cards that were introduced in the diocese. On the card is written the name of the father, mother, children (baptised and non-baptised), village and the contributions they are making to the parish in form of cash known as *mugove* in Shona (Annual Statistics 2003). In addition to family visits, priests are often invited to attend most functions that take place in most families and it is through such interaction that most secret issues that touch the family directly are shared. The priest can organise a workshop, retreat or a day of prayer with his parishioners and finally celebrates Holy Mass with them. And

such an arrangement according to Mr Gumbo deepens the spiritual life of the family (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Through the celebration of sacraments, especially Holy Mass for family members, bishops and priests set the people of God on the road to salvation and maintain the scattered people of God (EN 68).

The pastoral care of the family for the bishop and priests in Gokwe diocese does not only mean caring for spiritual needs of the family. It goes beyond that to include even material needs. The bishop is also concerned about the material needs like health, hunger and starvation (Diocesan Pastoral Council Minutes, 16/10/2002). Where necessary, the priests of Gokwe diocese have helped so many people especially during the period of drought when most families were starving. This help came mainly through donations and through Catholic Development Commission. Apart from giving out food aid the Catholic Development Commission also helps people with projects such as farming, gardening, sewing, carpentry (Diocesan Pastoral Council Minutes, 17/05/1995).

It can be seen therefore that the bishop together with his priests are doing something for the people of God but the participation of religious men and women in the diocese also deserves to be mentioned.

#### **4.3.2 The participation of men and women religious to provide care for couples and families**

The contribution that is being made to the apostolate of the family by men and women religious and consecrated persons in the diocese of Gokwe and elsewhere finds its primary, fundamental and original expression precisely in their consecration to God (FC 74).

The whole diocese of Gokwe has three congregations for the sisters, namely; the Precious Blood Sisters, who are basically teachers and nurses (Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe and Precious Blood Sisters 1992), Daughters of Calvary, whose apostolate is also teaching and nursing (Agreement between



Diocese of Gokwe and Sisters of Daughters of Calvary 1992). The diocese has also The Little Children of the Blessed Lady (LCBL) sisters whose apostolate is doing pastoral work, teaching and nursing as well. (Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe and LCBL Sisters 1994). The diocese has only two brothers whose work is to take care of mission property (Fr Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/2003). So most of the Catholic schools and hospitals in the diocese have these Sisters as teachers and nurses. But apart from teaching and nursing, some of the sisters are engaged in full time pastoral work (Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe and LCBL Sisters 1994). Part of their contract runs: 'LCBL sisters are committed to pastoral activities, in terms of the Diocesan regulations, full time catechists will receive corresponding salary in terms of the particular agreement' (Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe and LCBL sisters 1994).

Religious sisters, for their part find in their consecrated life a privileged means of effective evangelisation (Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe and LCBL Sisters 1994). These sisters in Gokwe diocese dedicate themselves to teaching and nursing the people of God, making some house visits, including those who are sick at home and in hospitals, teaching catechism, giving marriage instructions to those preparing for marriage as well as doing some counselling to those in difficult marriage situations and cases such as polygamous, mixed or divorced (Health Policy on Mission Hospitals : 1).

Through their silent witness of poverty and abnegation, of purity, and sincerity, of self-sacrifice in obedience, they are touching the hearts of many, including non- Christians who have good will and are sensitive to the promotion of Catholic values. It is a policy in the diocese that on each Mission hospital, the sisters should find ways in which they can witness to Christian life: prayers and devotions as well as assisting the dying is highly recommended. In groups or as individuals, they also identify those in all kinds of problems, the abandoned, unwanted, orphaned, poor or handicapped children and report the cases to the priests who in turn should know how best to help those identified (Health Policy

on Mission Hospitals :1). *Familiaris Consortio* lists more of such duties of religious men and women:

They can also visit families and look after the sick; they can foster relationships of respect and charity towards one- parent families or families that are in difficulties or are separated; they can offer their own work of teaching and counselling in the preparation of young people for marriage and in helping couples towards truly responsible parenthood; they can open their own houses for simple and local cordial hospitality, so that families can find there the sense of God's presence and gain a taste for prayer and recollection and see the practical examples of lives lived in charity and fraternal joy as members of the larger family of God (FC 74).

It is a great joy therefore for the diocese of Gokwe to be privileged with such religious women who are a sign of total availability to God, to the diocese of Gokwe and to their brethren. But for their work to be easy they need catechists to provide the groundwork.

#### **4.3.3 The involvement of catechists in promoting family life**

Special mention should be made of the work that is being done by the catechists in the diocese of Gokwe, working in collaboration with the priests in providing pastoral care for the family. *Ecclesia in Africa* also commends on the indispensable role of these catechists: 'The role of the catechists has been and remains a determinative force in the implantation and expansion of the Church in Africa' (EIA 91).

The whole diocese of Gokwe has a total of 489 catechists (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002). In my interview with one of the full time catechists, Mr Gumbo, he mentioned that of these 489 catechists, only three are full time or paid catechists namely; Mr A. Gumbo, Mr R. Zinyohwera, and Mr J. Sibindi (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). The rest are voluntary catechists<sup>18</sup> but are doing a lot for the diocese. All the trained catechists are based on missions but they work for the whole diocese, giving courses, retreats, marriage instructions, training other catechists, giving Holy Communion to the sick, the aged and the dying, making house and hospital visits as well as teaching catechism. They teach

catechism and pray with families when they visit their homes (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003).

The work of the voluntary catechists is similar to that of the trained but they do that from their respective homes. They do not stay at the mission or parish. Their work, like that of sisters and the trained catechists is to work for the diocese especially assisting the priests in teaching catechism, visiting the sick and giving marriage instructions (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). Sr Rita made a long contribution on voluntary catechists. According to her, whilst everything is going on well for the catechists in the diocese of Gokwe, there is however need for more trained catechists since the ones currently working are aging. Secondly, voluntary catechists need some renewal courses so as to deepen their knowledge of the scriptures and the teaching of the Church. Their work also needs to be monitored by the priests from time to time to see whether or not they are working for the good of the family. They have no means of transport and it is very hard for them to visit each and every family in the rural areas because of the distance. Lastly but more importantly, she highlighted that the diocese needs a syllabus or a constitution that guides and directs the work of catechists and all those who assist priests in teaching catechism (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003).

#### **4.3.4 The role of the diocesan bulletin**

The role of the diocesan bulletin deserves a word of its own. This paper has proved to be of great use especially in the area of communication within the diocese.

The diocese communicates very well through the diocesan bulletin called 'The Church of Gokwe', being produced three times a year, with a total of about 1500 to 2000 copies (The Church Of Gokwe, June 2002). The work of producing this booklet is not for a single person but team work. The editorial team comprises of Fr. C.M. Chibango as the editor, being assisted by Fr. W. Mamvura, Fr. M. U. Iwueke and Sister Makupe (The Church Of Gokwe, December 2002:2). Even

though not all people in the diocese have access to this diocesan paper due to language (English) and shortage of copies, this bulletin is proving to be of great help to the diocese especially in the area of information, cultural and Catholic promotion, formation and education (Fr C Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

In my interview with the editor of the diocesan bulletin, Fr C. Chibango, he mentioned that the bulletin is divided into various sections to cater for all age groups. In this interview, he said,

There is a section for the youth, women and men as well as that for the Missionary Childhood. On each and every section you find relevant information pertaining to that particular group. These sections are providing relevant material especially today when our people are being damaged by what they read from books and periodicals, television and radio, films and videos. All these affect them culturally, economically, politically, morally and spiritually, and they make our people lose focus of sound Christian values. It is therefore the responsibility of our diocesan bulletin to provide maximum protection especially to our youths from any form of aggression they might get from the media (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

Fr Chibango also added that 'it is also interesting to note that the majority of those who provide articles to be published are the people themselves' (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003). Their contributions range from simple jokes and bible quiz to some controversial issues such as violence in homes, divorce, polygyny, human and women rights, child abuse, abortion and many others. Quite often they capture diocesan events like ordinations, retreats, opening of churches and so forth (The Church Of Gokwe, June 2002: 17). The bishop, priests and sisters also make use of this bulletin to teach and inform the faithful about any issues of faith and morals. In one of his many messages to his faithful, Bishop A. Floro, the current bishop of Gokwe diocese writes:

I encourage you to pray the rosary as you pray for peace in our country and for a solution to the grave problems besetting our people. Pray the rosary as individuals, family and at community level. Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with God's Blessings. May the Prince of Peace bless us and bless our people with true peace and love and an end to the present woes in our country (The Church Of Gokwe, December 2002: 6).

In his final words, the editor of the bulletin mentioned that even though their diocesan bulletin is contributing a lot in the area of communication, he still feels that it can even do more if they produce some copies in local language because currently, all copies are in English and the majority of the people, especially those in rural areas do not understand English quite well. Thus, according to FR. C. Chibango, 'There is need for a Shona bulletin that caters for all, since the majority of the inhabitants of Gokwe diocese are mainly Shona speaking people' (Fr C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

#### **4.3.5 The role of Small Christian Communities**

Right from the beginning of the African Synod, the Synod Fathers recognised that the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships (EIA 89).

In my interviews with Mr Gumbo, he pointed out that the Small Christian Communities are available in Gokwe diocese and are proving to be very effective because the majority of them were started not by the bishop or priests but by the lay people themselves after having seen them flourishing in other dioceses, especially Harare diocese (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Families close to each other just started to come together in the evenings to say prayers together until this idea was adopted by other people from various missions (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). Now in Gokwe diocese, each and every mission has such communities, with Kana mission having the highest (120), followed by Uganda Martyrs with 68. But the total number of these Small Christian Communities in Gokwe is 305 (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics 2002).

The African Synod described the characteristics of Small Christian Communities as follows:

primarily they should be places of evangelising themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's Word, encourage members

themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for everybody, a love, which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups (EIA 89).

Adding to this, O'Halloran said:

in simpler terms these are groups whose members believe in, and are committed to Christ and strive to share all aspects of their lives, such as faith, commitment, worship, ideas, intuitions, friendship, material possessions, and good works...who relate deeply to one another, giving witness in their unity to the harmony of the Trinity, being, in fact, body of Christ...that are anchored in the Eucharist, word of God, prayer, reconciliation, and reflection (O'Halloran 1996:44).

Small Christian Communities in the diocese of Gokwe, like associations of families for families, foster among the faithful a lively sense of solidarity, to favour a manner of living inspired by the gospel and by the faith of the Church, to form consciences according to Christian values and not according to the standards and values of public opinion. In addition, people are stimulated to perform some works of charity from deep down in their hearts and with a spirit of openness (FC 72). In one of my interviews with Mr Gumbo, he mentioned that families in difficult cases such as the divorced, single parents, the aged, orphans or even those in economic problems are taken care of in these Small Christian Communities. When people in such difficult cases are identified, assistance will then come through the leaders of such communities who know their people very well. This type of assistance often comes from Catholic Relief Services such as Catholic Development Commission and Lenten Sacrifice Campaign (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003).

In areas where these Small Christian Communities have been introduced, it is true to a great extent that many people are joining (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). As indicated on the Statistics, there has been an increase in the number of baptisms and Catholic marriages as well as the Catholic population in the whole diocese (Annual Statistics 2002). And this is a great achievement on the part of the diocese (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003).

In his concluding remarks, Mr Gumbo highlighted that they have identified some areas that need attention in some of the communities. It was seen that most of the communities have only women and children and very few men actively participate due to some unknown reasons (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). To this, Sr Rita also added: 'Maybe men think that Small Christian Communities are only for women' (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). She also mentioned that during summer time attendance is very low since people will be busy in their fields. In addition, some communities suffer the problem of organisation and poor leadership since the majority of the animators are not properly trained. It is of vital importance therefore on the part of the clergy, especially the bishop, together with the priests to see to it that leaders of such communities are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to lead and direct these Small Christian Communities.

At one time when I was still in Gokwe, the diocese sent one priest, a catechist and a sister to South Africa for a workshop on Small Christian Communities. Mr. Gumbo was one of them and can contribute a lot to this topic. Thus, it is a feeling of many people in Gokwe diocese that since such people are still available, they can be used to conduct more workshops for the betterment of other animators of these Small Christian Communities. Such workshops can be done at centre, parish level or at Shingai Training Centre according to arrangements.

#### **4.3.6 The role of Shingai Training Centre**

We cannot talk of effective evangelisation of the people of Gokwe diocese and not mention *Shingai* Training Centre. The word *Shingai* literally means persevere. But persevere in what? It is perseverance in pastoral care for the family of God.

*Shingai* Training Centre was built in 1976 when it was still Hwange diocese for Gokwe diocese was subdivided from the formally sprawling diocese of Hwange. The same purpose for which it was built before Gokwe diocese was created is the



same purpose for which it is being used today. The man currently in charge of the Centre is Father James Planells but he was reported to have gone for home leave when I visited the Training Centre to make my interviews. Fr Planells is assisted by Sister Rita and Mr Gumbo (catechist) (These two were however available for comment). Together the three make the Pastoral Team<sup>19</sup> (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). *Shingai* Training Centre is, therefore, the centre of most of the apostolate carried out in the diocese of Gokwe.

In my interview with Sr Rita who is in charge of the catechetical department, she mentioned that basically, *Shingai* Training Centre aims at increasing and improving the quality of Christian formation and understanding of the faith and this is achieved through various courses and workshops that are conducted (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). She also added that through the various courses offered, with people coming from all over the diocese, sharing their problems and life experiences, the diocese also becomes aware of the reality on the ground. It becomes aware that people find problems of marriage and family life, problems of divorce, polygyny, abortion, mixed and trial marriages, free unions, family planning and many others. The diocese also becomes aware that the area of catechism is to be emphasised or else revisited (Sr Rita, Interview: 11/08/2003). Mr Gumbo also added that it is not only due to ignorance that people have no knowledge of certain issues relating to the aforementioned problems, but there are also some social, cultural, psychological and economic factors (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Thus when courses and workshops are planned, most of these areas are addressed (*Shingai Programme for 2002*).

Mr Gumbo added that those invited to give talks and workshops range from priests, sisters, and catechists to doctors, nurses and social workers (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Every year the Centre conducts about 50 to 60 various courses and the duration of each and every course or workshop depends on the nature of the topics discussed (*Shingai Programme for 2003*). In most cases when serious issues like human rights, Justice and Peace, Youth and Marriage are being discussed, every parish is expected to bring one or two representatives (Sr Rita,

Interview: 11/08/2003) According to Mr Gumbo, those who come for the workshops are also expected to give similar courses at mission or parish levels. He was also confident that even though some problems like polygamy and divorce have no clear-cut solutions, with the help of Shingai Training Centre, most of the problems like ignorance of the teaching of the Church about marriage and family life are being solved (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003).

Mr Gumbo went on to mention that *Shingai* Training Centre is not only open to Catholics who want to come for courses. As a way of getting more money to sustain itself, it opens its doors to all those who want to come for workshops of any kind except for political gatherings. Those who look for accommodation for a night or two are also most welcome at Shingai Training Centre (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/2003). Such meetings and workshops of non- Catholics are however not put on the Annual Programme for the training centre but are arranged as per agreement with the pastoral team<sup>19</sup>. The money that is got through these bookings is latter used to run the centre and pay for its bills (Mr Gumbo, Interview: 1/08/2003). In addition to that, when Catholics come for their courses and workshops, the amount they are supposed to pay for their food and lodging is sometimes subsidized. Thus, on *Shingai* Programme, some courses are just free of charge (Shingai Programme for 2003).

As a conclusion to this section on agents of pastoral care of the family, we have seen that the diocese of Gokwe has quite a number of pastoral agents for the care of the family. These agents try to work together for no agent on its own can answer all the problems that affect marriage and family life. Each and every agent plays its part that is indispensable; the bishop, priests, religious men and women, catechists, Small Christian Communities as well as the Training Centre. The role played by each of these in caring for the family is not to be minimised in any case and they always operate in line with the special targets underlined by the diocese for the next ten years.

#### 4.4 Gokwe Diocese Special Targets for the next Ten Years

In an effort to evangelise the people of Gokwe diocese and provide maximum care for the family, the church of Gokwe has come up with special targets for the next ten years (Diocesan Pastoral Plan 1997:14-15). Most of the means to achieve some of these targets depend very much on the available resources in Gokwe diocese, especially the effective *Shingai* Pastoral Centre.

1. Firstly the diocese aims at increasing the quality of Christian formation and understanding of the Catholic faith. This is going to be achieved through improving the way of teaching catechism, obtaining a properly adapted catechism and increasing biblical formation. In addition to that there is need to reflect on and explain thoroughly the Christian vision of the present life and of the life to come, with the aim of purifying in Christ the beliefs of African culture about the spirits of the deceased. More still there is need for spreading the teaching of the Catholic Church about current moral and social issues, such as family planning, women's dignity and status, a just political order, honesty in professional life without dishonesty and corruption, a just economic order and the evil of abortion. Through various courses arranged by the priests and given through the Training Centre, we hope to get maximum results.

2. As Gokwe diocese focus is also put on promoting the spiritual growth in Christ of the faithful and a more intimate communion with God expressed in personal prayer and in trust and loving service to him. This can be achieved through forming some prayer groups and promoting Small Christian Communities.

3. Thirdly, since the diocese has discovered that Small Christian Communities are very effective, it now aims at promoting the increase of such Communities with the help of the members of the communities already established.

4. The diocese also intends to examine the practice of *Kurova guva* (bringing home ceremony) and other similar customs that might be in contrast with the teaching of the Church especially the issue of ancestor veneration. It also wants

to make sure that when such rituals are performed by Catholics everything will be in conformity with the Christian faith.

5. It is also within the targets of the diocese to stimulate the involvement of Catholics in action for justice and peace in fulfilling the social demands of our faith. This is going to be achieved through promoting the formation of justice and peace committees in our Christian communities, creating Caritas committees in each Christian community as well as getting involved in projects that promote development.

6. The diocese of Gokwe also wants to intensify marriage instructions and family apostolate. This is going to be achieved through giving pre-marital instructions and other courses for the youth, through the continuation of marriage encounter weekends, organising other meetings or instructions for married people and introduce the idea of Young Couples' Association to care for the newly married.

7. Even though most of the people in Gokwe diocese are poor, the diocese also aims at promoting a self-reliant and self-supporting Church, a Church that is able to support and cater for poor members of her community and minister to herself. This can be achieved through a revision of what is established as mandatory contribution and of all the other means with which the faithful support the Church. Part of the contributions will cater for the poor members of our community.

8. The diocese has in mind the idea of building a Minor Seminary. In training these young men to be future priests, the whole training must have as its object to make them true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd.

9. Caring for the family cannot be effective if there are no priests to do the work. Thus the diocese of Gokwe also aims at establishing new missions and invites more priests from other countries to come and help in the diocese.

10. Lastly it is also the concern of the church of Gokwe diocese to encourage families to build good, healthy, hygienic and comfortable homes.

According to my own observations and the interviews that I conducted, for the past six years, the diocese of Gokwe has managed to fulfil to a great extent some of its targets. By conducting various courses in catechism, it has managed, though not fully, to increase the quality of Christian formation and understanding of Catholic faith. This quality of Christian life is also effected by the many Small Christian Communities in the diocese. This Christian life is however challenged by the issue of *kurova guva* that was only adopted by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference *ad experimentum* in 1982.

Since Gokwe diocese is a typically rural diocese which mainly thrives on subsistence agriculture, the issue of establishing a self-reliant Church is hard to come by. The money that is contributed as during Lenten Sacrifice Campaign is far much below the expected. It cannot even cater for the poor people of one parish (Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics for 2002). Also hard to come by is the issue of building the minor seminary due to lack of funds. The Vicar General (Fr C. Chibango) also pointed out that the bishop is working hard to source the funds for this project (Fr Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

Apart from these setbacks, the Vicar general was confident that the diocese of Gokwe is determined to work hard for the realisation of their targets (Fr Chibango, Interview: 11/09/2003).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Whilst my First and Third Chapters present the concrete life-situation of the family in Gokwe Diocese as well as some significant challenges and problems that hinder effective evangelisation, the main aim of Chapter Four was to try and look for concrete pastoral solutions and proposals to such problems and

challenges. Most of the pastoral solutions come out clearly in the diocese's effort in taking seriously the various stages of pastoral care for the family, effective structures and pastoral agents of the care of the family.

The various stages are equally important and have proved to be very effective though not without some problems especially in the Church's effort to foster pastoral care after marriage. Even though some of the problems have no immediate solutions, the Diocese discovered that proper catechesis is key to solving most of the problems that affect family life. This catechesis is made available to the people through various structures and agents available in the Diocese such as Catholic schools, hospitals, priests, catechists, the Diocesan Training Centre and many others. The Diocese's commitment and dedication to helping and upgrading family standards is manifested in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, especially in the Diocese's targets for the next ten years which the Vicar General, Fr. C. Chibango, is so confident will help significantly in providing some concrete pastoral solutions to the problems that hinder effective evangelisation in the Diocese.

## Notes to Chapter Four

- <sup>1</sup>Evangelisation- It is the proclamation of the Good news of Christ not only by the proclamation of the Word but also by the witness of life (EIA 55).
- <sup>2</sup>Vision statement-It is a compass or a guiding principle in our pastoral work that helps us not to lose focus of what we want to achieve.
- <sup>3</sup>Interview: Mr. A. Gumbo on 11/08/2003 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. Mr Gumbo is a trained catechist who has been at Shingai Training Centre since 1985. He helps in organising and conducting workshops. He also did a Course in Small Christian Communities in South Africa.
- <sup>4</sup>Interview: Fr. C. Chibango on 11/09/2003 at St John's Cathedral, Gokwe. Fr. C. Chibango is the current Vicar General of Gokwe Diocese. Has a Doctorate in Canon law and is also the Editor of the Diocesan Bulletin.
- <sup>5</sup>Shingai Programme- It is the programme for the Training Centre on which programmes carried out at the training centre are outlined. It is a yearly programme, from January to December.
- <sup>6</sup>Interview: Sr. Rita on 11/08/2003 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. Sr. Rita belongs to the Congregation of the Little Children of the Blessed Lady. She has been at the Training Centre for the past three years helping in organising and conducting various courses. She also works with women at Diocesan level.
- <sup>7</sup>Interview: Sr. Pelagia on 05/02/2004 at Shingai Training Centre, Gokwe. Sr. Pelagia belongs to the Congregation of the Sisters of Calvary. She holds a Degree in Computer Studies and is currently teaching Computers Studies at Shingai Training centre.
- <sup>8</sup>Interview: Fr. W. Mamvura on 11/08/2003 at the Bishop's House, Gokwe. Fr Mamvura was ordained a priest in 1998. Has a Degree in Religious Studies and is currently the Diocesan Communications Co-ordinator.
- <sup>9</sup>Marriage Encounter Weekends- These are specifically for the married. They do not meet every weekend but once per month. They come together to discuss issues that affect marriage and family life with the help of their advisors.
- <sup>10</sup>Parish Council- It is that body at parish level responsible for the administration of the affairs of the parish, both material and spiritual, with the help of the parish priest.
- <sup>11</sup>Diocesan Pastoral Council-Its administration goes beyond parish level to cater for all the administration at diocesan level. Its role is purely consultative (CCL 514) and its attention is directed towards any matters concerning pastoral work in the diocese.



- <sup>12</sup> Interview: Mr. Tarugarira on 11/09/00 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. Mr Tarugarira is a farmer by profession and is currently the Diocesan Pastoral Council Chairperson.
- <sup>13</sup> Catholic Youth Association- This is an association purely for the youth, those preparing for marriage and religious life. The diocese has no association as yet for boys or girls alone.
- <sup>14</sup> Missionary Childhood- Also known as Holy Childhood. This association is for primary school children and below, but it is strictly for baptised Catholics.
- <sup>15</sup> Interview: Theresa Moyo on 11/09/2003 at Makore Village. Theresa is a single parent but staying with her parents. She got pregnant whilst at school and since then was not given the chance to go back to school.
- <sup>16</sup> St Monica is an association of single mothers found in Masvingo Diocese whose spirituality is that of Monica the mother of St Augustine.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview: Mai Chimombe on 10/02/2004 at Mashava Parish, Masvingo. Mai Chimombe is a member of the association of St. Monica. She is a teacher by profession and is currently the Diocesan Chairperson of the association.
- <sup>18</sup> Voluntary Catechist- These are non-paid catechists who volunteer to assist the priests in parish work. They undergo a three months course before they begin their work.
- <sup>19</sup> Pastoral Team- This team stays at Shingai Training Centre and its duty is to see to it that pastoral work is effected from the Centre to all parts of the diocese. It is also responsible for arranging the annual programmes for the Training Centre.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 GENERAL CONCLUSION

The whole thesis has been an endeavour to examine the challenges of evangelising the African Christian family in the light of *Familiaris Consortio*. The research was unique by virtue of its contextualisation for it targeted Catholic families in Gokwe diocese. I could have evaluated the various challenges that affect Christian families in general but I chose to confine myself to Catholic families for the sole reason that I stayed with these people as their bishop for seven years. That being the case, I came to be so close to them and got to know most of the problems that affect their marriages and family life.

The whole thesis has four major parts. The First Chapter focused on the location and family life in Gokwe diocese. The conclusion that is brought forward in this first chapter is that many families in Gokwe diocese find it difficult to conform fully to the Christian faith and the Gospel message because of various constraints arising from the socio-economic, political, cultural, religious and other aspects in which they live. Some of these constraints include: polygamy, divorce, poverty, influence of modernity, ancestor veneration and the issue of *kurova guva*. Most of these constraints however have been and are still part of the people's culture. It is part of the people's culture to marry more than one wife, to divorce when the former wife is infertile, to inherit the wife of one's brother in the event of death, to venerate their dead and bring them back home through rituals so that they may protect the living. Thus a quick impact of the Gospel message would be rather difficult though not impossible taking into cognizance the fact that the Church will be grappling with a people's culture.

Marriage and family life are of a divine origin and significance as reflected in Chapter Two. This same chapter helped a lot in clarifying the teaching of the Church on marriage and family life and this clarification has helped narrow the gap between the ideal and the reality in which the families in Gokwe diocese live. We saw from this Second Chapter that just as the Church is not complete without its mission, so also the Christian family cannot be considered complete unless it

carries out its mission of expressing, proclaiming and transmitting the love of Christ. It fulfils its mission by accomplishing four main tasks, namely; forming a community of persons, serving life, participating in the development of society as well as sharing in the life and mission of the Church.

In the light of the reflections from Chapter Two, it was then discovered that not all is dark and gloomy for the Catholic families in Gokwe diocese. The Third Chapter highlighted that in some cases the cultural settings of these people are already a preparation for evangelisation, offering a fertile promise for a fruitful dialogue with Christianity. Even though we have discovered that effective evangelisation in the diocese of Gokwe is hindered by the beliefs and practices of the people, like polygamy, divorce, position of women in society, attitude towards sickness and healing, there are so many other aspects and elements that facilitate the progress of evangelisation. Such elements again have been part of the people's culture and they need to be emphasised strongly for they give the Shona people a respectable dignity and raise them to the same level as that of the real Christian family reflected in *Familiaris Consortio*. Thus, the African (Shona) family mirrors the Christian family to a greater extent by emphasising the aspect of community life (a life of love and communion), a life that recognises the value and sacredness of life as intended by the Creator, a life that is guided by a moral and ethical compass as well as a life that recognises the communion between the living and the dead. This can as well help us realize that people in all circumstances can actualize the Gospel message.

This on its own, however, is not enough to conclude that the Catholic families in Gokwe diocese are perfect. This would be as it were tantamount to over-emphasising the similarities at the expense of the disparities. My investigation has pinpointed those areas that need to be challenged and catechised such as polygamy, divorce, dignity of women and the people's attitude towards illness and health. These require a lot of catechesis but in a gradual process as noted by John Paul II:

What is needed is a continuous, permanent conversion which, while requiring an interior detachment from every evil and adherence to good in its fullness, is

brought about concretely in steps which lead us ever forward. Thus a dynamic process develops, one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God and the demands of his definitive and absolute love in the entire personal and social life of man. Therefore, an educational growth process is necessary in order that individual believers, families and peoples, even civilisation itself, by beginning from what they have already received of the Mystery of Christ, may patiently be led forward, arriving at a richer understanding and fuller integration of this mystery in their lives (FC 9).

Thus in addressing some of the challenges that hinder effective evangelisation in the diocese of Gokwe, much attention is put on proper catechesis, which is gradual but effective as reflected in Chapter Four. And none other than the stages of pastoral care of the family, available resources of agents and structures of pastoral care for the family in the diocese can provide the much needed results. Among the agents and structures of pastoral care for the family available in Gokwe diocese include the various parishes, the families themselves, different associations, Catholic schools and hospitals, the training Centre, diocesan bulletin, Small Christian Communities, catechists, men and women religious, priests and more importantly the bishop himself. All these have proved to be quite effective in Gokwe diocese especially in their approach as the diocese in the implementation of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan and there is a lot of hope for the future.

We cannot however say that these agents and structures will solve all problems and challenges that affect all Catholic families in Gokwe diocese. Some challenges and problems can never be solved during this time when the influence of modernity upon marriage and family life is great. At the same time some of the challenges may not have immediate answers, but the attempt made to investigate them will further the understanding of these problems and challenges and provide material for other research towards real solutions.

And now, at the end of my thesis, which is intended to finding ways of effectively evangelising the people of Gokwe diocese, calling families of today to their original position (FC 86), I wish to call all individuals and groups,

movements and associations in the Church, especially those that belong to the diocese of Gokwe to re-dedicate and re-commit themselves to appreciating and fostering family values, to identify the dangers and evils that menace family life and endeavour with re-doubled energy to creating for it an environment favourable for its development.

## REFERENCES

- Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe & Little Children of the Blessed Lady Sisters, 1994. Unpublished Material.
- Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe & the Precious Blood Sisters, 1992. Unpublished Material.
- Agreement between Diocese of Gokwe & Sisters of the Daughters of Calvary, 1992. Unpublished Material.
- Appelbaum, R P & Chambliss, W J 1995. *Sociology*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Aschwanden, H 1982. *Symbols of Life*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Bacani, T 2003. *The Christian family: Mystery of Love. Fourth World Meeting of Families*. Philippines.
- Bate, S C 1995. *Inculturation & Healing: Copying- Healing in South African Christianity*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. 1995. *Grace & Truth: A Journal of Catholic Reflection*. Vol 12, n. 2
- Berridge, A 1993. *ESAP & Education for the Poor*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Bloom, L & Ottong JG 1987. *Changing Africa: An Introduction to Sociology*. London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Blum, W G 1989. *Forms of Marriage: Monogamy Reconsidered*. Nairobi: AMECEA: Gaba Publications (Spearhead Series 105-107).
- Bockie, S 1993. *Death & Invisible powers: The World of Congo Belief*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bourdillon, M F C 1990. *Religion and Society*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. M F C 1998. *The Shona People: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with special Reference to their Religion*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Brown, C ed 1971. *The International Dictionary of New Testament Vol II*. Exeter: Paternoster Press.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Catholic Church News July/August 1998, The Church's Response to Aids in Zimbabwe.
- Central Statistical Office: 1992.
- Church of Gokwe, A Diocesan Bulletin. July 2000, June 2002 & December 2002.

- Climatic Handbook of Zimbabwe: 1992.
- Daily News: 19 June 2002, Organisation to Rehabilitate Violence.
- Daneel, M L 1998. *African EarthKeepers Vol I*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Department of Surveyor: General 1984, 1985.
- Diocesan Pastoral Council Minutes, 11/10/00. Unpublished Material.
- Financial Gazette: 3-9 April 2003, Use Economic Sense.
- Gelfand, M 1962. *Shona Religion*. Cape Town: Juta & Company.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1965. *African Background*. Cape Town: Juta and Company.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1973. *The Genuine Shona: Survival Values of an African Culture*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1979. *Growing up in Shona Society*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.
- Gokwe Diocese Annual Statistics, 2003. Unpublished Material.
- Gokwe Diocese Pastoral Plan, 1997. Unpublished Material.
- Gokwe District Records 1999.
- Gokwe Diocese Education Policy. Unpublished Material.
- Gokwe Health Statistics: 2002/2004.
- Gordon, S W 1983. *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. London: SCM.
- Grace and truth 1999 vol.16, n. 1.
- Hastings, A 1973. *Christian Marriage in Africa*. London: SPCK.
- Henslin, J M 1988. *Essentials of Sociology*. London: Allyn Bacon.
- Hillman, E 1975. *Polygamy Reconsidered: African Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Holleman J F 1952. *Shona Customary Law*. London: Oxford University Press.
- John Paul II, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations. 2 October 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Address to the participants of the International Forum on the Active Ageing. 5 September 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1986. World Day of Peace Message. no. 5.
- Kalilombe, P A 1999. *Doing Theology at Grassroots: Theological Essays from Malawi*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Kisembo, B, Magesa, L, & Shorter, A 1998. *African Christian Marriage*. Nairobi: Pauline Publishers.



- Landy, D 1977. *Culture, Disease and Healing*. New York: Macmillan.
- Lawler, M G & Roberts, W P 1996. *Christian marriage and Family: Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.
- MacNutt, F 1974. *Healing: Notre Dame*. Indiana: Ave Maria.
- Magesa, L 1997. *The Moral traditions of Abundant Life*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications.
- McDonald, J F 1983. *Sacraments in the Christian Life*. Slough: St Paul Publications.
- McGrath, M and Gregoire, N 1977. *Our Way to love and Marriage*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.
- Mbiti, J S 1969. *African Religion and Philosophy*. Nairobi: East African Publishers.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1975. *Introduction to African Religion*. Chicago: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- Mudenge, S I G 1988. *The Political History of Munhumutapa*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Mugambi, J N K 1995. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. Nairobi: East African Publishers.
- Mulago, V 1991. *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*. New York: Paragon House.
- Nyamiti, C 1984. *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Ochiagha, C C 1997. *Value Re-Orientation Programme for Youths: An Alternative Approach*. Onitsha: Spiritan Publication.
- Odetola, T O, Oloruntimehin, O, & Aweda, D A 1983. *Man and Society in Africa: An Introduction to Sociology*. London: Butler & Tunner Ltd.
- Ogbonnaya, A 1994. *On Communitarian Divinity: An African Interpretation of the Trinity*. New York: Paragon House.
- O'Halloran, J 1996. *Small Christian Communities*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Okolo, C B 1978. *The African Church and the Signs of the Times: A Socio-Political Analysis*. Eldoret: Gaba Publications.

- Okure, T 1990. *32 Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*. Eldoret: Gaba Publications.
- Onyeocha, A E 1983. *Family Apostolate in Igboland*. Roma: Citta Nuova Publishers.
- Orobator, A E 1966. *The Church as Family: African Ecclesiology in its Social Context*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications.
- Orsy, L 1988. *Marriage in Canon Law: Texts & Comments, Reflections & Questions*. Dublin: Dominican Publications.
- Parrinder, G 1969. *Religion in Africa*. London: Pall Mall Press.
- Phillips, A & Morris H F. 1971. *Marriage Laws in Africa*. London: Camelot Press Ltd.
- Presbyteral Council Minutes, 19/02/02; 16/07/03; 17/05/95. Unpublished Material.
- Report to Rome. 1992-1997:1
- Robinson, J M 1964. *The Family Apostolate and Africa*. Dublin: Helicon.
- Schoffeleers, M 1991. 'Ritual Healing & Political Acquiescence: The Case Study of the Zionist Churches in Southern Africa'. (Africa 60, 1: 1-25).
- Shingai Training Centre, Programme for 2003. Unpublished Material.
- Shorter, 1978. *African Christian Spirituality*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.
- Sirico, R (ed) 2000. *The Social Agenda: A Collection of Magisterial Texts*. Vatican.
- Stagman, J G 1978. *An Outline of the Geology of Rhodesia*. Salisbury: Government Printers.
- The Canon Law Letter & Spirit: A Practical Guide to the Code of Canon Law. 1995. Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman.
- The Jerusalem Bible 1968. Darton: Longman & Todd.
- Tribal Trust Land Act No. 9, 1967.
- Walligo, J M, Crollius, A R et al 1986. *Inculturation: Its Meaning & Urgency*. Kampala: St Paul Publications.
- Weinrich, A K H 1982. *African Marriage in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Wilhelm, A J 1981. *Christ Among Us: A Modern Presentation of the Catholic*

*Faith*. New York: Paulist Press.

World Health Organisation 1998. Epidemiological Fact Sheet.

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference: *Catholic Directory*: 1998/1999.

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference 1984. Christian Message and Family

Life. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Zimbabwe Report to the UN. 1997:50-60

## CHURCH DOCUMENTS

- AA *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. 18 November 1965. Vatican II.
- AG *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, 7 December 1965. Vatican II.
- CA *Centesimus Annus* Encyclical Letter on The Hundredth Year: "New Things" One Hundred Years Later, Pope John Paul II, 1 May 1991.
- DH *Dignitatis Humanae*. Declaration on Religious Liberty. 7 December 1965. Vatican II.
- DR *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*. Discourse to the Saint Luke Medical-Biological Union. Pope Pius XII 12 November 1944.
- EIA *Ecclesia in Africa*. Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa. Pope John Paul II. 14 September 191995.
- EN *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, Pope Paul VI, 8 December 1975.
- FC *Familiaris Consortio*. Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World. Pope John Paul II. 22 November 1981.
- GE *Gravissimum Educationis*. Declaration on Christian Education. 28 October 1965.
- GS *Gratissiman Sane*. Letter to Families. Pope John Paul II, 2 February 1994.
- GS *Gaudium et Spes*. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. 7 December 1965. Vatican II.
- HG *Humani Generis*. Encyclical letter. Pope Pius XII, 1950.
- HV *Humanae Vitae*. Encyclical Letter on the Gospel of Life. Pope Paul VI 25 July 1968.
- IL *Instrumentum Laboris*. Pastoral Letter on the Church as Family of God. SECAM. 15 August 1998.
- LG *Lumen Gentium*. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. 21 November 1964. Vatican II.
- MD *Mulieris Dignitatem*. Apostolic Exhortation on the Dignity and Vocation of Women. Pope John Paul II. 15 August 1988.
- MM *Mater et Magistra*. Encyclical Letter on Social Progress. John XXIII. 15

May 1961.

- PP    *Populorum Progressio*. Encyclical Letter on the Development of Peoples. Paul VI 26 March 1967.
- SC    *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. 4 December 1963. Vatican II.
- SRS   *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. Encyclical Letter on Social Concern. Pope John Paul II. 30 December 1987.
- RH    *Redemptor Hominis*. Encyclical Letter on the Redeemer of Man. Pope John Paul II, 4 March 1979.

## INTERVIEWS

1. Chief Makore, Interview: 02/05/02, 20/02/02 & 19/01/03 at Makore Village, Gokwe. Chief Makore is the author's chief and has been a practising chief for more than ten years now. As chief he knows a lot about marriage and divorce. Thus he would say, 'Among the reasons leading to divorce, we can talk of impotency or sterility of husbands, accusations of witchcraft, lack of virginity on the part of the wife and many other things' (Chief Makore, Interview: 20/02/02).
2. Chief Nembudziya, Interview: 02/05/00 & 20/03/02 at Nembudziya Village, Gokwe. Chief Nembudziya is one of the most influential chiefs in Gokwe North District. Like most Chiefs he enjoys a lot of experience in the area of marriage, inheritance as well as reasons for polygamy. He argues that, 'In Gokwe area, like in most parts of the country, the causes of polygamy are many and varied. Chief and more common among them is wife inheritance. A man inherits the wife or wives of his deceased brother' (Chief Nembudziya, Interview: 02/05/00).
3. Dr. Chemhuru, Interview: 15/02/99 at Gokwe Centre. Dr. Chemhuru is a medical doctor and former Gokwe District Hospital Superintendent. As a medical doctor he has vast experience in causes and effects of HIV and AIDS. According to him, 'Due to AIDS, families disintegrate. Breadwinners are snatched...And this is sad and pathetic' (Dr. Chemhuru, Interview: 15/02/99).
4. Dr. Shamu, Interview: 20/05/00 at Masvingo General Hospital. Dr. Shamu is a medical doctor who is currently working at Masvingo General Hospital and he has been there since 1997. He did his medical studies in Russia for seven years. Talking about HIV and AIDS, Dr. Shamu said, 'In addition to lack of knowledge about the disease, there is also lack of seriousness in tackling HIV as a national disaster' (Dr. Shamu, Interview: 20/05/00).
5. Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/03 at St. John's Cathedral, Gokwe. Fr. Chibango is the current Vicar General of Gokwe Diocese. He has a Doctorate in Canon Law and is also the Editor of the Diocesan Bulletin.

Talking about the future of the Diocesan Bulletin, Fr. Chibango said, 'There is need for a Shona bulletin that caters for all, since the majority of the inhabitants of Gokwe diocese are mainly Shona speaking people' (Fr. C. Chibango, Interview: 11/09/03).

6. Fr. C. Machida, Interview: 02/05/00 at Gokomere Mission, Masvingo. Fr. Machida is a Catholic priest ordained in 1998. He has an Honours Degree in Religious Studies and is currently the Financial Administrator of Masvingo Diocese as well as the Health Co-ordinator. In his capacity as the Health Co-ordinator he emphasised the point that, 'Implementation of the National Policy on AIDS is rather relaxed' (Fr. C. Machida, Interview: 02/05/00).
7. Fr. R. Ndlovu, Interview: 20/02/99 at Gokwe Centre. Fr. Robert is one of the most senior priests in the diocese of Gokwe and is the current Chancellor of the diocese. Describing the situation in both Government and Church hospitals, Fr R. Ndlovu said, 'Both Church and Government hospitals have no enough vehicles. Sometimes vehicles of priests are used as Ambulances in most Catholic clinics and hospitals since there are no emergency vehicles to take critically ill patients to nearest hospitals' (Fr. R. Ndlovu, Interview: 20/02/99).
8. Fr. W. Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/03 at the Bishop's House, Gokwe. Fr. Mamvura was ordained a priest in 1998. He holds an Honours Degree in Religious Studies and is the current Diocesan Communications Co-ordinator. He is sometimes invited to give various courses and workshops at Shingai Training Centre, especially to Young Couples. Talking about Young Couples, Fr. Mamvura had this to say, 'The last time you see them is on the very day of their marriage. Soon after that the majority go and stay in towns or simply have nothing to do with Church affairs. And you wonder why they entered into that marriage' (Fr. W. Mamvura, Interview: 11/08/03).
9. Madzibaba Calisto Nyandoro, Interview: 15/02/03 at Nyandoro Village, Gokwe. Calisto Nyandoro is the author's Kraal head who has four wives and is a member of an African Independent Church. He has a vast



experience in polygamy and child-pledging. He values polygamists so much. He said, 'Most of them want this type of marriage to meet their labour problems. To them child-pledging has a double advantage, namely, promise of future wives. Secondly such a marriage draws all the family members of their bride wives for cheap labour' (Madzibaba Calisto Nyandoro, Interview, 15/02/03).

10. Mai Chimombe, Interview: 10/02/04 at Mashava Parish, Masvingo. Mai Chimombe is a member of the association of St Monica, an association of single mothers. She is a mother of three, a teacher by profession and is currently the diocesan Chairperson of this association. Talking about some of the members of this association who later got married, she said, 'They are living happy lives with their families' (Mai Chimombe, Interview: 10/02/04).
11. Mr. Chemhere, Interview: 15/03/04 at Chemhere Village, Gokwe. Mr Chemhere is a widower, a primary school teacher and a well respected man in the village. According to him, 'economic hardship was and still is the major cause of child-pledging' (Mr. Chemhere, Interview: 15/03/04).
12. Mr. Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/03 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. Mr Gumbo is a trained catechist who has been at Shingai Training Centre since 1885. He helps in organising and conducting workshops and has a vast experience in many areas that affect catechism, marriage and family life. From his experience as a catechist and facilitator of many workshops for married couples, he discovered that, 'it is interesting when men and women meet to discuss issues pertaining to family life' (Mr. Gumbo, Interview: 11/08/03).
13. Mr. R. Marega, Interview, 15/03/04 at Gokwe Centre. Mr Marega is a family man and a farmer by profession and he holds a certificate in Agriculture. He has been in the teaching field for years but has since retired. From what he discovered in the area of education when he was still in the teaching field, 'Whilst some families cannot afford sending their children to school, others can afford but seem not to see the value of education' (Mr. R. Marega, Interview: 15/03/04).

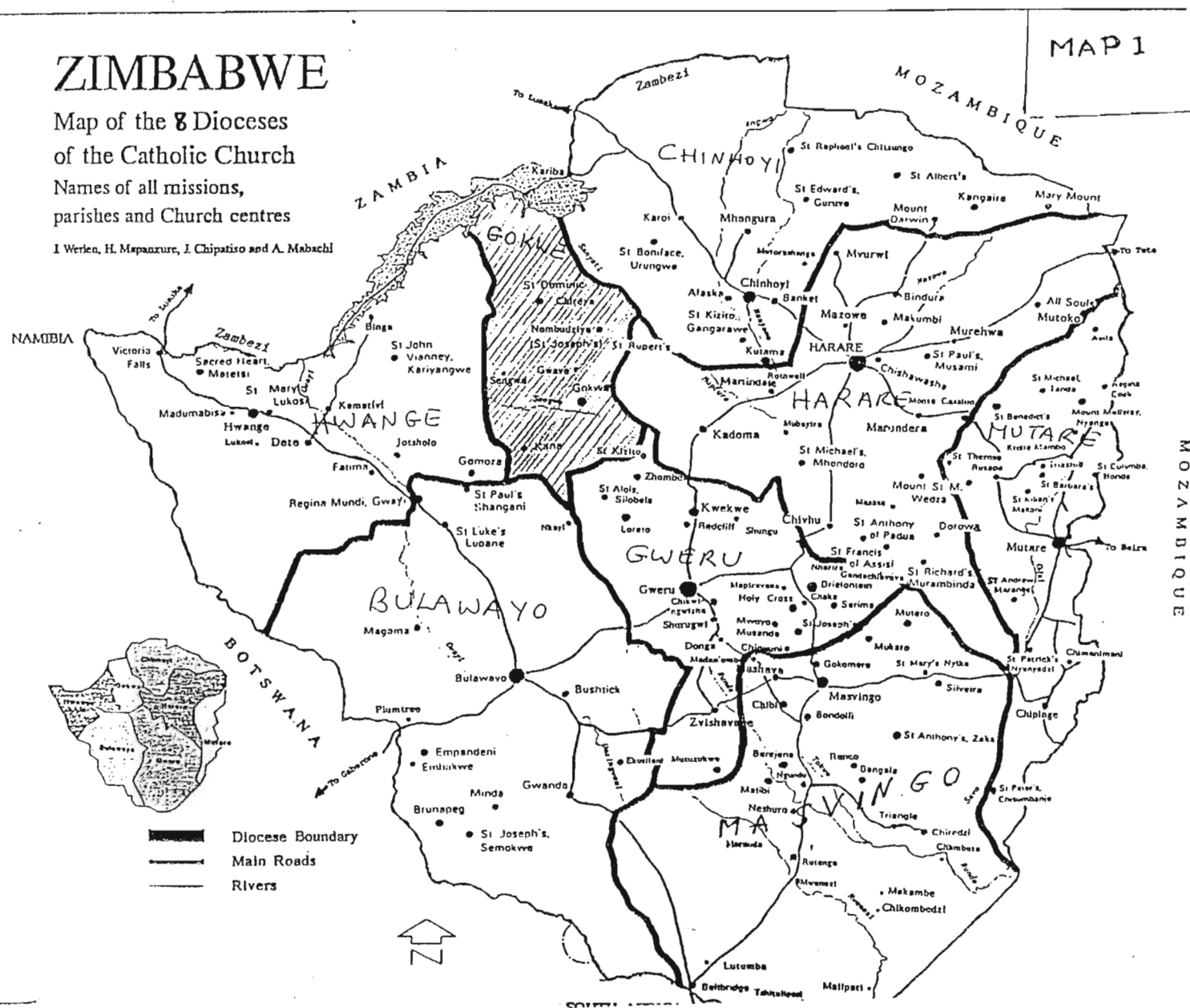
14. Mr Muchimwe, Interview: 11/09/03 & 15/03/04 at Muchimwe Village, Gokwe. Mr. Muchimwe is the Former District Education Officer and currently the Diocesan Pastoral Council Vice Chairperson. He discovered that the majority of parents in Gokwe send both children (boys and girls) to school except for some polygamous husbands and African Independent Church Leaders who still hold on to the system of sending boys only (Mr. Muchimwe, Interview: 15/03/03).
15. Mr. Tarugarira, Interview: 11/09/00 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. Mr. Tarugarira is a farmer by profession and is currently the Diocesan Pastoral Council Chairperson. He emphasised the point that parents are encouraged to teach their children Bible stories in a simplified manner, to teach them how to pray by praying together with them daily especially in the evenings' (Mr. Tarugarira, Interview: 11/09/00).
16. Sr. Pelagia, Interview: 05/02/04 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. Sr. Pelagia belongs to the Congregation of the Sisters of Calvary and she holds a Degree in Computer Studies. She is currently teaching Computers Studies at Shingai Training Centre and this course takes a period of six months (Sr. Pelagia, Interview: 05/02/04).
17. Sr. Rita, Interview: 11/08/03 at Uganda Martyrs, Gokwe. She belongs to the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Blessed Lady (LCBL) and has been at the Training Centre for the past three years organising and conducting various courses and workshops. According to her, 'most young couples divorce because the various media at their disposal challenge their spiritual and moral values' (Sr. Rita, Interview: 11/08.03).
18. Theresa Moyo, Interview: 11/09/03 at Makore Village, Gokwe. Theresa is a single mother staying with her parents. She got pregnant whilst at school in 1990 and since then was never given a chance to go back to school. With her situation, she cannot fit in any of the existing associations in the diocese and she is for the idea that the diocese introduces a new association for single mothers. Thus, she says, '...I have a strong feeling that we are being left out and we are not happy about it. We suffer from identity crisis' (Theresa Moyo, Interview: 11/09/03).



## APPENDIX

MAP 1

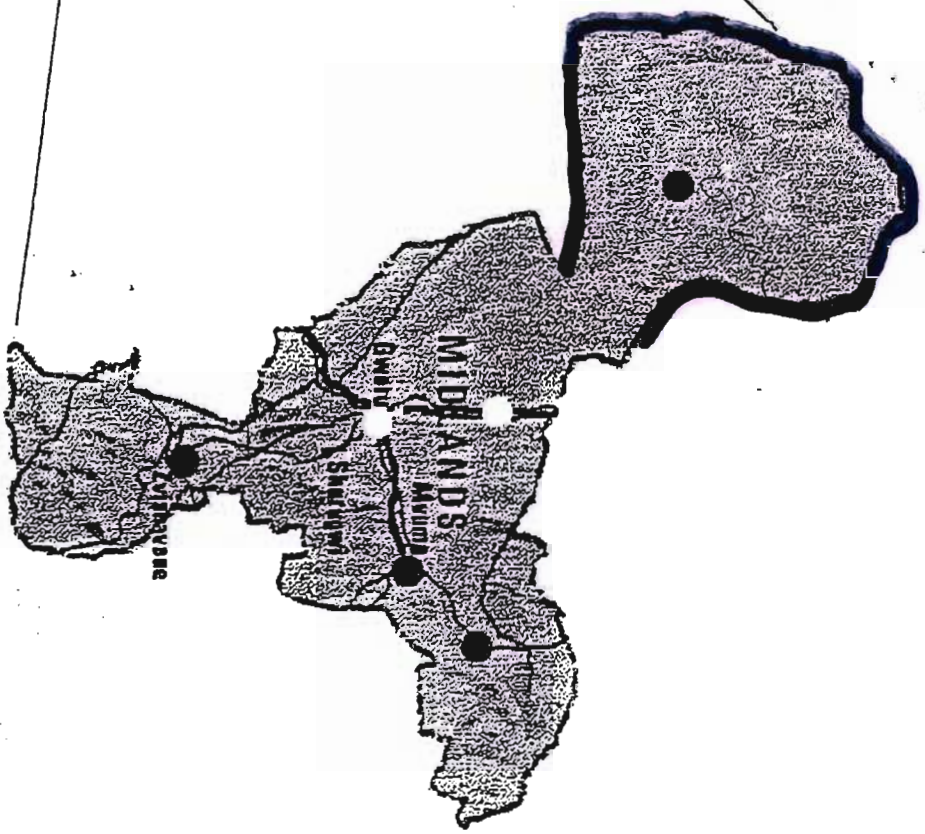
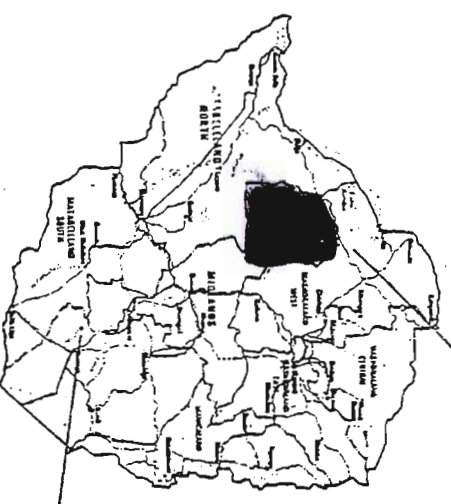
I Werlen, H. Mapauxure, J. Chipatiso and A. Mabachi



MAP 11

Gokwe District

National and  
Provincial Context





[illegible]

XXXX





## ANNUAL STATISTICS 2002

### Schools and Hospitals 2002

Formal Educ. Students				Mission School Teachers			Mission Pre-Sch.		Mission Hospitals		
Mission	Catholics	Non-Cath.	Total	Cath.	Non-Cath	Total	No.	Pupils	Out-Pat.	In-Pat.	Others
Chireya Pri.	102	708	810	21	2	23	4	300			
Chireya Sec.	100	384	484	20	0	20					
Chireya Hosp									60599	2622	2710
Gumunyu Pri.	89	109	198	5	0	5					
Gwanyika											
Kana Pri.	407	526	933	19	6	25	1	31			
Kana Sec.	115	303	418	9	9	18					
Kana Hosp.									18641	1957	8713
Mtora Hosp.									23623	1911	12609
Nembudzia Pri.	221	564	785	12	8	20	1	45			
St Johns Pre-							1	75			
Siakobvu Pre							1	47			
Tongwe Sec.	103	447	550	4	18	22					
TOTALS	1137	3041	4178	90	43	133	8	498	102863	6490	24032

### Various Collections 2002

MISSION	Mugove	Sunday	Mission	Lenten Sacri.	Seminary	Build. Fund	Matatenda	Soc.comm	M.Childhood	Totals
Chireya	52,190.00	110,904.98	14,321.70	9,117.60	12,187.50	0.00	54,314.70	0.00	0.00	253,036.48
Gumunyu	171,313.00	81,465.71	0.00	2,679.00	5,171.60	0.00	17,009.10	0.00	0.00	277,638.41
GWANYIKA	18,474.00	61,892.99	3,247.50	3,000.00	9,310.00		8,954.50	442.15	0.00	105,321.14
Gwave	32,000.00	29,000.00	7,040.00	7,672.00	0.00	0.00	12,750.00	167.00	0.00	88,629.00
Kana	91,336.70	180,737.97	5,580.00	14,100.00	16,411.00	0.00	16,753.00	2,011.16	2,140.00	329,069.83
Manyoni			4,827.00	5,845.00	1,929.00			595.00	405.00	13,601.00
Nembudzia	76,359.00	88,156.96	8,762.00	12,476.85	13,506.40	137,020.61	895.00	0.00	0.00	337,176.82
Nesigwe			1,070.00	20,495.00						21,565.00
Sengwa	77,625.00	123,880.60	15,678.90	12,922.90	20,945.00	162,328.20	21,207.25	1,234.50	900.00	436,722.35
Siakobvu	1,270.00	8,523.40	0.00	3,269.35	3,520.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	205.11	16,787.86
St. John's	65,310.45	165,451.42	9,131.05	9,626.00	11,016.50	0.00	23,943.90	2,039.35	0.00	286,518.67
Tongwe	31,387.00	63,461.01	4,220.00	7,469.15	7,238.35	0.00	36,873.85	630.00	0.00	151,279.36
Uganda MM	48,883.00	64,420.17	7,410.81	16,548.80	8,772.20	0.00	6,533.00	1,064.94	0.00	153,637.92
TOTALS	666,148.15	977,895.21	81,288.96	125,221.65	110,007.55	299,348.81	199,239.30	8,184.10	3,650.11	2,470,983.84

## ANNUAL STATISTICS 2002

### Sacraments 2002

MISSION	Catholics	Baptism		Cate-	1st Comm-	Confir-	Annointing	Marriage		Deaths	Immi-	Emmi-
		Infants	Adults	chumens	union	mation	Sick	Cath.	Mixed		grants	grants
Chireya	5813	146	289	600	321	0	50	18	13	150	200	200
Gumunyu	2959	11	79	95	14	59	3	5	6	11	15	0
Gwanyika	1565	23	52	90	5		8	2	4	15	10	5
Gwave	4937	11	126	150	126	0	6	7	0	80		0
Kana	11120	119	272	623	52	216	20	32	28	150	250	150
Manyoni	2356	30	126	130	25	120	8	10	2	18	11	0
Nembudzia	12892	121	75	340	9	0	50	60	18	26	13	9
Nesigwe	1822	8	57	42	7	15	8	2	1	19	0	2
Sengwa	8171	93	259	700	64	284	11	28	23	78	50	25
Siakobvu	1318	1	54	679	45	0	7	3	0	3	9	5
St. John's	1260	7	21	80	13	0	83	0	0	19	155	20
Tongwe	3378	16	48	56	5	18	5	8	7	5	0	0
Uganda MM	7721	39	166	400	35	88	50	19	10	50	0	1500
TOTALS	65312	625	1624	3985	721	800	309	194	112	624	713	1916

### Churches, Catechists and Associations 2002

MISSION	Churches	Centres	Small CCs	Catechists	Voluntary Catechists	St Annes	CYA	St Joseph	Missionary Childhood
Chireya	2	33	6	0	66	500	400	200	200
Gumunyu	2	19	3	0	19	240	220	60	200
GWANYIKA	2	13	6	0	15	250	225	40	300
Gwave	4	24	0	1	59	500	250	200	400
Kana	21	40	120	0	80	2568	953	523	1130
Manyoni	5	13	11	1	13	210	190	78	115
Nembudzia	16	34	12	0	68	520	510	273	821
Nesigwe	5	20	0	1	21	80	85	18	25
Sengwa	20	26	65	0	60	1000	850	300	500
Siakobvu	2	14	0	0	14	72	270	33	29
St. John's	1	1	9	0	4	87	55	34	94
Tongwe	5	20	5	0	20	432	147	177	224
Uganda MM	11	20	68	1	50	1000	800	200	1000
TOTALS	96	277	305	4	489	7459	4955	2136	5038