

**The Role of the Roman Catholic Church in
South Africa in developing an authentic
Christian Sexual Morality for Zulu Christians.**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the School of
Theology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

By:

Protas Linda Zwane

November 2003

Supervisor: Dr. Charles Ryan

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the whole thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my original work and has not been submitted in any other university.



Protas Linda Zwane

Signed on this 28 day of November 2003 at University of Natal (PMB)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Bishop M. P. Nkhumishe, the then Bishop of Witbank, for believing in me and persuading me towards undertaking this project. My gratitude also to the present bishop of Witbank, Bishop P. M. Khumalo for his support and encouragement during my studies.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Charles Ryan, for the critical role he played in guiding me through this work. His precision and attention to detail made the study to be what it is.

I am grateful to the role played by the staff and students of the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) who participated in the post-graduate seminars of the School of Theology. Their critical companionship has shaped this work to a great extent.

I am also grateful to Stellar Zulu and Ntokozo Molefe who helped me with the typing of this material.

I am also grateful to Mrs. Zondi who always accompanied me when I was conducting the interviews.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the interviewees for their openness and trust.

I would also like to acknowledge the role played by Bernard Mathey who edited this work.

I am grateful to the students of St John Vianney Seminary (1999-2001) who made me realize the need for this work.

I am grateful to the support that I continually receive from my mother, my two brothers and my sister.

I dedicate this work to my father, who has passed on into new life, who would have liked to see this work completed.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to encourage honest dialogue between the Christian teaching on human sexuality as propounded by the Roman Catholic Church and that advocated by the Zulu traditions and customs. The perceived gap between these two worldviews results in the ineffectiveness of the sexual teaching of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa and the experience of many Zulu Catholics of being torn between their Christian belief and their Zulu cultural roots. This study shows that the dialogue between these worldviews produces a relevant, positive and holistic moral sexual teaching. In order to achieve this end the thesis juxtaposes these worldviews and exposes their compatibility and incompatibility. This dialogue establishes a melting point of the Christian sexual teaching on human sexuality and the teaching of the Zulu traditions which produces a Zulu Christian theology of human sexuality.

To achieve this end the thesis is divided into six chapters. The Introduction outlines the problem and describes the approach that is followed. Chapter Two offers a brief history of the Zulu society. It also deals with the interviews conducted among the senior members of the Kwa-Mzimba village in order to learn of Zulu traditions relating to sexual matters. Chapter Three deals with interviews that were conducted among the young people of Kwa-Mzimba. These young people show Zulu traditions and customs in transition in the modern world. Chapter Four outlines the development of the Catholic teaching on human sexuality from the early church to the present day. Chapter Five presents the official teaching of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa, especially in the HIV/AIDS context. Chapter Six brings together the Zulu and the Catholic approaches and practices and gives a Contextualised Moral Sexual Teaching that is both positive and holistic.

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: THE ZULU TRADITIONAL SOCIETY.....	16
2.1 A Brief History of the Zulu Society.....	16
2.1.1. The Pre-Shaka Period (Before 1800).....	16
2.1.2. The Post-Shaka Period (1800- Today).....	17
2.2. Interviews.....	21
2.2.1. An Interview with Ndesheni Ezrome Ngubane.....	22
2.2.2. An Interview with Ntombikayise Juliet Mdletshe.....	25
2.2.3. An Interview with Fikile Ndlela ma-Dlamini.....	30
2.2.4. An Interview with Msongelwa Zondi.....	32
2.2.5. An Interview with Phillip Zondi.....	35
2.2.6. An Interview with Chief Sondelani Zondi.....	38
2.2.7. An Interview with Jacob Malinga.....	41
2.2.8. An Interview with Margaret Malinga ma-Makhathini.....	41
2.2.9. An Interview with Nomagugu Patience Ngobese ma-Molefe.....	43
2.3. Conclusion.....	45

**CHAPTER THREE: THE ZULU TRADITIONAL SOCIETY IN
THE MODERN WORLD.....48**

3.1.	Interviews with young people.....	48
3.1.1.	An Interview with Mbengeleni Khumalo.....	48
3.1.2.	An Interview with Losbhamu Masango.....	50
3.1.3.	An Interview with Nomakha Sibisi.....	52
3.1.4.	An Interview with Masesi Mtolo.....	54
3.1.5.	An Interview with Zodwa Zwane.....	56
3.1.6.	An Interview with Mabilane Ndlela.....	58
3.1.7.	An Interview with Mdikla Zuma.....	60
3.1.8.	An Interview with Mfunwa Buthelezi.....	62
3.1.9.	An Interview with Ntombifuthi Zulu.....	64
3.2.	A Transition.....	66

**CHAPTER FOUR: THE THEOLOGY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON
HUMAN SEXUALITY.....71**

4.1.	The Patristic Period (Before 400).....	71
4.2.	The Middle Ages (400 – 13 th century).....	76
4.3.	The Reformation (1483 – 1596).....	82
4.4.	The Council of Trent (1545 – 1563).....	84
4.5.	Vatican I to Vatican II (1870 – 1962).....	87
4.6.	Vatican II to Today (1962 – 2000).....	90
4.7.	Conclusion.....	96

**CHAPTER FIVE: THE TEACHINGS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH ON
HUMAN SEXUALITY.....101**

5.1.	The History of the SACBC.....	101
5.2.	The Teachings of the SACBC on Human Sexuality.....	102

5.2.1.	A Pastoral Directive on Family Planning.....	102
5.2.2.	The 1988 SACBC Statement on HIV/AIDS.....	103
5.2.3.	Pastoral Statement on AIDS.....	103
5.2.4.	Message of Hope.....	105
5.2.5.	Pastoral Letter on HIV/AIDS.....	107
5.2.6.	The Church's Response to AIDS.....	108
5.2.7.	HIV/AIDS: A Call to Action.....	122
5.3.	Dissenting Voices.....	122
5.3.1.	Continuing the Conversation.....	123
5.3.2.	The Response of a South African Woman Theologian on the Position Taken by Bishop Dowling on Condom Use as a Means of Preventing Disease and Death.....	128
5.3.3.	The Sacredness of Life: A Catholic Opinion on Condoms and AIDS.....	131
5.4.	The SACBC AIDS Office.....	134
5.4.1.	An Interview with Alison Munro.....	134
5.5.	A Questionnaire to Priests in the Vulindlela Deanery.....	138
5.6.	Conclusion.....	140
 CHAPTER SIX: FUTURE DIRECTION: A CONTEXTUALISED MORAL SEXUAL TEACHING.....		148
6.1	Catholic Theology of Human Sexuality.....	148
6.1.1	The Necessity of the Church imbibing a Local Culture.....	152
6.2	Zulu Culture.....	157
6.2.1	The Role of Parents.....	157
6.2.2	The Role of 'Advisors'.....	158
6.2.3	The Role of the Extended family and community.....	159

6.2.4	Pre-marital relations.....	160
6.2.5	Virginity.....	161
6.2.6	Mutual Respect.....	162
6.3	Values in Zulu Culture.....	162
6.3.1	Values implied by the respect for parents.....	166
6.3.2	Values implied by the extended family and community.....	168
6.3.3	Values implied by pre-marital relationships.....	168
6.3.4	Values implied by virginity.....	169
6.3.5	Values implied by fertility.....	170
6.3.6	Values implied by mutual respect.....	171
6.4	A Zulu Christian Theology of Marriage.....	172
6.4.1	The Value of Parents.....	173
6.4.2	The Role of the Extended Family and the Community.....	175
6.4.3	The Value of Pre-Marital Relationships.....	177
6.4.4	iLobolo.....	179
6.4.5	Fertility and polygamy.....	180
6.4.6.	Virginity.....	181
6.4.7.	Mutual Respect and Equality.....	184
6.5.	Catechesis on Zulu Theology.....	187
6.5.1	The Role of Parents.....	187
6.5.2	Religious Formation.....	188
6.5.3	Youth Groups.....	188
6.5.4	Small Christian Communities.....	189
6.5.5	Virginity.....	190
6.5.6	Marriage.....	191

6.6. Conclusion..... 191

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....194

APPENDIX 1.....205

APPENDIX 2.....209

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It is a common thing to hear parents or the adult supporters (sponsors) of a youth group constantly warning the youth about the dangers of sex outside marriage. Parents make sure that their children are not involved in anything that would lead them to unwanted pregnancies. For the parents this is the best way to protect their children from the dangers of sex outside marriage. Youth organisations even have programmes and expert advice on what they should avoid and how to avoid it. They would be schooled in how **not** to get involved in situations that might lead them to unchaste sexual activities. Any activity that might suggest that a person is involved sexually with the opposite sex would be met with disapproval from the peers of the youth and, in addition, parents who meet out a harsh punishment on the one who is suspected of being involved.

Young people, being human, continue to have normal human sexual urges. They continue to feel attracted to other young people of the opposite sex. They long to hug and experience the warmth of one another. They fantasise about each other's company. They want to be together and to experience each other's presence. In such situations of intense emotions they find their own way and time to express these longings to one another. They meet in secret places, without the knowledge of their parents, and they share and experience their feelings. They explore and celebrate their sexual longings. Without adult supervision and guidance, they use whatever knowledge they have from whatever source, normally the television or pop stars, to make their relationship interesting and meaningful for them. Their enjoyment will continue as long as the parents or someone in position of authority does not find out.

Sometimes it happens that the parents find out and they want to be involved. They become harsh to the young person, scold him or her, and would normally not want to discuss these issues with 'children'. In trying to live a good life the young person

would feel the need to be loyal to the parents and to their teaching, while at the same time experiencing an emptiness that needs to be filled. It becomes a continuous struggle between the need to be loyal to the parents and the need to express themselves to one another sexually. A vacuum is then created that makes the young people feel lost, rejected and misunderstood. It is at these times that the young person would start to search for answers, as the parents do not seem to understand.

One of the places where the young person hopes for acceptance and direction is the Church. Young people would join youth groups and be involved in other activities of the Church. While looking for a sympathetic and understanding response from the Church regarding sexual issues, the answer is normally a categorical 'No' to sexual intercourse and to all other activities relating to sex. There was also a time when any expression of feelings towards one of the opposite sex was frowned upon in the Church. Some of the young people continue with their relationships in the village or the community. This causes them to live two lives, which seem to contradict one another. They feel unwanted or misunderstood by both the Church and their parents. They then become rebellious as a sign of wanting to be in control of whatever they do. It is precisely at this difficult time of their life that young people would see the Church as irrelevant and out of touch with their way of life. Some would leave the Church and be content with the non-practise of their faith. They would now see the Church as imposing rules upon them, insensitive and uncaring towards all those who are unmarried, especially the young people.

The teachings of the Church on human sexuality over the centuries that have been about abstinence outside marriage and fidelity within marriage are confronted with many challenges today. The influence of western-modern culture has resulted in a gap between the theory or the teachings of the institutional church and the praxis of many Catholic Christians. This gap or vacuum that exists between the teachings of the Church and the life of its members is further widened by the powerful media, with its sex-obsessed culture. This is a big challenge for the Church, as the media makes and shapes the attitudes of so many people. This challenge comes at a time when attempts are being made on the African continent to put structures in place for

the rediscovery of Africa. Structures such as the AU¹ and NEPAD² are designed to help the peoples of Africa as they embark on the road to economic and cultural rebirth. It is crucial for theology to address this perceived gap or vacuum, as it has to do with the moral fibre of society. The concept of African Renaissance, I am convinced, will remain a dream unless African moral regeneration is given priority, and structures are put in place to enhance such a rebirth. This African rebirth demands, among other things, the revisiting and rediscovery of values imbedded in the cultures of the African peoples.

The Church, being part of society, and therefore affected by this moral decay, needs to lead the way in rediscovering the moral fibre of society, thus becoming a leaven in society and thus leading the way towards moral regeneration. In the spirit of African Renaissance, the Church is challenged to take Africa seriously. It has to be relevant and meaningful in responding to questions that are peculiar to the people of the continent. For a very long time solutions were being imported from the West to Africa. This resulted in those solutions being short-term, skin-deep and mostly contributing to people living two lives, which is a life lived during the week and a Sunday life, which is different to that of the rest of the week.

There is a big need for the Church to take inculturation seriously. In matters that relate to faith and morals the church is challenged to utter those great ancient truths in a language that the people of Africa can understand and relate to. It is also important for people to see the connection between a truth of faith or morality and their way of life. This helps them in trying to own the truth and to live it out. To be able to respond to this challenge I believe that the Church is called to take the life of the people and their experience as the starting point of theologising. To look more consistently and deeper into people's lives, and to find out what God's intention for them is, is to try to bring the good news of salvation to the very people whom the Church is trying to evangelise. This can be achieved by the Church trying to understand the lives of the people from their perspective. While taking the lives of

¹ African Union.

² New Partnership for African Development.

the people seriously it is crucial that the Church should not be perceived as an outsider, imposing some knowledge from somewhere else. Learning the culture and traditions of the people one is serving, listening to them and studying their way of life and trying to see the values embedded in their way of life, together with them, will lead to the Church taking its rightful place of influence among the people it serves. People have experienced the harsh and impolite attitude of the Church of knowing-it-all, wanting to convert people as if they have no knowledge or history. This can be seen in the attitudes of the first missionaries who came and changed everything, from the names of the local people to the way they worship, without any reference to their experiences and history. It is against this backdrop that the Church can be seen as capable of leading this re-vision. It can revisit the cultures and traditions of the people and re-appreciate them. It can lead people to reclaim the values of their culture in a different context. This in no way means that the Church should encourage people to go back and live in the past. What it means is that the Church can help in retrieving the good values that are buried away in the past - values that are essential in appreciating and living the Christian life today. These values need to be put again in front of the people that the Church is serving, and need to be used in order to minimise the gap between Christianity and the local culture. I believe that the perceived moral degradations of society today are due largely to a society that is estranged from its norms and values. A life of a society that is not built on its cultural norms and values does not have a firm foundation. It is because of this dichotomy, a Christianity that is not affected by local culture, that society is in such a state of moral degradation. People find themselves wanting to embrace the new reality of Christianity while at the same time wanting to hold on to their culture. This creates a people that is torn between these two worldviews. Attempting to bring culture to affect Christianity, and vice-versa, would assist in building up a society that is firmly founded on consistent values.

Gula summarises the direction that the church should be taking during this time. He states that:

The good is the foundation and the goal of all moral living. Ethics, then,

whether philosophical or theological, must in some way be specific about what the good is and where it can be found. The basic conviction of Christian faith is that God is good. God is the only centre of value, the fixed point of reference for Christian morality. As a result our convictions about God, which are formed and mediated by the experience of the Israelite community, Jesus, the apostolic community, and the subsequent tradition of the church ought to make a difference in the moral life. (1989:43).

Gula highlights the need to illustrate the beauty and the goodness of God in all His creation so that when this beauty and goodness is appreciated by people, it will then make a difference in the way that they live their lives daily. A fresh approach to the question of human sexuality and family life is needed as society witnesses an increase in broken families and the phenomenon of single-parent families. In South Africa apartheid³, together with its policy of migratory labour⁴, aided by industrialisation is responsible for many people not having a proper family structure, as the father is not resident at home. It will still take a long time for this damage to the family structure to be restored. It is in such situations that when the Church teaches on moral issues, the teachings are met with some degree of cynicism and indifference.

It is against this background that Bate⁵, in Keenan, puts his question so well: 'How can the Church develop a moral position regarding human sexuality which will not just be ignored and disregarded by the vast majority of Catholics as inapplicable?' (2000:217) Referring to people who are HIV positive, Bate sees an effective response as lying not in the articulation of principles and norms. For him an effective pastoral response lies in the ability of the Church to create a link between the ideals of the Church's moral teachings and the context of their human life. Bate calls this ability to create such a link 'a mission to heal'. (Keenan 2000:219). It is this 'mission to heal' that this work is interested in.

This work will attempt to look at ways of creating a link between the mission of the church and local culture. It is my hope that this work will take seriously the life and experiences of the Zulu people, and use that experience in trying to see how the Zulu

³ South African policy of segregation.

⁴ Workers from rural areas who have to make a living away from home.

⁵ An article titled 'Differences in Confessional Advice in South Africa'.

experience can affect the content and the way of communicating the moral truths to them. I will take the experience of the Zulu people as my starting point in trying to find a theology that can be relevant and meaningful to them and to their situation. I will spend a considerable amount of time listening and finding out what they regard as key values in their lives and what they see as essential, and what helps them in living good lives. Experiential knowledge is an essential ingredient for good theology. After studying and understanding the Zulu way of life I would then try and see what the teachings of the church say to their way of life and what best way can be used to communicate these truths. I would see it as important for a Zulu person to see the connections between the moral truths that the Church is teaching and his or her culture if he or she has to be convinced about what the Church teaches. It is therefore important to demonstrate this connection, for the Church to show respect for the local culture, and to facilitate a mature and convinced assimilation and internalisation of the Christian faith.

Avvento makes an apt comment when he says that we live in a society where 'sex is, perhaps, the best selling commodity on the open market.' (1982:01). He sees 'street-walking prostitution' as being refined to massage parlours and pleasure places. Such commercialisation of sex now answers a recreational need and it leads to the total worth of a person being reduced to his or her genital functioning. Avvento has noticed that among American Catholics: '... the taboos of the past cannot meet the needs of today's young adults. While these standards are not necessarily wrong, the majority of persons today simply do not recognize and accept them on a conscious level.' (1982: 121).

In trying to respond to this lack of enthusiasm of Catholic praxis McDonagh (1989) notes that there is little specific positive elaboration one can find in the Christian moral tradition for the growth into chastity of the unmarried. He also notes that moral theology and teachers have simply settled for the simple guidelines of no intercourse outside marriage. He sees such an attitude as reducing the whole sexual life to sexual intercourse. People need more help if they are to be dynamically chaste. He notes also, and rightly so, that the unmarried are also called to be people whose

sexuality promotes loving and life-enriching relationships, as signs and realisation of the presence and the power of God. Slattery⁶ echoes the same sentiment when he says:

Sexual activity outside marriage is harmful to society, a sign of a lack of commitment, dangerous, destructive to family values but does everyone believe this? Media has been more effective in forming people's consciences than the Christian community. (2001:5)

Aptly captured by Slattery (2001) is the conviction that the church has about sex outside marriage, and the conviction of people. He explains the convictions of the church on sexual matters and what the church expects from those who believe.

The questions are:

- Are people convinced?
- Is the Church talking alone?
- Is there a gap between the teaching authority of the Church and the life that is lived by people?
- What is the cause of the gap?
- If people perceive such a gap, are they going to follow what the Church teaches?

If the magisterium continues to promulgate teachings that people do not believe, this will end up in people observing the rules and norms of the magisterium and living different lives afterwards. It is a fact that people know what the magisterium teaches on certain sexual matters. The question is whether they are convinced about what it teaches, whether they believe the teachings of the magisterium. This 'gap' is largely responsible for the teaching office of the Church teaching one thing on sexual morality and people doing another thing in this regard. This shows the gap that exists between the teaching authority of the Church and the people. I will look at the language that is used by the magisterium and the language that is used by the people who are served by the magisterium. I will suggest that the different languages that

⁶ Bishop of the Diocese of Tzaneen in South Africa.

are used in the moral teaching of the Church can only become common if there is a common starting point for teaching authority of the Church and the people. This common starting point would be the experience of the people, which in this case would be the culture of the Zulu people. Such a language would be understood and accepted by both the Church and the people, as they both can relate to it.

In this work I am going to attempt to discover ways of making the teachings of the Church persuasive and appealing, as well as meaningful and relevant to the 21st century Zulu Christian. A lot of sensitivity is required if this work is to help in making a difference in people's lives.

There is a kingdom call for the unmarried, the single, the widow and the celibate, which seems to be neglected by the Church. There is a need to highlight the fact that the unmarried are not asexual. They are not automatically and statistically chaste. Chastity comes about when a person gradually integrates his or her sexual gifts into their human relationships. There is little specific positive elaboration one can find in the Christian moral tradition for the growth into chastity of the unmarried. Moral theology and teachers have simply settled for the simple guidelines of no intercourse outside marriage. Such an attitude reduces the whole sexual life to sexual intercourse. It is important to note this as it captures the perception of people who see the Church as less concerned about the sexuality of the unmarried. It is such attitudes that cause people to disregard the teachings of the Church as they feel the Church is not interested in helping them in their struggle with sexuality. Such guidelines of no sex before marriage do not help the young persons' growth to maturity. Such guidelines do not contribute anything to the moral or faith growth of the individual. All it does is to instil fear in the mind of the individual. This guideline also instils a sense of sin, should the individual be involved in sexual intercourse before marriage. It is not the mission of the Church to instil fear and a sense of sin. Rather, it is to preach the good news of salvation, to bring hope and new life to people. Looking at the way life was lived in a Zulu traditional setting, I hope to show that those who are unmarried were catered for in the activities of society. I will also show that there were activities that were directed at assisting them to celebrate their

sexuality joyfully and fully. As there were ways of encouraging a full sexual life in marriage, there were also ways of allowing the unmarried person to celebrate and enjoy being a sexual being. This work will suggest ways of affirming the sexuality of the Zulu person, before and after marriage, and will also show ways of bringing about a positive 'view of human sexuality to the Zulu people, both young and old. This will necessitate a thorough study of their way of life and how they dealt with issues that relate to their human and sexual growth. Such an approach will highlight the need of the Church to do theology from an experiential point, and then move on to teachings. This would help in affirming people's humanity.

Some people hold the belief that the Church does not have much to offer those who are not married, with regard to the appreciation and celebration of their sexuality. There are norms and prohibitions for those who are not married. The Church prohibits sexual activity outside marriage, and even the entertainment of thoughts of sexual activities, namely, fantasy, is looked upon as having the possibility of leading a person to sin. Very little or no positive call for celebration is given to the unmarried. Because of such perceived lack of positive and attractive direction some people just engage in sexual activities privately. They do not care about what the Church or the immediate community feels. They concentrate on their own needs and the satisfaction thereof.

They experiment with those of the opposite sex without adequate knowledge about sex. They try to gain knowledge and competence by sharing with their peers. Young women will feel secure, as they would normally have a relationship with a man who is older than themselves. The young woman presumes that the man has better knowledge about sexual matters, as he is older. Such experimentation, which is done without any adult interference and direction, leads sometimes to pre-marital pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. A lot of pain and hurts ensue from such relationships as neither the young man nor the young woman were informed and educated about love and fidelity.

In this modern era parents leave the sexual education of their children to the competence of the school situation. Teachers, on the other hand, cannot cope with the numbers of school children in their classes. They tend to concentrate on the intellectual achievements of the children, and neglect their social and spiritual growth. In such societies the value of a person is weighed according to the level of academic education he or she has, and the possessions and wealth that they have amassed. People that appear on television and newspapers become role models for young people because of their power and influence. There is no reference to their personality, their honesty, integrity or commitment. The value of a person is now judged according to what he or she has, rather than who he or she is. This leads to a society that is driven by a passion to have a lot of possessions, and one that defines itself according to the amount of wealth it has. This is consumerism at its worst. The values of society now get to be slowly eroded, as they do not contribute to a person's worth in a consumerist society. Individuals within society begin to look after their own success and well being only. They tend to forget about the other members of society.

Such a selfish mode of existence leads to individualism, which upholds the individual person as the centre of everything else in life. Anything in this society, and in life, is now seen as a means to satisfy the needs and urges of the individual. This leads to people exploiting others for their own enrichment. The environment is also destroyed because of such a selfish view of life. Competition for scarce resources becomes high. The rich nations hoard money at the expense of the poor ones. The poor nations end up being further marginalised. This leads to poverty, diseases and corruption. Society now degenerates as the fundamental values of society are being eroded in the name of economic emancipation and development.

It is in such a situation that the role of the Church needs to make a difference. Young people who grow up today in this environment of individualism and selfishness, notwithstanding the benefits that come along with this modern way of life, can only be self-centred. They grow within an environment that is characterised by a culture of individual rights. For them these rights mean that they can do anything they like

with their bodies. In their relationships they can use other people, as long as it serves them and they benefit from it. This is an environment that encourages people to get married for other reasons, rather than commitment and self-giving. There is very little sacrifice in these marriages, and as soon as a partner feels that the marriage does not serve his or her needs, divorce follows. This creates a difficult situation for each of the partners and for the children involved. This becomes a vicious cycle, as emotionally deprived children would experience a lack of love within themselves. They would then get involved in unacceptable ways of behaviour, as a way of getting the attention and love that they need.

The phenomenon of single parents is growing at an alarming rate. It has now become normal to find a family that is looked after by a single parent, especially by the mother. This is due to children born before marriage, divorce or the death of a spouse. Children who are born into single-parent families are deprived of the love of the other parent. They grow without the experience of a father figure. This affects them as they start to relate to other young people. They still long to have a relationship with their father, and they may find comfort in having sexual relationships early in their lives, or even develop homosexual tendencies. This would be a way of trying to make up for the deep need that they have for a parent. A single-parent family is also occasioned by modernisation and the movement of people to look for work in the big cities. Some parents get together occasionally and at certain intervals, while some men find new wives in the cities and end their relationships with their wives at home.

There is also the phenomenon of young school children who move away from their communities to attend school in different communities. This happens mainly when young people reach the level of tertiary education. As they leave their communities where they are known, they are now responsible to nobody. They become part of the crowd and they lose their individuality. If the young person has no strong family background he or she can easily succumb to peer pressure and become delinquent. This brings in the important role that should be played by the family in the life and growth of a young person.

The question that should be asked by the Church, and theology, is about the culpability of young people who get involved in different forms of deviant behaviour, without having an experience of being brought up by both parents. The culpability of young people who grow up in an environment where certain activities that are seen as unacceptable by the Church, are the order of the day, should be looked at. An example of this would be a Church that tells a young person that pre-marital sex is sinful, while all members of the village practice it, and it is even prized by families and the community. The young person, given his stage of personal growth, will be torn between following the teachings of the Church and following the precepts of his or her culture. If it happens that the young person gets involved in pre-marital sex he would be objectively wrong. It is possible that while he or she might not have had full knowledge of the rightness and wrongness of that particular act he or she might not have had the necessary freedom to actualise his or her convictions. The environment or circumstances might reduce his or her culpability in this regard. This calls for a holistic approach to morality, which includes mitigating circumstances. Such an approach demands a serious consideration of the context of the act. The person who does an act is intrinsically connected to, and influenced by, the context. If the actor is separated or taken out of his or her context in judging the gravity of the act, this might give a distorted analysis of the whole act.

The Church's teachings on sexual morality should adopt a holistic approach. In this study I hope to demonstrate the importance of the environment or the context of the Zulu people in living out their morality. Their context, their values and cultural norms inform the way they act and permeate all the dimensions of their existence. In teaching about sexual morality the Church would have to know the Zulu mentality, and their way of life. In understanding the values and customs of the Zulu people the Church would be making its teachings relevant and meaningful. To show the connection between the values that are found in the Zulu way of life and those that are taught by the Church, will help the Zulu person to identify with this new teaching. This would also lead to theology establishing connections between the two worldviews, exposing their compatibility and their incompatibility. This would be a

melting -point of these worldviews, which would lead to a Zulu Christian theology of human sexuality. Such an approach is essential, as the Christian message needs to be incarnated in the lives and values of the people.

The Christian message and the traditional lives of people should not be seen as two parallel realities. They need to be seen as one reality. The two worldviews should be in tension with one another, as that tension facilitates dialogue and growth. They should affect, enrich and challenge each other so as to be able to produce a new reality. In this new reality the two worldviews should be able to inform each other and contribute to the human Christian character of the Zulu person. Bringing the Zulu culture to dialogue with Christian theology would highlight their similarities and their differences. The similarities would establish a common ground for both the Zulu culture and Christian theology. A common ground would help in strengthening their unity and their acceptance by the Zulu person. Their differences would help in highlighting the need to think and to re-think theology in the context of the Zulu culture.

This would also show the need to make a distinction between essence and accident in theology. Theology would, therefore, have to show what belongs to the essential definition of the Christian message and what belongs to the cultural environment of the time. Such a frank and open dialogue would demand, of necessity, that some cultural practices are re-appreciated, while some, which are in direct contrast with the Christian message, be discarded. For this dialogue to happen and to be fruitful a serious study of the Zulu culture needs to be undertaken. The values that are imbedded in the Zulu culture need to be re-visited. The relevance of these traditional values to the present and modern Zulu need to be demonstrated. A connection between the values of the Zulu society and the Christian message needs to be shown. Such a connection would facilitate the Zulu person's ownership of the Christian message. It would contribute to the Zulu person becoming a Zulu and a Christian at the same time. The end-product of this dialogue would be a Zulu Christian, who lives one undivided life and who allows his or her culture to affect Christianity, while at the same time, allowing the Christian message to have an impact in his or her daily

living. This would contribute to the quality of life that is lived by the individual African or Zulu Christian and to the completeness and relevance of the Christian message. This Zulu Christian theology would produce a Zulu Christian who lives a life that is not characterised by guilt and contradictions. It would be an integrated life that is committed, convinced and secure. This life would be lived in a love that flows from a Christian conviction, and that finds its expression in the different activities and celebrations in the community.

This work will be divided into six chapters. In Chapter Two I will look at research that has been done in a Zulu traditional village of KwaMzimba (Pietermaritzburg). These will be interviews were conducted among the senior members of this village. My main aim is to establish some elements of the Zulu culture that were important for the sexual development of young people. Chapter Three will deal with the Zulu traditional society in the modern world. I will conduct interviews among the young people of this village. This will be important in showing the life of these people today as they are in transition, trying to live according to traditional custom in an atmosphere that is open to modernisation and the influence of the media, where individual rights seem to be more important than the rights of the family or those of the clan. In Chapter Four I will trace the development of Catholic theology on human sexuality, from the period of the Patristics, through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, through to the Council of Trent up to Vatican Council II and eventually to the 21st century. Chapter Five will deal with specific documents of the SACBC⁷ on human sexuality and related issues. In this chapter I will also give attention to dissenting voices, which challenge the teachings of the local hierarchy. Chapter Six will be the conclusion, where I give my own contribution on how the Church in South Africa should approach this complex and complicated, and yet rich, issue of sexuality among the Zulu people, if it is to be relevant and meaningful to them. I will do this by juxtaposing the Zulu worldview with that of the Catholic worldviews as articulated by the church over the centuries, creating a tension and an interaction between the two which will lead to the renewal of the theology of the Church on human sexuality. This will help to counter the perceived negative attitudes

⁷ South African Catholic Bishops Conference

of the Church on human sexuality. I would hope that this work would contribute to the development of a healthy and holistic appreciation of human sexuality, which needs to be a gift to be cherished and celebrated by all.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ZULU TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ZULU TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

In this section I will look briefly at the history of the Zulu traditional society. This history would be helpful to a reader who is not familiar with the history of the different ethnic groups of South Africa. This history will give a skeletal knowledge to such a reader. I will rely on the works of Msimang (1975) and Krige (1981). Msimang (1975) divides the Zulu society into two periods, namely the Pre-Shaka period and the Post-Shaka period.

2.1.1 THE PRE-SHAKA PERIOD (Before 1800)

We cannot speak of a Zulu nation before King Shaka as during this time all the Zulus were made up of small clans. These clans were scattered all over and they were led by different chiefs. The smallest unit of Zulu society was the homestead. A homestead consisted of a man, a wife or wives, their children and their relatives. Each homestead was made up of a number of houses surrounding a cattle kraal. The cattle kraal was key to the life of a family unit. It was important for the provision of the material needs of the family, for *ilobolo* and for making sacrifices. Cattle distinguished the rich from the poor. They also gave the man economic and spiritual power over the woman.

Ngwane (1997) sees *ilobolo* as recognition of the bride's family's contribution in raising the bride, a compensation for their loss of a member of their family. After the payment of *lobolo* the new wife becomes part of the homestead. She now has a hut within the homestead where she lives. There was one house for each wife, grown up child or a relative. Each wife had a piece of land and her own household projects. The houses of the wives were arranged in order of the wives 'seniority'.

Ngwane notes that *Undlunkulu* is not necessarily the first wife. It is a designated mother of the homestead heir. It was common for men of status to wait until they are quite old before marrying their great wives. This ensured that the heir would be too young to threaten the father's power or life. A Zulu clan or extended family consisted of descendants who trace their origin to a common ancestor after which the clan is named. Such clans may be widely spread and scattered. Marriage within one's clan is not allowed. Marriage was seen as a way of creating relationships between families and clans, thus ensuring peace.

During this time the Zulu chiefdom was small. It consisted of 2000 people living between Mhlathuzi and White Mfolozi rivers. Msimang (1975) notes that during this time boys were expected to go to the mountain school. It is at the mountain school that they were initiated into adulthood. They spent months or weeks in the mountain and came back as adult men, after circumcision. Dingiswayo, a Mthethwa chief, changed this tradition. He conscripted men of the same age into regiments (*amabutho*), thus enlarging his army. Other smaller groups, like the Zulus, voluntarily became his loyal subjects. Some of his subjects would be under their own chiefs and just pledge loyalty to Dingiswayo.

2.1.2 THE POST-SHAKA PERIOD (1800 – TODAY)

A brief history of the life of King Shaka will help in understanding this period better. Senzangakhona had an affair with Nandi. When Nandi fell pregnant people did not believe it and they said she is suffering from *itshaka*¹. Nandi's son was named after this bug: Shaka. Senzangakhona married Nandi and treated her harshly because he was ashamed of what he had done, as Senzangakhona did not intend having a baby with her. Due to this treatment Nandi left the royal kraal and went back to her home. Nandi's family returned the *ilobolo* to Senzangakhona. When he reached the age of fifteen, Nandi sent Shaka to stay with the Qwabe people, her relatives, as she feared that Senzangakhona might kill him. Shaka had a bad time with the Qwabes and was eventually sent to Nandi's father's sister, among the Mthethwa people. Shaka had a difficult and lonely childhood. In 1808 Dingiswayo became chief of the Mthethwa people. Shaka learnt a lot from Dingiswayo. In 1816,

¹ An insect that causes the stomach to swell.

when Shaka was 29, Senzangakhona died. Dingiswayo loaned some soldiers to Shaka to seize the chieftdom from Sigujana, one of Senzangakhona's sons. When Shaka became chief he used Dingiswayo's military practices and improved on them. In 1818 Dingiswayo died and Shaka took control of the Mthethwa chieftdom. King Shaka, after incorporating Dingiswayo's army into his, started to reinforce his reign.

The young men were now grouped into *amabutho*². They lived in military barracks. While in regiment Zulu men were not allowed to marry. King Shaka did not marry because he feared heirs. He had concubines and every woman impregnated by him was executed. In 1826 King Shaka crushed Zwide of the Ndwandwe people. When his mother died in 1827 King Shaka killed 7000 people. He wanted other families to share his grief. Many were killed also for not crying enough. He went on to declare a one-year period of mourning where there would be no farming and hunger followed. Due to this slaughtering of people and starvation King Shaka was running short of people to raid other clans. In 1828 he sent an army to raid the Pondos. On coming back he sent them to raid Soshangane, before they could even rest. It is during this time that Dingane and Mhlangane sneaked in and assassinated him.

King Shaka is the reference point for the Zulu nation. He is the one who brought all the different clans together, led by different chiefs, and formed one nation. Before him there was no Zulu nation as such. During this time many Zulu rituals were performed at night during a full moon. For them full moon meant the fullness of creation and the fullness of life. Young girls started receiving teachings on sexuality around the age of 12. It is at this age that the parents notice some physical changes in the girls. She now starts to have big breasts and pimples. The mother now explains to her about the imminent menstruation. When she starts menstruation an announcement will be made to all the neighbours, and to all the girls in the village that a particular girl has reached the stage of maturity. They say '*lona usehlelwe umhlola ongaziwayo*'³ (Msimang 1975:216). A feast will now be held in her honour. This feast is called *ukuthomba*⁴. During this feast the young girl is urged to look after her body even more carefully than before. This ritual

² Regiments.

³ Something strange has happened to her.

⁴ Becoming an adolescent.

publicly declares that a young girl has become a young woman. This *itshitshi*⁵ will now be placed under the watchful eye of *iqhikiza*⁶.

King Shaka decreed that young boys would be initiated at the royal kraal. When a boy reached the age of ten the *ingqwele*⁷ takes the boy while herding cattle in the veld and ties his vein below the foreskin with a string from the tail of a bull. After a few days this vein tears and he would be circumcised. At the age of 15 the boy will experience some physical changes. He now has pimples and his voice grows deeper. His body is now preparing for maturity. His teachers now explain to him about the imminent wet dream. During the first night of his wet dream the boy wakes his peers up at night and take the cattle out of the kraal, together with those of the neighbours, to the veld. All the other young boys, upon hearing their cattle being taken out of their kraals at night, know what had happened. They wake up and join this young man and stay with him in the veld. This young man is now called *umthombi* or *umakoti*⁸. He is now maturing into manhood. A feast is then held in his honour. After this feast he takes the cattle to the veld for the last time. Now he is an *insizwa* or *ibhungu*⁹. From now onward he looks after the cattle of the chief. The father now officially hands him over to *ingqwele*, who is the officially appointed teacher. Now the young man begins *ukweshela*¹⁰. After the acceptance of the proposal the young man together with *iqhikiza* plan a day for *ucu* (exchange of gifts). All the young men and women of the village are involved. They go out in the evening to meet in the veld. The young woman publicly declares that she loves this young man and the *iqhikiza* gives the man a white beaded necklace. The young man may give her a broom or a sleeping mat. After a few weeks the young man secretly goes to the woman's place and spends a night with her. The *iqhikiza* watches them so that they do not have sexual intercourse. This is called *ukubambanisa*¹¹.

Msimang (1975) gives an account of how young men used to propose love to young women. The young men knew that *amatshitshi* would go to draw water from the

⁵ Young woman.

⁶ Young woman responsible for looking after younger girls.

⁷ Young man responsible for looking after young men.

⁸ One is getting mature.

⁹ A mature young man.

¹⁰ When a young man proposes love to a girl.

¹¹ When the young man and the young woman meet for the first time.

river in the mornings and would go again in the afternoons either to fetch wood or to do some washing. The young man would start with *ukufesela*. This happens when the young man hides in the grass where the young women would pass. The girls were always in groups because being alone was frowned upon. As the young women came passing the young man would emerge out of the grass. He would praise the young woman he is proposing love to and dance in front of her. The young woman would ignore him. This is because she was not yet allowed to respond to young men who propose love to her. This is called *ukujutshwa*. It may also be that she did not like the young man or she just wanted to be special. The longer the proposal the more special she becomes. *Ukuqomisa*¹² took weeks, months or even years. If she was proposed to for a longer period she was deemed to be having a good character.

A young man was expected to praise a young woman whenever they passed each other. It reflected badly on a woman if a man passed by without a word of praise. The following are some of the general praises often used by men when passing a woman:

'Dudlu mntanethu! Zala bantu ziy'ebantwini, akukho ntombi yagana inyamazane'
'Gegelagege, ntaba zonke ziyangigegela'
'Iyaph'emazolweni'
'Oseyishayile akakayidli, oseyidlile akakayosi, kanti noseyidlile udl icala'
 (Msimang 1975:224)

These praises refer to a young woman who is trying to avoid the one who is proposing a relationship. They express the fact that a woman will eventually get married to a man. A woman is, therefore, advised not to avoid men as the two are meant for each other.

It was also customary for a young man to touch the breast of a woman. If her breasts were hard it meant that she was well behaved, and this encouraged young women to look after themselves. If her breasts were soft it meant that she was having a love

¹² The acceptance of the proposal by the young woman.

affair and was having sexual intercourse, and this discouraged young men from proposing love to her.

Krige notes that “Zulu marriage is a contract involving the two homes between which brides wealth has passed ” (1981:3). He notes that marriage for a Zulu woman is a drawn out process. It begins with the woman being detached from her own family and being incorporated gradually into the family of her husband. This process of incorporation begins when she has to touch the gall of the head of the cattle (*umqholiso*). This special rite is performed before she may partake of the meat and milk of her husband’s family. The ancestors of the bride continue to intervene in her affairs. They gradually disappear into the background until after her death, when she is finally brought home as a spirit in the husband’s family.

When a man marries a woman in the Zulu tradition (*ukuthatha*) he expects her to be productive and to continue the descent of his lineage. When *ilobolo* is paid the right to her reproductive powers is given to her husband’s family. Marriage subsequently transforms her from maidenhood to motherhood. After being inserted into the husband’s family she has to observe the *hlonipha* rituals¹³. She will observe all these rituals as long as she is still childbearing. Krige (1981¹⁴) notes that all the *hlonipha* rituals are lifted when the woman reaches her menopause. She is then honoured by partaking in the *inanzi*. This is the ritual that unites the husband’s family with their ancestors.

2.2 INTERVIEWS

I conducted the following interviews with interviewees from the village of Kwa-Mzimba, which is about 20 km from Pietermaritzburg. I chose this village because it is one that is closest to truly traditional Zulu community. Obviously there are variations from one community to another. The Pietermaritzburg area is an important area in the history and the culture of the Zulu people. Some chiefs of the Zulus used to live around this area, which is traditionally known as Mgungundlovu.

¹³ Avoidance rituals.

¹⁴ In her article *Marriage, Affinity and the Ancestral Realm: Zulu Marriage in Female Perspective*.

Some of the descendants of these chiefs are still alive in this area. It is an area that still practices some of the Zulu traditional customs. I visited them in their homes on a weekly basis and the interviews lasted about an hour and a half per interviewee. Mrs Zondi, a retired schoolteacher, helped me in identifying some interviewees and she took me around to introduce me to them. The interviewees in this section were born between the years 1904 and 1969. The presence and influence of Mrs Zondi was essential, as she is well known and trusted in the village. Her presence made it easy for the researcher to be accepted and to win the confidence of the interviewees.

2.2.1 INTERVIEW WITH NDESHENI EZROM NGUBANE

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 8 March 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 1924

PLACE OF BIRTH : *Kwa-Mzimba*

DATE OF MARRIAGE : Interviewee not sure

Question 1: Explain to me your first experience of interaction with girls.

I remember that as a young man I used to look after my father's cattle. While we were out in the veld, playing in the mountain and learning tricks about life, we used to talk with other young men about life in general, and about women in particular. It is during this time while herding cattle that we had an opportunity to meet with young women. These young women would be going to the river to fetch water or to do the laundry in the mornings or fetching firewood in the afternoons. This was the time for us to propose love to them. We would wait for them along the path where we know they are likely to walk past, and then we would spring up on them and catch them unaware. You had to learn the girl's routine in order to get to her otherwise she would avoid you if she did not like you. I met my wife MaPhakathi while she was fetching water. I was quite grown up by then and I had already started working. I was working at a mine in Johannesburg. I used to come home every month. She used to be at her home and I used to see her with her friends. I looked at her and I loved her.

Question 2: How did you propose love to MaPhakathi?

It was at the end of the month on a Sunday morning. I had come home to bring money to my father, as it is expected of every workingman. I then saw MaPhakathi going to fetch water and I loved her. I followed her and I praised her. I told her that I loved her and she did not respond. I did not think much of this because a girl was not expected to respond immediately in those days. In fact I would have thought less of her had she given me the answer on the same day. The following day I had to return to work. A month later I came back home and at this time MaPhakathi was allowed by *Iqhkiza* to respond to me. I met with her *iqhkiza* who told me to organise *ucu* ceremony. If *Iqhkiza* told you that, as a young man it was a clear sign that the girl you have been pursuing has made up her mind about you. I still had to wait for a perfect time to hold the ceremony. In all this time I had not spoken directly with MaPhakathi. A month later this ceremony took place. Young men and women from our village gathered in the veld where we feasted. There was beer and she gave me *ucu*. The whole village knew that she had accepted my proposal.

Question 3: What happened after you received *ucu*?

This was the time for *iqhkiza* to organise for MaPhakathi and myself to be together for the first time. This coming together is called *ukubambanisa*. We met in the open veld outside the village, where nobody could see us. This is where we performed *ukubambanisa*. This is when a young man will try to force himself on a young woman. The young woman is expected to resist the young man's advances with all her power. This would result in a big fight that a young woman would have to win so that there can be no sexual intercourse between the two of them. If the young man wins the fight and penetrates the young woman it is regarded as a sign of weak character on the part of the young woman that results in friction between her and her *iqhkiza*. The young man also develops doubts about the young woman's integrity. He assumes that she will easily have sex with other men in his absence. From this point onwards we had to practice *ukusoma*¹⁵. This was important for me because I worked far from home and would be gone for long

¹⁵ Masturbation between the thighs of a woman.

periods of time. It was important for me to know that I could trust MaPhakathi to behave herself while I was away at the mines.

Question 4: How would penetrative sex create friction between MaPhakathi and *iqhikiza*?

For us Zulus, we do not permit any sexual intercourse before marriage. If I, as a young man, have sex with MaPhakathi during *ukubambanisa*, it means that I have made her my wife. That would have meant that we have skipped some important stages that would have been frowned upon in the community. How can she be my wife before I have paid *ilobolo*¹⁶? Remember that *iqhikiza* is watching this fight from a distance. If MaPhakathi had allowed me to have penetrative sex with her *iqhikiza* would have had to report this to MaPhakathi's parents. I would have been fined a cow for that because I would have spoiled her virginity. My father would definitely not have been impressed by this since I did not own cows then. Had I been found to be doing wrong he would have had to pay for me with one of his own cows. This is bad because men want to marry virgins. She would have been subjected to ridicule by girls of her age as one *ongenasimilo*¹⁷. A young woman is supposed to have penetrative sex only after marriage. If she loses her virginity before marriage her *ilobolo* becomes ten cows instead of eleven. The eleventh cow, called *inkomo kamama*¹⁸ is not given to the mother because she failed to take proper care of her daughter.

Question 5: How would you know that a woman is not a virgin?

If penetration is easy during your first sexual intercourse then you know that she is no longer a virgin. Penetration is supposed to be difficult for both the man and the woman if she is still a virgin. She is also supposed to bleed. A man knows when a woman is not a virgin. A virgin is supposed to be tight and it must be difficult for a man to penetrate her. This is also shown by the pain she has during sexual intercourse. One can also see from her physical appearance. A woman who has tight

¹⁶ A recognised Zulu custom whereby a young man pays some cows, now in the form of money, for the bride.

¹⁷ One with loose morals.

¹⁸ The mother's cow.

breasts is one who has not had sexual intercourse in her life. The one with big breasts is normally one who is no longer a virgin.

Question 6: What happened after *ukubambanisa*?

After sometime of courtship, I do not remember exactly how long this period took, I told my father about my intention to marry MaPhakathi. It was easy for me to get to this stage because I had been working for some time and thought I was ready to look after a wife and children. My father sent *abakhongi*¹⁹. *Abakhongi* went to *ukucela*²⁰. I paid 3 pounds (R6), which serves as a deposit. After *ukucelwa*, *ilobolo* is paid in stages. I gave part of my salary to my father so that he could help me with the payment of *ilobolo*. After the *ilobolo* was finished, which was twelve cows in my case, we had a big traditional wedding (*ukugcagca*). MaPhakathi was brought to my father's house where we lived together. This is when we began making a family and ensuring continuity of the family name by having children. We have three boys and a girl. Marriage is a long process that can take even two years. This is done in order to involve the two families who are now becoming relatives. The whole community has to be involved in all the different stages of marriage. This long process of marriage allows the two families to get to know each other. The two who are getting married get to know more about marriage before they start living with one another. It is during this process of being initiated into marriage that one gets to know about the roles that have to be played in marriage and all the other expectations of marriage.

2.2.2 INTERVIEW WITH NTOMBIKAYISE JULIET MDLETSHE

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 8 March 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 1949

¹⁹ A delegation to the woman's family.

²⁰ To ask to marry their daughter.

PLACE OF BIRTH : Albert Falls

DATE OF MARRIAGE : 1969

Question 1: Explain to me about your first experience of interaction with men.

When I was growing up there was no real interaction between girls and boys as it is today. Even our duties in the home made it impossible for girls and boys to interact on regular basis. When we became young women we would see young men on our way to fetch water or firewood from the forest. They would approach us and we would laugh it off. It was expected for young men to approach young women but we were not supposed to take it seriously till we come of age. It was only when we became slightly older that we started taking young men's advances seriously but there was no chance for doing anything that was forbidden because the parents would know even if we tried to hide it. I grew up during a time when young women went for *ukuhlolwa*²¹. These young women were tested every month to ensure that they were still well behaved. Most of us had good morals as young girls for fear of our parents and the community. If a young girl was found to have lost her virginity she was ostracised (*uyathukwa*) by her peers and looked down upon as one with loose morals (*ukungabi nasimilo*). It was never heard of that young girls would be involved sexually with young men before marriage. If this happened there was a penalty to the young man's family and a ritual had to be performed for the cleansing of the young woman and her family. In fact he was even asked to marry her, as many men would not like to marry a woman who is no longer a virgin. The first contact of a young girl and a young man was during *ukubambanisa*. We used to meet with young men during the different feasts of the community. We met and spoke together without any aim of establishing a relationship. Whenever we met with young men there were always some elderly people around to keep an eye on us. We never really met with young men, except on family or community feasts.

Question 2: What is *ukubambanisa* ?

This is the first meeting of a young woman and the young man after the young woman has accepted his proposal through *iqhikiza*. *Ukubambanisa* took place about

²¹ Virginity testing.

six months after the young man had received *ucu*. It is the time when the young man will try to force himself upon the young woman in order for her to have penetrative sex with him. This happens under the watchful eye of the *iqhikiza*. If the young men physically forces the young woman to have intercourse with him this might mean the beginning of a marriage. The young man would have to marry the young girl because she may have fallen pregnant during the meeting. It could also mean the end of a new relationship because the young woman is not strong enough to resist the advances of the young man. She would therefore not be able to resist temptation from other men. Having sexual intercourse would have to go with a penalty. The man would have to pay a cow for spoiling the virginity of a young woman. You must remember that sexual intercourse is not the aim of *ukubambanisa*. It is to see the character of the young woman so that the young man can see that she is a young woman of good and unquestionable morals. In those days men were very particular about the character and quality of the person that a woman is and women took pride in that. We were proud of ourselves then. This was a very important stage in the life of a young person. Both the young man and the young woman know how to avoid sexual intercourse, as they were taught by their advisors. Avoiding sexual intercourse during this time might be the beginning of a new life for them. This was a time when the character of both the young man and the young woman were tested. It also laid a sure foundation for marriage.

Question 3: Do you still have some of these customs here?

In our time we had *iqhikiza* and *ingqwele*. They were responsible for the induction of young girls and boys into society. Their duties included teaching the taboos of their clan, customs and ways of doing things to young women and young men entrusted to their leadership. Today we lack such structures, which will assist in advising young people on issues of sexuality and life in general. Young people these days learn by accident, sometimes the lesson comes when it is too late. At the school where I teach we have young people of different age groups together in the same class. This is bad because those who have sexual relationships and are sexually active discuss such matters in the presence of the younger ones. Those who are not yet sexually active are made to feel stupid by those who are already sexually active. This puts pressure on the younger ones. The temptation is for the young ones to go out and have sex so as to be part of the group and to be seen as

grown up. These days sex is seen as the most central aspect in a relationship unlike for us where it was one of the things to look forward to when we got married. Young people think that they enter in to a relationship for sex instead of an interaction between two young people as was the case with us when we were growing up. Young people also fall into relationship that we culturally consider to be incestuous because they do not know about each other's backgrounds and histories. They meet in town and fall in love without asking about each other's family names and background. According to the Zulu custom, for an example, one does not enter into a sexual relationship with a person who shares the same surname as one's mother. Many young people either do not know this or do not care. There are no structures in society like we had growing up. Young people are free to make their own ill-informed decisions as they grow up and society is not putting in place measures to make sure that young people are looked after and protected from life's challenges. It is a pity that most of these customs do not exist anymore. All the work that was done by *ingqwele* and *iqhikiza* is now left to the teachers at school. These teachers cannot cope. They have too many young people to look after. They are also not sure about what to say to the young as their classes are made out of young people with different experiences. These teachers are also ill prepared to talk to young people about sex.

Question 4: What do you think needs to be done?

A big problem that I see, especially in our school here at Kwa Mzimba, is that a meeting of a young man and a young woman is regarded as a private affair. I think that if a young man likes a young woman they must introduce each other to their respective families. This will help in case the young woman gets pregnant. The girl's family will know who is responsible for that pregnancy. If the relationship ends the young man should inform the young woman's mother. This is *inhlonipho*²² which young people should afford to one another and their parents. Parents also need to be re-educated in ways of raising their children that will help them be good parents in the way that is relevant to a young person growing up today. You may find that the girl's family does not expect their daughter to be in a relationship because she should know that a family rule requires her to wait till she is older or to

²² Respect.

have finished school. Sometimes parents try to enforce the same way they have been raised on today's youth who have totally different challenges from the ones they had to face growing up. I am not calling for families to lower their moral standards but our children should know that should they fall into a temptation of having a relationship they can come and talk to us so that we can help them deal with the choice that they have made. This way we will avoid having our sons and daughters learn from their peers about how to handle sexuality especially in the times we are living in where we have HIV/AIDS killing young people. The school needs to teach sex education, especially in this HIV/AIDS environment. Sex education should be part of the curriculum. Young people should be encouraged to share with one another and their teachers about their relationships. This would help them in receiving guidance and direction with regard to their relationships. Something has to be done to ensure that parents know what is going on at the school. Parents are normally a big problem as they forbid their children from getting involved in relationships. They are not aware that their children are already involved in relationships. All they do is to keep those relationships a secret.

Question 5: Are the young people in your school sexually active?

While still a young girl I was taught that *itshitshi aliyi ocansini*²³. She has to wait for marriage. Today's economic climate has influenced the interaction between young men and women. I know that young women want to have sexual relationships with men who have money. Spending money on a young woman entitles the man to expect the relationship to be sexual. Yes, a large number of pupils in our schools are sexually active. We have to stop pretending it does not happen and deal with it as it presents itself to us as teachers and parents. We should stop feeling as if our children's choice to be active at what we believe to be an early age is a reflection of our skills as parents. It might be, but we do not stop being our children's parents just because they have decided to disobey us. We have to try and save what is left today, if we are not too late, so that we can save them from diseases, early parenthood and death. We have cases of pregnancies outside marriage. Young men who do not attend school here, come and fetch young women from this school. What is a source of concern for me is that some young women get

²³ A young woman may not have sex.

into relationships with older men who are already working. Some get involved with married men, and they keep their relationships a secret.

2.2.3 INTERVIEW WITH FIKILE NDLELA-MADLAMINI

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 15 March 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 1917.

PLACE OF BIRTH : *Kwa-Mzimba*.

Question 1: Where did you grow up ?

I was born into a Dlamini family. I stayed in this village of *Kwa-Mzimba* all my life. This used to be a small and beautiful village where everyone knew one another. We had few homesteads, which were far from each other. We had a lot of cattle and big fields. Everything was peaceful then. The whole village was an extended family as everybody got involved in the affairs of the village.

Question 2: What did you do as a young girl?

I spent my time at home with my mother. My father was always at the fields with the boys, ploughing and looking after cattle. It was very good to work with the parents because we got to know each other very well. She taught me how to cook and how to keep the homestead clean. I used to watch her doing some work in the house and she would tell me stories about her family and how she grew up. Being with her most of the time taught me about perseverance in difficult times. She told me about the difficulties that come with marriage and the need to persevere. Her success in marriage lay in her hard work and in the desire to see her children succeed in life. This was a chance for me to ask questions about life and changes I saw taking place in my body. She taught me a lot about housework and what a girl is expected to know. At the age of fifteen my mother thought I was ready to have a relationship. She sent me to an *iqhikiza*. At that stage I was still an *ijongosi*²⁴.

²⁴ Adolescent.

Question 3: How did your mother know that you are ready to have a relationship ?

Parents have many ways of knowing such things. They are wise and they do things for a reason. My mother could determine this stage by observing me while doing my daily chores. She noticed some physical changes in me. My breasts were growing bigger. She would sometimes ask me to undress for her, or ask me to take something from up the roof so that she could look at me and assess my growth. She knew that soon young men will start approaching me and I had to know how to handle that situation. *Iqhikiza* would teach me how to handle myself. It was known that a young girl learns such lesson from her *iqhikiza*. While we were alone together she used to touch me. I think that it was her way of gauging my physical growth and my readiness to be taken to *iqhikiza*. She would also ask me about health issues, like headaches and pains. She never asked me about who was making some approaches to me, who I was interested in. She was very careful not to mention those issues to me. She would determine that I am ready to have a relationship by my physical appearance, the way I walk and the people with whom I associate.

Question 4: What did *iqhikiza* teach you?

She instilled in me the love of self. To love myself meant to have one *isoka*²⁵. It also meant not to be involved in pre-marital sex for fear of pregnancy. During that time traditional customs were strictly observed. If a young girl fell pregnant before marriage she became the laughing stock of the village. *Iqhikiza* taught me how to *ukuziphatha*²⁶ when I was with my *isoka* (boyfriend). I was taught that when a young man asks to have a relationship with me I should never respond to him directly. This was easy if you were not ready to have a relationship or you did not have feelings for the man. It was very difficult to keep quiet if you had feelings for the man. All you did was to wish that he comes back again. I would discuss my feelings about the young man with the *iqhikiza*. After some time, if I like the man, I would be given permission by the *iqhikiza* to accept the proposal. I would then tell *isesheli*²⁷ to meet with my *iqhikiza*. Young men knew that this was a way of

²⁵ Lover.

²⁶ Behave myself.

²⁷ The one proposing love.

accepting the proposal and the beginning of a long process of marriage. The young man and the *iqhikiza* organise a feast where the young girl presents the young man with a gift of a beaded necklace or bracelet. This is called *ucu*, a token of her love. In exchange the *isoka* would present the girl with a gift of either a broom, beads or a sleeping mat. This ceremony took place outside the village where all the young men and women of the village would meet. The young girls would have to prepare beer for the feast that would begin after *ukunikezwa kocu* (exchange of gifts). This feast went on for the whole day. The *iqhikiza* and the *ingqwele* are in charge of this feast. The parents of the young man and the young woman know nothing about what is going on. *Iqhikiza* and *ingqwele* take the place of the parents. We would feel freer to talk openly with *iqhikiza* than with our parents. We respected them because they had a direct contact with our parents in case anything went wrong. As young people we were catered for with someone accessible to us who is in authority and yet distant enough so that they can command respect and instil discipline in us.

2.2.4 INTERVIEW WITH MSONGELWA ZONDI

DATE OF INTERVIEW : 15 March 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 1925

PLACE OF BIRTH : *Kwa-Mzimba*

DATE OF MARRIAGE : Not sure

STATUS : Retired Primary School Teacher

Question 1: Tell me about your life as a young man.

I grew up here, at the village of *Kwa-Mzimba*. I used to help my father looking after cattle and working in the fields. When I turned fifteen I stopped looking after cattle. This is the time when I could start proposing love to young women. I started having a deep voice and some hairs on my face. This is when I started seeing girls in a different way. My father now introduced me to *ingqwele*. I was an *ibhungu*²⁸ and I was now always in the company of *ingqwele*.

Question 2: What did *ingqwele* teach you ?

²⁸ Adolescent.

He taught me to respect women. Before I had a girlfriend he took us through regular talks which were lessons on how to handle ourselves with young women. After the *ucu* ceremony he taught me to look after my girlfriend properly as she is now part of me. If she is part of me it means that if I treat her badly I hate myself. Nobody should hate his own body. One of the most important things he taught me was about *ukusoma*. Pre-marital sex was not tolerated in our time. The young couple, *ijongosi* and *ibhungu*, were supposed to *ukweba*²⁹ each other now and again. They were to meet in the reeds or get to the *ilawu* (hut) of the woman. We would never force young women to do anything they did not feel comfortable doing. We were taught to respect our woman and that is what we did. Parents knew that *isoka* and *intombi* would sometimes spend time in an *intombi*'s homestead without them knowing. They provided for this, in that a girl who is at an age where she was involved with young men would have her own room. However, the young man had to ensure that he was never caught at a girl's house. You had to make sure that you left the girl's house very early in the morning before the herd boys wake up to take the cattle out to graze. This meeting was not for the young man and the young woman to have sex. They were to meet privately and enjoy themselves without sex. If they could not control themselves they would have to practise *ukusoma*. Being in the company of *ingqwele* means that there are many things to be learnt about being in this stage of growth. Listening to others sharing their stories and the advice of *ingqwele* contributed to the knowledge I have about relationships.

Question 3: What happened when you were together?

When the young man was spending a night at the woman's hut, and the young man could not control himself anymore he could practise *ukusoma*. This is for the young man to release himself. If the young man forces to have sex with the woman this might lead to the end of the relationship. It was understood and accepted as natural for young men to need to have sex. We were not made to feel ashamed of it or that needing sex means you are not able to control yourself. Instead we were given ways to deal with that need without hurting ourselves and our partners. Breaking these rules would result in a lot of shame for both the young woman and the young

²⁹ To steal.

man's families. When a girl becomes pregnant it becomes a community affair. There are penalties to be paid and public cleansing ceremonies for the girl's family. As young men we were careful that girls did not get pregnant before we had paid *ilobolo* and married them. For our generation that was the only fear we had in sleeping with girls, unlike today where there are all kinds of illnesses that young people have to guard against. Life was carefully controlled and easier for young people then. Both the young man and the young woman were aware that should they have penetrative sex the young woman's parents would get to know about it. When she goes for *ukuhlotwa* it would be found out that she is no longer a virgin. This would lead to her being ostracised and to the young man paying a fine for having made the young woman his wife. Such a situation might lead to the young man and woman getting married, even if it is against their will. The young man would have to share with the *ingqwele*, and the young woman with the *iqhikiza*, about what happened when they were together.

Question 4: What happened after *ucu*?

This was a ceremony every young man wished to have held in his honour. It symbolised an important stage in a life of a young man. Girls were difficult to convince then, so this felt like conquering a mountain for us as young men. Women would sometimes make us wait a whole year for an answer. What happens at the ceremony is *ukubekwa kwendwangu emhlophe*³⁰. This white flag is displayed at the entrance of the house of the young man. This is a public declaration that the son of the house has fallen in love. The parents of both the young man and woman know nothing about what has happened. They will only get to know about this courtship when *abakhongi* come to negotiate about the marriage. Parents are not directly involved with the love life of their children. *Iqhikiza* and *ingqwele* were the main teachers. From now onwards the village will get ready for the pending marriage. Courtship and marriage was not a private matter between two people. It was a village affair. This was very good for the fidelity of those getting married. The young man would not dare become unfaithful because they would have the white flag flying at the entrance of the house for all to see. A young man would be bringing shame to his father's house if he went looking for other women while there

³⁰ Displaying of a white flag.

is a flag hanging in his honour outside his father's homestead. The whole family would know about a young man's love life. This kept the young man from doing wrong things and the same thing was true for the young woman's family. We were closely monitored.

That is why young people today fall into all kinds of temptations because they are doing things in private. It is very easy to give in to temptation because no one is looking or interested. In our days you fell in love because you were looking for a possible wife unlike these games we see our children playing today. This is a stage when the two families would be working on their new status as relatives. Gifts would be brought to the family of the young woman (*ukwaba*). This would be the beginning of the two families visiting each other, getting to know more about each other. They would also be planning for the marriage (*umgcagco*), which would be the final stage of the marriage.

2.2.5 INTERVIEW WITH PHILLIP ZONDI

DATE OF INTERVIEW : 15 March 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 1943

PLACE OF BIRTH : *Kwa-Machibisa*

DATE OF MARRIAGE : 1973

MARITAL STATUS : Married to Ma-Duma, with 8 children.

Question 1: Tell me how you grew up.

I was born at *Kwa-Machibisa*. We later moved on to *Emvundlweni*. I grew up at a time when girls were looked after by *iqhikiza*, and young men were tutored by *igosa*³¹. We spent our free time going to dances where we sang and danced for all to see. It was an exciting period in a young person's life when all you cared about was learning how to look after your father's wealth and how to be a man. As a young man we were told by *igosa* when to start proposing love to girls. *Igosa* was in charge of us so as to keep us under control and to ensure that we were not sexually involved. He taught us certain customs and practises, which would be expected of us by the community as we grow. His duty was to teach us about

³¹ Another name for *ingqwele*.

ukusoma. As you might know, the Zulu tradition was intolerant to any sexual intercourse before marriage. We were supposed to abstain from sex until marriage. *Ukusoma* was introduced when morality started deteriorating, when the young men started losing control of themselves. *Ukusoma* was tolerated because it does not interfere with the virginity of the young woman. I met MaDuma around this time when I thought I was old enough to have a serious relationship and look for a possible woman to bear my children and carry on my father's name. I had to work first to make sure I would have money to pay ilobolo for a wife. In those days our fathers would never want to pay full ilobolo for us to have wives. You had to produce the bulk of the money first so that your father can then support you with what you could not afford. I paid *ilobolo* for MaDuma in 1972 and got married in 1973. I have no children outside marriage. We did not do anything for no reason those days. I have taught my children the same values. My five sons also do not have children outside marriage. What worries me is that my sons are grown up and working but they have not introduced any woman to me. This might be a sign that they have a number of relationships.

Question 2: What happened if one was found to have had sex before marriage?

During our days sexual intercourse before marriage was not a sign of a young man's virility as it is thought of today. It was a punishable offence to more than just the girl involved. The young man involved in sexual intercourse was supposed to pay a penalty. I do not know about other villages because we differ from village to village. In our village the young man had to give a goat to the woman's family. What the woman's family did was to slaughter the goat and spill its insides at a river. All the children belonging to the young woman's family had to wash themselves in that water. This was a cleansing ritual because the young woman had defiled the whole family. No young man took pride in having his name and that of his family be dragged in the mud in that manner. Girls also did not want to be the ones to bring shame to their own families, especially their mothers. The bulk of the blame, should such an incident take place, was shifted to the mother and called into question her ability to raise her daughters. That is why we still have virginity testing even today, to protect families from this defilement. We have virginity testing which takes place every Saturday here at Emvundlweni. Yende Mkhize, a woman in her fifties, conducts these tests for every girl in the village. These tests

are compulsory for every girl from the age of twelve until marriage. Many parents send their daughters for this testing. Nothing is done for the testing of boys here at Emvundlweni³². My wife is against *ukuhlolwa* (virginity testing). She says it is against human dignity to be asked to reveal your private parts to a stranger now and again, for her to fiddle with.

Question 3: Do you think your children are involved in pre-marital sex?

I do not know. All I know is that my daughters go for virginity testing every Saturday. I teach my sons *ukushaya indlwabu*³³. I teach them masturbation because it is a good way of releasing oneself. Masturbation helps to cool down the hot blood that would cause these young men to deflower girls. This is what I teach my children because the situation is so bad today, with young girls getting pregnant, children without a father, divorce, AIDS. If my child would have to impregnate a young woman we would have to pay a lot of money which I do not have.

Question 4: What can people do today to live good lives?

Life today would improve if the old customs were to be revived. This looks like an impossible dream. One of the biggest obstacles to people living according to the dictate of their culture is education. Those who are educated look down upon the role of *igosa* and *iqhikiza*. The arrival of the white man, the advent of television and the regard of tradition as pagan, all these hinder the Zulu people from living a life that is in accordance with their traditions and customs. The roles of *iqhikiza* and *igosa* are mistaken for interference in the privacy and the individuality of a young person to choose who they want to be. This is sad because young people are fumbling in the dark. There are things that society considers to be wrong because education and religion dictates them to be so. Young people then go through these changes because they are inevitable. They then secretly find ways to fulfil these needs without guidance and risk getting sick.

Question 5: Do you belong to the royal family?

³² Virginity testing for boys is done by making the boys to sit on the ground with their legs straight. Their teacher will feel their kneecap. If it is hard and firm it means that they are virgins. If it shakes and moves it means that they are not virgins anymore.

³³ To masturbate.

Yes I do.

Question 6: Explain to me how you are connected to the royal family.

The Zondi's feature in the royal family this way: During the time of King Shaka there was a case, which involved sexual misconduct. A certain man was having sexual intercourse with under-aged girls. King Shaka asked *Zondi*, his *Induna*³⁴ to preside over the case. In his handling of the case, Zondi impressed King Shaka. He was so wise in his deliberations and showed a lot of skill. Because of such wisdom and depth of judgement King Shaka instructed Zondi to rule over the area of Greytown, across the Tugela, as chief of e-Nadi. Zondi became a chief as a reward and an acknowledgement of his wisdom by King Shaka. That is how the Zondi royal family was established.

2.2.6 INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF SONDELANI ZONDI

DATE OF INTERVIEW : 27 April 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 1969

PLACE OF BIRTH : *Inkandla*

DATE OF MARRIAGE : 1992

Question 1: Tell me about who you are, where you come from.

I am a chief of e-Nadi, an offspring of Dlaba, a descendant of King Zwide. I am in charge of the Zondi chiefs around KwaZulu-Natal. I am married to *uNdlunkulu*³⁵ MaThuli. I have one child with *uNdlunkulu* MaThuli and three others from my previous marriage. I grew up at a time when virginity testing was a normal way of life. It was performed on girls from the age of eighteen. I attended school at *Inkandla* until high school. I then went somewhere³⁶, where I could learn more

³⁴ Foreman.

³⁵ First wife.

³⁶ Chief Zondi did not want to reveal where he went to learn about becoming a chief.

about becoming a chief. There are many mysteries about becoming a chief that you would not understand.

Question 2: Tell me about the social life of Inkandla where you grew up.

I grew up at a time when we were encouraged by our seniors (*igosa*) to go out and propose a relationship to girls as a sign of growth, maturity and life. It was frowned upon if a girl would accept a proposal on that same day, without waiting for some time. In certain instances the young man would have to wait even for a year, to elicit a response from a girl. When the response was given it would not be direct. A girl might say ‘*gibela esihlahleni ungikhele icembe eliluhlaza*’³⁷. A young wise man knows that this means that he has to take something from the woman to show his friends that he has won her heart. One learns these things from the peers or *igosa*.

Question 3: What would happen after the acceptance of the proposal?

The two who now have a relationship would agree to meet at certain times. They would meet to share jokes, secrets, and so on. They would also want to share their intimacy. Now, the only way to express sexual intimacy would be through *ukusoma*. It was a well-known fact that sexual intimacy was the privilege of *umkhwenyana* (bridegroom) through *ilobolo*. As the two continue to meet, they will now organise a party where the two will be locked in a room. In this room the young man will try to overpower the young woman in bed. Remember, this is not for sexual purposes. It is for *ukusoma*. *Amaqhikiza* would be watching through the window. If the woman is overpowered *amaqhikiza* will come to her assistance and take her out of the room. It is a bad thing if the man is overpowered by the woman. It reflects badly on the strength of the man. It is also a crime if the young man forces his way and has sex with her, for which he will pay a penalty of a few cows, for having sex before marriage.

Question 4: Are these customs still being observed in your village today?

³⁷ The literal meaning is ‘Get me a green leaf from a tree’.

Not completely as it was in our days. The emphasis now is in looking after young girls and making sure they keep their virginity for a longest possible time in their lives. I still have virginity testing conducted in my village every weekend. In this village I always encourage abstinence from sex. I also implore young women to go for virginity testing. I always teach people to say no to condoms. I want to explain why I say this. I say this because condoms can burst open. I am particularly concerned about the youth. The message that condoms send is that the youth are allowed to involve themselves in sexual activities before marriage, as long as they do not contract the HI Virus. Such an attitude destroys the future of young girls, in particular. The lives of young girls are destroyed, as young men do not want *amasekeni*³⁸. We need to preserve the moral fibre of our young people. They need to know their value. If we can teach young girls to say no to sex and teach our young people the value of abstaining from sex before they are married we would have done well as a society.

Question 5: How is the AIDS situation in your village, and what are you doing about it?

I acknowledge the effects of AIDS in my village. I believe that the only real solution to this scourge is in going back to our traditional way of life. Let me give you an example: if a young girl goes for *ukuhlotwa*, she will be saved from involving herself in sexual activities. She will be scared to disappoint her parents and the community. I have also recently started working with a certain Non-Governmental Organisation, which will help the villagers in educating them about AIDS. I am training twenty people who will work together with this organisation. They will go from home to home, talking about AIDS to families. I believe that the only effective way of educating people about AIDS is not in big gatherings, but in the family set-up. As a leader in this village I do not just want to talk about HIV/AIDS but I want to get involved in fighting it.

Question 6: Do you think people today can abstain from sex?

³⁸ Second hand.

It is difficult, and almost impossible. But I believe that those who want to can abstain from sex. People should abstain from sex, although condoms can be used because of the context and environment of today. If young people cannot abstain from sex I would opt for masturbation. If I masturbate nobody would be infected or impregnated. After abstinence, masturbation is the best solution to the AIDS pandemic. Some people think that *ukusoma* is a safe alternative. I would not encourage it because the thighs of a woman can crack, and that would lead to contact with her blood. Another thing that should be considered by our Education Department is to divide schools according to different age groups. This would help in that the younger children would not be influenced by the lifestyle of the older ones. As it is now they are all put together in one class, different age groups, who are at different levels of sexual growth which is not good for the younger ones.

2.2.7 INTERVIEW WITH JACOB MALINGA

DATE OF INTERVIEW : 22 March 2002
 DATE OF BIRTH : 1904
 PLACE OF BIRTH : *Kwa-Mshwadi* (New Hanover)
 CHILDREN: : 11

Question 1: Tell me how you grew up.

I had no formal education. I had 11 children within this marriage, today things have changed. Our children should go to school so that they can be employed. They should also go to church.

2.2.8 INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET MALINGA (MA-MAKHATHINI)³⁹

DATE OF INTERVIEW : 29 April 2002
 DATE OF BIRTH : 1912
 PLACE OF BIRTH : *Phasiwe*

³⁹ Margaret and Jacob had difficulty with hearing and understanding questions. Some responses were off the point. Jacob's memory does not work well anymore. He spoke about education and church on all the question asked.

Question 1: Tell me how you grew up.

I grew up in a family that was strict and believed in the traditional way of living. When I was younger girls were looked after by an older girl who made sure that we did not break the rules that were set for us and bring shame to our families. We were given guidance on how to handle life and men. Boys could not get to us because we were taught how to handle them. *Iqhikiza* taught me to respect the teaching of my parents.

She was my parents' eye in their absence as we interacted with one another in our daily lives. During *ukuthomba* ⁴⁰ I remember I was taught to respect my body and abstain from sex. We were taught what this stage of our lives meant. We were taught that we were ready to become involved in relationships with young men but this should be done with the guidance of *iqhikiza* who would inform our parents should anything go wrong. Violating these rules would bring shame to the family.

Question 2: How did you manage to abstain from sex before marriage?

My parents sent me for virginity testing. I knew what would happen if I were found to be breaking the rules. If you lose your virginity the man pays the penalty of a cow. This penalty is called *umqhoyiso*. The whole village would know and I would become the laughing stock. I did not want that to happen to me. A girl had to take pride in her own body and look after herself. When I fell in love with Jacob we never had sexual intercourse before marriage. We practised *ukusoma*. This took place out in the veld. This was a sign of respect for each other and for the traditions of our families.

Question 3: How are these customs observed here?

Our young people are lost. The schools are to blame for the behaviour of young people today. They are taught at school that it is right to fall in love. Young people fall in love and meet regularly at school, without anybody supervising them on

⁴⁰ Puberty.

sexual matters. Parents do not know with whom their children are having relationships. Teachers are also involved sexually with school children. When a teacher looks at a girl in class he sees a potential lover. This is bad. Virginity testing should be brought back so that children will not have babies. They should learn, like we were taught, *Ukuma entweni eyodwa*⁴¹.

2.2.9 INTERVIEW WITH NOMAGUGU PATIENCE NGOBESE (MAMOLEFE)

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 6 June 2002

DATE OF BIRTH : 15 October 1956

PLACE OF BIRTH : *Mpendle*

MARRIAGE STATUS : Married with six children

ACADEMIC

QUALIFICATIONS : Primary Teachers' Certificate
(Madadeni College of Education)

B A (Hons) Zulu

Currently doing a Masters degree in Zulu culture.

ACTIVITIES : Retired Principal of Masimdumise Junior Secondary School, Teaching in an Adult Learning Programme, A Priest in African Religion (Radio Ukhozi⁴² and SABC ⁴³ *I Izwi Labantu*⁴⁴)

Question 1: Tell me about your childhood.

I was born illegitimate. That is why I use my mother's surname, Molefe. My real surname is Makhaya. After my birth my mother got married to a Molefe. With the Sothos there is no problem with marrying a person with your surname. Being a

⁴¹ Margaret and Jacob had difficulty with hearing and understanding questions. Some responses were off the point. Jacob 's memory does not work well anymore. He spoke about education and church on every question asked.

⁴² Radio station broadcasting in Zulu.

⁴³ South African Broadcasting Corporation.

⁴⁴ Literally means 'the voice of the people' a religious programme on traditional religions.

Sotho I did not have the privilege of going through the different stages of growth that a Zulu person goes through.

Question 2: How did you meet Ngobese?

I initially wanted to be a nurse. While still waiting to be called for nursing I went for *ukupipita*⁴⁵. I met Ngobese when I was doing my private teaching. I was a virgin by then. He proposed to me and it took me a year before I could respond positively to his proposal. He paid *ilobolo* and we had a church wedding in 1977.

Question 3: How did you manage to be a virgin until marriage?

I grew up in a strong Christian background. I had my principles given by God. I also had fear of getting involved with men after I had observed others falling in love and getting disappointed. As I grew up I stopped being a Christians but kept some of the principles instilled in me by the Christian religion. I am now 46 and I still follow my principles. I am unlike Christians who talk about things that they do not do. I was once a Catholic, by the way.

Question 5: Did you go for virginity testing?

No, I did not. Sothos do not have this custom.

Question 6: What can be done to ensure a positive approach to sexuality?

We should go back and practice *ukuhlolwa*. We are now revising the aim of these tests. We are looking not only at virginity. We want those also who are not virgins any more. We want them to come so that we can teach them about abstinence. We want them to know about AIDS and unwanted babies. We want also to offer sex education to them. They should know how important it is to look after themselves. If they look after themselves the family and the community become proud. This country will run short of leaders in the future because of AIDS. There is very little sex education around. The Church has failed dismally. All they know is that there

⁴⁵ Private teaching, without the necessary qualifications.

should be no sex before marriage. That is why I left the Catholic Church. Christianity eradicated two very important institutions in our culture: *Iqhikiza* and *ingqwele*. This is the worst form of oppression, taking away our values so that we do not know who we are. The Church should empower people by giving them activities, which will educate them.

I believe that we all should say no to condoms. Condoms are for adults and those who fail to behave. Unfortunately the condom is made a yardstick. *Ukusoma* is also very dangerous as the skin of a woman peels. Abstinence is the only safe way of keeping alive. There are four things which are important for me Education, *ukuhlotwa*, activities to keep young people occupied and abstinence.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The minute details of different traditions and customs of the interviewees differ according to clans, families and communities. Some of them did not remember the exact dates of their birth and marriage.

All the interviewees felt that life without customs and tradition contributes to the difficult time of today. They lamented the decline in sexual morality and they blamed this decline on education, television and unemployment. They pointed at the vacuum that is created by the departure of *iqhikiza/ingqwele* in the education of the young. Today nobody plays those roles and parents do not know what is happening with their children. What makes it more difficult is the fact that the children are together at school, boys and girls, of different ages. It is at such schools that the older children influence the younger ones on sexual matters. Some of the older people saw the school as a place of meeting for the young people, where they learn, and are encouraged to be involved in sexual intercourse, without proper supervision.

From the foregoing discussions and interviews it is clear that what was important in the upbringing of young men and women was the role of the *iqhikiza* and *ingqwele*. As *iqhikiza* and *ingqwele* were part of the community structure, this ensured

parental involvement in the sexual education and upbringing of the young people. Parents were not directly involved in the sex life of their children, as this would be seen as meddling in young peoples' affairs, but if there was something amiss parents would definitely know it through the teachers of the young people, in order to deal with the issue at stake and to instil discipline. The parents did not know the details of the sexual lives of their children. All they knew is that sexual education was taking place and that their children were in good hands. The young people were open with their appointed teachers.

The traditional young person was not exposed to too many threats sexually. This is because of their context. Their family structure was a closely-knit web of an extended family. This ensured that young people were offered support through the different stages of growth and development until adulthood. Everybody knew one another in the village. The feasts that were held in the village from *ukuthomba* until the marriage ceremony, all inculcated a positive attitude towards sex and sexuality. For a young man to propose a relationship to a girl and be accepted by her was a sign of honour and of being a real man. This had a psychological effect of boosting the self-esteem of the young man. It was the beginning of a fulfilment of a vocation to continue the lineage of one's family. Not to be loved by a girl was a great shame. Some ritual had to be performed to cleanse the man from such bad luck. When a young woman was proposed to it was seen as a sign of being a woman who can contribute to her own family through *ilobolo*, and to the whole community through childbirth. If a woman was passed-by, by a man without a word or two, that would reflect badly on the young woman.

Having sex before marriage was a punishable offence. A love affair for the traditional Zulu person presupposes no sex. It is interesting to note that an alternative to sex was given. A young man had to masturbate on the thighs of a young woman. Sexual intercourse made a young woman a wife. The only way a young man could make her his wife was through *ilobolo*. If the young man cannot control himself then they should practice *ukusoma*. It also became clear in the interviews that in the traditional Zulu society young people were supposed to abstain from sex until marriage. *Ukusoma* came in because of a decline in morality. The Zulu culture had to adapt to social change and new demands. This was a development that made it possible for a young woman to remain a virgin until

marriage. Taboos were also known and there were structures to deal with situations that were culturally unacceptable. *Ukuhlolwa* was one of the ways of ensuring that young girls did not involve themselves in sexual intercourse before marriage. Such a ritual instilled a sense of pride in the young girls. To be known to be a virgin entitles the young woman to a full *ilobolo* and a sense of pride. There was a penalty for a person who deflowered a young virgin.

Ukuhlonipha was key to the education of young men by *ibhungu*. *Ukuhlonipha* stems from the fact that the young woman is becoming part of the young man's life. If the young man respects the young woman it means he is respecting himself. That meant that a man had to provide for the woman materially and protect her. The young woman was also formed in all the *hlonipha* ways, which made it possible in some cases to have mutual respect. A woman was also taught to *hlonipha* herself, which meant to look after her own body, to be clean and not to allow anyone to have sex with her.

In this Zulu traditional society there were strong family bonds. This is demonstrated by the way the homesteads were built, with the sons in the same homesteads with their parents. Even the graves were in the homestead, to demonstrate the unity of the living and the dead. Whenever there was a feast in the family the whole village was involved. An example of this is the hoisting of the white flag when a young man has fallen in love. The whole village was involved in the preparations for the feast.

A close connection was demonstrated between polygamy and divorce. For members of the royal family polygamy was a status and a sign of wealth. For the ordinary Zulu person polygamy was exercised as a way of avoiding divorce. If a woman could not bear a child, or was sickly or had children but no son, it was deemed fit that instead of abandoning her it was good to get someone else to assist this woman as a second wife. Polygamy was not something forced upon the woman. It was discussed with the wife. Divorce was not possible as the woman is now part of the man's household. There were also not many illegitimate children. Any child who was born out of wedlock was legitimised by a subsequent marriage. An illegitimate child would be one born out of wedlock and the mother does not marry after that. Such instances were very rare.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ZULU TRADITIONAL SOCIETY IN THE MODERN WORLD

I interviewed young people from the village of *Kwa-Mzimba*. They live in a traditional society, while at the same time, they are influenced by education, the media and many forms of modernisation. They represent a people that are holding on to traditional values while open to new influences. The interviewees range from the age of fourteen to twenty-six. In this section I have substituted false names for real names. This is because of the sensitivity of the material.

3.1 INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1.1 AN INTERVIEW WITH MBENGELANI KHUMALO

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 31 March 2002

AGE : 23

HOME : *eMvundlweni*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I have stayed here my entire life. I was born here at *eMvundlweni*. My parents are also from here. I attended school in the local primary school and I did not finish my Matric due to financial constraints. I am now at home and I sometimes go to town to look for a job when I have money. It is difficult to get a job because I do not have Matric or any certificate of something like a trade that I can sell. I wanted to complete high school but my parents could not pay for me any more.

Question 2: Do you have a boyfriend?

I grew up with my elder sisters who warned me never to mix with boys. That is what our parents told her when she was growing up. She is very strict and I respect her because she is older and has looked after me and provided things such as clothes for me. My parents and my sister never told me why I should not mix with boys. It was something I was never supposed to do. In 1995 I decided to find out why they said I should not mix with boys and I had my first boyfriend then. I knew that should they find out I would be in big trouble. I had to keep it a secret from everyone at home. It was not very difficult to hide the relationship from everyone at home because they do not expect me to be disobeying them behind their backs. I just had to make sure that no one who knows my parents or my sister saw us together. If it ever got out that I have a boyfriend I was going to deny it.

Question 3: How did you meet with your boyfriend and what attracted you to him?

We went out on a school trip to Mayor's Walk (Pietermaritzburg). While we were walking in the park with my friends this young man came up to me. We talked for some time and he proposed a relationship to me. I thought that he was good looking and I told him I would think about his proposal. We exchanged telephone numbers and he said he would come to see me. In the meantime I inquired about this man from my friends. I also inquired about his personality from his friends, since I knew them. I was afraid as I thought about what my sister told me. I was not sure whether to accept that proposal or not. I also thought that I am now a grown-up person and I need to live my own life. I felt that I love this man and I need to share some time with him. After two weeks we met and I accepted his proposal. I guess I could have said yes earlier but it would not look good. I did not want him to think I was an easy girl.

Question 4: What do you do when you are together?

He used to come to my village and we would find a secluded place to talk where no one sees us. We some time would meet at the bus stop. We went to town together, talked, discussed about my family problems. He listened to my problems and I

listened to his problems. He would also share about his own family. I do not know his family. Meeting a guy's family is a serious thing and we did not feel we should be taking such a serious step. We continued to meet in private and got to know each other better. After some time we started having sexual intercourse. We use condoms because it is not safe to have sex without a condom. Sex was more his idea than mine. I was very shy to do it with him. I was always worried that at some point he will start asking me to sleep with him and I was dreading it. I heard from my friends that it is painful to sleep with a guy for the first time. I was not looking forward to it but I knew it was going to happen at some point in the relationship.

Question 5: What do you mean by sex not being safe without a condom?

I might be pregnant or contract AIDS. I would have to leave school to raise the baby. I do not know where he has been and with whom he has slept before me. So we use condoms to protect ourselves. I am afraid of dying and I am not ready to be a mother. Going to the clinics for contraceptives is embarrassing. The nurses are rude to you and the people talk. I would not want to risk meeting someone I know at the clinic while I am waiting in the line for my pills or injection. What I am really afraid of though, is being sick and dying of AIDS. There are so many people who have died of AIDS in this area and I do not want to be one of them. I am lucky that my boyfriend feels the same. A lot of my friends tell me that their boyfriends do not want to use condoms and that they feel that the girls do not trust them.

3.1.2 AN INTERVIEW WITH LOSBHAMU MASANGO

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 8 March 2002

AGE : 14

HOME : *Kwa-Shange*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I am fourteen years of age. I am doing Grade Nine at the local high school. I come from a very strict family. I am not allowed to go anywhere without asking my parents for permission. They do not say yes to everything too. If it is not a school-related thing or something they know about, they do not allow me to go. I am very afraid of my parents and I also respect them. They would kill me if I should disobey them. I like going to the youth club. In the youth club we get to meet other young people and share about life. We learn a lot by sharing together. The youth club gives a chance to visit other places and to meet other people. I like being a member of the Catholic Youth Club as it helps me to keep away from the streets.

Question 2: Do you have a boyfriend?

No, my mother warned me that boys would always want to have sex with me. If I have a boyfriend I will be pregnant or have AIDS. Boys always want to have sex with a girl. I am afraid of boys. My mother has told me a lot of things about boys and I do not think I want to deal with that right now. I really want to finish school and study to become something. Boys approach me and I run away or be rude to them. I find them very irritating. Some of them do not listen when you tell them you are not interested. They just keep coming back and stopping me on my way to school or when my mother sends me to the shops. I do not know how some girls stand them. Sometimes the boy is not even that good looking and they want to talk to me. Besides, boys lead to sex and sex leads to babies or AIDS. I am very afraid of dying young.

Question 3: What do you know about the relationship between boyfriends and girlfriends?

My friends at school have boyfriends. They talk about them. They tell me how they buy them presents and give them money as pocket money. My friends always push me to having a boyfriend. I am afraid of my mother because she warned me. My friends had boyfriends already while we were doing Standard Six. I am not always with my friends because they sometimes ignore me because I am not yet ready to have a boyfriend. I am still young. I guess they think I am being stupid. I sometimes

envy them when they show me their money and presents. Sometimes they are sad because they have had fights with their boyfriends or their boyfriends were seen with other girls. It is all too much trouble and I do not think it is worth it. Besides, where would I tell my mother I got the money from if I were to get a boyfriend for money? Some of my friends have boyfriends who are older than them. I think it is disgusting. When they tell me about the things they do with their boyfriends I get really disgusted. Things like how they kiss using tongues and spit. I think that is really strange. On the boyfriends' birthdays the girls go shopping for cards and presents. I would not have money for such things. I think I know enough to realise that I am not ready for it.

Question 4: When will you have a boyfriend?

When I finish Grade Twelve. I think by then I will be older and my parents will not have a problem with me having a boyfriend. I also want someone who is educated and will not want me to do things I am not ready for. Maybe when I go to the university I will meet someone special who will love and respect me. I do not think it will be that difficult to stay away from boys. The ones we have in our school and in this area are not particularly interesting or tempting. These girls fight over them and I do not see why. They are not worth it. Right now all I want to do is do well at school and get my Matric so that I can go to university and study so I can be something or someone respected in the community.

3.1.3 AN INTERVIEW WITH NOMAKHA SIBISI

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 15 March 2002

AGE : 18

HOME : *Kwa-Shange*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I am eighteen and I'm doing Matric. I have both my parents and I live with my siblings. I attend school at the local high school. I like this place but I would like to go somewhere and study further when I finish my Matric. I have a lot of friends that I spend time with talking about all sorts of things that affect girls of our age. My siblings are also good to talk to. My friends and I talk about boys a lot.

Question 2: Do you have a boyfriend?

Yes.

Question 3: When did you start having a boyfriend and what do you do when you are together?

I started having a boyfriend when I was doing Standard Six. I first heard about boyfriends in that same year. My friends were telling me how nice it is to have a boyfriend. One of my friends who is the same age as me, started having a boyfriend one year before me. I saw that my friend has a boyfriend already, and we are the same age, then I decided to have one. I saw her receiving gifts from her boyfriend. She also received money for transport so that she can catch a taxi after school to go to town to meet her boyfriend. I used to see her receiving letters, through another girl, from the boyfriend. I liked that and I wanted to try it. My boyfriend wrote me a letter, proposing a relationship to me and I accepted his proposal. I had my first boyfriend when I was 14. I never had sexual intercourse until the age of 17. When we had sex for the first time I was very nervous and I was not really interested. I just felt that we had put it off for a long time maybe it was time to do it. We used a condom though because I did not want to be pregnant. I did not think about AIDS at the time. I guess using the condom also protects us from contracting HIV/AIDS. He and I are not ready to become parents or to die from AIDS. He respected me for a long time about not wanting to have sex with him. Sometime he would complain about it or accuse me of not loving him enough but he never forced himself on me. When I was seventeen and in Standard Nine I thought it was okay because a lot of my friends had done it a long time ago. I was a bit worried though after we had sex for the first time because I had heard girls tell me that boyfriends leave them after

they have sex. Girls also told me that you have to know how to do it and I did not have any experience. I thought he would think I am not good and leave me. He is still here, I guess this means he is serious about me. Otherwise we spend a lot of our time talking and watching television or going to town. He sometimes gives me presents when it is my birthday or when he has money he buys me something nice. I think I am lucky because he never fights with me like some of my friends do with their boyfriends. We also share about our schoolwork, our life at home and about the stories of our families. This helps us to get to know each other better and the families from which we come.

3.1.4 AN INTERVIEW WITH MASESI MTOLO

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 15 March 2002

AGE : 15

HOME : *eMvundlweni*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I stay at *eMvundlweni* and I am doing Grade Ten. I stay with my parents and I spend most of my time studying and going to church. I go to choir rehearsals or church services on Sundays and midweek. Outside that I go to school and help my parents with cleaning, cooking and doing washing at home. I spend most of my time at home because my parents would kill me if I went visiting other girls in my village. Friends usually visit me at home. My mother has to approve of the girls before they can visit me. She requires that I also finish my chores before I can spend time with my friends. Most of my friends are from the same church as me.

Question 2: Do you have a boyfriend?

No.

Question 3: Why not?

I do not have a boyfriend. My parents told me that I should not have a boyfriend because boys will always want to have sex with you. I do not have a boyfriend because I respect my mother's teachings. I am also still very young to have a boyfriend. I agree with my parents about boys. I am too busy to have time for a boyfriend. People in church would not approve of a young girl having a boyfriend. Some of the boys I see look stupid and irresponsible. Not everyone agrees with me on this though. Some of the girls at school think I am being silly. They say it is a lot of fun but I do not see how it can be fun when you spend your time hiding from your parents and if you get caught you get beaten up while he is sitting comfortably at home enjoying himself.

Question 4: What do you do when boys propose a relationship to you?

There are many boys who propose love to me. I am not ready to have a boyfriend now. I think I will be ready when I am 17. If I were to have a boyfriend now my parents would beat me up. I am also scared that I would fall pregnant. I just walk away without talking to them or I tell them to leave me alone. Some boys are rude and they start to call me names but I do not mind them. I think they are stupid. Some boys are decent and they talk to you nicely. If a decent boy approaches me I tell him politely that I am not ready to have a boyfriend. Other boys really do not get it. They even try to touch you or pull you by your arm so that you can listen to them. I hate it when they do that because a person walking by would not understand. They might think he is my boyfriend and get me into trouble. My parents would kill me if they heard I have a boyfriend at this age.

Question 5: Why would you fall pregnant?

If I were to have a boyfriend I would have to sleep with him. I believe that boys propose love to girls because they want to sleep with them. Girls cannot say 'no' because the boy will leave if he does not get what he wants. I do not think that there is any relationship where the boyfriend and the girlfriend do not have sex. My parents have told me this many times. It is important to me that I remain a virgin for

as long as it is possible. I also go for virginity testing every Saturday. If I have sex my parents will get to know it. I want to be known by everybody that I am a virgin and I am proud of that. Boys do not respect you after you sleep with them. They tell each other how you were and leave you if you fall pregnant. I do not want to be left with a baby and have to leave school to be a mother. My parents would ask me to leave home if I were to be pregnant. Where would I go to live with my baby? I know that boys run away when girls get pregnant. They get to continue with school while you stay at home. When they go to university they meet nicer girls who are educated like they are and never come to see you again because you are not good enough for them anymore. Having a boyfriend will mean risking that happening to me. I respect my parents and myself too much to let that happen to me. In church we are taught to respect ourselves as girls. Men will respect us better if we are strict with ourselves. Being a virgin is important for me as it makes me proud of myself. I know that I can look after myself well. Some people look up to me as their role model. If I remain a virgin there are better chances of meeting a young man who would want to marry me. Those who do not look after themselves meet men who would enjoy sexual pleasure with them and they do not end up in marriage. Many men would like to get married to virgins.

3.1.5 AN INTERVIEW WITH ZODWA ZWANE

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 31 March 2002

AGE : 26

HOME : *eMvundlweni*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I finished Matric three years ago. I have been looking for a job since then and I can't find any. I am unemployed and I just stay at home. I get bored sometimes because there is not much to do in this place. We are far from town where there are things to do. I sit with the other girls talking and laughing about all kinds of things. I hate it

sometimes because it is very easy to get into trouble since you end up talking about other people if you spend too much time with girls.

Question 2: When did you start having a boyfriend and what do you do when you are together?

I was never interested in boys until the time I was doing Standard Six. My peers at school used to talk a lot about their boyfriends. My parents and my sisters told me that it is dangerous to have a boyfriend because I will fall pregnant. I thought it was a bit early for some of my friends who already had boyfriends when we were too young. In Standard Six I did not think I knew much about boys to start having one of my own. The boys were also too young themselves. I had to finish my Matric first before I could have the time for boyfriends. I had my first boyfriend when I was 23. At 23 I thought I was old enough and my family would not have a problem with me having a boyfriend. I just thought it would be silly to start early and have to play hide and seek with my family. When I started nobody was worried about me being pregnant because I was old enough to look after myself and make my own choices. If you start too early you tend to take long time to learn to make your own choices and you tend to let the boyfriend be in charge of a relationship. When we are together we relax, listen to music and talk. We respect each other and listen to each other's opinions. He never makes me do anything I do not feel like doing. I think it is because he met me when I was old enough to make my own decisions. We talk about everything before we take any action. Yes, we do have sex because it is normal for a boyfriend and a girlfriend to show intimacy in that way. I always insist on a condom. I love and trust my boyfriend but I do not want to risk my health and our future.

Question 3: Do you sometimes practise *ukusoma*?

No, that is old-fashioned. Sick people and prisoners do that. Why would we practice that? Besides, I think we are old enough to have sex without feeling guilty about it. Today there are condoms and contraceptives to ensure that you do not fall pregnant. I do not see why we should deny ourselves when we can safely have sex.

I would not want to do that with my boyfriend. I know what I want in life. It is my right to do what I think is right for me. If I make up my mind to have sex, and I agree with my boyfriend, that is all that matters.

Question 4: What about abstinence?

Today marriage is not guaranteed. What if I abstain and no one marries me? I am getting old, I should enjoy myself, and maybe I might meet the right person now. Abstinence does not work. I might die without ever having had sex if I insist on abstaining till marriage. I am 26 and I do not see any sign of marriage anytime soon. I may never get married. What if I marry someone only to find that they do not satisfy me or we are just not meant to be when it comes to sex? I want to know everything there is to know about a boyfriend before I can marry him. I think it is okay to wait till you know the person you are with a little better but I do not think it is a good idea never to have sex with your man before he marries you. I think that sex is sharing something special with your boyfriends. To refuse him that special part of yourself simply because he has not asked you to spend your entire life with him is not fair. It is important to love someone fully while you have him or her. When they are gone or they change their minds about you, or you change your mind about them at least you will know that you gave it all you've got. Maybe there is a case for abstinence for other people but not for me.

3.1.6 AN INTERVIEW WITH MABILANE NDLELA

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 31 March 2002

AGE : 21 years

HOME : *Kwa-Mzimba*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I am currently doing Matric. I am involved with a number of projects in the village. I am a member of the Youth Club in church and I like helping my parents with some

household chores. I think I am a young person who is looking after himself really well. I have managed to stay out of trouble up to now. I keep myself very busy and that saves me from a lot of trouble.

Question 2: Do you have a girlfriend?

Of course I do. I am normal. I had my first girlfriend when I was 13.

Question 3: How did you meet her?

I met her in church. Her appearance attracted me. I thought she was a beautiful girl. She looked well behaved and collected. I also found that we are at the same level of school, although at different schools. I approached her and I proposed a relationship to her. I was not really interested in having a girlfriend. The problem is that my friends were accusing me of being gay. They said I am gay because I do not have a girlfriend. I had a girlfriend to prove to them that I am not gay. I wanted to stop them from ridiculing me. Having a girl friend became something of a habit and before I knew it I was so used to having a girlfriend that I did not want to be without one. I can say it was not a decision I thought about before I started. I was pressured into having a girlfriend. Mine is a perfect example of peer pressure.

Question 4: What do you do when you are together?

We talk, kiss, touch and have sexual intercourse. If you don't have sex your girlfriend will leave you and think there is something wrong with you. Girls talk about these things and I know that it would look really bad if a girl left me because I cannot satisfy her in bed. The other guys would really be convinced that I am gay. But I do not forget to use a condom. I am very careful that I do not get sick from AIDS or get my girlfriend pregnant. I am not ready to leave school and become a father yet. If that were to happen I will be forced to marry her.

Question 5: What about if your girlfriend can ask you to practice *ukusoma*?

They (girls) always pretend not to want sex. When you suggest that you sleep they always say 'no' but they end up sleeping with you. It is not that hard to get them to end up in bed with you. They can say we should practise *ukusoma* but they are the ones who ask for sex when we are together. Now I just let her be the one who decides when we have sex and it is a lot of times that we have sex because she always suggests it. I cannot practice *ukusoma* when she is here. It is impossible. *Ukusoma* should be done when one is alone or when one does not have a girlfriend. Girls are more forward than we are made to believe. It irritates me when people talk as if boys are the only ones who are interested in having sex when the truth is we are equally interested. I actually think girls are more interested than we are. We get blamed for girls getting pregnant and for spreading AIDS but I think girls are also responsible. It is very easy to blame us because we are supposed to be in charge of the relationships since we are men. I do not think boys are in charge of anything in a relationship. Girls are the ones leading because if you do not do what they want they just cry so that we feel sorry for them and give in to their demands.

3.1.7 AN INTERVIEW WITH MDIKLA ZUMA

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 31 March 2002

AGE : 17

HOME : *Kwa-Shange*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I am doing Grade Ten at the local high school. I come to church, go to school and stay at home. My time is spent around activities in these three areas. I keep myself very busy with my books and my involvement with the youth at church. I enjoy music and I spend a lot of time at choir rehearsals for the church choir.

Question 2: Do you have a girlfriend?

No.

Question 3: Why?

I just don't like to have a girlfriend. My friends talk about 'these things' at school. They tell me how nice it is to propose a relationship to a girl. Boys like us who do not propose love to girls are called *izishimane*¹. That does not worry me. I will have a girlfriend when I want to. My friends tell me it is natural to propose love to a girl. I am not interested in girls. I just do not think I am ready yet. There are a lot of things that make it very risky to start having girlfriends these days. It is not as easy as it used to be in the old days. There is a risk of having AIDS that can end your life early. Girls are not going anywhere. They will always be here whenever I decide to have a girlfriend. I will find one that is suitable for me. I look at girls being busy getting lied to by these boys and I feel sorry for them because these boys come to us and brag about the things they get up to in private. I do not want to participate in such a sick activity. I want a girl I can respect because she has valued herself and waited for the right time to start having relationships. I think I am also influenced by the teachings of the church where we are told that it is important to save ourselves as young men of God. I want to have respect for the young woman who will become my girlfriend when it happens. Right now I think I am too busy with schoolwork and church activities. It would not be fair to a girl to make her my girlfriend and then not give her any time in my busy day. I do not believe that one can concentrate on two things at the same time. Besides it looks like it is expensive to have a girlfriend. There are birthdays, movies and going out to eat at restaurants that I cannot afford right now. Girls expect these things and if you do not do them they think you are not cool or you do not love them enough. They then leave you for someone who can afford to buy them gifts. Why risk getting my heart broken when I can just spend my time with my books and my church activities? I think it would be stupid to start now. They can call me *isishimane* all they want, I do not care. I know what I am doing.

¹ Failures in love affairs.

3.1.8 AN INTERVIEW WITH MFUNWA BUTHELEZI

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 5 April 2002

AGE : 20 years

HOME : *Kwa-Mnyandu*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I am currently doing Civil Engineering, Level 3 (S53) at the Natal Technikon in Durban. I am a member of the Catholic Youth Club. I come home only at the end of the month and during holidays. I spend most of my time in Durban. Life is very different from the one I have here there. There is a lot to do for entertainment when I have free time. My studies and social life keep me very busy.

Question 2: Do you have a girlfriend?

Yes.

Question 3: How did you meet?

I had my first girlfriend at the age of 14. I met her in church and I was attracted to her quiet personality and good character. I proposed a relationship to her, she accepted my proposal and we started having fun together. It was not easy to approach a girl for the first time in my life. I was nervous and scared that if I failed to get her interested in me the other guys would laugh at me. I was happy when she said 'yes'.

Question 4: How many girlfriends do you have?

I will tell you the truth because I hope that you will not tell anyone else what I am about to tell you. I have a number of girlfriends

Question 5: How many?

I have six girlfriends in total.

Question 6: How do you spend your time with them?

I divide my time amongst them and I visit them at different times so that I can spend time with each of them. I tell them all that I love them but the truth is I really love one out of them all. I show my love to her by having sex with her without a condom. I trust her and I believe that I am her only boyfriend. When I have sex with the other ones I use a condom. If you have sex with someone using a condom it means you do not trust them and you do not love them. If you do not use a condom it means you love that person and you trust her.

Question 7: What about AIDS?

People should not worry too much about AIDS. If you will get it you will. There is nothing much we can do about that. We cannot let AIDS run our lives and prevent us from enjoying ourselves. If fate has it that you will die of AIDS you will no matter how careful you are with your sex life. That is what I believe. I won't stop having fun because of fear of contracting AIDS. I am still young and I owe it to myself to enjoy my life so that when the time comes for me to settle down I will have had all the fun I need to have. This way I will be able to be faithful to my wife because I will have experienced all that there is to be experienced. I will slow down later. Right now it is important that I have all the fun I can get.

Question 8: What about abstinence?

This is old-fashioned. It is for people who are not normal. No man should ever do such a thing. We should use our manhood and love is a gift from God. Soon we will be too old to have sex and girls will not be attracted to us anymore because we will be wrinkled and slow. Why waste our youth? Guys who say they are abstaining are just cowards who do not know what to do with girls in bed. If you knew what it is like to

have sex and to satisfy your girlfriends you would not choose this abstinence business.

3.1.8 AN INTERVIEW WITH NTOMBIFUTHI ZULU

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 5 April 2002

AGE : 20

HOME : *eMvundlwani*

Question 1: Tell me about yourself.

I am doing Matric in Pietermaritzburg town. I am a member of the Catholic Church Youth Club. I stay with my parents and we are a closely-knit family.

Question 2: Do you have a boyfriend and what do you do when you are together?

Yes I do. I enjoy talking with him, discussing all kinds of issues and driving around town. I have been with him now for 3 years. I love him. One thing that I do not do is to have sex.

Question 3: Why?

I am 20 this year. I have been going for virginity testing since I was 9. I am very proud of it. It makes me feel good if everybody knows that I am still a virgin. If I have sex with my boyfriend my family will come to know about it and my boyfriend would have to pay the penalty of a cow or a goat. I would not like that to happen. If it comes to a push, although I've never done it, I would agree to *ukusoma* but I would never allow penetration. I have been lucky in that my boyfriend actually respects this and has been with me for the time that we have been in each other's lives. I do not think that guys these days are willing to put up with that. I really believe that he loves me for who I am instead of my body because he is still here after

all these years. He has allowed me to honour the things that I consider important to me without putting me under too much pressure. I think that is special in our days.

Question 4: What is your attitude towards virginity testing?

It is good. It helps me to behave well and to be collected. I think all girls should go for virginity testing, although I know of a friend of mine who has slept with her boyfriend and still tests as a virgin at the virginity tests. I do not know what happens to these women, maybe they are too old. I also think I am going to stop going for these tests. I believe discipline should come from within and not from outside. It is humiliating to always go to someone and open your legs to. I should be able to look after myself without anybody checking on me. Besides, the majority of the girls being tested are little girls who should not be sexually active anyway. I am beginning to doubt the value of the testing but I have not changed my mind on the value of staying a virgin for as long as possible. I would recommend it for any young woman. I guess virginity testing is good while you are still too young to discipline yourself. But it really should be driven by your need to stay pure than by fear, which is the case most of the time with the girls who get tested. It is always the fear of a parent than the need to preserve one's body.

Question 5: How is this virginity testing done?

A girl is made to lie down on a grass mat facing up. The woman conducting the test, with gloves in her hands and using her fingers, 'looks inside the girl' and feels with her fingers to find out whether the girl is still a virgin or not. It can be uncomfortable having this done to you. You have to hope that the woman testing you is using a new pair of gloves for each girl she is testing in order to avoid spreading diseases.

Question 6: What does she look for?

I don't know. She knows what she looks for. I think she looks for *iso*². I do not really know what she looks for. I have no idea what this thing that makes one a virgin looks like. There are arguments about there being no biologically proven state of a woman's body that says for sure that a woman has not had sex. I think it is important that the girl knows herself that she is true to herself. One should not need to be policed and monitored in order to stay pure. All I know is that virginity testing has worked for me in that it has kept me with something to live up to. I am not saying that it will work for anybody. I also think it should not be made public if a girl is found to not be a virgin. There are many reasons why I say this. The most important one is the reason of sexual abuse. Not all girls who have sex are willing participants.

3.2 A TRANSITION

These interviewees represent an evolution from the old and a desire to embrace the new, a shift from the traditional way of life to the modern. Vilakazi (1962) looks at this shift which is so influenced by the advent of Christianity and notes some changes. He sees *ukujutshwa* as a custom by which girls were declared big enough to take lovers and were allocated to a particular *ibutho* (regiment). From the age of fourteen she can now listen to the conversations on lovemaking by her elder sisters. She goes with them to the river and comes to their defence against her sister's suitors. For a Christian it is a sin to have a relationship at fourteen as she is still regarded as a child and still at school. These young people are taught in church that courtship leads to sexual sin. Now they write letters at school and they arrange their meetings and activities without the involvement of any adult person. There is now a big secrecy about love affairs and young people have no one to talk to as they deem their relationship sinful.

Vilakazi states that:

² Literally referring to the eye, meaning the hymen.

a sure sign that the girl is softening up, and may after all accept his importunities, is when she begins to be coy, to avoid his eyes, to be soft-spoken, and when she stops making fun of him. This is the time when he either takes some article from her, such as a string of beads or bracelet, or she tells him to go and talk to her senior sister. (1962:48).

The most important gift he receives is the love letter in white beads (*impahla*)³. Only after receiving this gift can a young man hoist a flag as a sign of being in love.

Vilakazi (1962) cites the sociological and psychological impacts of a girl accepting a young man as a lover. He notes that such acceptance boosts his ego. The woman *umenza umuntu*⁴ by accepting his proposal of love. This is an assurance that he is a human being and he is normal. Christian practice cuts out *iqhikiza*. It leaves the matter of control to schools and churches. The pre-marital pregnancy of a Christian woman is treated severely. This is a moral taint for the pregnant woman and she becomes a social outcast. The family tends to treat the matter as a family secret. Pre-marital pregnancy might lead to excommunication, announced publicly in church. She might be given a seat at the back of the church, emphasising her lowly status and she might be forbidden to associate with others. The young girl will have to start her catechism afresh. After a period of probation she may come back to the congregation and ask for forgiveness. Later when she gets married she will not have 'a church marriage'⁵.

The modern Christian way of rearing young people undermines the role of the *iqhikiza* and *ingqwele*. This results in young people being left to their own devices, without any supervision, which results in children born out of wedlock.

It is very difficult to find the rate of illegitimacy among the Zulus. Vilakazi (1962) says Zulu people have a different definition of illegitimacy. A child born from unmarried parents, who later on marry is legitimised by marriage. This child is *lobolad* together with the mother. If a Zulu woman is to have a child by another

³ Another word referring to *ucu*.

⁴ Accords him status.

⁵ A marriage which is not done in the church buildings and without the minister.

man, other than her husband, the child is legitimate as it belongs to a family, the mother's house.

After *ukugana*⁶ the young woman will now visit the boy's family bringing along some gifts. The aim of this visit is to learn more about this new family. The young man's sisters also visit her house to see what kind of woman she is. They then come back with the necessary information for the correct assessment of the young woman as a suitable wife. The parents of the young boy should approve of the woman. This is a very individualistic approach to marriage as opposed to the traditional process.

Hlengwa (1992) refers to *ukugoya*⁷, when the young woman is taken to the young man's family to spend time with them before marriage. The aim of this transfer is to go and see the lifestyle of her future family, and their customs, and to find out if she would be able to cope.

Another way of starting negotiations is *ukuma*⁸. The girl goes and stands at the boy's kraal, instead of *abakhongi* being sent. This happens in a situation where her parents threaten to marry her off to somebody she does not love. By standing at this particular kraal the woman is making her own choice. This can also happen when the woman is rejected in another place and she cannot return to her home in shame.

Vilakazi (1962) notes that Zulu society practised what is known as the kraal economy. Their whole life was organised around the kraal. Even the physical homestead of the Zulus has huts built around the kraal. The cattle were the main source of power and prestige. They did not have the idea of a national economy. The land that they use is tribally owned. Now the concept of money has been introduced into the lives of the modern Zulu people. They are now involved in formal education. The school and the church have replaced their informal and non-institutional traditional system of passing on knowledge. The school and the church have become so important and are a symbol of new life. The father of the

⁶ Zulu word for engagement.

⁷ Literally meaning to be shy.

⁸ To stand.

homestead, who owned the cattle for ritual offerings for the whole family, was the priest and the head of the family. Now in the changing Zulu system every member of the family is responsible for their own spiritual life. It is not only the man who is the priest. Women have achieved greater roles in the religious sphere. Both men and women are now involved in the fields. They both go out to work in order to earn money. Industrialisation and the policy of migratory labour have accelerated this.

The bride price was paid as a symbol of a relationship between the two families in the traditional Zulu society. Hlengwa (1992) note that for the modern Zulu society the motive for the bride prices (*ilobolo*) is wealth. People use the bride price to enrich themselves. Some people remain unmarried because of the high bride price that is demanded by the family. As a result of this "the civil court has established a stipulated reasonable price for cattle" (Hlengwa 1992: 28).

Marriages are now no longer seen as a community matter as in traditional society. Members of families are no longer living together in villages next to each other. They are now scattered all over the country. They are in town, and in rural areas. To meet as family for all the different stages that lead up to marriage, would be costly. Each family now ends up arranging its own marriage, with family and relatives coming for the final celebrations.

If the young man who intends to get married cannot afford *ilobolo*, and the young woman feels strongly about the impending marriage, they can plan for pre-marital pregnancy. When the parents, who are locked up in disagreement, discover that the young woman is pregnant they would give them permission to marry. Such permission helps to curb illegitimacy and to bring down the bride price.

A marriage that involves the whole community ensured that the woman is married not only to her husband but also to his family and to his community. The young woman would have to stay with the young man's parents. In the modern Zulu society the young woman gets married to the young man and they stay together. The family and the community of the man is still important although the emphasis is put on their personal or individual relationship.

There are instances where *ilobolo* is not paid up fully. This is sometimes described, according to Hlengwa (1992), as a sign of the continuing negotiations and relationship of the two families. Such relationships are continuing and still open to negotiations. A fully paid-up *ilobolo* sometimes becomes a sign of the two families having nothing to do with each other anymore.

Polygamy was practised in the traditional village as a way of avoiding divorce. It was also a means of legitimating children born out of wedlock. Everybody belonged, in some way, to a type of family. The modern Zulu cannot afford polygamy. The economic situation of today and the effect that Christianity has on the Zulu people, with its rejection of polygamy, makes polygamy less attractive.

It happens today that the wife-to-be comes back pregnant. This is accepted among the traditionalists, as the man is assured of the woman's fertility. This has decreased a lot among Christians, as the woman is expected to get pregnant only after marriage.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THEOLOGY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Roman Catholic Church has been teaching on human sexuality over the centuries of its existence. What the Church teaches today has been handed down from the Early Church. The Church has taught on human sexuality through its councils and individuals. These major events and persons contribute to the present Catholic theology on human sexuality. It is important to know the background to the Church's theology of human sexuality so as to be able to understand what the Church teaches on human sexuality today. In this chapter I will look at the development of the theology of human sexuality within the Catholic Church over the centuries of its existence. A survey of major events and persons will suffice for the purpose of this work, rather than an extensive historical background on this issue.

4.1 THE PATRISTIC PERIOD (Before 400)

The Patristic period also includes the period known as the Early Church. Some of the authors of this period lived beyond 400. This period spans from the beginnings of the Church, during the times of the apostles, until 400 AD. This is the time when the Church was positioning itself within an environment that was hostile to the gospel. This was a difficult time in the life of the Church. It is the time when the Church was struggling to establish itself within its own context. New, as it was, it was teaching a faith that was not known by the general populace. The environment of the time was hostile towards this new message. This led to the message of the Church being unfavourably received. The Church was bringing a message that would be contrary to the way of life of the majority of the people. It became even more difficult for the Church to have maximum influence in society, as it was a faith of the minority. It was a faith of a few people who were trying to influence the way of life in an environment that was contrary to the demands of the new faith. It

is within this context that the Church was trying to teach a faith that was generally not favourably received. The hostility of this context towards the message of the gospel posed a challenge to the faith. This was to be the first test of Christianity as the faith of the Church was at its infancy. It was the initial stage of the Church coming into contact with the so-called pagan world. This was a period characterised by pagan prostitution, divorce, contraception, abortion and infanticide. Lawler calls this period “a time of great sexual licentiousness” (1985: 32). The Greco-Roman environment gave rise to philosophies such as Gnosticism. Many authors use the term ‘Gnosticism’ as referring to a philosophy, in reality it existed in a variety of sects, though with common denominators such as a rigorous dualism of body and spirit. This is a philosophy that held a negative view of the human body, therefore, it viewed human sexuality as evil. The elite of the time was expected to abstain from any form of sexual involvement. For the Gnostics sexual activity was defiling and they attached no good to it. Pleasure was the main purpose for engaging in sexual activity and the Gnostics were opposed to any form of pleasure. For them there was nothing good in the sexual activity, except for pleasure, and such pleasure was defiling, and therefore not encouraged. The non-elite could engage in sexual activities “as long as they took care to ensure that no new life was generated” (Lawler 1985: 33). One can see that the environment surrounding the infant Church did not give much honour and respect to human sexuality. Human sexuality was seen as something that was sub-human. It was regarded as an aspect of the human person that defiles the person. It is also interesting to note that even those who engaged in sexual activities were supposed to ensure that there was no conception. This would have a bearing on the later teaching of the Church on the finality of the sexual act.

In trying to repudiate this philosophy Early Christian writers used the gospel and Paul’s letters. The aim of these Christian writers was to teach about the institution of marriage within which sexual activities are permitted. The institution of marriage was advocated as being divinely instituted and blessed by God. The wedding at Cana, as narrated by John, was used to justify this view. While highlighting the goodness of marriage the writers also taught about the value and honour of virginity. Both the Gnostics and the Early Church writers advocated the preservation of one’s virginity but differed in their reasons for staying pure. The

Gnostics saw virginity as a weapon against defilement while the Church saw it as a tool for the glorification of God's kingdom.

Justin, the Martyr, (100-165), affirmed the goodness of marriage. For him the goodness and importance of marriage lay in its power to procreate. His teachings on procreation were a way of responding to the Gnostics. The Gnostics taught that sexual activities could be tolerated as long as they produce no conception. To see marriage as good and important because of its openness to procreation was contrary to the belief and the way of life of the Gnostics and the environment of the day. Athenagoras of Athens, a second century author, and Clement of Alexandria (150-215) also stressed the procreative aspect of marriage. For them marriage was for the sake of producing children. Clement of Alexandria acknowledged that trials are sure to come in marriage. These trials serve the purpose of growth in virtue.

Tertullian (155-220), a North African Latin, who later embraced sectarian Montanist views, introduced a new perspective in the theology of sexuality. He saw marriage as a total communion of life. Procreation was seen by him as the essence and justification of marriage. Referring to the concept of total communion Tertullian saw marital sex as a communion that could never be shared with anyone else. Such a communion is meant for the married couple only. The fourth and the fifth century writers like Athanasius continued to highlight the importance of virginity and procreative sex in marriage. Athanasius saw virginity as a calling, a way of life that can be embraced for the sake of the gospel. He therefore encouraged young people to choose virginity, not for any other reason, but for the sake of the kingdom.

John Chrysostom (347-407) and Gregory Nazianzen (337-390) in the East also insisted on the value of preserving one's virginity for the sake of the kingdom. They saw Christ as the origin and the foundation of virginity. At the same time they appreciated and promoted the value and goodness of marriage. Some of these writers were not so open to the goodness of sexuality because of the environment and the culture of their time. These writers include Gregory of Nyssa (335-394), John Chrysostom, Theodore and John Damascene (750). They had some reservation about sexuality. This is evident in their teachings. They taught, for

example that “God had intended to generate life in some non-sexual way” (Lawler 1985: 34). This type of teaching came about, and was shaped by the anti-sex environment. Perhaps the weakness in their teaching is that they tended to focus a great deal on the fall of humankind and its effect on sexuality rather than the origins and purpose of sexuality.

One of the early Christian writers who wrote extensively about sexual and marital issues is St Augustine (354-430). Though holding fast to certain basic values that he had absorbed from the teaching of Plotinus and Plato and from the ethics of the Stoics that led to his pessimism in sexual morality, his theology and influence formed the basis and a foundation for the theology of sexuality that the Church subscribes to today. He saw marriage as the first bond of society. He says:

The first natural bond of human society, therefore, is that of husband and wife. God did not create them as separate individuals and bring them together as persons of a different race, but he created one from the other, making the side, from which the woman was taken and formed, a sign of the strength of their union. (Hunter 1999:33)

In his writings St Augustine was concerned with one question: Why is a Christian marriage a good thing? He re-affirmed the goodness of marriage on the basis of procreation and the sexual relationship between husband and his wife. For him marriage was a communion of total, faithful and indivisible life-sharing between a husband and his wife. The *Ordo caritatis*¹ between spouses was important for marriage. He developed three principles necessary for marriage act, *de bono coniugali*, namely:

- To perform the marriage act for procreation is a good thing.
- To perform the marriage act while excluding procreation is to commit a deadly sin.
- To perform the marriage act not for a creative purpose but for the sake of marital fidelity and to prevent one spouse sinning is to sin venially.

Based on these principles for marriage, St Augustine developed the three goods of marriage, namely:

¹ Genuine love.

- *Proles*²
- *Fides*³
- *Sacramentum*⁴

In trying to show the goodness of marriage St Augustine taught that the natural good of marriage is the union of male and female for the sake of procreation. In this male–female union there has to be fidelity. This is a duty that husband and wife have towards each other. St. Augustine holds that:

A breach of this duty of fidelity is called adultery, when, either because of the urge of one's own sensuality or by consenting to the other person's, one violates the marriage contract by sleeping with someone else. In this way there is a betrayal of trust, and even in base material matters trust is a spiritual good of great value... (Rotelle 1999: 35)

He maintained that a sexual activity becomes negative if it is performed excluding its procreative aspect. Such an act becomes an instrument of sexual pleasure only. This position was going to have a great impact on the teaching of the Church on contraceptive sex later. The spouses are meant to be together forever in marriage. Just as Jesus and the Church can never be separated, so spouses are meant to remain in their bond of marriage as long as they are alive. For him marriage was holy and sanctifying due to the mystery of Christ penetrating their relationship and informing them as they live together. On the equality of spouses he taught that each has equal rights on the body of the other.

The Council of Elvira (305-306) is the earliest council that legislated on marriage. It is the same council that prescribed celibacy for priesthood and condemned homosexuality. Such a prescription for the priesthood sounded as an upgrading of celibacy and a disregard for marriage at that time. During the period of this council

² The good of offspring or procreation

³ The good of fidelity or the avoidance of illicit sexual intercourse.

⁴ The good of indissolubility.

marriage was seen as good for procreation and for the setting of a family. It was also seen as a *remedium concupiscentiae*⁵ for the human person.

The council meeting of Grangra in Turkey (340) tried to strike a balance to the degradation of marriage and condemned anyone who looked down upon marriage. It also condemned those who held that the spouses involved in the marital act cannot enter heaven.

Patristic morality is in no way an inferior morality. It knew how to respond to challenges of its own time. It managed to present the spirituality of virginity for the sake of the kingdom as the culmination of morality. The truth of faith, as found in the articles of the creed and conveyed by Patristic morality, has endured to this day and has formed a firm foundation for Christian living and moral teaching. The teachings of the Fathers are a primary source for moral theology, after Scripture. This period made an important foundation for the later teachings of the Church on human sexuality. It showed procreation as the essence of a marriage relationship. It also showed that marriage is a relationship of total communion of the spouses. This is the time when the introduction of celibacy for the priesthood was seen as a way of taking celibacy as superior to the married state. Important to note is that the Church was trying to teach on the goodness of marriage during this time.

4.2 THE MIDDLE AGES (400 – 13th century)

This period stretches from late antiquity up to the Reformation.

The Middle Ages covers the period from 400 AD up to the 13th century. A contextual understanding of this period will assist in understanding the reasons behind the teachings of the Church on sexuality that prevailed during this period. According to Lawler (1985) the Middle Ages was a time of great social upheaval in Western Europe. This was as a result of the fall of the Roman Empire and the migration that resulted from that fall. It was a time of many movements. People were moving from one place to another. The only people who remained stable were the monks. The monks, in their monasteries, became teachers of the heritage of the

⁵ Remedy for concupiscence.

past. The monasteries were centres of cultural heritage. Amongst their duties was the responsibility to teach about marriage. They taught that marriage was holy and good. It must be understood that the monks lived during a difficult period where they had to teach their faith and defend it from the new pagan environment hence they, sometimes, have rigorous views on sexuality. These views helped in preserving the Catholic faith when challenged. In their quest to ensure that their teachings were adhered to they had a lot of admonitions and prohibitions. This time is characterised by the adoption of the scholastic method of *sic et non*⁶. It is during this time that the Church was struggling to accept major works as sources of knowledge and bases for teaching. Apart from Sacred Scripture the Church had works of great writers who helped in the transmission of faith and the spiritual upliftment of Christians.

This is the time when we find a new form of Gnosticism. This is a dualistic sectarian group that has two extremes, namely a dualistic tendency on one hand and an absolutisation of romance on the other hand. This 'neo-Gnosticism' held marriage in contempt. This new philosophy showed its contempt of marriage in the form of Albigensianism, Catharism and Bonomitism. This was a time when romantic sexual activities, separate from marriage and procreation, were endorsed and held up as ideal. Sexual pleasure, without procreation, was endorsed by the Gnostics. A lot of sexual activities were performed within the context of romance. Theology was now facing two challenges, namely, Gnosticism and neo-pagan license. When the Medieval Fathers pronounced their teachings they were trying to respond to these challenges. This period is also characterised by an attempt by theologians to systematise the teachings of the Church.

Sexuality was considered good in marriage but procreation dominated. Even the understanding of matrimony points at this mentality. *Matrimonium* meant '*ut mater fiat*'⁷. It was believed that the male seed was an active element, the female contribution being purely passive. Many male seeds were believed to be lost during sexual intercourse and a loss of seed was considered a serious offence. This view was due to a limited understanding of biology. During this period marriage was

⁶ Literally meaning "This, and nothing else." It is a frank confrontation of contrary opinions.

⁷ In order to be a mother.

beginning to be accepted as a sacrament, although there were lots of hesitations and doubts about it becoming a sacrament.

Peter Lombard, who died in 1160, a bishop and a theologian, was concerned about the purpose of marriage. He taught that any sexual activity that is contrary to the purpose of marriage is sinful. All sexual activities that are practised in marriage should respect the sexual differentiation of the origin of the species of male and female. He saw any sexual activity that does not respect this sexual differentiation as sinful and a violation of the commandments of God. He believed that marriage did not confer grace. He saw it as a remedy for concupiscence. This explains why marriage had a negative significance for him.

Albert the Great (1200-1280), a Dominican writer, held that the act of marriage was much more than being merely a biological act. He saw it as a personal act, one of merit. He saw the sacrament of marriage as conferring grace upon the couple. This grace is given in the sacrament not merely to offset evil in sexual matters but in *ordine ad bonum*⁸.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a Dominican, also known as the Angelic Doctor, taught that marriage is good. In answering to objections made on the goodness of marriage he has this to say:

If we suppose the corporeal nature to be created by the good God, we cannot hold that those things which pertain to the preservation of the corporeal nature and to which nature inclines, are altogether evil; wherefore, since the inclination to beget an offspring whereby the specific nature is preserved is from nature, it is impossible to maintain that the act of begetting children is altogether unlawful, so that it be impossible to find the mean of virtue therein; unless we suppose, as some are mad enough to assert, that corruptible things were created by the evil God, whence perhaps the opinion mentioned in the text is derived; wherefore this is a most wicked heresy (1928:82).

He taught that the sacrament of marriage was made by the consent of the partners. He states that:

⁸ In order to fulfil the good of married life.

The words whereby the marriage consent is expressed are the form of this sacrament, and not the priest's blessing, which is a sacramental. The sacrament of Matrimony, like that of Penance, is perfected by the act of the recipient. Where therefore just as Penance has no other matter than the sensible acts themselves, which take the place of the material element, so it is in Matrimony (1928:87).

This sacrament impacted on the whole marriage in a sense that it conferred grace to the spouses to assist them in living out their married lives. Aquinas also affirmed the teaching of the Church that a marriage bond is indissoluble. He saw the marital act as good in itself. For him marriage is ordained for the common good whereas virginity is ordained for a special good for the individual. Virginity is higher than bodily fulfilment, only when dedicated to God. It is for the first time in history that we have a complete organisation of theological material in his *Summa Theologiae*.

Alexander of Hales (1245), a Franciscan writer, was the first to admit that marriage was salvific. He believed that it could confer grace. What conferred grace was the agreement between a husband and his wife. This was a contribution in theology that was going to be key in the idea of the couple being the ministers of matrimony to each other later.

St Bonaventure (1217-1274), a Franciscan writer commenting on the good of fidelity, holds that non-marital sexual intercourse is against this good. He saw the original intention of marriage as a person having *amor singularis*⁹. For him it was impossible to share this kind of love with others. It is a love that is personal and exclusive. He ascribes to the notion that matrimony is a remedy for lust. As a symbol of Christ and the Church matrimony symbolises the union of two natures in one, the human and the divine.

Another Franciscan theologian Duns Scotus (1266-1308) looked at the rights that married couples have. He saw them as having a right on each other for the sake of procreation. He was the first theologian to teach that the true ministers of the sacrament of matrimony were the bride for the groom and the groom for the bride. This idea of the ministers of matrimony gave rise to the theory of *ratum et*

⁹ One kind of love.

*consumatum*¹⁰. This is the theory that a marriage is one that is agreed upon and put into practice by the couple. This theory makes the couple the key people in matrimony.

Nicolas Oresme, a theologian and the bishop of Lisieux, who died around 1382, wrote about the love between husband and wife. Such a love, which is a gift of the couple to each other, is displayed in the marital act. For him marriage was the perfect place where such love can be displayed and nurtured. Nicolas was concerned about the love that should exist between husband and wife. He saw the husband and the wife as being brought together in marriage by love. This love is a gift of the couple to each other. There are many ways that the couple can employ to demonstrate their love for each other, but the best way according to him, is to display this marital love in the marital act.

It is within these teachings that three arguments showing the moral evil of non-marital and unnatural sexual activities were developed. The first argument states that no sexual union is allowed except within the marital covenant. Such an argument bases its reasoning on the sixth commandment.

The second argument maintains that prohibited forms of sexual behaviour violate the divine and the natural laws that are printed within our hearts. These prohibited acts are acts such as bestiality, sodomy, contraceptive intercourse and others. Such acts were seen as violating the God-given purpose of human sexuality. The theologians of the Middle Ages regarded these acts more seriously than acts of intercourse outside marriage.

The third argument states that sexual desires “have been corrupted and indeed infected by original sin in a special way” (Lawler 1985: 46). This argument states that when a person gets married that person remedies such a disorderly itching for sexual gratification. Important to note is the fact that the teachings of the Middle Ages on sexuality are based on the theology of the early Fathers of the Church. Both the teachings of the Early Church and of the Middle Ages employed the theory of the three goods as taught by St Augustine.

¹⁰ Ratified and consummated.

The Second Lateran Council (1139) together with the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) defended the goodness of marriage. The Fourth Lateran Council concerned itself with the issue of marital consent. During this time there were people who were forced into marriage against their will. Looking at marital consent the council aimed at protecting those forced individuals from sexual abuse. It is during this time that the legal code of Justinian was discovered. This legal code emphasised mutual consent as establishing marriage. In marriage sexual intercourse was essential as a completion and cementing of the marriage relationship. The Council of Florence (1439) officially listed matrimony among the seven sacraments. This council made an important contribution by teaching that matrimony does not only symbolise the presence of grace but it also confers it upon the married couple. It also affirmed the goodness of marriage and taught that marriage is part of the seven sacraments of the New Law. This council went on to adopt St Augustine's doctrine of the three goods of marriage, namely, *proles*, *fides* and *sacramentum*.

Until the Middle Ages there were no church ceremonies for matrimony. Local customs played a significant role in the structure and celebration of marriage. From the 4th century onward the Church started to show more interest in this sacrament. There were para-liturgical services associated with marriage that were introduced into the life of the Church. Weddings were now blessed in church. Only the bride was given a blessing during the wedding ceremony. To strike a balance between marriage and virginity the Church continued to value virginity for the sake of the kingdom. The Church equated this kind of virginity to martyrdom, and hence it was called white martyrdom. This was a time of a great swing, from the Gnostic mentality that saw procreation as evil, to a time where procreation dominated the union of husband and wife. Marriage was now a getting together of wife and husband so that they can be mother and father. This is a time also when the spouses were accorded rights over the bodies of each other. To show the importance of marriage the Church introduced marriage ceremonies. It is in the marriage ceremonies that the consent of the individual spouses was seen as essential. A marriage without the free consent of a spouse was seen as no marriage at all. One of the key contributions of the era was the realisation by the Church that marriage is a sacrament and it confers grace upon those who are getting married. This

realisation of the presence of grace in marriage highlighted the fact that both the husband and the wife are responsible for the salvation of each other. They are also part of the salvation process as they are also called to salvation.

4.3 THE REFORMATION (1483-1596)

This was a difficult time for the Church. There were lots of dissatisfactions about certain practices of the Church. The Church, in trying to establish its authority, tried to respond to the criticisms of the time by becoming very defensive and reactive. This led to some groups leaving the Church to establish their own churches. This was the beginning of the renewal of the Church.

Martin Luther was a reformer who based his theology on Scripture alone. Tradition played little or no role in his theology. This was influenced by his principle of *Sola Scriptura*¹¹ as well as his personal experience.

Cahill (1983) looks at Martin Luther's treatise, *The Estate of Marriage*, where Luther cites Genesis 1: 27-28 as a foundation for the ethics of marriage. He sees sexuality and procreation as part of the divine ordinance. Marriage is for him a natural institution rather than a sacrament. Luther sees marriage as a station through which God orders human life. He did not see marriage as a sacrament but as a natural institution to bring husband and wife together. He says:

So the woman was a helper for Adam; for he was unable to procreate alone, just as the woman was unable to procreate alone. Moreover, these are the highest praises of sex that the male is the father in procreation, but the woman is the mother in procreation and the helper of her husband. When we look back to the state of innocence, procreation, too, was better, more delightful, and more sacred in countless ways. (Pelikan 1958:118).

In a marriage, a woman should be subordinate to the man. For those who do not opt for marriage, celibacy is the answer. Luther saw celibacy as a great gift. He nevertheless affirms that in a celibate state there will be many temptations. Matthew 19: 3-9 is the basis for his teachings on divorce. He sees the one who divorces an adulterous wife as justified. If the one who divorces is justified this

¹¹ Scripture alone.

allows remarriage for the innocent party. Spouses can divorce on grounds of incompatibility. If the reason for divorce is incompatibility, Luther holds that they may not remarry. If after separation a spouse is denied reconciliation by an estranged spouse and this spouse cannot remain celibate, then that spouse is allowed to remarry. Marriage here is seen as a vocation. In this vocation a Christian can live out his or her faith. It was impossible for Luther to see marriage as a sacrament.

He saw the whole life of a Christian as an occasion for the presence of Christ in the world, and that does not justify singling out marriage as sacrament.

For him there are only two sacraments: Baptism and Eucharist. On the other hand Luther maintains that a Christian should not seek to dissolve marriage. He saw the male and female complementarity and partnership as being based on Scripture. This partnership was mandated at creation. He states:

But among men the nature of marriage is different. There the wife so binds herself to a man that she will be about him and will live together with him as one flesh. If Adam had persisted in the state of innocence, this intimate relationship of husband and wife would have been most delightful. The very work of procreation also would have been most sacred and would have been held in esteem. (Jaroslan 1958:117).

Luther has a dual mentality about the sexual activity. He saw sexual passion as occasioned by lust while on the other hand, he marvels at the miracle of pregnancy and birth.

Thomas Cardinal Cajetan (1469 –1534), a Dominican commentator on Aquinas who belongs to the Counter-Reformation, taught that those who are married can legitimately seek pleasure in the marital act. Here we see an advancement and development in Catholic theology's appreciation of marital intercourse. This development was anticipated by Thomas Aquinas, who was open to the possibility of pleasure in the marital act. During this period spouses were seen as obliged to have conjugal union. Pleasure now becomes the natural perfection of the marital act. If this act is to be morally good together with its pleasure, an explicit intention to foster the goods of marriage should be presented.

Thomas Sanchez (1550 – 1610), a Jesuit theologian belonging to the Counter-Reformation, taught that to render a marital act good it is sufficient that spouses seek marital union as spouses. Lawler calls this intention “a habitual intent” (1985:55). This habitual intent means the intention need not be explicit for this act to be morally good. Thomas Sanchez, together with Alphonso Liguori (1696 – 1787), noted that it would be seriously wrong for the married spouses to diminish or not to intend the goods of *proles* and *fides*. He sought to find a middle way between the rigorists and the laxists of his own time and that won him the title ‘Patron of Confessors’. The Alphonsian moral teaching remains in the mainstream of moral theology even today.

This period saw many teachings of the Church being challenged. One of the challenges to the teachings of the Church on marriage was to see marriage as one of the many human acts. Luther could not see marriage as a sacrament. In spite of this challenge the Church continued to hold and teach that marriage is a sacrament and it confers grace upon the couple. Some reformers, like Luther, saw some occasions that could justify divorce. These were occasions like an adulterous wife and the incompatibility of the spouses. There were also instances where some reformers could justify re-marriage. One can also note a growth in the appreciation of the sexual activity during this time. The Counter-Reformers encouraged married couples to seek pleasure in the marital act. Such a pleasure was seen as a natural perfection of the marital act.

4.4 THE COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563)

Theological reflections before this period formed part of the mystery of faith. The Penitential Books of the early Middle Ages were not theological, strictly speaking. They were lists of typical sins with a corresponding penance. They were designed to be used by priests during the emergence of private and frequent confession of sin. During this time Trent adopted a defensive and a reactionary posture to protect itself from the Reformers. It is at this time that moral theology emerged as a discipline distinct from other theological disciplines. The seminary system for the training of priests was also introduced. It was introduced to assure the continuation of clear and

consistent doctrine and to provide clear lines to distinguish Protestant protest from Catholic doctrine. Such a defensive attitude resulted in the teaching on morality becoming so closely aligned with Canon Law and liturgical rubrics. Gula (1989:27) notes that moral theology on the eve of Vat II “reflected a moral perspective that was individualistic, act-centred, law-oriented, and sin-conscious”. The main aim of moral theology at this time was the formation of confessors to determine the limits of sin and to educate conscience in the sacrament of penance. Some of the Reformers had over-exalted marriage to the detriment of celibacy and virginity. Trent, in its twenty-fourth session, issued canons and the decree Tametsi, concerning the reform of matrimony. It reaffirmed that Christian marriage is a sacrament by divine institution, and as such, is a grace-filled experience. The Council states that:

The perpetual and indissoluble bond of matrimony was expressed by the first parent of the human race, when, under the influence of the divine Spirit, he said: *This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.* But that by this bond two only are united and joined together, Christ the Lord taught more plainly when referring to those last words as having being spoken by God, He said: *Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh,* and immediately ratified the firmness of the bond so long ago proclaimed by Adam with these words: *What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.* (Schroeder 1941: 180).

It also affirmed the belief of the Church that a Christian marriage is monogamous and is an indissoluble contract that cannot be broken while parties are still alive. This is in direct contrast to Luther’s “scriptural” views.

This council taught that the natural love of the couple was perfected by the sacramental grace of marriage. This sacramental grace also strengthens the indissoluble units of the marriage bond and assists in the sanctification of the spouses. An important contribution that Trent made towards the sacrament of marriage was its decree that Catholics who want to marry should follow a specific form. This ‘specific form’ refers to the presence of a priest and two witnesses. In its *decree concerning the reform of matrimony* (Tametsi) the Council states that:

... in the future, before a marriage is contracted, the proper pastor of the contracting parties shall publicly announce three times in the church, during

the celebration of the mass on three successive festival days, between whom marriage is to be contracted; after which publications, if no legitimate impediment is revealed, the marriage may be proceeded with in the presence of the people, where the parish priest, after having questioned the man and the woman and heard their mutual consent, shall either say: "I join you together in matrimony, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," or he may use other words, according to the accepted rite of each province. (Schroeder 1941:184).

The Council of Trent involved a priest in the marriage ceremony in order to counteract those who wanted to limit the authority of the Church in civil activities. This position of Trent was inserted in the official law of the Church. Later a canon was added which allowed for marriage to take place without the prescribed sacramental form, due to some local conditions. Canon 1094 states that:

Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the pastor or the Ordinary of the place, or a priest delegated by either of these, and at least two witnesses, but in accordance with the rules laid down in the canons which follow, and with the exceptions mentioned in canons 1098 and 1099 (Bouscaren 1958:562) Canon 1098 paragraph 1 states that 'In danger of death, marriage is valid and licit when celebrated before the witnesses alone; and even outside danger of death, provided it is prudently foreseen that the aforesaid condition of affairs will last for a month.' (Bouscaren 1958:571).

Canon 1099 paragraph 3 states that '... non-Catholics, whether baptised or not baptised, if they contract among themselves, are nowhere bound to observe the Catholic form of marriage' (Bouscaren 1958:572). Marriage was now put in the public life of the Church. The public recognition and celebration of marriage highlighted the fact that marriage affects the overall life of the Church. The presence of a priest or any other minister is not primary. Such presence represents the pastoral or religious support for the couple. The essence of marriage vows is unconditional love in all circumstances, and they must be intended by the spouses. Although the Council of Trent was reactionary and defensive, it showed the conviction of the Church with regard to certain issues regarding marriage. Its basic contribution with regard to the theology of human sexuality is its teaching on the indissolubility of marriage. It also taught on the monogamy of marriage, and this reaffirmed the original intention of the author of marriage. This is one of the basic

teachings of the Church that has endured until the present day. The introduction of the 'specific form' of marriage ensured that the Church is involved in the marriage of husband and wife. The involvement of the priest and the witnesses showed that marriage is not only a Church issue. It needs the involvement of the wider community. The priest represents the Church while the witnesses represent the community who will be important in the support they will show to the married couple.

4.5 VATICAN I –VATICANII (1870-1962)

The First Vatican Council had no specific teaching on marriage.

Pope Leo XIII issued a document *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* on the 10th of February 1880. This was the first papal encyclical in modern times on the nature of Christian marriage. From the beginning of his pontificate, Leo XIII showed concern about marriage. In this document he makes it clear that Christ is the only restorer of human dignity. He affirms the dignity of marriage by acknowledging that marriage is the place where spouses are sanctified. It is in this document that the dignity of women was restored through the correction of the abuse of marriage and the restoration of the equality of spouses. He affirmed that marriage was divinely instituted and was indissoluble. In explaining the divine nature of marriage Pope Leo XIII says:

We record what is to all known, and cannot be doubted by any, that God, on the sixth day of creation, having made man from the slime of the earth, and having breathed into his face the breath of life, gave him a companion, whom He miraculously took from the side of Adam when he was locked in sleep. God thus, in His most far-reaching foresight, decreed that this husband and wife should be the natural beginning of the human race, from whom it might be propagated and preserved by an unfailing fruitfulness throughout all futurity of time. (Treacy 1942:5).

He taught that it was one of the seven sacraments and it confers grace on the spouses. Leo XIII insisted on the Christian idea of sexuality and marriage. This document refers to God fashioning the man's companion from Adam's rib from the beginning of time. The purpose of this was that the two might be united in order to

ensure perpetuity. Jesus is seen as honouring marriage by being present at the wedding at Cana. He also brought back the nobility of marriage by condemning divorce. Marriage is a holy sign, giving grace and showing forth an image of Christ. He states that "Marriage has God for its Author, and was from the very beginning a kind of foreshadowing of the Incarnation of His Son; and therefore there abides in it something holy and religious; not extraneous, but innate; not derived from men, but implanted by nature." (Treacy 1942:12).

The 1917 Code of Canon Law made an important contribution to the theology of marriage. It is important to look at the circumstance that necessitated the birth of this code. Vatican I had practical difficulties arising from the condition of the sources of Canon Law. There was no code yet and, therefore, no systematic and formal source from which to build. Articles that dealt with Canon Law were scattered in bulls, briefs and constitutions. This highlighted the need for a coded Canon Law. In this code canons 1012 to 1041 are dedicated to marriage. They deal with the requirements, which must be met, in order for marriage to be a sacrament. They also deal with the ends of marriage, namely, the primary end, which is procreation and the education of children, and the secondary end, which is mutual help and the remedy for concupiscence. The code also states that marriage has two properties, which are unity and indissolubility. It is important to note that this code did not define marriage, perhaps as a way of trying to avoid a formulation, which would be less responsive to the theological moral tradition. For most of the Canonists marriage was seen as a contract of yielding rights, especially the *ius ad corpus*¹². A canonical definition of marriage came with the 1982 Code of Canon Law, which included in its definition, mutual consent, union of the whole life, man and woman, for procreation and education of children.

Pope Pius XI issued *Casti Connubii* on the 31st of December 1930. The context of this document was the growing predominance of humanism. This philosophy repudiated God and sought to de-Christianise the world. The pope saw the re-evaluation of the family as the basis for re-Christianising the world. This encyclical deals with the principles and goods of marriage, the errors and vices against marriage and the principal remedies to be applied. It exhorts spouses to co-operate

¹² The right to the body.

with God in order for marriage to attain its full capability, as it was intended by God. This was the first papal encyclical on marriage in the last century. The pope defended the contractual basis of marriage. He reiterated the ends of marriage as procreation, fidelity and indissolubility, using the teachings of Augustine. He taught that the Sacrament of Marriage confers grace on the couple. He said:

... the blessing of which We are speaking includes other far greater advantages, which are most aptly designated by the word Sacrament. For on the lips of a Christian this is no empty word. When Our Lord, who 'instituted and perfected the Sacraments' raised the marriage of His faithful ones to the dignity of a true and real Sacrament of the New Law, He really made it the sign and source of that special interior grace by which natural married love is perfected, the indissoluble unity of marriage secured, and the married parties sanctified. (Pope Pius XI 1957:21).

He stated that sexual intercourse had a value outside procreation. The marital act therefore could be engaged in for the sake of the cultivation and deepening of mutual love. He condemned contraception as unnatural and intrinsically evil, running contrary to the procreative purpose of marriage.

Pope Pius XII in 1959 taught that spouses may seek pleasure in the marital act. It is God who intended marriage for procreation to propagate the human species. God also wills that the spouses find pleasure and happiness of mind and body in this intercourse. By seeking the pleasure of this intercourse the spouses only accept what God intended for them. In the search for happiness only natural instincts should be used. Sexual pleasure adds to the joy of marriage. He also noted that there are other ingredients to enjoy in marriage like the respect for each other as irreplaceable persons in the commitment. Even in the case of infertility the purpose of the marital act should be appreciated "As of every eye it can be said that it is intended and formed to see, even if, in abnormal cases, owing to special internal and external conditions, it will never be in a position to lead to visual perception." (Pope Pius XII 1959:17).

This period is important in the theology of the Church on human sexuality. It introduced the canonical requirements for marriage. The canonical requirements strengthened the two properties of marriage, which are the unity and the indissolubility of marriage. This period also saw the reaffirmation of the need for

pleasure and happiness in marriage in general, and in the marital act, in particular. The marital act, which is for procreation and the propagation of the human species, should also be enjoyed. The Church also gave attention to the question of infertility. It made it clear that even in infertility the spouses are encouraged to love one another and to appreciate the purpose of the marital act.

4.6 VATICAN II (1962-1965) TO TODAY

The Second Vatican Council saw a great renewal of the Church. In its teachings the Church saw a need to respond to the diverse pastoral needs of its members. This Council tried to open its eyes to the needs of its people and to respond to the challenges of the day. The Church was aiming at giving a Scriptural basis to its theology.

There was a widespread dissatisfaction with what was termed Christian morality for the Catholic Church on the eve of the Second Vatican Council. There was a growing conviction that Christian morality had much more to offer than what was contained in the manuals. This led to what Gula (1989) calls a shift in focus, a shift in worldview and a shift in method for the Church. Marriage was seen as a sign of God's love, as is seen among us and in relationships. God's love is not only about pronouncements and prohibitions but it is incarnate. Thomas puts it so well when he states that "God's love is real and it can take on human form" (1983:18).

Vatican II ¹³ sees Christian marriage as an intimate partnership of married life and love. All human beings are first called into existence by God's love. It is on this type of love that marriage is founded. Marriage is the most basic community that expresses that love. "Christian marriage is also capable of playing a prominent role in being a 'real symbol' of God's concrete love for humans". (Thomas 1983: 18).

Vatican II was preceded by an extensive biblical renewal, which gave all Catholics access to Sacred Scripture. This document approaches marriage from a pastoral point of view and it is concerned with the scriptural basis of marriage¹⁴. In its

¹³ Church in Modern World.

¹⁴ Dei Verbum :Chapter VI

section *Gaudium et Spes*¹⁵, the Second Vatican Council speaks on marriage and bases its theology on the covenant between Christ and His Church. In its first chapter this document deals with the dignity of marriage and the family. It also treats the holiness of marriage and the family. It further looks at the essential goods of marriage, namely, conjugal love and the fruitfulness of marriage. The unity between conjugal love and the fruitfulness of marriage is clearly demonstrated. This document sees it as a duty of all to foster the good of marriage and the family. The importance of this document in the Church's sexual moral teaching lies in the fact that it presents marriage as a specific vocation to holiness. It deals with the relationship between love and procreation, in the context of abortion, contraceptive mentality and demographic growth. This document describes marriage as holy and assists couples in attaining their own sanctification. It states that:

Christ our Lord has abundantly blessed this love, which is rich in its various features, coming as it does from the spring of divine love and modelled on Christ's own union with the Church. Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Saviour, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of marriage. He abides with them in order that by their mutual self-giving spouses will love each other with enduring fidelity, as he loved the Church and delivered himself for it. Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is directed and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ and the salvific action of the Church, with the result that the spouses are effectively led to God and are helped and strengthened in their lofty role as fathers and mothers. Spouses, therefore, are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special sacrament; fulfilling their conjugal and family role by virtue of this sacrament, spouses are penetrated with the spirit of Christ and their whole life is suffused by faith, hope and charity; thus they increasingly further their own perfection and their mutual sanctification, and together they render glory to God. (Flannery 1975:950).

It also accepts the principle of responsible parenthood, although it does not dictate its norms. This Council also affirms the divine character of marriage, together with its undissolubility. It did this in the face of modern attitudes towards marriage. There was now a privatisation of marriage, an individualistic mentality which held that marriage is whatever individuals choose to make it. It taught that the spouses bring about their marriage bond through their mutual consent but the character of the bond does not depend upon them.

¹⁵ Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World.

Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae* ¹⁶in 1968. This encyclical on human life came during the time of hot debates concerning artificial methods of birth control.

Although this encyclical responded on this issue it was a much wider document. On the one hand, it speaks positively on the value of marital life and, on the other hand, it hits out at the growing eroticism of the time. It taught that any marital act which separates the procreative and unitive aspects of marriage is wrong. It states that:

That teaching, often set forth by the Magisterium, is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning. Indeed, by its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and woman. 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 ordination towards man's most high calling to parenthood... (n.d :11):

These two goods cannot be properly respected when they are separated. It went on to reject contraceptive acts and all marital acts that are imposed on a partner without regard to his or her condition or desire.

This encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, maintains that what the Church teaches about human sexuality is based on natural law that is enriched by Divine Revelation. The context of this encyclical is the growth of a contraceptive mentality. In the face of the demographic problem scientific regulation of birth was used, without taking into cognisance, the primacy of ethics. This document covers the competence of the Magisterium, the moral principle for the transmission of life, the re-affirmation of the immorality of contraception, the legitimacy of recourse to periods of infertility and pastoral directives. The pope addresses himself to scientists, urging them to contribute to a morally upright way of regulating birth, to Christian spouses to be faithful to their vocation, to doctors and health personnel to create a climate of respect for morality and lastly, to priests and bishops to promote clearly the teaching of the Magisterium. The Church has always pronounced on the correct use of conjugal rights and on marriage, It derives such competence from Jesus sending his disciples to go out and teach all nations ¹⁷. The context of this encyclical was

¹⁶ On human life.

¹⁷ Matthew 7: 21.

population explosion, a new understanding of the dignity of a woman and her place in society and the human being dominating the forces of nature. Pope Paul VI taught that marriage is a sacrament and has its source in God. The married love of the baptised “represents the union of Christ and his Church” (1968: 11). Such a love is fully human and is also an act of free will. It is faithful and exclusive and creative of life. No one is free to do what they like in bringing about a new life. A married couple should ensure that the activities in their married life and the decisions that they make are in harmony with the Creator. It states that sexual activity within marriage is “honourable and good” (1968: 13). In cases of infertility, the Pope states that sexual activity within the context of marriage is still legitimate. An important contribution of this document is its teaching on the two significances of the marriage act, namely, the unitive and the procreative significances. “To use this divine gift while depriving it, even if only partially, of its meaning and purpose, is equally repugnant to the nature of man and woman, strikes at the heart of their relationship and is consequently in opposition to the plan of God and his holy will.” (1968: 14). The Church implores and encourages the couple to be aware of the natural cycles immanent in reproductive system and choose those times that are infertile. Such a system of controlling birth is in harmony with Catholic moral principles. This encyclical urges couples to have a complete mastery of themselves and their emotions. The importance of this document lies in the fact that it reconfirmed perennial morality and reaffirmed the teaching of the Church over the years. From the pronouncements of Pope Paul VI the Church took a stance that is theocentric, Christocentric and ecclesiocentric on the issue of the regulation of birth. The magisterium believes that its teachings on the regulation of birth is in accordance with the mind of Christ and the tradition of the Church.

In 1981 Pope John Paul II issued *Familiaris Consortio*. This is an apostolic exhortation, which concerned itself with the role of the Christian family in the modern world. The 5th Synod of bishops in Rome in 1980 occasioned the birth of this exhortation. This document deepens and amplifies the teachings of Vatican II. The first part of this document, entitled ‘*Bright spots and the shadows for marriage today*’ deals with the current situation of the family. The second part goes on to deal with the place of God in marriage and family life. The third part deals with the role of the Christian family in society. The fourth part is dedicated to pastoral directives.

where the pope looks at difficult situations. The pope then specifically calls upon science to work with wisdom. This exhortation reaffirmed the goodness of marriage. It saw marriage as a human reality created by God. It sees a person as created out of love and for love. It says that "Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being". (1981:19). In marriage the spouses experience a total self-giving of each other. John Paul II notes that the fundamental task of the family is to serve life. This life is transformed by procreating the divine image from person to person. Marriage is, therefore, made by the love and life of the spouses. The duty of the spouses, in turn, is to co-operate with the Creator in procreation. Addressing families John Paul II says:

In affirming that the spouses as parents, co-operate with God the Creator in conceiving and giving birth to a new human being, we are not speaking merely with reference to the laws of biology. Instead, we wish to emphasize that God himself is present in human 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 received at Creation. Begetting is the continuation of Creation. (John Paul II 1994:21).

The pope makes it clear that a Christian understanding of sex will appreciate the central role it plays in the relationship of husband and wife. The Roman Catholic Church, in its catechism, teaches that marriage is for the purpose of procreation and is a sacrament. Article 7 no. 1601 of The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that: "The matrimonial consent, by which man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered towards the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptised persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament" (1995:394). This document is invaluable in that it analyses the divine plan in order to discover the essence and the truth of marriage and the family. It makes it clear that the tendency to give life is the deepest inclination of true love.

Modern theologians, like Rahner, give a very strong sacramental character to matrimony. He sees marriage as a sign, taking place in the Church, where "the Church realises her own nature and thereby 'actualises herself'". (1973:201). It is in marriage that the spouses express their most interior and their most personal union in love. Such a union in love is open to procreation and it is a source of, and an

initiation into, the wider community. For Rahner it is important to make sure that married love does not become so intimate and so exclusive that it stops being love. Married love needs to contribute to the greater community in many ways. Christians regard married life as a true vocation, a personal calling from God. Genovesi states that on the wedding day a man and a woman become sacraments. They become a living and an authentic sign of God's love, The essence of such a marriage lies in the exchange of vows and the mutual consent of the couple.

Hume (1987) sees the prevalence of AIDS today as a proof that actions have consequences. He sees the disorder in human sexuality as the one that is responsible for this damage and destruction. This deadly disease is a symptom of something deeper. It is a consequence of promiscuous behaviour. He sees the AIDS crisis as a health issue that demands a moral response. In trying to fight against AIDS and conquer it Hume (1987) sees public attention as focusing mainly on the way the crisis is transmitted and on our precautions to reduce the risk of infection. Too little has been said about the need for a radical shift in attitudes to halt the advance of the pandemic. A radical shift in attitudes will educate the public about ways of appreciating human sexuality. He sees the main aim of the Church as being one of wanting to tackle promiscuity as the principal cause of the infection. To those who are infected the Church wants to show unconditional and practical compassion. Self-righteousness and judgement would not help them. An urgent and immediate appraisal of our attitudes and behaviour in matters concerning sex and human sexuality is needed if this catastrophe is to be averted. He calls the appraisal of attitudes as the moral reawakening of society, which is essential for any meaningful national programme of information and education. He sees condoms and free drugs as ways of reducing the dangers but not removing them. The AIDS pandemic is a potentially lethal life style that cannot be made safe. It needs to be reduced.

In discussing sexuality Genovesi makes a distinction between non-marital and pre-marital sex. He states that non-marital sex implies no commitment to marriage. It occurs in a series of casual affairs. Pre-marital sex, on the other hand, occurs in a relationship that is directed towards marriage but which is not yet realised in a public ceremony. Genovesi summarises the Catholic Theology of sexuality in four points:

1. “Any truly sexual intercourse is an act of mutual self-giving by means of which two people express their willingness to assume unconditional responsibility for each other.
2. Human sexual love in its full richness is to reflect the quality of God’s love for us; therefore, just as his love is creative and faithful, so also must human sexual love, when fully realised, be open to procreation and permanent fidelity; marriage is the context in which this full richness can be best achieved.
3. Pre-marital sex is not sufficiently appreciated of the fact that for human activity to be moral, it must be socially sensitive. Marriage is an institution that is intended to enhance personal relationships by offering some defence against human immaturity, self-seeking and false protestations of love.
4. Finally, the perception of chastity as honesty in sex- such that physical relationships must truthfully express the degree of personal commitment between two people - would seem to be of special pertinence to those Christians who regard marriage as a sacramental reality...”(1987:188).

Modern theology sees marriage as a vocation to holiness. This affirms the call to witness and holiness as open to everybody. This is a call to marriage partners to acknowledge that they are called for the sanctification of each other and their family in marriage. By being open to the grace of marriage the married couple assists each other on their way to salvation. Marriage is also seen as being at the service of life. This means that marriage, and the marriage act, should be open to conception, so as to be ready to serve the procreation of new life. A family should be ready to serve life in the community around itself. If a family is closed on itself it defeats the aim of being of service to life and to humankind.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of the Church’s existence Catholic theology has shown the importance of the sacrament of matrimony. It has taught that sex belongs to

marriage. To those who are not bound in marriage the Church has consistently taught abstinence. To those within marriage the Church continues to teach fidelity to each other. This stance of the Church, as we have it today, has been handed down to this age from the era of the Early Church.

Catholic theology sees Genesis 2:24 as affirming that a marital relationship takes precedence over one's family of origin. It was commonly held that this 'two in one flesh' text refers to the sexual union of spouses. It is clear that this imagery used in the Genesis mandate refers to the love relationship that is established in marriage. This relationship is a joining of two lives, thus affirming their unique individuality. In marriage a couple commit themselves totally to one another until death.

The traditional explanation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity is God as a community of love. This love binds the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity and keeps them together. This image of the Holy Trinity is a model on which the idea of marriage should be built. A married couple is supposed to be so one in mind and heart that the two of them cannot be separated. The mutual self-giving in love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit should be reflected in the love of husband and wife. It is when marriage is modelled according to the image of the Holy Trinity that it attains its aim and fulfilment. While loving each other and sharing their being, the husband and wife remain unique individuals. They are not assimilated into each other.

In the concept of the Holy Trinity the identities of the three persons is not diminished but enhanced. While trying to emulate the Holy Trinity marriage becomes both a gift and a challenge. It took some time for the Church to appreciate sex as one of the many good things created by God. The possibility of the Early Church appreciating sex as spiritually good was impossible. This was caused by the influence of dualism. The Joseph-Mary unions¹⁸ were valued higher than those with sexual relations. Such dualistic anthropology was inherited from the Greeks. It compartmentalised the human being into body and soul, The soul was seen as imprisoned in the body. Thomas (1983) sees a husband and a wife as the smallest human community. He states that Christian marriage creates a personal spiritual

¹⁸ Marriages without sexual intercourse.

union between husband and wife. What marriage provides for sexual love is a context for the fullest meaning of that kind of love, where that love can be protected, directed and enhanced in relation to the fuller dimensions of wife-husband union. Jesus took a stand in support of marriage. He rejected the current views on divorce and marriage. For him marriage was very deep and profound. It involved interior attitudes and thoughts. The totality of the person was affected.

The Catholic Church has been teaching about sex and sexuality from its beginnings. During the Early Church it taught about the three goods, namely, the *proles*, *fides* and *sacramentum*. This teaching is so fundamental that it is the basis of the Church's teaching even today. Throughout the ages the Church encountered some challenges and it continued to uphold sexual intercourse within marriage as good and willed by God. Through the pronouncements of councils down through the ages the Church taught that the proper place for sexual intercourse is in marriage, which creates a bond that lasts until death. As marriage became a public affair, with the minister and witnesses involved it became clear that marriage affects the overall life of the Church. Matrimony slowly and cautiously evolved into a sacrament that imparts grace on the couple for them to live out their vocation as married people.

Male and female were created for each other, so that they could find fulfilment in each other. Neuner and Duipis state that "God has created the human race in the complementarity of the sexes so that man and woman may find fulfilment through a mutual union ordained by the Creator to the generation of new human life". (1986:659).

The Sacrament of Matrimony, which unites husband and wife together signifies the unity of Christ and the Church. As Christ is united with his Church forever so it is the will of Christ that those who bind themselves together in Matrimony should never be separated, as long as they are still alive. In marriage the spouses receive the grace to love each with the love of Christ. Through the consent that the spouses give to each other they bind themselves to live for each other so as to be able to live a fruitful and faithful love. An interesting evolution in Catholic theology concerning marriage was the acknowledgement of the fact that the couple administer the Sacrament of Matrimony to each other. The presence of the minister and the

witnesses is important, for they are representatives of the Church and the community. The couple, by making their promises to each other, bind themselves to one another in a visible way. They also implore the help of the Holy Spirit upon themselves to help them in becoming a good sign of love and unity that exists in the Godhead. Such an exclusive love rules polygamy out of the question. Divorce is also seen as contravening the law of God. In all the different contexts and challenges the Church taught that marriage is for love and procreation. An important document in this regard was *Humanae Vitae* (1968). In this document the Pope maintains that the unitive and procreative aspects of the marital act should not be separated. One aspect of the marital act should not be undermined in favour of the other. If one aspect is undermined the finality of the marital is not respected. The finality of the marital act is for the unity of husband and wife and for procreation. This is the traditional teaching of the Church that still holds today, and is against all forms of artificial birth controls. Matrimony, by its definition, includes an openness to fertility which results in the building up of a family, and therefore, contributing to the growth of the human family.

The Synod of Bishops who gathered for the Special Assembly for Africa in (1996) produced a document entitled *Ecclesia in Africa*. The Synod held by bishops, pastors, together with Pope John Paul II was aimed at being an occasion of hope for Africa. This document looked at the challenges and future proposals of evangelisation in Africa on the threshold of the third millennium of the Christian faith.

The Synod states that the future of the world and that of the Church passes through the family. It made an appeal to each Christian family to be a place where evangelism and love that serves humanity will flourish. It goes on to talk about the dignity of man and woman. Such dignity derives from the fact that male and female are created in the likeness of God. The fact of creation makes them essentially equal from the point of view of their humanity.

The synod sees the marriage of a baptised person as a symbol of the new and eternal covenant that was sanctioned in the blood of Christ, which in turn demands indissoluble love. Marriage has a special mission in the world, which is to

perpetuate humanity. The synod rejected all cultures in Africa that do not give the woman her right as an equal partner with the man in marriage. The inequality that is perpetuated by some African cultures does not contribute to the goodness and the holiness of marriage.

Curran (1977) summarises the standpoint of Catholic theology. He states that sex outside marriage is wrong. This is because sexuality calls for some degree of personal relationship and commitment. One of the ways of showing personal responsibility and commitment is through marriage. There are a lot of questions about trial marriages, compatibility and couples living together without marriage. This situation is aggravated by the rate of divorce in these modern times. The Church still believes that sex belongs to marriage, in this atmosphere of sexual licentiousness, where mass media promotes values that are contrary to gospel values. Such marriage was ordained by God, and given a special place by Jesus attending the wedding at Cana. It is God's intention that those who are married should never be separated from each other. In such activities one accepts the responsibility of another. To accept full responsibility of another means that the persons are fully committed to one another. The biblical understanding sees the two-in-one –flesh as the sign of the total giving of one to the other in marriage. God created man and woman and declared them husband and wife, thus he gave a special blessing to the marital union. Connell (1953) sees the comparison that Paul makes between the union of the Christian husband and wife with the union of Christ and his Church as alluding to the sacredness of the union of husband and wife, which produces grace for the married couple.¹⁹

The Church has been consistent in its teachings on human sexuality down through the ages. It has aimed at preserving the institution of marriage through difficult times. It has also responded to threats that were directed towards the family and continued to be faithful to the teachings that come down from the Patristics.

¹⁹ Ephesians 5: 25-32.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TEACHINGS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

Before I look at the teachings of the SACBC¹ I will begin by briefly looking at the history of this body. An understanding of the history of the SACBC is important in understanding their teachings and activities.

5.1 THE HISTORY OF THE SACBC

The Catholic Church in the Republic of South Africa had vicars apostolic whose responsibility was to look after certain geographical areas of the Church. They were to visit them and attend to their problems. They were also to ensure that they had good administration and governance of their areas. As early as 1896 these vicars apostolic used to meet occasionally to discuss matters pertaining to the life of the Church. Such meetings were informal and held at irregular intervals. The decisions taken at these meetings were not binding on the individual vicars. This setting was to change with the arrival of the Archbishop Martin Lucas in 1945. It is in 1947 that Archbishop Lucas proposed that a conference of the Bishops in South Africa be established. Such a conference would be to form a consultative body to deal with matters of common interest of the Catholic Church of South Africa. Even with this newly proposed conference decisions taken would not be binding on the individual bishops. Four bishops would be elected to form the Administrative Board of the Conference. Brain (1997) states that it is probable that the foundation date of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference was 22 March 1947 at Mariannhill.

The plenary sessions of the bishops were initially to be held every five years, however, this was not to be. The Administrative Board was summoned to meet six times in its first year. During this time the ecclesial hierarchy did not have many

¹ Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference.

collegial matters to deal with. It is also during this time that the National Party came into power, thus necessitating a unified response from the South African hierarchy. The ecclesiastical hierarchy in South Africa was officially established on January 11th of 1951 by the papal *Supreme Nobis*. Brady (1951) notes that the establishment of the hierarchy in South Africa meant that the Church had definitely taken root and had acquired a certain level of maturity.

5.2 THE TEACHINGS OF THE SACBC ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

5.2.1 Pastoral Directive on Family Planning

The SACBC issued a document entitled '*A Pastoral Directive on Family Planning*' in 1974, on the fifth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*². This document affirmed what was taught by *Humanae Vitae*. In this document the bishops see the spouses as brought together by love for life. Marriage is now at the service of love and life. These spouses who are brought together for life are bound together by a covenant of conjugal love. In trying to determine the number of their children and how to space them parents should act responsibly. The bishops see responsible parenthood as important in family planning. For them responsible parenthood includes the gift of life and education for life. As much as responsible parenthood is important for family planning, nevertheless, this document acknowledges that there are decisions on family planning that should be left to the individual consciences. The individual spouses should be empowered to make responsible decisions with informed consciences. Those consciences should always remember that to separate love from fruitfulness, sex from procreation, will always prove destructive. To uphold the value of human sexuality marital chastity and self-control are needed. The couples are reminded that in difficult situations decisions should be made for the promotion of the good of the family.

² Pope Paul VI's encyclical on Human Life, dealing mainly with artificial methods of birth control.

5.2.2 The 1988 SACBC Statement on HIV/AIDS

The Administrative Board of the SACBC issued a brief and concise statement on HIV/AIDS in 1988. This statement puts clearly the position of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to the AIDS pandemic. It states that:

The Bishops' Conference is equally abhorrent both of the scourge of AIDS, so destructive to human life, and the response of the South African government making provision for so-called safe sex, however indiscriminate, by the use of condoms. Pre-marital chastity and marital fidelity are the best protection against AIDS. (1988:30).

It is clear from this statement that there has been a long standoff between the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa and the South African government with regards to the issue of condoms. In this statement the SACBC acknowledges the negative effects of HIV/AIDS on human life and has reiterated the traditional teachings of the Church, the teachings of premarital chastity and marital fidelity.

5.2.3 Pastoral Statement on AIDS

In January 1990 the SACBC issued a statement entitled '*Pastoral Statement on AIDS*'. In this document the bishops speak about the 'AIDS crisis' and the challenge it presents to the Church. One of the questions that this crisis raises is that of sin and morality. Some Christians see HIV/AIDS as God's punishment for sexual sins. This is an important issue to be attended to as this attitude leads to the rejection and labelling of those infected as sinners. The reality of death, the meaning of life and the after-life, and the reason why God allows people to die in this way are some of the questions raised by HIV/AIDS. The SACBC views this crisis of HIV/AIDS as leading people to examine their position on issues of human relationships, medical care and social welfare. The statement suggests that this crisis, more than revealing the existence of sexual sins, shows the absence of love and care for those infected. This pandemic is seen as God's way of challenging us to care for one another, to support the dying and to appreciate the gift of life. This situation, according to the statement, should be seen as a God-given opportunity for moral and spiritual growth.

In trying to adopt a pastoral response, the bishops take Jesus as an example. Whenever Jesus is confronted with sickness and the suffering of those considered as sinners he responds with compassion and a willingness to heal. In his ministry Jesus aimed at overcoming the prejudice surrounding diseases such as leprosy. Such diseases alienated those infected from society. In his ministry Jesus mixed with outcasts and shared meals with them. He revealed a caring God to those who were sick. The bishops see such an attitude of Jesus as the one that should inspire the Church in caring for those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.

The Pastoral Statement on AIDS goes on to state a number of ways in which AIDS can be contracted, apart from sexual intercourse. It cites blood transfusion, sharing unsterilised needles with an infected person and exchange of blood through an open wound. People with AIDS are normally judged around sexual issues, which does not do justice to the complexity of the disease. It follows, therefore, that judging a person with AIDS may be a greater sin than the act by which the virus may have been contracted. One of the ways of trying to prevent the spread of AIDS is the dissemination of information concerning AIDS and responsible actions with regard to sexual activity. Condoms are seen as not always being reliable even though certain medical authorities and governments advocate their use. The bishops maintain that "if an attitude prevails that when using a condom sex is safe, then the message can increase rather than decrease the incidence of AIDS" (1990:32).

This statement presents chastity as "a quality of genuine relationships" (1990:33). It urges young people to see their partners as people of immense dignity and beauty, and not as sexual objects. For those who are married avoidance of sexual promiscuity is the key, and for those who are not married abstinence is the only solution to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. For the bishops sexual union is "the expression of a loving human relationship which has reached the stage of a mutual commitment to each other for life" (1990:33).

There are certain situations in South Africa which contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS mainly in the past, and some situations which still exist today, namely, single sex hostels for migrant workers which encourages prostitution and

homosexual behaviour, a large prison population, poverty which leads to short term sexual intimacy and drug abuse, and excessive wealth which leads to people searching for excitement in sex and drug abuse. As they conclude their statement, the bishops see HIV/AIDS as an opportunity to reflect more deeply on the works of the Lord.

This statement adopts a holistic approach to the problem of AIDS. It looks at the situation in Southern Africa that contributes to the spread of AIDS. It denounces the use of condoms as they are seen as unreliable in the prevention of AIDS. The use of condoms is seen as having a possibility of spreading the incidence of AIDS rather than preventing it. This is possible as some people might rely on condom-use and engage in sexual activities indiscriminately. This document goes on to contribute positively to ways of decreasing the spread of AIDS. It portrays a positive idea of chastity, which the bishops see as key in the fight against AIDS. They also state the teaching of the Catholic Church that sex belongs to a committed relationship in marriage. For those who are not committed in marriage abstinence is the key in ensuring that they do not become infected with the H I virus.

5.2.4 Message of Hope

On the 30th of July 2001 the SACBC issued a statement on HIV/AIDS entitled *Message of Hope*. The document was published at a time when HIV/AIDS was on a rapid increase in South Africa. During this time condoms were freely available and the government was continuing with its advocacy of safe sex. The document is divided into seven parts, namely, *A Message of Hope*, *A Message for our Nation*, *A Message to the Youth*, *A Message to Married Couples*, *A Call to Conversion*, *A Call to Action* and *A Call to Prayer*. (See Appendix 1.)

The 'Message of Hope' starts by describing the context of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. It calls on those who have AIDS to have faith, and the bishops assure them of their support. In the *Message to Our Nation* the document talks about the indiscriminate use of condoms. It regards the indiscriminate use of condoms as 'an immoral and misguided weapon in the fight against AIDS'. They see such use of

condoms as being against human dignity. Condoms promote the selfish search for pleasure and are no guarantee against HIV/AIDS. The bishops maintain that the use of condoms might spread HIV/AIDS, and their use contributes to the breakdown of self-control and mutual respect. Condoms bring a message that it is all right to sleep around as long as one does not contract HIV/AIDS. The preparation for future fidelity is thus undermined. In this way unfaithful and irresponsible sexual behaviour is promoted and thus *ubuntu*³ and self-respect destroyed.

This document exhorts those who are not married to abstinence, and those who are married to fidelity. In the *Message to the Youth*, the bishops urge the youth to choose life. The youth can accomplish this by joining support groups whose aim is to lead chaste lives. The married couple is challenged to fidelity as they promised on their wedding day. The bishops urge those who are affected to use 'the appropriate means and course of action' without spelling out what those 'appropriate means and course of action' are. *The Call to Conversion* calls on people to turn away from sin and to live their lives the Kingdom's way. *The Call to Action* calls on people to break the silence around AIDS and to support those who are infected. *The Call to Prayer* exhorts people to pray to Jesus at this hour of agony.

This document sees the use of condoms as promoting selfishness. People would engage in sexual activities only for the sake of pleasure. There would be no use to discuss the issue of commitment, as the condom assures them that there would be no responsibility of taking care of a child. The HIV status of a partner would not even be asked, as those who get involved in sexual activities would put their faith in the condom. This document sees the use of condoms as against human dignity, as it might lead to one partner being used by the other for his or her sexual pleasure. Abstinence and fidelity are still seen by the bishops as the two pillars of a good and mature sexual life. They see these two values as contributing to the self-control of an individual. These values also contribute to the mature approach of the spouses to their future relationship in marriage. The meeting of young people to share ideas and to have support structures is seen as important. This document was criticised

³ Respect and honour that is due to a human being.

for its perceived moralising tone. The *Call to Conversion* was seen by some as blaming those who are infected by the H I virus. Some people felt that this time of the AIDS pandemic is a time for comforting, understanding and listening to the those who are affected by, and infected with, the H I virus. There is a need to lead in a compassionate and understanding way. This call to conversion was seen by others as a way of judging those people who have AIDS. It was felt that to think of those who are HIV positive as sinful is far from the mind of Jesus.

5.2.5 Pastoral Letter on HIV/AIDS

Bishop Hirmer⁴ published a document entitled *Pastoral Letter on HIV/AIDS* in the year 2000. In this document he talks about AIDS as the enemy that attacks families, friends and communities. He also talks about the reluctance of people to call AIDS by its name. If a person dies of AIDS people prefer to blame it on pneumonia, cancer, witchcraft, etc. The Bishop singles out unfaithfulness in married life as opening the door to AIDS. He also notes the lack of self-discipline before marriage and calls on young people to say ‘No’ to sex. He cites different ways in which one can become infected with HIV/AIDS such as sexual intercourse, sharing the same needle for injecting drugs, sharing the same instrument for circumcision and the transfusion of infected blood. Hirmer urges people not to judge; instead, people should show mercy and love. Jesus cared for those with leprosy. He taught and healed them. People should care for those with HIV/AIDS as Jesus did to those who were sick. He goes on to give a strong admonishing to those abusing children with the false hope of curing themselves of AIDS. He says such people have become an instrument of the devil and they are “misguided by the prince of devils” (2000:08). He gives a reminder that condoms do not provide an absolute protection against HIV/AIDS. They can be faulty and they go against human dignity. Condoms make sex an act of pleasure without accepting responsibility. The free distribution of condoms undermines self-control and respect for others. “Condoms open the way for selfish, irresponsible and undisciplined sex” (2000:10). In conclusion he talks about the A (abstain), B (be faithful) and C (condomise) as

⁴ Bishop of Umtata.

policy adopted by the government. He says that the Church supports A and B only, and that is the only way to overcome HIV/AIDS.

Hirmer (2000) makes an important contribution to the response of the Church to HIV/AIDS. He states that people who are infected by the H I virus need not be judged but, rather, be shown mercy and love. This is very important as many people die because of the psychological effects of rejection, ostracism and judgement. Some people are thrown out of their homes when it becomes known that they have AIDS. Some babies are abandoned or killed as people do not want to associate themselves with those who are infected by the H I virus. There are also cases where some people get killed when they reveal their HIV status. The issue of child abuse is also very relevant to the South African situation. There are a great number of the instances of child abuse in the South African society. This is caused by a belief that having sexual intercourse with a child would cure AIDS. Himer (2000) sees such people who hold on to this belief as misguided. Showing love and mercy to those who are infected by the H I virus is responding to the situation of the AIDS pandemic according to the mind and heart of Jesus.

5.2.6 The Church' s Response to AIDS

Bishop Dowling⁵, in Munro (2001), in his article, *'The Church's Response to AIDS'* describes the situation of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Using September 2000 statistics, he notes that the province of KwaZulu-Natal is already having a negative rate of population growth. He analyses the devastating effects of the pandemic in the region. He cites political reasons as one of the major causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS. White supremacy and racism coupled with capitalism led to many people being dispossessed of their land. This led to the destruction of the culture of the people, which created an alienated and rootless population, "a society whose moral and social fabric has been shattered" (2001:16). Another reason for the spread of this pandemic is poverty. He says HIV/AIDS "thrives in overcrowded situations, where people have minimal to very poor nutrition, and where their social condition and poverty can drive them to liaisons and relationships which are fraught

⁵ Bishop of Rustenburg.

with dangers” (2001:17). A holistic approach to HIV/AIDS is needed. Community-based care coupled with value-based awareness and prevention campaign is needed. The Church is called to have a response, which is based on the values of the Gospel, values of compassion, solidarity and justice. In an interview by Williams in Byamugisha (2002) Dowling sees the Catholic Church as responding to the AIDS crisis through home-care, orphan care and ministering to the dying. He sees the Church as still struggling in the area of morality and theology surrounding HIV prevention. It is struggling to get a meaningful message to where people are. It is easy to adopt a pharisaic approach, telling people to keep God ’s law. Such an attitude would be blind to the realities of millions of people, especially women who have lost their loved ones and are trying to make a living. Meeting such people in their situations and listening to them will help the Church to develop a theology that is not skewed. Dowling believes that caring should assure those dying that God loves and treasures them. The Church is thus called upon to protect life, even the life of those women whose option and choice has been taken away by the socio-economic and cultural situations they find themselves in. In such situations Dowling believes people should be invited, even challenged, to use a condom in order to prevent the transmission of death, or to protect themselves from infection “especially in abusive and destructive relationships” (2002:95). Due to the influence of *Humanae Vitae* condoms have been seen as contraceptive measures. Dowling challenges the Church to see condoms as incidentally contraceptive and primarily for the prevention of the transmission of death in this context.

Dowling represents a watershed in the teachings of the Southern African hierarchy on the issue of HIV/AIDS. His stance with regard to the use of condoms in the face of the AIDS pandemic makes him a controversial figure in the structures of the SACBC. His concern for life, together with his experience of the situation of poverty-stricken areas, makes him want to respond compassionately and mercifully to those who are infected by the H I virus. He theologises from the context of human pain and suffering and from his fist-hand experience of people dying from AIDS. He also notes the situations that aggravate the spread of Aids, like poverty and unemployment. Due to his stance on the issue of AIDS and the use of condoms I had an interview with him and asked him to respond to questions, which I asked.

BISHOP DOWLING'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

(May I begin by stating that I am not a theologian; I do not have degrees because I was never able to study for them. I have spent my whole life 'theologising in the context' particularly around issues of injustice and abuse of human rights, the global economic system, international debt issues, poverty and underdevelopment, democracy and reconciliation, environmental justice, HIV/Aids and so on. Therefore, whatever I hold as a personal opinion is simply the fruit of my own personal reflection on various issues in the living context of people's lives as I experience that reality. In no way am I an expert on anything; if I have any claim at all it is simply that I have not formed opinions about all these issues in 'ivory towers' from a theoretical perspective. It has come from real personal experience, e.g. of the situation faced by single women, totally impoverished as economic refugees, living in shacks next to mine hostels, and whose only option in life is how to survive for one more day. I have sat in those shacks with those women.)

Question 1: Explain this controversy about you, the bishops and the condom issue.

1) Background

In June 2001, I was in the USA as the SACBC AIDS Office liaison bishop, to discuss the AIDS programmes and projects in five countries that are being administered by the SACBC AIDS Office, especially with Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). That visit was part of our ongoing evaluation of the partnership and the programmes, and to discuss a new initiative viz. the provision of a Mother to Child Transmission prevention programme in seven pilot clinics and hospitals.

In February 2000, when Archbishop Buti Tlhagale and I went to New York to sign the agreement with Catholic Medical Mission Board, I was interviewed by Tracy Early of Catholic News Service who asked if the Bishops of South Africa had made any statement on the condom issue. I said that at some time in the future we would

probably issue a pastoral letter on AIDS, and that perhaps the issue of condoms might be dealt with within that letter.

This time, on 28 June 2001, I was again interviewed by Tracy Early of CNS, and she reminded me of his question one year before, and whether there had been any progress on the issue. I told her that three bishops were preparing a pastoral letter on sexuality, which is the fundamental issue in terms of AIDS. However, a pastoral letter tends to be fairly short. At the same time I told her the SACBC AIDS Office was preparing a longer reflection document, more in the line of a pastoral statement, within which the issue of condoms would be treated among other items. The first draft of this statement would be presented to the forthcoming SACBC Plenary Session in July for comment and possible acceptance. I expressed the hope that the reflection document would be accepted.

He asked me then what was the thinking on condoms. I told him the bishops had not discussed this yet, and so he asked me to give my own viewpoint. I proceeded to give him what is my personal view, and carefully. I tried to present the context as holistically as possible, and spoke to him and clarified my stance for about 30 minutes.

My personal stance on this issue comes out of much reflection, not to say anguish over the enormity of the suffering of people in the AIDS pandemic, of the complex issues which have to be faced, all of which I have experienced in a very personal way in my own ministry and support of AIDS programmes in the diocese here. In no sense, therefore, was I trying to speak for the Bishops' Conference. I had been asked a question which I did not know would be posed, and I tried to respond honestly, and not shirk from facing the issues as sincerely as I could, mindful always of my view that as Church we must try to speak a word and be a presence of life and hope in what are, often, very complex situations.

2) My response

What I said was basically the following. I stated right away that as Church we are committed to a 'culture of life' from conception to death, and not to a 'culture of

death'. We promote what supports a 'culture of life'. In terms of the context of AIDS and prevention, I stated unequivocally that as Church we hold the position that the only complete safeguard against infection by the HI Virus and AIDS is abstinence from sex before marriage, and faithfulness to one's partner in marriage. If someone does not follow this then, in my opinion, we would call for a change of lifestyle by that person in view of avoiding becoming infected with the virus.

However, we live in the real world, which is complex in terms of the views, decisions and actions of people. We live in a world where people choose not to live according to the values espoused and promoted by the Church, or who simply decide how they will live and act without any thought or reference to such values.

In that context, and in the very real context of the vast problem of AIDS affecting millions in our land (5 million with HIV, 1 million orphans projected by 2005), the issue then becomes one of life and death. The question then is stark in terms of its possible outcome, viz. that a person has the capability through a sexual relationship of transmitting a virus that can cause death to another person. Responsibility for one's choices and for one's actions towards another person has the potential either to protect from or to cause potential death, if one is infected with the HI Virus and one chooses to enter into a sexual relationship with another person.

In that context, the use of a condom can be seen not as a means to prevent the 'transmission of life' leading to pregnancy, i.e. as contraception, but rather as a means prevent the 'transmission of death' or potential death to another.

The Church in its education and prevention programmes must, besides its major emphasis on education in life-giving and life-preserving values, also try to give people accurate and comprehensive information about condoms, including their failure rate, so that we try to help people become fully informed in view of taking responsibility for their choices and actions, i.e. to build up an informed conscience, as far as this can be done with people. There are also sensitive cultural issues surrounding sexuality as well as condoms that need to be addressed wholesomely and holistically.

Several important issues were addressed by the Prime Minister of Mozambique, H.E. Pascoal Mocumbi, in his address to the United Nations on 25 June, a speech that I heard. (See Appendix 2.)

3) Further personal reflections by me

One cannot, therefore, treat the issue of condoms in isolation or simply from one particular aspect. The fact that so much effort has gone into promoting 'safe sex' through the use of condoms, and our HIV infection rate is still rising, shows that there are other issues that need to be faced. Even the focus on 'safe sex' through using condoms, for example, does not protect a person from an assault on their personal dignity through force and sexual violence. Hence the need to promote values which ensure and enhance the dignity and worth of people, self-respect, respect for the rights of others, especially women and children, and a mature sexuality which will enable people to recognize and accept that they need to take personal responsibility for their decisions and actions, especially when such decisions could be a matter of life and death for another person.

It is within that context of values that I am trying to situate the issue of the 'use' of condoms. If we simply proclaim a message that condoms cannot be used under any circumstances, either directly or through not trying to articulate a proper response to the crisis we face, then I believe people will find difficulty in believing that we are committed as Church to a compassionate and caring response to people who are suffering, often in appalling living conditions. The fact that condoms are not 100% safe in every case cannot be advanced, in my view, as an argument that they should never be used in any circumstance. We live in an imperfect world, and sometimes even imperfect results at least can save some lives.

We need to be able to speak a word of life and hope to people who have to face very stark choices. If a husband becomes infected with the HI Virus, the wife could also become infected and both could die leaving their children as orphans. It is so important that the wife at least should continue to live and care for her children with whatever support can be provided by others and the community. In other words, to opt for what is 'the greater good' in this difficult situation, so that life can be

protected and promoted. People in such a situation need to feel cared for, accepted, loved and supported, and the Church should be right at the heart of such a response. We need to enable people to really feel that no matter what has happened in their life, we as Church will walk with them, accompany and support them in that caring, compassionate and deeply respectful spirit right to the point of death, and beyond death for those who are left behind.

The issue of the possible use of condoms cannot, therefore, be dealt with unless at least all these issues and values are taken together to provide the context within which we view the question as a matter of the 'prevention of death' for people who may be living in all types of circumstances, such as a single woman who desperately seeks a way out of hopeless poverty and is almost driven or forced into seeking liaisons which offer her a way out, but which at the same time hold the potential of death for her through becoming infected with the HIV. Such impoverished women, in my view, do not have any options at all in life except how to survive – and the only way to survive for them is more often than not, being forced into prostitution.

The ethical issue for me is a profound question of justice, therefore, and we need to 'create' a moral theology around the issue of 'survival' (which is the only issue for millions of poor people), and not a moral theology which only speak to an 'ideal' situation. The question for me is simply this: what do we as Church say to a 23 year-old woman, an economic refugee from countries to the north of us (therefore, illegal and unable to access any grants), who has one or two little children, who is desperately trying to find food in a miserable shack with no water or toilet or anything, and whose only way out is to offer sex to a miner from the hostel who has money?

There are so many real people living in such real conditions, and I believe we, as Church must struggle to discern answers to real questions, and above all face the real questions with humility. That may mean that we humbly admit that sometimes there are no answers to some of the difficult issues and questions, but that always we can offer people the experience of the compassionate, caring God who is with people no matter what.

5) Summary of my position

I consider that when we take all these issues and values into account, and when people for whatever reason cannot or choose not to follow the values we promote as Church (people both within and outside of our Church community), then the bottom line is the real possibility that a person could transmit a death-dealing virus to another through a sexual encounter. In that context, such people who are living with the HI Virus must be invited and challenged to take responsibility for their actions and their effect on others, and should use a condom in order to prevent the transmission of potential death to another.

And for the women – who are my primary concern and focus in this issue, and who are precisely discriminated against politically, economically, culturally and socially – they have, in my view, a basic right to life. Their life was not only precious when it was conceived; their life is precious until the moment they die, and beyond death. That life should be protected, and in a situation which is totally beyond anything remotely approaching what would be regarded as ‘acceptable’, never mind ‘ideal’, that person needs to have options which will enable her to protect her life from a potential death-dealing virus.

In my view, this is taking both the spirit and content of our moral and ethical tradition as Church (the principles of ‘double effect’, ‘the lesser of two evils’ or preferably ‘the greater good’, ‘no harm or violence’), which is a ‘living’ tradition, and trying to apply this to very complex situations at times. For me, this is not only a matter of promoting chastity as a value, therefore, but also a matter of justice in terms of the potential for death in another person.

We cannot compound one human failure in terms of chastity – where someone engages in sex for whatever reason or because they are ‘forced’ to by economic conditions - with what I would regard as a far greater failure in justice by insisting that people who have no options at all, must follow the moral ideals that we proclaim as Church when their living situation precisely prevents taking any moral decision except how to survive. That is a question of justice, and not just morality

in the narrow sense. And in particular situations, we have to try and discern what is the 'greater good' and promote that. In the end the question may be fairly simple: in this context, with this particular person in this situation, what is required so that there may be life and not death?

That was basically my position, with its nuances and so forth. It caused a storm of discussion two years ago. The bishops met a couple of weeks later, and as you know rejected my viewpoint, and made a very strong attack on condoms as opening the way to promiscuity and, indeed, as a possible cause of the AIDS pandemic reaching the proportions it has. You have the 'Message of Hope' issued by the bishops. I personally do not agree with the attack they made on condoms. They did, however, indirectly address the question of what to do in the case of a sero-discordant couple, and basically stated that they must make a decision in conscience.

Where they differ from me is also in terms of the approach. I think they would recognise that in the 'internal forum' – i.e. a priest meeting someone with this problem – a 'pastoral solution' must be found. They disagree with the fact that I brought the debate into the public domain.

Question 2. Do you believe that the SACBC is responding effectively to the AIDS pandemic?

Yes I do. You can get a whole range of documentation on the excellent programmes being implemented by the SACBC AIDS Office from the Office itself. There is no doubt that the Catholic Church is in the forefront and is doing far more than most in terms of creative and holistic programmes concerning prevention and education (particularly through peer ministry by young people and young adults), the home-care and counselling system in parishes and villages, orphan care and day-care centres for orphans, hospices, and on a whole range of advocacy issues at national and international level regarding access to treatment, ARVs and so forth.

Question 3: What more can the Church do to show solidarity with those infected and affected by HIV/Aids?

We have to continue developing sustainable programmes on the ground that empower our own people, as is happening now, to respond creatively to emerging and changing needs. There is no doubt that the issue of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children is going to be perhaps the greatest challenge we face in the years to come. Also, the question of providing Nevirapine and other ARV programmes, with all the support systems relating to counselling, food nourishment and so forth. Then, turning around attitudes relating to stigma, silence and discrimination at local level in parishes, villages, informal settlements, suburbs, and so on, so that we will gradually become caring communities able and empowered to deal with all the issues around this pandemic.

The medium and longer term advocacy work around the underling systemic issues of economic underdevelopment and the international economic system which keeps that in place, poverty, lack of jobs, lack of proper food nourishment, health care and education, community development programmes, are all areas in which the Church (through its Justice and Peace Department, the Parliamentary Office, the Development and Welfare Agency, and the AIDS Office) is already engaged, and which it must enhance even further in terms of the Church's engagement in all these areas.

This will be work for years to come, and hence the issue of sustainability, accessing more and more funding partners through whom we can empower both our national SACBC agencies, our dioceses and our parishes in a concerted training and implementation programme.

Question 4: How can the Church be prophetic and relevant in this situation?

By continuing to do all the above with even greater dedication, and by being a 'listening' community, alert to the signs of the times. We need to develop a much more holistic approach to evangelisation, and not be perceived as a Church which is wedded to the 'sanctuary' and the 'sacristy' as our primary focus – only doing the 'churchy' type of things we are noted for, e.g. catechises, liturgy, associations, and so on. All that is important, but we need to be profoundly aware that the structural

and system issues in society and the world are equally part of the Church's mission of evangelisation, and are in fact the 'foundation' for everything else we do in Church ministry.

That 'foundation' which is at the heart of working for a more just world, is what is precisely necessary to develop the human dignity and an acceptable quality of life for all, and especially for the poor and marginalised of our world in their billions. If we as Church are not 'seen' or experienced to be actively engaged, both locally, nationally, and internationally in all these systemic issues which are at the heart of all that is unjust in our world, then I believe we are failing our people and failing our world as a faith community – and we will be, and will remain, increasingly irrelevant and certainly not prophetic.

Question 5: Do you think that people consider the teachings of the Church on human sexuality in their decisions on sex and sexual matters?

I think increasingly people are making up their own minds and consciences on such matters. Sometimes it is a question of education. I think well educated and thinking Catholics (in particular, but not exclusively by any means) might consider what the Church holds in its so-called 'official policy'. But then, they make their own decisions, 'theologising' in their way in their particular situation. I think many thinking Catholics, and this includes many who do not have a well-developed formal education, regard the official Church position on many issues around sexual morality as a position taken by celibate males who have very little idea of what real life is like for most people. Such people would hold that our official positions 'do not make any sense', and so they are simply dismissed. I have found this constantly in my years of ministry.

(Just an aside. As one theologian wrote to me at the time: "There really is something drastically wrong with our moral theology if we are saying: if you must fornicate, then don't add the further sin of condomatically reducing the chance of the transmission of AIDS.")

This is my personal opinion. I believe 'Humanae Vitae' and the way it was perceived in terms of the issue of contraception is simply no longer even thought about, still less even considered, by the vast majority of Catholics. That encyclical has very little, if any influence on how people make up their minds. What is difficult for some in high positions in Church, I think, is to accept that there are hundreds, if not thousands of religious people who are just as qualified theologically and academically as our mainstream clerical theologians. And they will take up positions that are different from the official line. I found this particularly in a whole range of meetings recently in Germany, where the average Catholic in a parish questioned me on all the issues raised here, could quite confidently and directly state that they are aware of what the official Church position is, but that they disagree with this and do not follow it. And they continue to be active in their parishes and even at diocesan level.

For many years, and particularly for the past 12 years of my life and ministry as a bishop, I have been deeply concerned about what the above means for the 'credibility' and 'relevance' of the Church and its leadership. The way the magnificent and heroic response of so many thousands of our Church people in terms of caring for the most vulnerable in society as far as the AIDS pandemic is concerned – the way this is almost totally ignored because the Church is perceived as hard-line and intractable in terms of its stance on condoms, is a case in point, and makes me profoundly sad.

For example, the effectiveness of condoms is a red herring (no one holds that they provide 100% safety but all the scientific evidence is that they can lessen the risk considerably, if one is determined to have intercourse where there is a danger of contracting AIDS).

And the other issue – the Church's traditional teaching - is precisely where matters are not all that clear. That one cannot use condoms **to prevent the spread of AIDS** can hardly be called 'traditional teaching'. The only traditional teaching around concerns contraceptive actions. And wearing a condom to prevent the spread of AIDS is not a contraceptive issue. It is more akin to the issue that we were taught in the late fifties: one can remove a diseased fallopian tube carrying an ectopic

pregnancy since one was doing so for health reasons and one had to simply allow the secondary effect of the abortion of the foetus; or one could take a pill for health purposes even if a secondary side effect was sterilisation or the prevention of conception.

I realise that the condom is different in the sense that there is the option of abstinence. But that is not the issue. The issue is what is the morally correct thing to do if someone insists on having intercourse in a situation where the spread of AIDS is very possible. In that case the condom becomes perhaps the only health accessory available and any prevention of conception must simply be accepted as an unintended side effect.

Incidentally, I have often wondered whether appealing to principles of double effect, etc. is not granting an assumption that needs questioning. The assumption is that the very act of using a condom is evil and can conceivably only be justified if there is a greater evil to be prevented. However, the only tradition that our theology has about condoms is not that they are evil but that the attempt to prevent conception is evil and that their use for that purpose is evil. If one were to use them to promote health - life rather than death, as you put it - then one is not grudgingly accepting one evil to prevent a greater one, but one is promoting something that in the context is not simply good but a moral imperative.

Question 6: What will the teachings of the Church in terms of sexual matters and prevention of the transmission of AIDS be in 20 years time?

I really do not know. Several moral theologians of great repute told me two years ago that the condom debate vis a vis prevention and AIDS should have been over and done with 15 years ago, and that the Church's official position should be very different today. It isn't. So, what will happen in 20 years time is hard to imagine. It will depend on whether we have prophetic leaders who are deeply in touch with the real issues on the ground, and have reflected profoundly on personal experience in the light of the millions of suffering people in our world.

(End of transcript)

Dowling (2001) reflecting on the Church's teaching and *Humanae Vitae* ⁶notes that the AIDS pandemic is the greatest threat that humankind may have faced in the course of history. The Church's response to this tragedy needs to reveal God's compassion. The Church is deeply committed to promoting a culture of life by defending the values of faithfulness, responsibility and integrity in human relationships. In his statement he goes on to ask the question how the church can protect life, especially the life of the vulnerable and the defenceless. He notes that experts and government departments have promoted the use of condoms as the best way of reducing the risk of HIV infection, but as an exclusive solution, without reference to values such as abstinence outside, and fidelity within, marriage. The Church promotes the values of abstinence and fidelity that led to the perception that the church does not really care about the suffering of others and is blocking HIV prevention programmes, and thus promotes death. The Church is seen as interested only in the promotion of its moral principles, without regard to the lives of the people. He states that the reality on the ground is that people are facing incredible suffering every day. The question he asks is what to say to a discordant couple⁷ and to those women who are forced by poverty to prostitution. Women are more vulnerable to infection through gender-imbalance, inequalities, economic realities, cultural practices and patterns. He sees value-education as a long-term solution. He stresses that a short-term solution is needed for the containment of the spread of the infection. Value-education includes a decrease in the number of one's sexual partners, delaying the age in which a young person experiences his or her first sexual intercourse. There is still a section of people who would not accept this value-education, those who would not be faithful to their partners. What about advising them to use a condom? He goes on to summarise the essential core of *Humanae Vitae*, which are the unitive and procreative aspects of their marital act. He argues for the principle of the lesser of the two evils in the face of the HIV pandemic. He holds that moral theology has to develop in this new situation. He gives an example when the Church never approved of organ transplant. When the safety of such a transplant was assured the Church changed its standpoint. He concludes by stating that if the Church holds that the use of condoms is unlawful,

⁶ Unpublished statement dated 22 July 2001, entitled: The Church's teaching and *Humanae Vitae*.

⁷ A couple where one is HIV positive and the other HIV negative.

and cannot be used in any circumstances, then it has to be questioned whether the Church is ignoring the teachings of *Humanae Vitae*, in terms of the present situation. The Church needs urgent short-term measures, while putting energy into the long-term measure of education on values. The Church needs to defend the rights of the most vulnerable, and needs to do that in unconditional love, care and support.

5.2.7 HIV/AIDS: A Call to Action

Slattery (2002)⁸ sees sexuality as destined to enrich the lives of married couples. The marriage of the couple reflects the community of the three Divine Persons. The conjugal relationship of husband and wife deepens the love of the husband and wife and also deepens their relationship with God. In this marriage relationship the husband and wife give glory to God and bring a new life into the world. The response to the AIDS pandemic, according to Slattery "... must start from the deep awareness of our human dignity, with our God-given free will and our God-given gift of human sexuality" (2002:60). He advocates the family and sees its importance in the fight against AIDS. He states that "The family is the first community, the first school and the first church and needs to be continually promoted especially at the present time"(2002:77).

5.3 DISSENTING VOICES

The SACBC continues to teach on the values of fidelity within marriage and abstinence outside marriage in the face of the AIDS pandemic. It continues to call on people to reject the use of condoms as they are unreliable and they are against human dignity. It does this collectively through publications. There are also individual bishops who make statements with regard to the AIDS situation in their particular dioceses. There are, however, voices that express dissatisfaction with the approach that is taken by the bishops. Some believe that the SACBC is not doing enough in addressing the AIDS crisis in the region, while some think that the SACBC is out of touch with reality, as a different strategy is needed for the

⁸ Bishop of Tzaneen.

challenges that are presented to society by the AIDS pandemic. I will look at some of those who voice their dissatisfaction with regard to the approach that is adopted by the SACBC on HIV/AIDS.

5.3.1 CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

A transcript of the document:

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

A RESPONSE TO THE RECENT STATEMENTS MADE BY BISHOP KEVIN DOWLING AFTER THE UN AIDS CONFERENCE (9/7/2000) AND BY THE SACBC ("MESSAGE OF HOPE", 30/2001) ON THE ETHICS OF USING CONDOMS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF AIDS

We, the Sisters of Justice of Johannesburg, wish to comment on the recent statement by Bishop Kevin Dowling after the United Nations Special Assembly on AIDS held in June this year and the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Statement, A Message of Hope, issued in July. There has been a great deal of press coverage of these two statements in recent weeks and we wish to be part of this important debate, which is in fact not only around the use of condoms but includes much wider concerns such as the link between HIV/AIDS and the moral fibre of the nation. Sexuality, the oppression of women and unjust socio-economic conditions are critical related issues.

We are given hope by the fact that the SACBC statement contains not only moral norms but also the emergence of the pastoral application of those norms in the case of married people when one of them is HIV positive. Such people are encouraged to "listen to their consciences" and make an appropriate decision. We would like to see conscience formation and personal responsibility explained and promoted more widely and in reference to other ethical decisions and situations, since it is consonant with human dignity.

We ask ourselves for whom the SACBC statement is in fact a message of hope? Upholding ethical and moral norms in one thing, but the pastoral application of such norms to people's lives is another. It is the contextualization, the pastoral application of the moral norms in the Message of Hope that concerns us. For many women, the SACBC message in its present form will not be one of hope.

The indiscriminate use of condoms is not at issue in this debate. Neither Bishop Dowling's statement nor the Message of Hope considers this morally acceptable. Abstinence before and fidelity within marriage are the only real safeguards against HIV/AIDS and upholding these moral norms builds the moral fibre of the nation. One would expect the bishops to uphold these norms, as they and we do. However, there are other Christian Church leaders

who have pledged themselves to the moral renewal of the country as the Catholic bishops have done, and who are just as committed to building the moral fibre of the nation. Many of these promote the use of condoms to reduce the rate of infection and death and do not see this as an undermining the coherence of their stance and message. Professor Jerry Coovadia, engaged in HIV/AIDS research at Natal University, has said that “faith communities have done significant work in many African countries in helping to reduce the impact of the epidemic by combining religious principles with an understanding that not everyone subscribes to these values.” (Sunday Times, 22 July 2001)

We support Bishop Dowling’s pastoral application of the moral norms in the context of complex, ambiguous and often unjust socio-economic situations. We are deeply concerned about patriarchal attitudes which lead to severe discrimination against many women and girl children, the serious gender imbalance and inequality experienced by women in terms of sexual relationships and the fact that so many women have no say over their lives, much less over their bodies. We are also aware of the plight of women who are forced into desperate situations that might put them more at risk of infection.

Phrases such as “the beautiful act of love” and “equal and loving partners” seem to us to direct the Message of Hope to people who are in fairly healthy and stable marriage relationships, but not to people, usually women, in abusive, oppressive or desperate relationships or circumstances and who are very much at risk of being infected by the HIV. We share Bishop Dowling’s and other bishops’ compassion for these women. It is entirely within the context of the AIDS pandemic in our country that the use of condoms to prevent infection, of one’s sexual partner could be seen to be permissible. The Message of Hope supports the principle that “everyone has the right to defend one’s life against mortal danger”. The reference is to married couples where one of the partners is living with HIV/AIDS and in an indirect way, without the word “condom, the statement opens the door to some form of self-protection.”

On the principle that everyone has the right to defend his or her life against mortal danger, those who (often most unwilling) are the sexual partners of people who have AIDS would also be able to make a decision to use the appropriate means and course of action, even if they are not married. It is precisely this defence of one’s life that is the central issues in Bishop Dowling’s pastoral stance.

The use of a condom for the sake of defending life is morally defensible according to the principle of double effect. This principle is applied when a terminally ill patient is in great pain and is given high doses of morphine. The primary objective is the relief of pain, even though the other effect is the possible shortening of the person’s life. Or a woman is permitted to take the “pill” to regulate dysfunctional menstruation even though she is rendered infertile while taking it. In the same way, it would surely be morally defensible to resort to the use of a condom to prevent infection by HIV, even

though the possible prevention of conception is the other effect of condom use.

It is in the context of such desperate situations that we feel people should be educated to make responsible decisions and take appropriate action. This is the “grey area”, not addressed in the SACBC statement, that we feel needs to be addressed. It seems unreasonable and unjust to insist that people in desperate strains should adhere absolutely to standards that describe the morally correct response of people living in fully human situations and conditions. This view is a very far cry from the “indiscriminate use of condoms”.

James Keenan, S.J., professor of moral theology at Weston School of Theology, and others, who have entered this debate, also invoke the principle of the “lesser evil.” This applies, says Keenan, “to those sexual relations that occur outside the context of marriage. The Catholic Church has long held that any sexual activity outside of marriage is morally wrong because it violates the principle of chastity. In a time of AIDS, such sexual activity could also cause the transmission of HIV and this would violate the principle of justice, because by unprotected sexual activity one could infect another with the deadly virus. The principle of the lesser evil means that the wrongdoing against chastity remains so, but without condom use, the sexual action would also violate justice. The principle of the lesser evil does not diminish the agent’s violation of chastity. Rather, the principle is concerned solely with another evil being added to the moral wrongfulness of the action, that is, the agent’s violation of justice”. (Keenan’s paper on the SACBC statement). Unfortunately, a woman who is dominated by a man is hardly able to ask for the use of a condom. However, if either person is infected, the decision to use a condom shows some measure of responsibility, according to the principle of the lesser evil.

Dr Ingrid Skakal, a Catholic doctor in Johannesburg who has significant exposure to people with HIV/AIDS, writes: “At the recent WONCA- World Organisation of Family Doctors – Conference, Prof. Helen Rees of SA stated that violence plays as significant part both in the acquisition of HIV /AIDS and as a sequel thereof. It is estimated that nearly one third of pregnancies in the 14 to 19 year-old age group occur as a result of rape and reluctant sexual intercourse.” It is imperative that girls and women be provided with the information and the mean to protect themselves in abusive relationships. This point was well made at the UN Special Assembly on AIDS by the Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi of Mozambique on 25 June 2001. He said: “We need to develop protection methods like microbicides that women can use with or without a partner’s knowledge or co-operation”. One wonders whether female condoms would no be one of the more effective methods of protection for women who are at risk.

“Condoms do not guarantee protection against AIDS”. This is an uncontested fact. Poor quality or faulty use means that there is no guarantee of protection. However, we question the statement in the Message of Hope that condoms may be “one of the main reasons for the spread of HIV/AIDS.” Professor

Louise Kuhn and epidemiologist engaged in full-time AIDS research at Columbia University, states that “the efficacy of condoms to prevent transmission is well-established scientifically”(Email response to SACBC Statement, 14/8/2001). Prof. James McIntyre of the prenatal HIV unit at Wits University and Professor Coovadia are quoted in *The Tablet* of 28 July and in the *Sunday Times* of 22 July as stating that many international and national scientific studies show that condoms, if properly and consistently used, “have played a significant part in preventing transmission of the virus from an infected partner to the uninfected partner.”

The bishops in the SACBC statement cannot be denying any value in the use of condoms if they permit their use (as is suggested) in defending the uninfected partner in a marital relationship. If what they really mean is that education about condoms, or their availability, may lead to an increase in promiscuity there is evidence to the contrary. Fuller and Keenan state: “It has now been well demonstrated that education which includes information about the appropriate use of condoms does not increase the rate of sexual intercourse, and in fact can lead to a delay in the age of first intercourse. Numerous studies, (from Uganda, Senegal, Thailand, among others) have demonstrated that educational programmes which discuss intercourse and which also encourage a delay in the age of first condoms and a reduction in the number of sexual partners can make enormous strides in decreasing new HIV infections as well as other STDs”. (Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention, Continuum 2000, p35)

It seems clear, from the preceding discussion and from what many people who have entered the debate are saying, that the condom issue is only a surface issue. What is on the table now is about much more than condoms. It is about the kind of Church we would like to be as we reach out in compassion, as disciples of Jesus, to those who are in mortal danger and have no other means of protecting themselves. It is about the way we feel for people in complex socio-cultural-economic situations; people who do not live in regular, equal and loving relationships. It is about educating people so that their consciences are formed in making responsible moral choices. It is about our accompaniment of young people, and particularly of young women, at this crucial time in their lives, as they face choices that are about life and death. It is about how we search humbly and sincerely for truth, justice and compassion without seeing everything in “black and white” terms as though there are no grey areas in between. And, finally, it is about gender imbalances in society and Church; about the ongoing injustice, violence and discrimination against women. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, with all its ramifications, calls us urgently to address the issues of social, economic, and racial and gender injustice, which make our country so vulnerable to the spread of the virus.

As Ingrid Skakal points out: “To reserve the ethical debate to those who are privileged enough to have stable, caring relationships is to exclude large

numbers of the population and will continue to ignore the need for women to develop a voice in their destiny.”

We must continue to address these issues. Teresa Malcolm (NCR, 10/8/2001) citing Fuller, declares; “The statement from the Southern African Bishops certainly does not end the conversation. It should further stimulate dialogue on this question, what are our priorities here – defending an ethic of sexuality or protecting lives?”

(End of transcription.)

For the Sisters for Justice this debate is not really about the use of condoms. It is a debate that includes issues such as the link between HIV/AIDS and the moral fibre of society, the oppression of women and the unjust socio-economic conditions. The moral norms and the pastoral application of those norms when one of the married partners is HIV positive give hope. Such people should listen to their conscience and make an appropriate decision. The Sisters for Justice would like to see conscience formation and personal responsibility explained and promoted more widely to include other areas of life.

The pastoral application of these norms is a concern for the Sisters for Justice. The sisters believe that for many women this statement from the SACBC will not be one of hope. Abstinence before, and fidelity within marriage are the only real safeguards against HIV/AIDS. These are important norms as they build up the moral fibre of the nation. They support Dowling's pastoral application of the moral norms in the complex context of our situation. They are concerned about the patriarchal attitudes that discriminate against women. Their concern also is about the gender imbalance that leads to women having no say over their bodies. This also leads women to be forced into desperate situations, putting them more at the risk of infection. It is within such contexts that the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS can be seen to be permissible. The SACBC does open a door to some form of self-protection, without using the word 'condom'. Even those who are not married have the right to defend their lives against mortal danger, if their sexual partner has AIDS. It is important to note that some of the women are unwilling sexual partners. This desperate situation that the Sisters for Justice call the 'grey area', is not addressed in the SACBC statement. It is therefore unreasonable to expect people in

these desperate situations to adhere to standards for people in fully human situations and conditions. They refer to the principle of the lesser evil, which means that if a woman uses a condom, where a partner is HIV positive, outside marriage, she is showing some measure of responsibility. Although it is an uncontested fact that condoms do not guarantee protection against AIDS the Sisters for Justice question the SACBC statement that condoms may be one of the main reasons for the spread of AIDS. For them the SACBC statement seems to suggest that the availability of condoms may lead to an increase in promiscuity. They hold that there is evidence to the contrary. Numerous studies in Uganda and Senegal, among others, have shown that information on condoms can result decreasing new HIV infections. In conclusion they state that condom use is only a surface issue here. What is at stake here is the kind of Church we would like to be as we reach out in compassion to those in mortal danger.

5.3.2. The Response of a South African Woman Theologian on the Position taken by Bishop Dowling on Condom use as a Means of Preventing Disease and Death.

Transcription of the document:

TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

THE RESPONSE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN WOMAN THEOLOGIAN ON THE POSITION TAKEN BY BISHOP DOWLING ON CONDOM USE AS A MEANS OF PREVENTING DISEASE AND DEATH

I wish to state my support for the position taken by Bishop Kevin Dowling on the use of condoms as a means of helping to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and the resultant death.

I believe that the use of condoms for this reason is both morally and pastorally defensible. According to the principle of double-effect, a woman is permitted to take the birth control pill to regulate dysfunctional menstruation even though this also has the effect of preventing conception, at least temporarily. A woman with a uterine tumour may have a hysterectomy even though this renders her sterile. In the same way, the use of condoms in order to help prevent the spread of AIDS, even though it also prevents conception, would surely fall into the same moral category.

Bishop Dowling upholds the Church's position that the "only complete safeguard against infection by the H.I. virus and AIDS is abstinence from sex before marriage and faithfulness to one's partner in marriage." He adds that people need to be called to a change in lifestyle if they do not live according to this.

However, he expresses pastoral concern for those who are forced to be victims of irresponsible people who take no heed of the Church's call to live according to these standards of virtue and faithfulness. I am particularly appreciative of Bishop Dowling's sensitivity to the vulnerability of women with regard to AIDS. In Africa especially, women live in conditions of great poverty and inequality. Sexual violence is often perpetrated against women by unheeding partners, or by partners who are ignorant of their own HIV status. The child conceived when even one partner is HIV- positive will probably be born infected with the virus. It becomes a matter of justice to help these women protect themselves and their children. The sad truth is that women in these situations are often in no way able to ask for or insist on the use of a condom. As part of an AIDS education campaign, in which the value of respect for oneself and others would be upheld, the use of condoms where there is any risk of infection could be promoted as a minimal means of expressing such respect.

Bishop Dowling also speaks of the plight of single women who are desperately seeking a way out of hopeless poverty and are driven or forced into seeking liaisons which offer a way out, but at the same time hold the potential of death if she becomes infected with the H.I. virus. The use of a condom could at least prevent such infection. It is well known that condoms are not 100% effective but they have played a major role in reducing the number of infections in countries such as Kenya.

In the context of the growing AIDS pandemic, condom use as a means of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS can be viewed in terms of the principle of double-effect in which the aim is the "greater good" or the "lesser of the two evils". Each day throughout the world, 15 000 people become newly infected with AIDS. According to the director of the SACBC AIDS desk, in sub-Saharan Africa the infection rate per day is the highest in the world and South Africa has the highest number of people infected with the virus in the world. In view of this, the pastoral need to reach out to people in compassion is extremely compelling. One can only imagine that this would be the stance of the One who came "that they may have life, and have it to the full". Africa is dying of AIDS. In the next ten years, Africa will have 29 million AIDS orphans and will have reduced the gross national product of heavily affected countries like South Africa by as much as 17 percent.

Together with the many women religious and other people in this country who support Bishop Dowling's courageous and compassionate stance, I call on you, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Southern Africa, to give just and compassionate consideration to the issue of the use of condoms as means of helping to prevent the spread of AIDS in our country.

(SR) PATRICIA FRESEN, OP (King William's Town Dominicans)

This statement is written with the full support of other members of our Regional Leadership Team, comprising:

Sr Geraldine Devine, OP

Sr Jordana Rechten, OP

Sr Mary McCreath, OP

The following sisters who comprise our Congregational Leadership Team and are presently in the country also give their full support to this statement:

Sr Margo Verspeek, OP

Sr Agnes Murphy, OP

Sr Maureen Yenson, OP

Many of our other sisters have signed statements of support of Bishop Dowling's position. These are being forwarded to the SACBC.

21 July 2001

(End of transcription.)

Fresen (2001)⁹ believes that the use of condoms as a means of preventing death and disease is both morally and pastorally defensible. She compares condom use with the case of a woman who undergoes hysterectomy because of a uterus tumour. This is defensible even if it renders her sterile. She sees Dowling as having a pastoral concern for those who are forced to be victims of those who do not heed the Church's call to live a life of virtue and faithfulness. She sees Dowling as sensitive to the vulnerability of women with regard to AIDS. With so much sexual violence against women this becomes a matter of justice for women to protect themselves and their children. Condom use is a minimal means of expressing respect for self and for others. Condoms have played a major role in reducing the number of infections in countries such as Kenya. She states that condom use in this AIDS pandemic context can be viewed in terms of the principle of double effect. In this principle the aim is always the greater good. The Church needs to reach out in compassion. She ends her statement by calling on the SACBC to give a just and compassionate consideration to the issue of condoms to help prevent the spread of AIDS in South Africa.

⁹ A Dominican sister.

5.3.3 The Sacredness of life: A Catholic opinion on condoms and AIDS.

The Pietermaritzburg Dominicans ¹⁰ issued a press statement entitled '*The Sacredness of life: A Catholic opinion on condoms and AIDS*'. This statement is dated the 14th of August 2001. This statement is occasioned by the SACBC's *Message of Hope*.

A transcription of the document:

PRESS STATEMENT
Pietermaritzburg Dominicans on AIDS and condoms
The sacredness of life
A Catholic opinion on condoms and AIDS
14 August 2001

The message from the Catholic Bishops of Southern Africa on AIDS and condoms has received widespread publicity in the media. In their statement the bishops urge the people living with HIV/AIDS to maintain hope. They call on Catholics to join hands with all people who are engaged in the struggle against AIDS and affirm that AIDS must never be considered as a punishment from God.

In the same statement the bishops take a firm stand against the use of condoms in the fight against AIDS. This part of their declaration has been received with mixed feelings in government, NGO and church circles.

We are solemnly-professed members of the Dominican Order, an eight-century-old religious congregation of the Catholic Church with a well established tradition of preaching, theological reflection and social ministry and we belong to the Emaphethelweni community in Pietermaritzburg. We welcome our bishops' desire to promote the best possible approach to the issue of AIDS and condoms and wish to contribute to the discussion of this problem. We speak as Catholics, and for some of us, as people actively engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The bishops implicitly recognise that the use of condoms may be appropriate in a couple where one of the partners is living with HIV/AIDS. The Church,

¹⁰ A group of Dominicans who teach at St Joseph's Theological Institute.

they say, accepts that everyone has the right to defend his or her life against mortal danger.

In all other cases, they disapprove of the use of condoms, which they argue, goes against human dignity and changes the act of love into a selfish search for pleasure. Campaigns for safer sex are morally wrong. The reason for such a radical position is that the bishops wish to uphold the sacredness of marriage. Sex outside marriage is a sin. Condoms encourage promiscuity, and jeopardise the dignity of marriage, which is a gift of God.

As Catholics, we fully support this defence of marriage. The breakdown of family life, which we observe in so many parts of Southern Africa, is a major cause for concern. The first to suffer from this situation are the children. The women, who experience abuse and lack of support, are another category of victims. The men, even those who are involved in acts of violence against women and children, are also in distress. The crisis of marriage is a contributing factor to crime, sexual abuse and gender discrimination.

We also agree with the bishops when they say that abstinence and marital fidelity are the best means by which HIV infections may be prevented. The multiplicity of sexual partners is one of the main causes for the rapid spread of the disease. Other factors, such as the loneliness brought about by urbanisation and persisting systems of migrant labour or the emphasis on sexual prowess and performance in popular culture, play a role in people being trapped in maelstrom of sexual relationships. Persons engaged in risky sexual behaviour also deserve compassion and the opportunity to be drawn into more supportive personal, economic, social, and spiritual relationships. They also have a claim to the love of Christ before hearing the words, "go, sin no more".

HIV/AIDS is a social problem, not only a problem of personal morality. It is not only the individual who is called to conversion. Industry, advertising, corrupt officials who leave people in poverty and despair through their selfish acts, persons who regard HIV as God's curse, all of us, in fact, are called to conversion. We need to speak out against all factors promoting risky and inappropriate sexual behaviour. We need to have a Christ-like compassion for all who are at risk. A compassion that heals and frees persons to embrace the ideals of abstinence and fidelity.

There is a second aspect, which needs to be emphasised in the discussion on AIDS and condoms. Life, for any spiritual person but especially for us Catholics, is sacred. It is a gift of God. In South Africa alone, more than four million people are HIV positive. It is a catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude to think that these four million people, not to mention those who are at risk of contracting the disease, are all equally free to follow the Catholic ideal of marriage as a dream. We live in a broken society. Yet all people deserve to live, and not only those who follow the narrow path of Christian sexual ethics.

Condoms are no absolute guarantee against AIDS. There is a certain percentage of failure in their use. All medical practitioners, AIDS activists

and people of good will engaged in the fight against AIDS are aware of their limitations. More importantly there are important cultural obstacles to their use. Promoting condoms without consideration for the social, medical, cultural and religious circumstances of their users is problematic. But the fact remains. With all their shortcomings condoms are an important way to stop AIDS. They are some insurance against infection, a first line of defence. Even one life saved from infection is victory.

Abstinence and faithfulness would be better, of course. But should we let those who are impeded from fully embracing the ideal which all people of good will promote simply die? Should we sentence their unborn or yet to be conceived children to a life of chronic disease and maybe an early death? Should we remain silent about even the most imperfect means by which to prevent the deaths of millions of human being? The answer clearly is no.

We admit that HIV and the role of condoms in its prevention presents us with a very difficult moral problem. Two principles are at stake: the sacred nature of sexuality, which is expressed with the greatest integrity in marriage and the absolute sanctity of all human life. In the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, saving lives, by even the most imperfect means, would appear to be the first and most important step which we can encourage people to strive toward the dignity of sexual fidelity in marriage.

We cannot blame the government for promoting condoms. They have the duty to protect all lives and not only those of the people who follow certain religious principles. Yet we would object to a government who would indiscriminately promote the use of condoms. As much as the church leaders need to listen to non-religious points of view, the political leaders need to be sensitive to the religious and moral values adhered to by a significant proportion of the.

Prof. Phillippe Denis.

(End of transcription.)

In all other cases the bishops disapprove of the use of condoms. The bishops maintain that the use of condoms goes against human dignity and changes the act of love into a selfish search for pleasure. In saying this they are trying to uphold that marriage is a gift from God and is sacred, and that sex outside marriage is a sin. The bishops believe that the use of condoms encourages promiscuity and jeopardises the dignity of marriage. The Pietermaritzburg Dominicans agree with the bishops that abstinence and marital fidelity are the best means by which the infection may be prevented. However, they believe that HIV/AIDS is not only a problem of personal morality. It is a social problem. It is not only the individual who is called to

conversion. Industry, advertising and corrupt officials, all of these have to change. They also note that it is not all those who are HIV positive who are equally free to follow the Catholic ideal of marriage. With all their shortcomings they see condoms, nevertheless, as important in stopping HIV. They see the use of a condom as a first line of defence. Saving lives, by even the most imperfect means, would appear to be the first and most important thing to do.

5.4 The SACBC AIDS Office

The Catholic Church in Southern Africa has put some structures in place to respond to the AIDS crisis. The SACBC has set up an AIDS office. This office is responsible for accessing funds and expertise to intervene at local level. Each and every diocese in the SACBC region has an AIDS response. The SACBC AIDS Office has full-time staff and financial resources. This office holds conferences, workshops, training, retreats and consultations in different dioceses to help motivate and mobilise communities. Hospices for the dying, orphanages, feeding schemes and visiting teams have been organised to assist those suffering at home. Viljoen (2000) gives an overview of the work done by the SACBC AIDS Office. This office has provided support for those doing home-based care, those caring for the sick in hospices, those providing bereavement counselling and those who care for orphans. This office is also involved in education and awareness programmes promoting abstinence through behavioural change. It also seeks to ensure that orphans are supported within their immediate families or extended families. It falls within the diocesan structures to organise for foster care or adoption by non-relatives. Institutionalisation is used as a last resort for orphans.

5.4.1 AN INTERVIEW WITH ALISON MUNRO

The following is an interview with Sr Alison Munro ¹¹ on the 21st of January 2003 at Khanya House.

Question 1: Tell me about your work at the SACBC.

¹¹ An AIDS Office co-ordinator of the SACBC.

Response: “My office co-ordinates the response of the Catholic Church to HIV/AIDS in the SACBC territory. The SACBC encompasses South Africa, Swaziland and Botswana, and we also work in Lesotho and Namibia because of funding arrangements. We deal with five of the seven countries which are most affected with AIDS. What we do is to ask for proposals of projects, which seek to assist those infected and affected with AIDS. These proposals are submitted through the respective dioceses. It is our responsibility to make sure that each and every diocese in the SACBC has a response for AIDS. In our office we have project managers who go out to the different dioceses to help out with management skills and the capacity building of the local church. Our emphasis is on local, rural and small. We do have big projects like *Sinosizo* in the Archdiocese of Durban and the Caring Network in Cape Town. These two projects have good structures and are more organised. An example of one of our small projects is *Ndumo* in the diocese of Ingwavuma. The AIDS office has over 100 projects, offering peer and horizontal learning. Peer learning means that those who are involved in the project share information and learn from one another. Horizontal learning happens when someone comes from outside the group to assist. Some of these projects are involved in advocacy.”

Question 2: What is advocacy?

Response: “Advocacy refers to lobbying on behalf of those who do not have a voice. Those who are involved in advocacy network take the government to court on certain issues and represent the Church in particular forums trying to change structures. Those involved in advocacy also engage government departments in dealing with issues like child-care and foster-care grants, maintenance grants and fast-tracking the process of adoption. Through my experience with the work of advocacy I have noticed that people want to deal with faith organisations. This helps in bringing about credibility and weight to the issues at stake.

We are also involved in media and communication. This helps in the passing on of information related to AIDS. We try and facilitate a free flow of information from

our different projects. These are opportunities of learning even for us, as you might know the Church is not really good at communication. We also have a number of Community Outreach Programmes. We have one at the Valley of Thousand Hills in KwaZulu-Natal, St Annes in Mariannhill and Blauuwbosch in Newcastle. We also have clinics like the one in Winterveldt (Pretoria), which has facilities for the possible prevention of the mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

There are prevention programmes that are targeting the youth. One of these projects is called Education for Life. This project was started in Uganda by Sr Mirriam Duggan. This prevention programme focuses on behaviour change. It also tries to instil a conscious effort to delay sexual intercourse. Here young people are encouraged to wait until marriage for their first sexual intercourse. The Church struggles with prevention work since it is often seen as a hindrance in this area. It is far better accepted for its response in the area of care.

Another prevention programme used in some areas is called True Love Waits. It is similar to Education for Life, as it deals with prevention and life-skills. We also have home-based care programmes which are linked to orphan-care projects and to income generating projects. These projects help people look after themselves. They are projects like gardening, crafts, beadwork, papermaking and many others. The policy of this office is to try and support every effort that is initiated by the local communities as they try to respond to the challenges that are posed by the AIDS pandemic. We try to link up better-resourced projects with those that are struggling, for an example, there is a sister from Dundee and an Anglican woman who did some training in the diocese of Tzaneen. A sister from De Aar does a lot of training wherever she is needed.

The AIDS office of the SACBC is also involved with the SACC¹². We are also a member of the inter-faith group called NRASD¹³. This group was started by the then Minister of Social Development, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. She did not want to speak to one Church on certain social issues. She then decided to call all the religious bodies together to form this forum where they together could deal with

¹² South African Council of Churches.

¹³ National Religious Association for Social Development.

AIDS education and poverty alleviation. The NRSAD has recently become the official working arm of the NRLF¹⁴. The latter has asked me to represent the faith section on SANAC¹⁵, which is meant to act as an advisory body to the president and the government.”

Question 3: Do you think your work is relevant to the South African population?

Response : “Yes. It is. AIDS is the greatest crisis that has ever plagued the globe. The gospel has to be preached in the world in which we live. The values of the gospel, as interpreted by the Church, should be implemented by responding to our brothers and sisters in need. This is our arena where we can give flesh to our values. We are all part of the body of Christ. We try to reach out, although at the same time try to avoid being a Church of ‘hand-outs’. This is education and hospital ministry in a new form.”

Question 4: What advice would you give to an unmarried HIV positive young man who has made a young woman pregnant, who still wants to live together?

Response: “I would want to find out about their expectations of each other. They must decide whether to marry or not. Some are unable to make decisions. I would offer them information. They would have to make options around prevention. I would further advise them to get involved with youth clubs and other social activities where they can receive support and information. We should start where people are, and then gradually move with them to a higher goal.”

Question 5: What do you perceive as obstacles in your work of educating people on the prevention of AIDS?

Response: “The negative attitude of the public and the media towards the Church is disheartening. Due to apartheid the Church in South Africa faces a lack of capacity in many spheres like poor management, poor financial skills and lack of skills in the

¹⁴ National Religious Leaders Forum.

¹⁵ South African National Aids Council.

running of projects. There are not many people who want to be involved. The hierarchical church needs to provide leadership at local level.”

Question 6: Share with me your high- points in your work.

Response: “On a personal note, this is a faith commitment. I do this work because I believe this is a call to continue the healing mission of Jesus. I also note with joy that the local Church is not necessarily a hierarchical church. It is a Church doing its own work.”

5.5 A QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRIESTS IN THE VULINDLELA DEANERY

In trying to see how the Church responds to the issue of human sexuality in general, and HIV/AIDS in particular, I sent a questionnaire to sixteen priests in the parishes of the Vulindlela deanery of the Archdiocese of Durban. I wanted to find out about the openness of the priests with regard to human sexuality, what importance they give to matters relating to sex and human sexuality and how they would approach particular problems that might be presented to them. It is important to find out how these issues are attended to in the life of a parish, as they deal with the HIV/AIDS issue from a first-hand experience and on a daily basis. Out of sixteen questionnaires that were sent to the different parishes I received twelve responses. This indicates that about 75% of the priests in the Vulindlela deanery show an interest in the issues of sex and human sexuality. These are the questions that were asked and the summary of their responses:

Question 1. Do you preach about sex in your parish? (Yes/no)

Responses: All respondents answered ‘yes’.

Question 2. If you do, what do you say to your parishioners?

Responses: The respondents preach on sexual morality according to Catholic sexual teaching. They teach gospel values. There should be no sex outside

marriage. Sex outside marriage is evil and sinful. It is against the sixth commandment. They also stress fidelity in marriage.

Question 3. Do you preach about pre-marital sex in your parish? (Yes/no)

Responses: All responses were positive.

Question 4. If you do, what do you say to your parishioners?

Responses: Some respondents did not answer this question. Some teach that sex is for marriage and that sex outside marriage is evil. If people engage in sex outside marriage partners become objects of pleasure.

Question 5. Do you preach about condoms in your parish? (Yes/no)

Responses: Only four respondents answered 'yes'. The rest did not give any answers to this question.

Question 6: If you do, what do you say to your parishioners?

Responses: Two respondents gave no answers to this question. Some tell their parishioners that the church does not allow condoms. Some stress the need of responsibility and self-control. Some parishes have an AIDS awareness programme where sexual matters are dealt with. Some say that if anyone has any personal problem they should come and speak to the priest privately.

Question 7: What are your views on condoms?

Responses: Two respondents did not answer this question. Some think that condoms are not safe in fighting against the HI Virus. Some see the use of condoms as a lesser of two evils. Some believe that people should never have unprotected sex. One respondent stated that in the internal forum he would advise an HIV positive person to use a condom.

Question 8. Suppose a young man, aged sixteen and a member of your parish, comes to you and says he has impregnated his girlfriend. They love one another and they are prepared to keep the child and they want to continue with their relationship. They cannot get married now as both of them are still at school and he does not have money to pay *ilobolo*. How would you advise him to live out this relationship?

Responses: Two respondents did not answer this question. Some believe that the young man should take responsibility for the consequences of his actions. Some would advise him to refrain from casual sex and come to church. Some would highlight the importance of chastity and fidelity until marriage, as demanded by Christian moral teaching. Some would advise the young man to pursue his educational career and to keep the child.

5.6 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the Church in the SACBC region has put a lot of effort in trying to educate its members about their human sexuality, especially with reference to the AIDS pandemic. It is also evident from the respondents to my questionnaire how difficult it is to teach or preach about sexuality. Over the years the SACBC has published some documents that aim at teaching society about human life. These documents seek to instil in society the sanctity of human life and responsible behaviour with regard to sexual activities. It is unfortunate that most of the teachings of the SACBC coincide with the context of HIV/AIDS. It is almost impossible to show the beauty of human sexuality if it is taught along with AIDS. Although it is the moral responsibility of the Church to teach on AIDS it would be beneficial to treat human sexuality separately from the issue of HIV/AIDS. When human sexuality is dealt with together with AIDS, the Church tends to have a moralising and judging tone. The message that society tends to get from such statements is to be careful and to turn away from sin. The beauty and the God-giftedness of human sexuality is thus lost. The Church has also done a lot to take care for those infected and affected by the HI Virus. The SACBC continues to respond to, and to help, those who need support through its AIDS office. It has made it possible for each and every diocese in its area of jurisdiction to have projects that empower and take care of those infected and affected by the HI Virus. Such work by the SACBC is plausible, although much more is needed. In these trying times the hierarchical Church has been faithful to the traditional teaching of the church on sex and marriage. The SACBC's teachings with regard to abstinence outside marriage and fidelity within marriage, has, however been met with some resistance from members of the Church who feel that much more needs

to be done, especially in the face of this abnormal catastrophe. They feel that such an abnormal situation of death and pain warrants an abnormal response from the Church, which might challenge the Church to take extreme measures to combat the spread of AIDS. Such challenge or dissension stems from the perception that the Church is not in touch with what is going on in the communities. One of the biggest challenges that the hierarchical Church is facing is the question of those who find it impossible to live up to the moral demands that the Church is putting in front of them. It might be impossible for some members of the Church to observe the ideals of abstinence outside marriage because of their environment where everybody grew up in a situation that honours and holds in high esteem those who involve themselves in pre- or extra-marital affairs. Some members of the Church are morally incapable of internalising these demands due to the type of education they received, unemployment, poverty, lack of family structures to fall back on and many other reasons that might be seen as aggravating circumstances. In most of these instances the role of the woman is seen as not taken seriously, despite the fact that they are the ones who suffer most.

It is good to note that there have been some positive developments in the quest for appreciating human sexuality. Love Life, a community agency, has developed a Y-Centre. This is a centre where the youth meet and have games together. They meet to discuss pertinent issues with their peers and they have an annual train trip, which arms them with life skills. It is estimated that about ten thousand young people get involved in these activities of Love Life every year. It is good to see the need for sex education being highlighted by the SACBC's statements on AIDS.

There is, however, a greater challenge facing the Church in Southern Africa. The Church is challenged to portray a positive image of human sexuality. With regard to the SACBC's 'Message of Hope' some people believe that there is no place for moralising, especially with reference to the issue of AIDS. Statements like 'turn away from sin' could be best replaced by statements of compassion and understanding. Poverty and unemployment are real issues in the SACBC region, which make the HIV/AIDS situation worse. It is with such understanding and insight that a compassionate response to the AIDS pandemic can be a source of strength to those infected and affected. While being faithful to its role of being a

teacher and a leader, the Church has to demonstrate Jesus' acceptance and understanding of those who found themselves on the wrong side of the law. Jesus accepts the poor, the lame the sick and the sinner. He does not condemn them. After accepting them he challenges them not to sin anymore. The SACBC needs to lead the Church in painting a beautiful picture of human sexuality. They need to embark on a campaign that affirms the beauty and goodness of sexuality. Society needs to be encouraged to a joyful and responsible celebration of sexuality. A God-given sexuality that needs to be cherished will be appreciated and valued if the beauty of sexuality is treated without mixing it with AIDS education. This will help in avoiding the guilt-undertones that are normally associated with AIDS. In this situation of unprecedented calamity there is a dire need for the Church to show compassion and understanding. It is not the right moment to be talking about repentance and the turning away from sin, to a suffering and fearful people as this has judgmental undertones. Those infected need to hear the Church leadership saying to them "You belong. We are with you. God is with you. You are not the worst in the world. Jesus loves you". It is the duty and the responsibility of the Church to uphold the Christian ideals of abstinence outside marriage and fidelity within marriage, while at the same time being sensitive to the different situations and contexts of its members.

Hume (1987) sees a need to live life according to a renewed set of values in the face of the AIDS pandemic. This will be difficult as there is a frequent ridicule of moral values from all sides of society. There is also an explicit encouragement to promiscuous behaviour in society. Such an encouragement to a promiscuous way of life reflects a general decline of values in society. He sees the challenge of the Church as being to learn from the past. A new response is demanded by the AIDS situation. He sees the need to learn from the asceticism and self-discipline of great religions like Islam and the religions of the East.

An unselfish and fully human love should be open to the possibility of new life. Such an openness would demonstrate that love as a sharing in the life and love of God. The full sexual expression of love should occur in marriage. Hume (1987) notes that the Catholic Church cannot be expected to support any sexual activity outside marriage. It is a demanding thing not to be engaged in sexual activities

outside marriage but not impossible. For those who are unmarried the choice does not lie between condoms and infection. It demands a new way of life, a radical change of attitudes, a third course of action. There is a great need today in our society to rediscover the joy of faithful love and a lasting marriage. Such a rediscovery demands restraint and a new awareness. There is much that still needs to be done in the homes, schools and in every part of life and love.

Hume (1987) goes on to give a response to the AIDS problem. This was the early days of the pandemic before the awareness had really hit Africa. He sees the fight against AIDS as lying in moral regeneration of society. Such a moral regeneration demands a radical paradigm shift in the way we view human sexuality. This renewal demands an education and an information that is based on the values. These values need to be rediscovered and be re-applied in our present context. In giving a practical response to those who are infected and affected he analyses the cause of AIDS, which he believes is promiscuity. He then sees a need to respond with compassion. Such a compassion assures those who are infected of support and hope. It assures them that Jesus still cares for them. The compassionate response is a way of demonstrating understanding and acceptance. In compassion there is no need to judge the compassionate response is a Christian response that reflects the attitude of Jesus.

The statistics of people who are living with AIDS do not show the suffering, the sadness and the misery that they go through. This is echoed by Ryan (2002). He sees the statistics as not accounting for the economic consequences, the number of orphans and broken families that these deaths cause. In responding to the challenge that is presented by the AIDS pandemic the Church has to start with the belief that no one deserves to have AIDS. An awareness that AIDS is not a punishment from God for immoral behaviour should inform all the responses to the pandemic. A God who punishes a sinner in this way does not exist. He sees a Christian God as a Father who is always ready to help. The analysis given by Ryan (2002) is important if the Church has to give a holistic, meaningful and relevant response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. To presume that people know the teachings of the Church and, therefore, expect them to live according to those teachings, without taking time to know their situations, is not helpful. A person can know the truth and be convinced

about it intellectually, while at the same time be faced with conditions which do not allow him or her to live that particular truth out. An example of this would be a young man who is convinced that sex belongs to marriage, and lives in a home where everybody practises sex outside marriage. If this life-style is taken as normal by this particular family, and by society, and is also encouraged by the government of the day and the media, it is possible that this young man might find it even impossible to live out his convictions in this environment. Such an awareness of the context is necessary for the Church, so as to adopt an approach that is compassionate and understanding. The environment within which people find themselves in South Africa, together with the influence of the media, and the breakdown of the family structure due to migratory labour, contribute to the lack of a proper knowledge and foundation with regard to sexual issues. There are many people who have never experienced a family situation where they could receive emotional support and acceptance. Many families, which are without the father or mother, produce children without direction as they look for advice and acceptance from their peers. This results in young people who cannot distinguish between right and wrong properly. Such people cannot be held responsible for a formation which they did not receive. Imputing guilt on people cannot contribute to their advancement in life. Knowing the 'text' and the 'con-text' of the teachings of the Church would contribute to a fuller understanding of human sexuality and would elicit an appropriate response from the Church to the AIDS situation.

The inception of the SACBC in 1947 was a way of enabling the Catholic Church to have a presence in Southern Africa. It was necessary to have this hierarchical structure to give direction and to lead the Catholic Church in Southern Africa. Due to the increase in the number of Catholics it was necessary to organise the presence of the Church in this region. Being responsible to the Vatican the SACBC has to ensure the continuation of the teachings of the Universal Church, in line with the thinking of the Vatican. Through the SACBC the voice of the Pope and the Vatican was brought to the people of the region and heard. It also ensured the adherence of the Catholics to the traditional teachings of the church. The hierarchical structure of the Church in Southern Africa continued to be faithful to the teachings of the Church. It demonstrated the link and the continuity of the teachings of the Church that is important for the life of the Church. It became the body that would localise

and adapt the teachings of the Church in this pastoral region. In its duty of showing direction it challenged and affirmed people according to the traditions of the Church. It did this from the context of the people, and in a language that people of the region would understand. This was a chance for the teachings of the Church to come into direct contact with the situation of the African people and for the Church to respond to that situation. There was a need to put the teachings into a different context and hence the publication of mediated documents from the SACBC that contextualised the teachings of the Universal Church. There was a great need for the leaders of the Church to reflect and respond to issues that affect the lives of the people of this pastoral region. It published documents that related to human sexuality. It also responded, and it continues to, to issues of sexuality through the AIDS desk of the SACBC. It educates people from all dioceses of the SACBC and is involved in the different projects of the different dioceses. The SACBC places orphans in places of safety and supports those affected by HIV/AIDS. It supports and ensures that those infected live quality lives and are involved in the life of the community. The SACBC also helps to give love to those infected and affords them a dignified death.

One can understand that the SACBC has to act together and teach as well as respect its collegiality. The leadership and collegiality of the SACBC is closely connected to the Vatican's idea of the unity and expansion of the Church. The main duty of the hierarchy of the SACBC is to preserve the Catholic tradition and to make it applicable to the Southern African context. It has to educate consciences in matters of right and wrong. The SACBC also has to instil Christian values in the people of the region. It also has challenged the African people to uphold these Christian values and to live according to them.

They suffer because if condoms are not used in marriages where there is suspicion about the conduct of the husband, this might mean that the wife is open to being infected with a sexually transmitted disease. That creates a situation where the woman has no means of protecting herself against diseases. This leaves the woman at the mercy of the man's behaviour, in that her safety depends on the safety of his suspected other partners. There is also a belief in traditional African communities that says that a man can do, as he likes as long as he takes care of his wife's material

needs at home. Married women are advised not to inquire about their husbands' whereabouts. This makes it possible for a man to have as many relationships outside his marriage as he likes and return home whenever he likes. The wife is expected to not interfere with her husband's life. The husband is the head of family and he provides materially for them. All the power of the family revolves around him. The wife is treated as one of his children.

When a woman is raped it becomes almost impossible to talk about the rape, as a woman is not expected to say anything against the man. This contributes to the silence on rape, and the unwillingness of society to discuss rape. This is also true for the victims of incest. In some instances where a father rapes a child, nothing gets done about it as no one wants to talk about it. In this situation where the victims are not permitted to talk about the abuse, child abuse continues unabated. This situation is further complicated by the belief that if a person has sex with a virgin this would cure AIDS. This leads to children, even babies, being sexually abused with the sole intention of curing AIDS. Some women are forced into prostitution by the economic climate of society. In their quest to support their families financially these women run a risk of contracting HIV. They would do anything for the man if he can pay them. These women who are involved in prostitution have no protection in the law. As prostitution is illegal, it means that even if the man abuses them physically and does not pay them, they have no legal recourse. It is against this background that women feel that the teaching of the Church with regard to the use of condoms does not take their situation into full consideration.

Love Life motivates young people to change their lifestyle. The motive for this change in lifestyle is not fear. Fear is an imperfect motive for a change in behaviour. A fear of death or punishment produces only temporary change. It is the positive attitude to life that assists them in changing their lifestyle. Such a change leads to a development in the individual's idea of life and helps in building up honest and transparent relationships. Such a change lasts and has an impact on the lives of young people. This education happens in small groups that encourage interaction and openness. It makes it possible for sharing amongst young people and for them to receive guidance from adults. The Y centre is a force for positive change amongst the youth. A positive idea of human sexuality, and a sense of

mission in one's life, helps people to respect and appreciate their lives. They now believe that their lives matter, and that there is purpose for each and every life that is in this world. If people see a value and an aim in their lives, they would love their lives and try to preserve them until the realisation of their dreams.

CHAPTER SIX

FUTURE DIRECTION: A CONTEXTUALISED MORAL SEXUAL TEACHING

6.1 Catholic Theology Of Human Sexuality

The mass media has become a very powerful tool in the hands of the government and big businesses. This powerful means of mass communication is being used by the powerful in society to propagate values, which are contrary to gospel values. In spite of this challenge, the Church today continues to teach sexual morality as it was handed down to it by the Early Church. The Church is faithful to tradition and it wants to inculcate the values of sexual morality in this present environment. In this environment which upholds selfishness, the Church still teaches, and rightly so, the values of chastity and fidelity. The Church, in its preaching and publications, continues to call on people to abstain from sex outside marriage and to those in marriage, to be faithful to each other. In an environment where pre and extra-marital sex is fast becoming a norm, the Church continues to proclaim the truth that sex belongs to marriage. It is a conviction of the Church that offspring (*proles*) should come from parents who are committed to one another in marriage. To those who are committed to each other marriage means that they are to be faithful to one another (*fides*). Such a commitment in marriage binds the two together for life, until death (*sacramentum*). The Church also sees the family as the primary Church where children have to be taught about faith and life. There can be no better environment to teach children than a family where there is trust, warmth and love. Such a family environment helps children to be receptive to the teachings of the parents, and they are open to learning by imitating their parents. In such a family situation the parents become the first catechists and they impart their knowledge and experience in an environment that is conducive to openness and growth.

In trying to instil and impart a theology of sexual morality, the Church is perceived as having stressed more the negative aspects of human sexuality than the positive. It is seen as concentrating on what should not be done, without giving a credible alternative. It is seen as being especially uncaring towards those who are unmarried, as almost no guidance is given to them. Haering rightly notes that: “Nothing is more futile than to speak on sexuality by beginning with norms and prohibitions. Norms do not help anyone who does not first understand meaning” (1979:493). Haering highlights the fact of teaching and understanding as coming before prohibition. Norms and prohibitions, if based on a proper understanding of human sexuality, would yield a good and integrated personality. The Church teaches that Jesus, who was born of a virgin, took human nature upon himself. He became vulnerable and he also suffered. The Church teaches that Jesus was a sexual being. He laughed and felt pain, he had compassion and wept, he loved and could also feel lonely. He became like us in all things but sin. The Church also acknowledges the truth that affirming that Jesus was fully human does not make him less divine. He was fully human and fully divine. He lived a full human life according to the will of his Father. It is clear that at times it was difficult for Jesus to follow the will of his Father. This is illustrated by him asking his Father to remove the cup that he was to drink during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane¹. Jesus experienced the joys and challenges that any human being experiences when trying to live a good life. To be fully human, among other things, means to be a sexual being. To be a sexual being means to have feelings and to have feelings is part of the beauty of creation. The implication of this truth is that it is only through accepting our humanity fully and joyfully that we can best receive the graces that God gives us. For grace to have good effects in our lives it needs to build on nature. After creating the human being God saw that it was good². This means that the totality of the human being is good.

To ensure that we are fully human, that we participate fully in our humanity and believe that God can use our human nature to communicate his message to us and to others, is one of the ways we can prepare ourselves to receive grace in our lives. An illustration of this is God using the human nature of Jesus to bring salvation into the

¹ Mark 14:32-41.

² Genesis 1:1-31.

world. It follows that God needs our human nature and our co-operation with him, in order to make his message known to the world. It is only as human beings that God can save us, and only as human beings are we able to respond fully to his love. This approach of affirming the humanity of Jesus, and acknowledging the essential role that should be played by our humanity in the history of salvation, will counteract the negative attitudes that the Church is perceived to have towards human sexuality. Slater (1999) talks about the idea of the 'spirituality of sexuality'. She uses the phrase in trying to talk about an understanding of human sexuality as a way of life that encompasses one's daily life. Her idea brings to the fore a spirituality that holistically transforms one's way of life. An important idea that she stresses is the idea of sexuality as God's gift to humanity. This is a gift that needs to be lived out by all people. This is a powerful gift and it defines one as a man and another as a woman. Slater (1999) sees this gift, as pointing to the fact all human relationships are sexual relationships. For this gift to be fruitful, and not counter-productive to one's life, it needs to be well integrated into the whole spectrum of the activities of the human person. Her idea highlights the point that all human life is an integrated and holistic reality, and that it cannot be departmentalised. Human sexuality should not be seen as an extra, or an appendage of human life. It is a way of life, a part of a bigger picture, which colours all our activities. True chastity, positively stated, comes about when a person gradually integrates his or her sexual gifts into his or her relationships. Such a 'gradual integration' points to the fact that no one is born chaste, and that no one attains the state of chastity and remains there forever. It is a process that requires patience. As human sexuality allows a man to act as a man, and a woman as a woman, it is a reminder that at the beginning God created them, male and female he created them³. Such an approach to human sexuality would help people to accept who they are. It would also help them to express their sexuality appropriately.

The Song of Songs echoes the beauty of human sexuality when the author says:

"Shower me kisses of your mouth:
your love is more delicious than wine
Your fragrance is better than any perfume,

³ Genesis 1:27.

your name spreads out like an ointment;
 no wonder the maidens love you madly.
 Lure me to you, let us hurry,
 Bring me, O king, into your room!
 We will rejoice in you and exult,
 And praise your caresses more than wine.
 How rightly you are loved.” (1:2-4)

Hosea also uses the language of love when talking about the relationship of Israel and Yahweh. The author uses the beauty of human sexual relationships when he states:

“ Pursuing her lovers,
 She will not overtake them;
 Looking for her lovers, she will not find them.
 Then she will say, “I will go back to my husband
 For I was better off then than now.” (2: 9).

Sacred Scripture shows the importance of human sexuality in the realm of salvation and points to the fact that our sexuality can be used in communicating the message of salvation to others. The beauty of human sexuality, as shown in Sacred Scripture, shows that sexuality should be acknowledged as part of the beauty of creation. As sexuality is not the whole beauty of creation it is also important to show the need to inculcate prudence and discipline in order to celebrate such beauty in a positive way.

The Old Testament has developed a teaching about the goodness of sex and marriage. Marriage and fruitfulness were seen as goods that were supposed to be highly prized. To be unmarried was a disgrace. This is illustrated by Rachel praying to God to allow her to give birth to children or she would die⁴. The language that is used by the Old Testament to describe the relationship between God and Israel is a language that is based on the idea of marriage. This relationship is described in terms of the bridegroom loving his bride. This bride is supposed to be a virgin but is too often found to be faithless. McDonagh talking about the Christian implications of virginity, mentions that “Christianity accepts the goodness of the world and the need to sanctify it. It also recognises the relativity and impermanence

⁴ Genesis 30 :1.

of this world and points to the absolute eternal good beyond. The Christian attitude to the world is one of both acceptance and transcendence.” (1963:175).

The New Testament does contain references to the idea of marriage. Matthew presents Jesus as talking about the idea of both the husband and wife leaving their parents and clinging to each other. In this way they become one⁵. St Paul puts some energy in talking to the Corinthians about sexual immorality, abstinence, virginity and divorce. He advises the husband and the wife to fulfil their duties towards each other. He goes on to allude to the idea that they now belong to one another, as the husband is now the owner of the wife's body and the wife owns the husband's body⁶. The relationship between husband and wife is important for St Peter. He advises that this relationship should be governed by consideration between the spouses. He says that wives should be submissive to their husbands while, at the same time, he implores husbands to be sensible in their attitudes towards their wives⁷.

6.1.1 The Necessity of the Church Imbibing a local culture

After looking at the teachings of the Church, both locally and universally, and looking at the way the rural Zulu people, both traditional and modern, celebrate and live their sexuality, it is clear that human sexuality plays a very important role in human life and, in particular, in human relationships. Human sexuality is at the centre of human activity and it defines a man as distinct from a woman. It is also a deep human dimension that can hurt and can also be a vehicle for healing. One of the deepest hurts occurs in the form of rape and child abuse. The healing of such wounds would need a person to get involved in a mature, loving and mutually supportive relationship. In this level of a relationship the soul can be lifted up and redeemed. This delicate and intimate aspect of the human person demands of the Church an approach that is positive, caring and compassionate, an approach that highlights respect of self and of others. The Second Vatican Council⁸, talking

⁵ Matthew 19: 3.

⁶ 1Corinthians 6:12-7 :39.

⁷ 1Peter 3:1-7.

⁸ *Gravissimum Educationis* no 1,

about the Christian education of the youth, states that “As they grow older they should receive a *positive*⁹ and prudent education in matters relating to sex. Moreover, they should be so prepared to take their part in the life of society that, having been duly trained in the necessary and useful skills, they may be able to participate actively in the life of society in its various aspects” (1981:727). A positive education, with regard to sexual matters, would have a profound implication for the person, the family and society at large.

A big challenge for the Church is to identify teachings that no longer speak adequately to people in our present context. The Church should be able to identify what needs to be taught with new and different emphasis. This means that while the Church holds on to its tradition, it is important to rethink deeply the implication of its traditional teachings. *Ecclesia in Africa*¹⁰ has called on Africans to rediscover their roots. This would enable them to become good Christians and, yet, remain authentically African. This exhortation points to the necessity of the church imbibing a local culture, so as to be more effective in the lives of the people it serves. The unity that should exist between the teachings of the Church and the lives of the local people is necessary for the holistic development of the human person. In African society all the important moments in human life were marked by rites of passage. These are important rites for the individual and for society, as they serve for the progressive incorporation of the individual into the life of the community. Lots of time and efforts went into preparing for these rites. Such rites, coupled with their particular celebrations, create a sense of belonging and responsibility in the individual. Such celebrations would be very important for the individual, as a sense of belonging is key in the life of an African. The importance of such a sense of belonging is illustrated by the concept of *ubuntu*. This concept of conveys the idea that a person becomes a person through the contributions of others in his life. It is, therefore, imperative that one should treat other people well as they belong together. To belong to a particular stage in the life of a community means that an individual has people around him or her to share on issues of life. The effect

⁹ My own emphasis.

¹⁰ A Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II to the Church in Africa 1995.

and importance of culture in the life of an African is highlighted by Bishop de Jong at the 1995 African Synod¹¹. He points out that:

The African Church has not integrated traditional rites of marriage with Christian rites and, since many young people today no longer pass through the traditional rites of initiation, couples often act out of ignorance and enter marriage without any real preparation... Through traditional preparation in stages and rites young people used to be prepared and introduced into the marital state with mind and heart disposed." (1995:68).

Bishop de Jong makes a crucial observation which points to the need to marry Christian and traditional rites. If these two can be married successfully the African Christian would not lose the wealth of information and experience that is found in the traditional rites of passage. Couples would enter marriage better prepared and ready for marriage's life-long commitment. *Ecclesia in Africa* states that:

The challenge of inculturation in Africa consists in ensuring that the followers of Christ will ever more fully assimilate the Gospel message, while remaining faithful to all authentic African values. Inculturation of the faith in every area of Christian and human life is an arduous task which can only be carried out with the help of the Spirit of the Lord who leads the church to the whole truth:"(cf Jn 16:13) (1995:36).

According to this post-Synodal exhortation inculturation aims at facilitating the emergence of a holistic person. The African Christian is Christian and African at the same time. The issue of a divided personality is to be solved, where people proclaim their loyalty to Christ on a Sunday, while they practice values at home which they think are against their Christian faith. A Christian message that encompasses the whole person, his or her life and activity, brings about a well-integrated African Christian. The division between African and Christian values has led the society of today undermining its traditional values. Such undermining of traditional African values is further complicated by modernisation. Modern life, which goes together with Westernisation and technology, has made some people to look down on their culture. They leave their own cultures and values to cling to the new and the modern. The role of theology, in this situation, is to highlight the importance of the cultural life of people. Theology should be convincing in

¹¹ In *Ecclesia in Africa*.

showing that it does not happen in a vacuum. By taking the cultural life of people seriously theology is bridging the gap between Christian and African values.

Mwikamba, in Mugambi, states that:

Speculative moral theology is no longer sufficient. Theology must live in the concrete lives of people; it must be grounded in the reflection of the experience of people as they seek to understand and explain the mysteries of life. (1999:85).

Our society is experiencing a moral decline. This is seen in the increase in child abuse, rape, corruption and other forms of crimes. There is a great need for the Church to respond to this situation so as to make this world a better place, especially for women and children. The moral fibre of society cannot be reconstructed unless such renaissance is firmly built on the values imbedded in the culture of society. It would be a futile exercise to try and revive old cultures in an effort to bring them to bear on the present day life of people. This would be romanticising the past. This would be like trying to go back to the past that would be impossible. The past also had its own problems that were not solved then. The moral fibre of society can be reconstructed by re-visiting the values that are found in cultures. These values need to be reclaimed if the moral regeneration of society is to be built on a sure foundational support. Taking a person in his or her totality means accepting that particular person as a cultural entity. Anything that a person does is deeply coloured by who he or she is as a cultural being. To overlook this aspect of the human person will lead to the evangelisation of one dimension of the human person, leaving their deeper dimension unaffected, thus treating the person as an object that can be divided at will. This will result in a person with two personalities, which can cause a lot of guilt and pain. Trying to bring about the moral regeneration of society, by building this reconstruction on the values of society, will enable the African to be a truly African Christian and will help him or her to respond to the challenges of his or her context relevantly. Mugambi echoes this when he says:

An African Christian is challenged to be truly African, and at the same time, truly Christian. The African Christian should surpass the traditionalist in commitment to the African heritage. Such a high standard of faith and practice is possible only if the Christian seeks to thoroughly understand the meaning of African customs and practises, so that the positive values of those customs are retained to become the core of African Christian norms. This,

indeed, has been done in all other cultures where Christianity has taken root firmly over many centuries. The survival of Christianity in Africa will certainly depend on the degree to which African Christians will take seriously the essence of their own heritage, and express their faith in the context of that heritage. (1995:130).

The Second Vatican Council¹² tries to establish a link between culture and the good news of culture. It states that:

There are many links between the message of salvation and culture. In his self-revelation to his people culminating in the fullness of manifestation in his incarnate Son, God spoke according to the culture proper to each age. Similarly the church has existed through the centuries in varying circumstances and has utilised the resources of different cultures in its preaching to spread and explain the message of Christ, to examine and understand it more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in various aspects of the life of the faithful. (1981:962).

Such a link that this document is trying to establish, between culture and the message of salvation, is a challenge to the Church to adapt to its different circumstances, among different people. It is only through such adaptation that the Church would take its roots firmly in the lives of the people and the message of Christ would find a place in their hearts. Such an approach to culture is also a reminder to the Church that theology is always in time. It happens within the context of a lived experience, and never in a vacuum. The role of moral theology is to read and to re-read the mind of Jesus and to attempt to thoughtfully apply it to the context of a people. Such a role becomes even more necessary for moral theology. Jesus was also aware of the primacy of people's lives and situations. He was aware that sensitivity to people's lives and situations comes before rules and regulations. One of his confrontations was the conflict he had with the Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted to maintain a system without regard to, or at the expense of people's lives. In the gospel of Matthew Jesus declares that the gospel is fulfilment of the Hebrew heritage. His aim is to build on the Hebrew culture so as to produce a more perfect law "Do not think that I have to come to remove the Law and Prophets. I have come not to remove but to fulfil them." (5:17).

¹² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* no. 58.

6.2 Zulu Culture

We have earlier discussed Zulu culture in detail. At this point I will look at some of the issues of Zulu culture under the following headings:

- The role of parents
- The role of “advisors”
- The role of the extended family
- Pre-marital relations
- Virginity
- Mutual respect

6.2.1 The role of parents

In a traditional Zulu society parents played a very important role in the upbringing of the child. It was the duty of both parents to ensure that the child is looked after and both parents had their distinct roles to play. Their roles were taken seriously. It was seen as a blessing from the ancestors to have a child. The father played the role of socialising his son into the life of the larger society. He did this by introducing his son into the duties that society expects of him. These duties include looking after cattle and ploughing the fields. By being together at home the father imparted life-skills to his son so as to equip him for his adult life. The father had to ensure that his son would fit into society by encouraging him to be diligent in his work and facilitate the interaction with other young boys. The mother, on the other hand, was to make sure that her daughter would eventually take her place in society as a woman. She did this by introducing her daughter to all the house chores and the duties of a woman. The mother’s duty was to ensure that her daughter fetched water from the river, cooked, did the washing and kept the homestead clean. This was important, as these skills would play a vital role when she wanted to get married. Being together most of the time made it possible for the mother to pass on her knowledge and life-skills to her daughter. It was also the role of the mother to monitor the physical growth of her daughter as to know when she had to be sent to

an appointed teacher. The home was the place where the child got his or her first education about life.

6.2.2 The role of ‘advisors’

In a traditional Zulu setting the parents play a key role in the upbringing of their child until a certain stage of the growth of the child. The role of the parents becomes secondary after the young man’s experience of a wet dream for the first time and the young woman’s first menstruation. A feast would be held in honour the young man or the young woman, as he or she has become a man or woman. This is called *ukuthomba*. It is at this time that the parents appoint *iqhikiza* or *ingqwele*¹³. The role of these advisors is to continue with the human and social development of the young person. These advisors, together with the parents, are responsible for preparing the young person to take his or her rightful place in society. Under the supervision of the advisors, young people are taught how to look after themselves, how to be responsible members of society and how to relate with people of the opposite sex. It is the duty of the advisors to ensure that these young people understand their culture and are disciplined. *Iqhikiza* is involved in the life of the young woman even before she decides to be in a relationship. The young woman would be taught how to avoid young men who might be looking for a relationship from her, how to talk to those who show interest in her and how to keep herself attractive. *Iqhikiza* would have to give permission for her to be in a relationship. After the permission is given the young woman tells the young man to go to the *iqhikiza*. It is the *iqhikiza* who would respond to the young man on behalf of the young woman. It is a sign of bad character for a young woman to accept the proposal of a young man herself. She is also supposed to keep the young man waiting for a long time before she decides to be in a relationship with him. *Ingqwele* schools the young man in good behaviour. This includes teaching the young man how to look after himself, how to keep himself neat and how to look after a young woman. He is reminded that he is now a man. He has to let go of all the childish ways of doing things and to start to behave like a man. He is to be diligent in looking after cattle and ensure that his fields are always well kept. The

¹³ Zulu names for advisors of young people.

relationship that exists between the young person and the advisor is one of openness and transparency, where they discuss taboos, good and acceptable behaviour, where the advisor arranges for the first contact between the young woman and the one who is proposing for a relationship. Above all the advisor has to make sure that the young woman is well behaved, and that she does not get involved in sexual intercourse before *ilobolo*¹⁴ is paid. *Iqhikiza* accompanies the young woman through all the different stages of life, until she is finally incorporated into the family of the husband after marriage.

6.2.3 The role of the extended family and the community

In the traditional society the family and the immediate community played a very important role in the growth of a young person. This is clearly demonstrated by the role that the family and the immediate community played in the rites of passage, from *ukuzalwa* (birth), through *ukuthomba* (adolescence), to *umgcagco* (marriage) until *ukufa* (death). In all these rites the whole community takes part and assists the family in whatever way possible. An example of this is when the young man reaches the stage of *ukuqoma* (establishing a relationship with the prospect of getting married). A white cloth is hoisted at the entrance of the young man's homestead (*ukubekwa kwendwangu emhlophe*). The family starts organising a feast in honour of their son. This flag is an automatic invitation to everybody in the village to help with the preparations for the feast and to attend. Such a support by the family and the wider community instils in the young person a sense of pride and belonging. In this way all the villagers would be involved in the welfare of the young person. It is precisely the role of the family in the life of the young person that assists with the counselling that is needed should a person have problems within his or her marriage. The extended family has many possibilities of choosing who one can confide in, and share with, whatever they wanted to entrust to them.

¹⁴ Bride-price.

6.2.4 Pre-marital relations

I will use this idea to refer to the idea of two people having a loving relationship, supporting and caring for one another, wanting to grow together without exploiting each other through having sexual intercourse. In the traditional Zulu society the young man and the young woman were expected to be together at certain times. When they were together they were expected to do certain things together. Their togetherness was supported by the family and the community. At the beginning of their relationship, when the young woman accepts the proposal for a relationship from the young man, there is *ucu* ceremony. This is a feast where the young man and the young woman exchange gifts as a sign of loving one another. Other young people from the community attend this feast and offer their gifts. This is a way of bringing the two young people together, to have fun without engaging in sexual intercourse. There would also be a time when the young man and the young woman who are in a relationship would have to be alone together. This always happened under the watchful eye of *iqhikiza*. This time together is called *ukubambanisa*, where the young man and the young woman would share their feelings and emotions. This would be a difficult time for both the young man and the young woman, as they would have to be intimate, without having sex. The young man was taught that if he can't control his feelings anymore he should rather masturbate on the thighs of the woman than have sexual intercourse with her. The young man would have to show his power by physically being on top of the woman, without sexual intercourse. Should the young man force himself upon the young woman and have sex with her, he would have to pay a penalty. That would also be a bad reflection on the woman, as she would be seen as a young woman without a strong character. The young man would also have doubts about the integrity of the young woman, as she might be sexually involved with other men in the absence of the husband. In the Zulu traditional society young people were encouraged to be together and there were ways of giving expression to their sexual urges, without direct sexual intercourse. Young men were allowed to masturbate by themselves on the thighs of the young woman.

6.2.5 Virginity

The virginity testing of a young woman was so important in the traditional Zulu society. If a young woman remained a virgin until marriage there was an extra cow that was given to the mother during *ilobolo* as an acknowledgement of bringing up her child in a good way and as a thanksgiving for being a good mother to the young woman. To remain a virgin until marriage was a pride for the individual woman, for the family and for the community. It is a sign of a young woman with good character, who was in charge of her own life and who could control her feelings and emotions. The extra cow that was given in thanksgiving to the mother *inkomo kamama*¹⁵ or the eleventh cow. To ascertain that the young woman is still a virgin there has to be virginity testing. This is done by elderly women who would ascertain that the young woman is still looking after herself properly. The ceremony of *ukuhlolwa*¹⁶ reaches its climax in the annual feast of *uNomkhubulwane*.

uNomkhubulwane is a Zulu female divinity who is responsible for the fertility of the land, animals and people. The virginity testing of a young woman is done on a very large scale, some on weekly basis and some on monthly basis. All the different villages come together annually to celebrate the feast of *uNomkhubulwane*. During this feast all the girls are checked by elderly women who are wearing latex gloves. All those who are found to be virgins are smeared with white clay on their forehead to symbolise virginity. Those who are found not to be virgins anymore undergo a cleansing ritual to purify them. They are then questioned on what had happened, and if need be, the issue is followed up so as to bring the concerned man to justice. He has to pay a penalty. Those who are found not to be virgins anymore, due to rape or incest, are ritually cleansed and are encouraged to come for the feast again, as this loss of virginity is not their own fault. This idea of second virginity encourages some of the young women to continue to try and live chaste lives, to abstain from sexual intercourse outside marriage and to wait for marriage. The pride of a Zulu family is the marriage of a young woman as *intombi*¹⁷. To be an

¹⁵ Literally meaning the mother's cow.

¹⁶ Zulu word for virginity-testing.

¹⁷ Virgin.

intombi until marriage implied self-discipline. It means that the young woman can be a good wife as she can withstand temptations, especially during the absence of the husband. It also means that this young woman would be able to instil good behaviour and discipline in her children. Young women were always aspiring to marry as virgins because of the importance and the prestige that is attached to virginity. Those who were not virgins anymore could marry and their *ilobolo* would be without an extra cow. They could also be married as the second or the third wife in polygamy.

6.2.6 Mutual respect

The mutual respect that should exist between the man and the woman was instilled in the young people of the Zulu traditional society. It was automatically expected of the young woman to respect the young man, especially after the young woman has become a part of the young man's family. A Zulu young man was taught by his teacher that the young woman he has chosen to marry has now become part of his body. This was an important teaching as it guarded against woman abuse and woman battering. The young man was warned that it would be a scandal for him to be seen ill-treating his partner. To abuse his partner in any way would be seen as the young man abusing his very self. This is because the young woman is now seen as part of the young man's body. If a young man shows respect to the young woman it means that he is showing respect to himself. This mutual respect also meant that the man has to do the work that is reserved for men and be faithful in fulfilling his tasks as a provider for the woman and the family. The woman had to fulfil the duties that are reserved for women in the household.

6.3 Values in the Zulu Culture

The role of the parents in the modern Zulu society is to make sure that their children take up their rightful position in society. Both parents now work together for the development of their sons and daughters. It is not the duty of the Father only to ensure the growth of his son. Both parents tend to work together for the advancement of their sons and daughters. Some situations which are prevalent in

the modern times make it impossible for parents to play their role well. An example of this would be a household where the father is absent from home. He is away due to work commitments in big cities. In this case the father would come home at certain intervals, depending upon distances and expenses. This puts a strain on the role that is supposed to be played by the father. The mother now takes on the role of being both father and mother. There is also no extended family in this modern society, where the uncles and grandfather would play the role of the father in the absence of the father. Another phenomenon of the Zulu modern society is the absence of the father because of death. The mother might also be a single parent, as the child was born out of wedlock, and the father might have decided to marry somebody else. It results in a number of young people not knowing who their fathers are. Such an absence of a father has a very deep psychological effect on the child. Some young people live with their grandparents as their mothers might either be away at work, married to somebody else or dead. Most of these deaths are due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is important to note here that in many instances the role of both parents is played by the mother only. This affects the young people as they tend to look for guidance and direction from fellow young people, which in many cases, become misdirection. In the absence of the father the mother becomes the breadwinner, the role model, the teacher and the comforter. In such a situation young men tend to share deeply with fellow young men, while young women would have more chances of being close to the mother and, in some cases, to be open with them with regard to their sexuality. In many cases young women prefer to share about their sexuality with other young people, although this is gradually changing with the new education system and the social environment that encourages parents to talk to their children about sex. There are also instances in the life of the modern Zulu person when the parents are both at work. They then leave the baby to the care of the nanny. In this situation the nanny becomes the parent, and the parents have very little time with the baby. The nanny would look after all the needs of the child until the child is ready to go to school. This situation allows for the presence of parents, with a very minimal influence in the life of their child. The Zulu traditional society highlights the importance of parental involvement in the life of a child. The involvement of both parents in the life of a child ensures that a child would be psychologically secure and balanced.

In the modern Zulu society the role of the advisor is largely discarded. When young people start *ukuthomba* they are already at school. They are now with their schoolteachers most of the time. The teachers at school are supposed to inform these young people about the facts of life, as they are now ready to be adults. The reluctance of teachers to talk about sexuality and the large number of children at schools make it impossible for a proper guidance. Young people now talk to one another about their sexuality and they share ideas. They start having secret relationships, as modern Zulu parents would not approve of a young person having a relationship while still at school. They now communicate by writing letters to one another and they meet secretly. Some young women believe that the advisor, being the link between the young man and the young woman, is the one who eventually establishes a relationship with the partner of the young woman. Instead of helping young people grow in their relationships, these advisors are seen as selfishly manipulating the young people's relationships for their own ends. It is because of the present school system, which has removed the advisors that young people rely on each other for advice and education. It is mainly in the school situation, where one finds young people of different ages in the same class, that sharing about human sexuality happens. For young people this is sex education at its best. It is unfortunate that guidance among themselves is normally inadequate, and therefore not always helpful. The collapse of the structure of advisors is seen as the main cause of sexual promiscuity. Parents expect teachers to take the place of advisors but this does not seem to be the case because of the teacher-child ratio. The role of the advisor in the traditional Zulu society highlights the need for a structure of formation outside the family. This is important, as some parents are still not keen on talking about human sexuality with their children.

In the modern Zulu society the family and the community are not involved in the building of relationships of young people. This is furthered by the culture of political rights. Young people make their own choices of people with whom they want to have a relationship, and they do this privately, making sure that the parents do not know anything about their relationships. They communicate through letter writing and they meet at times and places where nobody else would interfere, and where parents would not find out. These young people ignore the demands of their parents who forbid them from having relationships. These relationships go on in

secret and, some of them, eventually result in unwanted pregnancies. The young man would then deny having fathered the child, as nobody would know what was going on, and no one can hold them responsible for that particular pregnancy. Such secrecy makes it possible for a young person to have a number of sexual partners, as nobody knows who is in a relationship with whom. Some of these relationships are responsible for incest, as some young people might establish relationships with their close relatives without knowing it.

In the Zulu modern society young people have no guidance. Most of them are involved in sexual intercourse because there is no alternative to sex that is given to them. Some would practice masturbation or thigh-sex. Some think that these activities, like thigh-sex or masturbation, are for abnormal people or prisoners. There are no social events anymore for those who are not yet married, for them to be together. Some of the young people try to abstain from sexual intercourse. The power of the media, especially television, becomes too powerful and influential to them, to the point that they decide to give up on chastity. Peer pressure, together with the way they are ridiculed by others, makes it difficult for them to persevere and be chaste.

The young woman in the modern Zulu society has no structure that challenges her to remain a virgin. Some young women see the need of remaining as virgins until marriage. This has to do with their own personal choices. Some of them do not see the need of remaining as virgins as, they believe, that marriage is not guaranteed. They base their argument on the ratio of men to women, which maintains that there are many more women than men in this world. This means for the young women, that many women will never have a marriage partner, especially today when polygamy is not appreciated by society. Some young women believe that if they remain virgins they will never enjoy sexual pleasure, as there is no guarantee of them getting married.

The importance that is attached to virginity in the Zulu traditional society highlights the value of chastity and good behaviour. It encourages young people to live chaste lives and to look after themselves.

A Zulu couple in these modern times still has respect for one another. The values of mutual respect is still ingrained in the lives of the modern Zulu people. The man would fulfil his duties of looking after the woman physically and financially. The woman would show respect to the man by doing her work in the home and looking after the needs of the man. The mutual respect that should exist between the two is sometimes lost due to a modern way of understanding *ilobolo*. Some men believe that by paying *ilobolo* they have bought the woman. Now that the woman is bought she becomes his property. This means that the man can do whatever he likes to the woman and the woman has no say in it. She is now just property. Some men feel that they are superior to their partners just because of the work they do. By being employed and bringing money to the home, for them it means that the man is superior. The woman can, therefore, have no say in matters of the home, especially on money issues, as she does not bring any money into the home. This scenario is rapidly changing as we have many more women getting employed and many men getting retrenched.

The Zulu culture contains a number of values that are important for the upbringing of the child in the family and for his or her eventual socialisation into the community. I will look at the values that are imbedded in the Zulu culture under the following headings:

- Values implied by the respect for parents
- Values implied by the extended family and the community
- Values implied by pre-marital relationships
- Values implied by virginity
- Values implied by fertility
- Values implied by mutual respect

6.3.1 Values implied by the respect for parents

The value that was attached to the important role that was played by the parents in the family is important for the well being of the family and society. Parents played an important role in the birth and the growth of the child. They provided for his or

her physical and spiritual needs. They are always close to their children. This is demonstrated by their awareness of the different stages of growth that their child is experiencing. They would know when to warn their daughter about her imminent menstruation and their son about his imminent wet dream. After this stage it is the duty of the parents to ensure that the child has an advisor who would be responsible for the moral growth of the child and his or her eventual assimilation into society. The parents also have to ensure that the child knows his role in the family by teaching him or her all the work that they have to do in the house. This was an important role of the parents, as society would expect these young people to be responsible members of society. Such responsibility would be seen in the way the man and the woman play their different roles in the family and in society. When the young man was ready to start a relationship and prepare for marriage the parents are the ones who initiated dialogue between their own family and the young woman's family. The parents supported their children through the different stages of marriage, until the young woman was eventually inserted into the family of the young man. Such support and concern by the parents instilled in the young people who are preparing for marriage, a sense of pride and confidence. The value of both parents in the upbringing of the child helped to preserve the idea of family. In the event of the death of one of the parents the remaining parent is expected to re-marry to ensure that the children are looked after properly.

Young people used to talk about their sexuality with their advisors, who had contact with their parents. Today many young people do not share with their parents about their sexuality. Young people see it as a sign of disrespect to talk to their parents about their sexuality. Such a respect for parents is based on the fear of being reprimanded by the parents. The value of parents instilled in the Zulu person the need to honour one's father and mother. It taught them to respect and obey their parents and to give them their rightful place at home and in society. This implies that the Zulu person had, among other things, to look after his or her own parents in their old age. This also led to the advices and precepts of the parents being followed and honoured by their children, especially after the death of the parents. This allowed the parents to lead the family and to be role models for their children and for the community.

6.3.2 Values implied by the extended family and the community

The extended family was responsible for bringing all the individual families together. This was an important thing for the economic and spiritual support of the family. The family and the community were always involved in the life of the individual Zulu person. Everybody belonged to a family and to a community. There was no person who was expected to live an isolated life from the community. A phrase that captures this sense of belonging in the life of a Zulu person in '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*'. This phrase refers to the idea that a person is a person through others. The family and the community are involved when the young person starts to have a relationship. In all the different events and feasts that lead up to marriage it was the responsibility of the family to invite the community to assist with the preparations and to be part of the celebrations. This involvement of the family helped the young people to have a sense of belonging. This also ensured that there would always be support for the young couple in case they experience any difficulties in their marriage. Such an involvement acted as a challenge for the family not to isolate itself from the activities of the community. This ensured that the family was not closed-in on itself but was open to be life giving to the community and was ready to serve it. The value of this practice was the mutuality and the interdependence of people in life. It highlighted the idea of a person living not only for him or herself only. A person is supposed to lend support and show appreciation of others. To be fully human is to belong, to contribute to the well being of others and to receive advice and support from others. To appreciate others and value their gifts in life is to live as a human being. In this situation the Zulu person had to live with others, to learn to be other-centred and also to learn to forgive.

6.3.3 Values implied by pre-marital relationships

The beginnings of pre-marital relationships were occasions of celebration by the community. Every young person was expected to have a relationship at a certain stage of his or her life. A special teacher was even appointed to teach and advise young people on the issues that relate to pre-marital relationships. This shows how

seriously the Zulu society took this stage. This was a stage to prepare young people for marriage. A young person who was deemed mature enough to have a relationship, and did not have it, was ridiculed and even ostracised by the community. People thought that the young person concerned had a problem or was just selfish, as he or she was not prepared to contribute to the well being of society. The importance of the pre-marital relationships of the Zulu people lies in the way they were celebrated and lived out. Pre-marital relationships are supposed to be lived-out according to the directives of society. Any deviation from the directives and norms of society is penalised. Pre-marital relationships highlight and affirm the fact that to have a relationship with a person of the opposite sex is normal and beautiful. It calls for celebration. Such celebrations are important for the well-being and the survival of society. The value that is attached to pre-marital relationships is a self-concern by the community in that it ensures the perpetuation of the group. To educate young people on pre-marital relationships, and to have these relationships controlled, is to ensure that there would always be new life in the community and, hence, the growth of the community. Through these celebrations the Zulu person knows that sexuality is an integral part of being human. It also teaches them about the complementarity of man and woman. The need to prepare for one's stage in life teaches young people to live according to their own stages of growth. The quality of one's life lies in the coexistence with others and in helping them in achieving their goals in life. A person needs others in order to live life fully. He or she needs the knowledge and the experience of others in order to enrich himself or herself and assist one in being prepared for life.

6.3.4 Values implied by virginity

The Zulu society attached great value to the marriage of a young woman as a virgin. This is a sign that the young woman is brought up well by her parents and that she has a good character. She has self-control and is, therefore, disciplined. It is believed that she would transmit this good behaviour and discipline to her own children. This important value is important in showing that sexual intercourse belongs to marriage. If a young woman loses her virginity she is cleansed ritually and there are ways of following up the matter until the perpetrator is penalised by

the family. Virginity instils in the young woman the need to respect her sexuality and to look after herself. Physical virginity was a requirement for a woman for marriage. There are isolated instances where young men were tested for virginity. A young man's virginity was, however, not a requirement for marriage. The structures that were put in place to ensure that young women were tested created an idea in the minds of young people that pre-marital sex is taboo. Young people could enjoy their sexuality in as many ways as possible, but the respect they had for their bodies, and the fear of losing their virginity, instilled in them the value of chastity and discipline. The importance that was attached to virginity highlights the value of chastity and good behaviour. It encouraged young people to live good lives and to look after themselves. Physical virginity highlights the fact that the rightful place for sexual intercourse is in marriage. There is no place for sex before *ilobolo* is paid. This is based on the Zulu understanding that to have sex with a woman is to make her one's wife. It is, therefore, unacceptable to treat a woman as a wife before the payment of *ilobolo*. Marriage is important for a woman to be a wife. Virginity shows the counter-effects of pre-marital sex. The need to wait for sexual gratification is highlighted. Respect for the needs of others, and for their well being, plays a part in ensuring that the Zulu person is disciplined. It makes the Zulu person grow with a sense of other-centredness, which is important in ensuring that sexual gratification is delayed, and it defeats the selfish use of the other person's body.

6.3.5 Values implied by fertility

Every person was supposed to show his or her fertility in marriage. This was an important value in the life of a Zulu person. Without fertility a relationship would end up being unpleasant. The barren woman would be ridiculed and ostracised. The birth of a child was celebrated by the extended family and the community. This gift of life needed to be valued and appreciated. The child who was born had a right to life. Such a life was not to be taken away. This ruled out the possibility of abortion being accepted as a way of terminating the life of an unborn child. Respect for life became a shared value in the Zulu society. Every marriage was entered into with the purpose of generating new life. It would be frowned upon in the Zulu society to see a married couple that wants to continue as husband and wife while, at the same

time, not wanting to generate new life. The birth of a child was seen as a contribution to the well being of society. Human life had, therefore, to be appreciated until its natural end. It is the woman who was always blamed for infertility. Infertility was also seen as an expression of the anger of the ancestors. The woman would have to perform a ritual ceremony and her family would have to communicate with the ancestors and appease them. This would be a way of asking them to restore her fertility.

6.3.6 Values implied by mutual respect

The appointed teacher told the young person about the importance of mutual respect before they could involve themselves in the pre-marital relationships. They were taught about the roles they were to fulfil towards one another, and their responsibilities. Mutual respect, as a value, highlighted the complementarity of the spouses. It showed that the man and the woman need each other if they are to have a good life together. The fact that the woman has become part of the man's body meant that the man had to respect the woman. By respecting her he would be respecting himself. This value also helped to cure the perversion of man that is caused by the belief that he is superior to the woman. Mutual respect meant that the man should remember that his body now belongs to the woman. He is, therefore, not free anymore to do as he pleases with his body. This created a good environment where children could grow in peace and be aware of the dignity of their parents. Although mutual respect did not mean equality in the Zulu way of life, it had its own benefits for the life of the spouses and the roles they played in the family. The importance of mutuality was instilled in the marital union. The husband, however, remained the head of the family and the centre of power, as he had cattle and land, and he provided for the family. This mutuality made the husband and the wife aware of their human dignity and the specific roles they play in order to make their marriage a success.

6.4 A Zulu Christian Theology of Marriage

It is important to have a Zulu theology of marriage. It will assist the Zulu Christians to see the connection between theology and their own way of life. Theology would make sense if the Zulu people can relate to it and see how it is connected to their own way of life. These points of contact, notwithstanding their differences, would facilitate in the Zulu people trying to live a holistic life. To demonstrate this connection between the Zulu way of life and theology is even more important as theology is perceived as being negative towards human sexuality. Shorter highlights this negative attitude when he states that:

Traditional, Christian theology has been suspicious – even hostile- towards the subject of sex, and there is still a great deal of uneasiness when it is discussed. This traditional, Christian attitude is being branded as hypocritical and unhealthy. Man is a sexual being who should be thankful to God for his sexuality- in his relationship with God, his fellow human beings and his environment. Sex is a gift of God and to call it dirty or obscene is a lack of gratitude towards the Creator. The attitude that associates sex with ‘dirt’ is very different from the traditional African attitude that sees sex as a sacred power. Often it is a sign of a sick man to have such unhealthy and negative attitudes towards sex (1977:40).

The Church must portray an authentic Christian sexual morality for Zulu Christians if it has to have an impact in the lives of the Zulu people and affect their way of life. Such a sexual morality has to be instrumental in persuading and attracting Zulu people to appreciate and honour such a God-given gift. It would be crucial for Christian morality to demonstrate the connection that exists between itself and the Zulu way of life. An awareness of such a connection would be key, so as to facilitate the Zulu person’s embracing of Christian sexual morality. Such a connection can be achieved by retrieving the values that are imbedded in the Zulu way of life. This is an important task for moral theology as it would be a sad scenario to have such wealth of knowledge, experience and tradition within the Church, while failing to communicate such treasures in a language that members of the Church understand. A possible result would be the Church, together with such wealth, becoming an obstacle for people in their quest of becoming kingdom people.

Shorter (1977) sees marriage as a sacrament – a mysterious image that somehow brings people into contact with what it represents. He states that “God uses the love of husband and wife, parents and children to redeem and make holy those who are involved in the family, and all who come into contact with it” (1977:6). For him marriage does not become a life-long affair because of a church ceremony. The commitment of the husband and the wife starts a long time before they come to the Church for the ceremony. All that the Church does is to acknowledge and recognise that the man and the woman have discovered a need for a life-long commitment. The Church also acknowledges that their love and union is a sacrament. All that the couple does is to express their love and commitment publicly and officially. Shorter sees the link between God’s love and the African concept of marriage as lying in the fact that “God’s love is not a passive love. It acts and it creates. So does the love of the marriage-sacrament. It bears fruit in children. It heals divisions between people. It brings families together. It builds the community” (1977:07). I will discuss the Zulu Christian theology of marriage under the following headings:

- The value of parents
- The role of the extended family and the community
- The value of pre-marital relations
- *iLobolo*
- Fertility and polygamy
- Virginity
- Mutual respect and equality

6.4.1 The value of parents

The Church has always taught that the family is the miniature Church. It is in the family that the idea of Church is reflected. The sharing, trust and openness that should exist in the Church begins in the family. Parents now become the first catechists for their children. By the way they relate to one another, their forgiveness of each other and the way they communicate with one another, they pass on certain values of life to their children. Children, in turn, will observe and assimilate what

their parents do. Experiences in the home are assimilated by the children unconsciously, and these experiences play a very important role in the lives of the children. Haering affirms this statement when he says:

The child understands the depth and meaning of love through the actions of mother and other people rather than by words. If the children have learnt the language of love, if they have seen how father and mother love each other in the dimensions of their life together, and if they have been allowed to share in the abundance of the love and the word of their parents, then they, in turn, will pass on the language of love to their own children. They are privileged if they have been called into life by that unique and most incarnate word by which their parents have expressed their total mutual self-giving (1979:494).

Such closeness between the parents and the child ensures the well being of the family. It is important for the parents to show such love to their children because without this love and unity the child would probably experience some problems later in life. Such problems stem from the vacuum that is created in the child by the lack of love of the parents. The child would start seeking love in other ways and would get involved in many ways of seeking attention. He or she might get involved in deviant forms of sexual behaviour that might later on lead to unstable relationships. It is in the home that the child needs affirmation in order for him or her to have self-confidence. Parents should be role models for their children, for their emotional stability, discipline, love and trust. If the parents are there to offer such support the child would move on into society from a strong and secure foundation which will make him or her a secure member of society. If trust exists between parents and the child there would be no need for young people to have secret relationships with those of the opposite sex. They would not be afraid of being branded as uncommitted to the Christian call, as they would know that their sexuality is an integral part of their humanity that needs to be allowed to grow. Being fully human, the feelings and cravings of young people for the opposite sex would not abate. They need to have parents whom they can trust. It is therefore important to demonstrate to the Zulu person that the Christian idea of valuing and honouring one's parents is an important value in his or her culture. The commandment of honouring one's parents as found in the Ten Commandments¹⁸ resonates with the Zulu idea of honouring their parents. They are essential for

¹⁸ Exodus 20:12.

offering the child an experience of comfort. The presence of both parents helps in teaching the young person what society would expect of him or her in the future. The bonds that would be created by the parents would give a sense of security to the child. Parents would be essential in passing on the values and customs of society and in supporting the child through all her stages of growth.

6.4.2 The Role of the extended family and the community

Haering (1979) mentions that marriage and family belong together. He sees marriage and family as the living cells of human society and of the Church. They are there to guarantee human culture, growth and the security of the human person. Marriage was instituted by God and it has a design that must be respected. He sees the family as a community of love and a life-giving community. It is in the family that members of the family are able to receive, experience and share love. It is also through the family that members of the family are able to express and share their love in the bigger community. Having a closer look at the family one notes that the modern nuclear family is quite different from the traditional patriarchal family. The traditional family had strong social bonds that united several generations in special solidarity with the clan. Today we have the nuclear family that can be healthy only if it is open to, and united with, other families in shared ideas and commitments.

One of the important roles that can be played by the family is to demonstrate the unity that exists between husband and wife. Haering (1979) believes that marriage, as a sacrament, has to be seen as two persons becoming one flesh, helping each other in their complementarity and reciprocity. Such a unity between husband and wife will help to show the fidelity that exists between Christ and the Church. This sacramental unity between husband and wife would not be for themselves alone. It would also be for the service of community, as the unity between Christ and the Church is for the salvation of humankind.

Wa Lele (1978) believes that Christian faith sees marriage as actualised by the mutual self-giving of one another in all aspects of life. Such a commitment for life demands preparation. He notes that such a preparation was done in a relational

manner. A preparation for family life and sex education was done in a community atmosphere where roles were introduced as part of education. The introduction of roles is essential for the formation of the character of the individual person. He notes that many married people in Africa are unable to adjust to one another. This is because roles and relationships are not defined any longer. In the traditional community everyone's behaviour, obligation and privileges were laid down. Proper guidance is needed if marriage is to be saved. Wa Lele (1978) believes that this is a challenge, for the Church, to respect traditional communities where they are still found. Respecting these traditional communities means respecting the values inherent in them. This would highlight, to the children, that God's love is a covenant, not only for having children, but for the service of mankind.

The Church teaches that the family is a place where the child is physically and spiritually nurtured. It sees the family as a miniature church where children can learn about the values of love and forgiveness, as they experience them from their parents. This unit is open to the service of community. A Zulu theology should encapsulate values like a sense of belonging and mutual support. The family structure continues to thrive and function as a family because of the support from the wider community. In all the different rites of passage the community is there to offer support to the family. The family, on the other hand, becomes involved in the life of the community by offering their support to other families in times of need. In this way the family is keeping the greatest commandment of love that was given by Jesus. If the family values the community and the community is open to the support that is offered by the family, there would be no cause for selfishness and individualism in the life of individuals, as there would be a high degree of interdependence. This would lead to the reduction in the number of homeless people and the lonely. Marriage therefore creates a bond between the family and the community. This is also noted by Shorter when he says:

African customary marriage was not just a private contract between two individuals, it was also an alliance between two family communities. The family community was the African's natural social surroundings. He acted always from within the family community and it was through the family community that he made contact with the outside world. In marrying a wife, a man accepted responsibilities towards another family, and she likewise (1977: 71).

Christian theology and Zulu culture are compatible in the way they view and appreciate the family and the community. Zulu culture places the importance of the community above everything else. The community is seen as being more important than the individual. The survival of the community takes priority over the needs of the individual. During the reign of King Shaka all able men had to be part of the King's regiment for the welfare of the Zulu society. There was no place for individual objections. Christianity, on the other hand, respects the individual in the community. This means that the growth of the community depends upon the freedom that is afforded the individual by the community. Christianity has come to believe in the rights and responsibilities of the individual within society. This is important for the personal growth of the individual. An individual is called to be at the service of the community and there are instances when the individual can be justified for not doing what the society demands of him or her. A Zulu Christian theology should point out this divergence and should challenge Zulu culture to acknowledge the individual rights of members of society.

6.4.3 The value of pre-marital relationships

A Zulu person celebrates his or her sexuality before marriage. From the experience of his first wet dream and her first menstruation the young man and the young woman are given education on how to behave now that they have reached a stage that leads to maturity. They are now led through the different stages of growth under the guidance of the advisor. They celebrate their relationships with those of the opposite sex. It is at this stage that young people are taught that sex belongs to marriage. It is impressed upon them not to have sex prior to marriage. In this avoidance of sex before marriage there is, however, an understanding that masturbation is a good alternative to sex. Young men are advised, even encouraged, to masturbate as a way of avoiding sexual intercourse. According to Zulu people, masturbation helps in the preservation of the physical virginity of the young woman. There was no reference made to masturbation by a woman in my investigations. A Zulu Christian theology has to point out the incompatibility that exists between Christian theology and Zulu culture with regard to masturbation. Christian theology holds that masturbation defeats the end of the marital act. It is

not open to the generation of new life and, therefore, selfish. It also cuts out the relationship aspect of the marital act. It undermines chastity, discipline and the need for self-control. It is a perversion of the marital act. *Humanae Vitae* (1968) sees masturbation as a deviation from the finality of the marital act. It sees the marital act as having two dimensions, namely, the unitive dimension that unites husband and wife, and the procreative dimension, which capacitates the couple for the generation of new life. It is true that there was a time when masturbation was not discussed in the Church. It is only in the development of the theology of human sexuality that the Church started prohibiting masturbation. The Catholic position on this matter remains unchanged, although there is an indication that theologians are revisiting the matter. As much as masturbation helps in the preservation of the physical virginity of the woman, and in the avoidance of sexual intercourse, it is, however, against the ends of the marital act. A Zulu Christian theology would have to appreciate the Zulu pre-marital celebration of sexuality, while pointing out the psychological damage that masturbation is capable of doing in the future marriage of young people. Psychological damage can occur if masturbation takes place as a solitary act, where there is no partner involved. This might be a manifestation of a lack of self-control or a manifestation of a deeper personal problem. For the Zulu person masturbation does not always reflect selfishness as it also happens within a relationship, as opposed to it being a “solitary sin.” If it happens within a relationship this might be a sign of an exercise in discipline, as the one who masturbates might be trying to avoid sexual intercourse with his or her partner.

A Zulu Christian theology would be a rich theology in the sense that it would incorporate its esteem and celebration of the pre-marital relationships in society. This would be an enormous contribution to the traditional theology of the Church as there is not much evident celebration of pre-marital relationships. This theology would encourage, even expect, young people to have relationships with those of the opposite sex prior to marriage. It would expect the young man and the young woman to spend time together, as a way of acknowledging their sexuality. To incorporate some of the customs of the pre-marital relationships into theology would highlight the fact that it is normal to be sexual. A Zulu person would have to find it in this theology that there is an appreciation of human sexuality from an early stage of the young person's life. Such an appreciation and appraisal of human

sexuality would be regulated by the parents. This would be done by following the different stages of initiation into adult life. Such a theology would be helpful in facilitating the much-needed dialogue between parents and their children with regard to sexual matters. The Zulu culture seems to suggest that a young man is incapable of controlling himself with regard to his sexuality. He was allowed, even encouraged, to masturbate because of a belief that he could not control his sexual urges. This suggests that a young man could not celebrate his sexuality without masturbation. There is a divergence between this view and that of Christian theology. Christian theology believes that a young man can celebrate his sexuality fully without having to masturbate. A young man can control his sexual urges and use them in a fruitful manner, for his growth and development as a human being. He can live a full and integrated life without masturbation. In this way a Zulu Christian theology would call a Zulu young man to a chaste celebration of his sexuality. This observation is important for the development of the Zulu culture and the acknowledgement of the man's responsibility with regard to his sexuality.

6.4.4 *iLobolo*

The traditional aim of *iLobolo* is thanksgiving. Its original intention was a token of thanksgiving for the bride. The family of the bride was thanked for the good behaviour of the bride and for her discipline. It was a way of establishing a relationship between the families of the bride and the bridegroom. This token of thanksgiving was to be used in the celebrations of this new unity of the two families as they prepare for the marriage of their children. There would be no marriage without the payment of the bride price. A Zulu Christian theology would need to affirm this practice, in so far as it serves as a token for gratitude to the bride's family and a way of celebrating the new relationship of the two families. This theology should, however, point out the possible inherent abuses of this practice. Some people use this practice as a moneymaking event. The demands that are made are sometimes very high that the family of the bridegroom cannot afford. If this becomes a self-enriching scheme it would leave the new couple poorer. This might also have a bad effect on the future relationship of the bride and the bridegroom. If the bride is seen by her family as a source of wealth the husband might treat her as her property in the future, as he has bought her. A Zulu Christian theology should

work towards an acceptable standard token to avoid *ilobolo* being used as a sale of women. This can be done by having a survey in the Zulu speaking dioceses of the SACBC. After consultation with the Zulu people of this region the bishops can then stipulate a standard token that is acceptable to the people of this particular area. This could be done by determining the standard financial value of a cow, and finding out how many cows people see as acceptable for *ilobolo*.

6.4.5 Fertility and polygamy

The husband and the wife get married in the Zulu society in order to raise children and have a family. A barren wife would lead to an unhappy stay in her new home and she would be ostracised by her new family. For the family of her husband this would justify polygamy. To be alive is to transmit life. Fertility is important as it ensures that the parents do not die. This means that they will always be remembered through their children. A Zulu Christian theology would have to acknowledge the respect for human life that is inherent in the Zulu idea of fertility. This is compatible with Christian theology's right to life. Christian theology values the life of a person as a gift. Christian theology does not, however, believe that marriage is solely for the generation of life. Marriage is a priority of God's blessing¹⁹. From this blessing comes forth fruitfulness. The emphasis in this passage is on the relationship of the man and the woman. This blessing is not conditioned by anything else. The priority of marriage is for man and woman to cleave to one another and become one body. A new relationship is formed in marriage, but first and foremost, for the sake of husband and wife. It is true that the marital act should be open to procreation. Marriage would still be, and should continue to, be valued even when the woman is barren. The unitive aspect of the marital act is still important in the expression of the love of husband and wife. A Zulu Christian theology should affirm the truth that marriage lasts, as long as the spouses are both alive. It would, however, have to illustrate the incompatibility of polygamy with Christian theology. It would have to state that marriage is, by its nature, exclusive and permanent. This is marriage as it was intended by its author. Jesus sees the

¹⁹ Genesis 1:27-28.

permission of divorce as caused by the hard-heartedness of people²⁰. There is no place for polygamy in Christian theology, as the unity of husband and wife does not depend on offspring. Shutte puts it well when he says : “ So marriage has a point that concerns the partners themselves quite apart from any children they may share. The point is simply the personal growth of both. The wedding must be seen as a beginning of a lifetime of exploration of the other.” (2001:95). With such an understanding of marriage husband and wife can see an opportunity to allow their sexual powers to promote and express their desire for personal growth. Polygamy, on the other hand, undermines this desire for personal growth. It also undermines the permanence that was intended by Jesus for this marital union. The availability of the spouses to each other is a condition for their mutual personal growth. Such a total availability to a spouse is undermined by polygamy. This exclusive relationship should be a commitment to one partner for life . The other purpose of marriage is the nourishment of the love of husband and wife. It enhances their communion and their mutuality. It also strengthens the fidelity that the couple has for one another. Such complementarity gives joy and fulfilment to the individual spouses. This shows that marriage can stand alone, even without procreation. This incompatibility between Zulu culture and Christian theology should challenge Zulu culture to see marriage as an exclusive relationship that was intended to last as long as the spouses are still alive.

6.4.6 Virginity

There were times in the history of the Church where virginity for the sake of the kingdom was seen as a state that was superior to marriage. This state of virginity was also termed ‘white martyrdom’. Today the Church sees virginity and marriage as a call from God to different life-styles. It does not exalt virginity above marriage. The Church has many saints who are honoured as virgins. They lived chaste lives for the sake of the kingdom. The exposition of saints in the Church as living their lives for the ‘sake of the kingdom’ undermined the need for people to live chaste lives for the sake of social relationships and life in the community. To make virginity important for the sake of the next life is a good value for the

²⁰ Matthew: 19:3-8.

spirituality of a person. There is a need now to balance this other-worldliness, with the theology of virginity for this life. An emphasis needs to be made for the importance of virginity prior to marriage, for a mature relationship and for a good self-concept. This will necessitate that theology, in trying to highlight the importance of virginity for this life, should show the normal life of the virgin saints, how they struggled with their sexuality and their failures too.

The importance of virginity among the Hebrews is highlighted by Collins, quoting *Summa Theologiae*, III, 68,11, when he states that:

The virginity of a bride was highly prized among the descendants of the Hebrews. In this respect the words of Philo are significant: "We, the descendants of the Hebrew, have excellent customs and laws. Other nations allow their young men of fourteen years of age to go to prostitutes and other women who sell their bodies. But according to our laws, all hetairas are condemned to die. Until there can be legitimate relations, we do not have intercourse with a woman. Both parties enter marriage as virgins (1986:186).

One of the ways of destroying one's virginity is through masturbation. Masturbation is sometimes called solitary sin, or onanism, which refers to the avoidance of conception in sexual unions. People like Haering (1996) see masturbation as contradicting the natural finality of sex, which is directed to the partner of the opposite sex. It is theologically incorrect to encourage young people to masturbate. As earlier discussed, *Humanae Vitae* (1968) sees masturbation as a deviation from the finality of the marital act. The marital act is seen as having two dimensions, namely, the unitive dimension, which unites husband and wife, and the procreative dimension, which capacitates the couple for the generation of new life. There is a need to form young people to have other ways of enjoying each other's company without having sex. It is true that there was a time when masturbation was just not discussed in the Church. It is only in the development of the theology of human sexuality that the Church started prohibiting masturbation. This implies a need for the Church to educate and encourage young people to do things together with their partners that enhance their growth and their trust of one another. This positive alternative will give direction to the longings of young people and help them to channel their energies towards worthwhile activities. This would be a practice in concentrating on loving the other, developing friendships, mutual understanding and

getting to know each other deeper. Young people will now be convinced that there is much more to a relationship than sex. Such an approach would be useful and needed in counteracting the need to have secret relationships, which are the main cause for so many unwanted pregnancies, thus enhancing spiritual and psychological growth. This is a huge responsibility that demands adequate knowledge, maturity and decisiveness from the young person. For Haering (1996) virginity is a witness to the dynamic dominion of God's love and the total submission to His undivided love. Virginity reminds the Church that the terrestrial is not the ultimate reality. This value of virginity that is undermined by the print and electronic media, is a value that is an exercise in virtue and self-control. It is not only a call for those who want to live consecrated lives. It is a call for every person, in all walks of life.

A Zulu Christian theology would have to note the incompatibility that exists between the Zulu traditional approach to virginity and the Christian approach. This traditional approach concentrated a lot on physical virginity. It would be essential that the Zulu theology goes further than that, and teaches the value of spiritual virginity. This would include values like purity of mind and heart, chastity and single-mindedness in one's way of life. The importance of this spiritual approach lies in the fact that it would be a value for every member of society. Both male and female would be able to live it out. It is unacceptable that physical virginity is expected of women only. To demand virginity from the woman only makes women feel that they live chaste lives just for the sake of the edification of men. This approach would also help to avoid the pressure that is put on women for physical virginity. Such a demand on women is uncalled for as some women lose their virginity through no fault of their own. Spiritual virginity would apply to both men and women, and hence an equal treatment of both men and women. The idea of second virginity would feature more prominently. It would convey the idea of forgiveness and the need to make a fresh start in one's life. The idea of a young woman, losing her virginity, and still having a chance to live a chaste life again, is a powerful symbol of a God who forgives all the time, and gives His people a chance of repentance. A young woman should never be made a wife before *ilobolo* is paid. Virginity illustrates the need for a total and open commitment for sexual intercourse to have its proper meaning. Such a demand for virginity would highlight the beauty

of procreation in marriage. Procreation would be worth waiting for, as it would seal the love of husband and wife. It would also be a sign of their total self-giving to one another. Such a self-giving would have trust and fidelity as its basis. All sexual activities would occur between the husband and the wife and there would be no place for masturbation, or any other forms of sexual activities that would exclude a partner of the opposite sex.

Virginity is highly prized by both Zulu culture and Christian theology. It is seen as highlighting the importance of integrity and chastity. A Zulu Christian theology would need to appreciate the Zulu notion of virginity and challenge it to a higher ideal, which are not only physical virginity but spiritual virginity also. This would be a way of life that is concerned with chastity as encompassing one's whole existence.

6.4.7 Mutual Respect and equality

The mutual respect that should exist between husband and wife is based on the fact that the two have now become one. Collins (1986) exposes the social situation of 1st and 2nd century Palestine. He shows how women were treated in that society. He shows that women were the property of their husbands. They also had limited access to the temple precinct. It was a general attitude of the time to consider women as inferior to men. Such an attitude of the time is reflected in the people's attitudes to Jesus' ministry to women. Jesus' ministry was considered as a scandal. This is indicated in Simon's utterance "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is, who is touching him, for she is a sinner"²¹. The disciples of Jesus are amazed that he is talking to a sinner. Above all, they could not understand how Jesus would spend time talking to a woman. Jesus shows a totally different attitude to the woman. He shows an openness towards friendship with women. Jesus shows a willingness, and a readiness to work with women. This is also illustrated by the friendship that existed between Jesus, Martha and Mary²². The willingness of Jesus to work with women is shown by allowing women to accompany him on his journeys and to provide for him and his

²¹ Luke 7:39.

²² Luke 10:38-42.

disciples²³. Jesus does not end by just accepting women in his ministry. He goes on and acknowledges that a woman is also a hero in the proclamation of the news of the kingdom. In the proclamation of the kingdom, as shown by the parable of the lost coin, a woman is shown as essentially equal to a man. She is put in the parables of Jesus as one who can convey the message of salvation to others. The love of a couple that incorporates respect and equality is closer to the attitude of Jesus to women. This is also in line with Feminist theology, which believes in the equality between man and woman.

The Church teaches that man and woman complement each other in marriage. They are important for the salvation of each other. Haering²⁴ states that:

We cannot speak on the human person without giving proper attention to the bi-polarity or reciprocity between man and woman in the whole of creation and redemption. The reciprocity is fundamental and presupposes, by necessity, equality in relational diversity. Only in their mutuality can they find and communicate to each other the fuller truth. Wherever equality is denied in this relationship, truth is jeopardised (1979:498).

Haering makes it clear that man needs woman as an equal in order for them to reach their goal of salvation. He goes on to mention that whenever this equality is denied man ceases to be a fitting image of God. A domineering man would cease to be a fitting image of God in a family, as he will cause a lot of frustrations for the woman. Such frustrations will be perpetuated in their children. A happy and well-adjusted mother will show a selfless love to their children, while an unhappy parent will find satisfaction through rejecting the child or loving the child possessively or destructively. This is further demonstrated by Paul's letter to the Ephesians where he speaks about it being necessary for the wife to be obedient and for the husband to love²⁵. The different roles that the husband and the wife play in society should not be seen as alluding to inequality. The roles that they play should be seen as a way of complementing each other. It should always be kept in mind that both man and woman are created in the *Imago Dei*²⁶. This means that they are both endowed with intelligence and will. They can also exercise their freedom as an expression of

²³ Luke 8:2-3.

²⁴ Quoting Wojtyla's *Amour et Responsabilite* (1965)

²⁵ Ephesians 5: 22-33.

²⁶ Image of God.

their humanity. Having intelligence and will makes both man and woman spiritually equal from the point of view of their humanity. The African Synod deplored all African customs and practices that deprive women of their rights and the respect that is due to them. To affirm the fundamental equality of man and woman enriches their complementarity.

There are many ways of showing respect in the Zulu society. Examples of this would be a young man who is supposed to remove his hat when talking to an elderly person, a person kneeling when asking something from their parents and sitting down when talking to an older person about an important issue. It is from the Zulu idea of mutual respect that the Zulu theology can develop the idea of equality between them. As the woman has become part of the man's body, the man has also become part of the woman's body. This would be the basis of the equality that should exist between the husband and the wife. This would lead to both the husband and the wife having equal rights and equal say on each other's bodies. Such an equality between husband and wife would help in avoiding the perversion that stems from the conviction that one partner is superior to the other.

A Zulu Christian theology would have to show that the mutual respect that is taught by Zulu culture is not equality. This Zulu notion of mutual respect should develop into equality. As Zulu culture believes that the woman has become part of the man's body, it should also acknowledge that the man has also become part of the woman's body. This puts both husband and wife on the same par as far as they need each other in fulfilling their tasks as husband and wife, and as father and mother, and it highlights their complementarity. Shutte sees this complementarity as alluding to responsibility in different ways. He says: "The complementarity of genders does not mean that the woman is responsible for the home and the man for the work. Both are responsible for both work and home but in different ways to be decided by mutual agreement." (2001:98). A Zulu Christian theology should stress the fact that the man and the woman become one in marriage. They become part of each other. Although they play different roles they are essentially equal by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God. A fuller image of God is reflected in the unity and the mutual acknowledgement of the equality of both husband and wife.

6.5 Catechesis on Zulu theology

In developing a catechesis that will convey a positive image of Christian sexual morality to the Zulu people it is important that the church looks first at the following issues.

- The role of parents
- Religious formation
- Youth groups
- Small Christian Communities
- Virginity
- Marriage

6.5.1 The Role of Parents

The relationship that exists between the parents and the child shapes the type of person that the child will be in society. If the parents are open and loving towards the child, he or she would be confident and secure in his or her relationships. If the parents do not have a healthy relationship with the child it is possible that the child would be abusive and unreliable in his or her relationships as he or she will be trying to make up for the love that he or she did not experience as a child. It is therefore important to remind parents that they are responsible for the social and spiritual well being of their children. As they brought them into this world it is their responsibility to ensure that their children take their place in society as confident and secure men and women. To teach children about faith and life skills should start within the family. They should be taught and groomed in the comfort of their home first, before they attended some catechesis outside the home. It is also important that parents continue to involve themselves even when the child is being catechised by somebody else. This will ensure that the parents journey with the child through the different stages of his or her life. Such accompanying of the child would instil pride and a positive self-image, as he or she becomes aware of the interest that the parents show in him or her and in his or her work. To simply

entrust one's child to someone else for catechesis, without first teaching the child at home, would be futile.

6.5.2 Religious Formation

Parishes have groups of confirmed adults who are responsible for the spiritual and social formation of Catholics. There are those who are still learning about the Catholic faith, those who want to be baptised or confirmed or those who are preparing themselves for marriage. This group of confirmed adults, whose duty it is to impart the faith to others, is called The Religious Formation Team or The Catechetical Formation Team. I suggest that there should be an open and transparent relationship between the parents and those in the Religious Formation Team. Such a relationship would ensure that the parents know what is happening with their children. It would, in fact, be more effective if the parents can choose those who are to impart faith to their children. Such a parental involvement would show the importance that the parents attach to the spiritual and human formation of their children. In this way parents become part of the growth of their children and they can now better understand and appreciate the different phases that their children are going through. This would also enable parents to further discuss catechetical issues with their children. They can also share with the teacher about what they think their children need in order to help them in life. The ideal situation would be when parents can eventually teach catechesis in their own homes, and meet occasionally with the bigger group to share on their progress. In this way the teachers in the Religious Formation Team would be taking the place of the advisor who existed in the traditional Zulu society. This would include advice on sexual matters to the same extent that the advisor did.

6.5.3 Youth Groups

The Church has youth clubs or youth groups that encourage young people to be together and to share on particular issues for their own advancement in life. It is in such groups that young people grow in their skills of communicating with one another with respect and being sensitive to one another. It is important for such a

youth group to have a youth leader or sponsor to assist them in their planning and their formation. This youth leader would be part, and at the same time, not part of the youth as he or she would be older than them. He or she would be involved with them in their activities and guiding them on certain issues. The presence of such a youth leader is important, as he or she would be forming a link between the youth and their parents. It is in such leadership that there would be a level of trust between the youth and their leader which would make it possible for the young people to share on certain issues which they might not feel comfortable sharing with their parents. This creates a connection between the youth leader and advisor who was responsible for the sexual and social growth of the young person in the traditional society. With a certain level of trust and openness those young people can talk about sexual matters, and with the presence of a youth leader, can be guided properly.

6.5.4 Small Christian Communities

The Church in the SACBC²⁷ region has rediscovered the value of community life in recent years in its pastoral plan. In the 1990s the SACBC introduced a pastoral plan for Southern Africa, entitled “Community Serving Humanity.” This pastoral plan helped the Church to move from the ‘crowd church’ towards the Small Christian Communities. This is a way of discovering the beauty of community. People who participate in the Small Christian Community participate at a deeper level, as they know one another and they are a smaller group. It is in such groups they tackle and deal with issues that affect them directly. Shorter (1977) sees the individual Christian as finding greater fulfilment in these communities. He sees these communities as highlighting the fact that human life is essentially something that is shared with others. The Church, therefore, must teach and highlight the beauty of a shared life, in the face of the individualism that is so rampant today. Such communities would serve for the communal celebration of all the rites of passage that was communally celebrated in the traditional Zulu society. The Small Christian Communities highlight the importance of community in the life of an individual Christian. It is in becoming a Christian that an individual is tasked with being of

²⁷ Southern African Bishops Conference.

service to others and to show love, which is the central message of the gospel. By working together in the Small Christian Communities the individual Christian discovers what it means to belong to the family of the Church and to be of service to their immediate community.

6.5.5 Virginit

Discussing virginity is a delicate matter today. It is a concern of the feminists that virginity is expected, and in fact, demanded from women only. This is an important issue that immediately brings in the question of power. The man who has power in the family, and in society, expects the woman to be a virgin, while he can do what he likes with his sexuality. This attitude also raises the question of the stereotype, which holds that a woman becomes a virgin, not for herself, but for the edification of a man. In the Church's teachings on the importance of living a chaste life, and therefore of virginity, it is important to bear such stereotype in mind so as to avoid over-stressing the importance of virginity. It is also important to be sensitive in this issue as some women lose their virginity due to rape, incest or child abuse. The economic climate of poverty and joblessness today can drive women to ply their trade with prostitution. Over-stressing the importance of virginity might also encourage young women to involve themselves in oral sex, masturbation and even anal sex. This might be for them sexual gratification, while they still want to maintain their virginity. They would engage in other sexual activities, as long as they can avoid the penetration of their female organs by a male organ. This might create a bigger problem, which might worsen the HIV/AIDS scenario today. I propose that the Church continues to uphold the values that are imbedded in the virtue of virginity. These are values like self-control and commitment to the message of the Gospel. The importance of virginity for sexual purity and holiness should be upheld. The Church should, however, on the other hand, show the importance of virginity for the sake of marriage and a good life. It should show that virginity is a virtue that instils discipline, self-control and pride in the human person. To those who have lost their virginity it is important for the Church to teach the concept of second virginity. This refers to those who have lost their virginity;

encouraging them to continue to try to live chaste lives .In such an approach no one is left out or ostracised when talking about virginity.

The feminists see virginity as a tool in the hand of a young woman that she used for political defiance. They maintain that a young woman remained a virgin as a way of avoiding to be forcefully married to a Roman King. It is important for the Church to teach that virginity is important for men. It is a call to both men and women to be self-disciplined and to have control over themselves. The beauty of virginity is also for this life, as it is for the next life.

6.5.6 Marriage

In this long process of marriage the Marriage Preparation Team would be involved. I would suggest the lessons should not only be for those who are engaged. It should be open to those who are already married and want to renew their marriage vows. Young people, who are not even thinking about marriage, should be invited to attend. This would help them in having an idea of what marriage is about. It would also encourage those who are still searching for marriage partners, and those who just want information on marriage, to take part in these lessons. This is a way of getting the Church community to be involved in the life of the individual. This would also challenge those who still want to keep their relationships secret to come out and receive assistance on their way to marriage. These marriage preparation lessons, together with the Small Christian Community, facilitate the long process of marriage and the involvement of the family and the community.

6.6 CONCLUSION

It is true that human sexuality belongs to the sphere and competence of morality but such a connection does not bring about the beauty of human sexuality. Morality tends to have an underlying judgmental tone towards human sexuality. This leads to a tendency to see sexual sins as the worst of sins. It is important to see that Jesus treats all sins in the same way. In the parable of the woman who was caught in adultery Collins (1986) sees Jesus as treating sexual sin and any other sin in the

same way²⁸. He states that for Jesus sexual sin is a sin among other sins. Human sexuality that can be treated without any moralising can be attractive and can lead to people appreciating it more fully.

A liberating theology is one that is vigilant and contextual. It does not want to teach what the teacher taught. Its main focus is to interpret theology in different contexts, trying to discern what the Word of God is saying in the here and now. Lawler (1985) holds that the Christian life involves a morality, a special way of life. He says "Christian life is not primarily the following of a moral code. It is, most fundamentally, living as adopted sons and daughters of God" (1985:66).

Ryan, in Bate (2003), believes that African tradition, together with Judeo-Christianity can lead people to a joyful and proud celebration of their human sexuality. In his paper he makes the following points, which are crucial if the Church is to portray a positive and attractive notion of sexuality. He states that:

1. Our sexuality is not an 'attribute' that we should fear and ignore as much as possible, but is a beautiful integral part of the human reality.
2. The human body- sexuality and all- is the culmination of God's creating love, which created us in his own image and likeness.
3. There is more to 'love' – the love which Christ made the corner stone of his new commandment – than feeling and attraction.
4. The attractions of our bodies and emotions must be integrated into our intellectual convictions and beliefs.
5. The human expression of each kind of relationship has evident boundaries, the observance of which is in the interests of society at large and in the ultimate interest of the persons concerned.
6. The joy of overt genital sexual activity is appropriate only when a permanent total commitment has been made. For us Catholics that commitment is found in Christian marriage (2003: 11).

²⁸ John 7:53-8:11

A challenge for the Church is to proclaim and teach a positive and life-giving human sexuality, as Regan rightly puts it:

Renewed moral theology should, moreover, mirror the positive qualities of the Gospel message, the Good news of salvation in Christ. The resurrection of Jesus means that sin has already been conquered and that a new joyful life awaits the believer. Why then concentrate on sin and its avoidance? God does not invite man to no-thing, to not-do things. He invites man to love him and one's fellow men. The moral values of justice, truth, or chastity inherent in concrete situations should be seen as opportunities to love God to whom one responds in seeking value. Universal negative prohibitions (for example, against adultery) should be presented as formulations protecting an underlying positive value (1971:43).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aquinas, T. 1928. *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas 3rd Part (supplement) qq.xxxiv-lxviii*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd.

Avvento, G.P. 1982. *Sexuality, A Christian View: Towards Formation of Mature Values*. Mystic: Twenty- Third Publications.

Ayrinhac, H.A. 1952. *Marriage Legislation In The New Code of Canon Law (2nd ed)*. New York: Benzinger Brothers, Inc.

Banzikiza, C.R. 1995. *The Pastoral Approach to African Traditional Values of Fecundity and Marriage*. Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications.

Bate, S.C. in Keenan, J.F. (ed) 2000. *Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention: Differences in Confessional Advice in South Africa*. PP212-221. London: International Publishing Group (LTD).

Berglund, A. 1976. *Zulu Thought-Patterns And Symbolism*. London: C. Hurst & Company.

Bouscaren, T.L. 1958. *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company.

Brady, J. 1951. *"Princes of His People" – The Story of Our Bishops 1800 - 1951*. Rivonia: Catholic History Bureau.

Brain, J. 1997. *50th Year Golden Jubilee 1947-1997 .South African Catholic Bishops Conference*. Pretoria: Khanya House.

Brown, C. (Ed) 1976. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Vol II.* Devon: The Paternoster Press.

Buijs, J.A. (Ed). 1985. *Christian Marriage Today: Growth or Breakdown? Interdisciplinary Essays. Vol 16.* New York: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Byamugisha, G. (et al) 2002. *Journeys of Faith: Church-based Responses to HIV and AIDS in three Southern African Countries.* Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Cahill, L. 1983. *Between the Sexes: Foundations for a Christian Ethics of Sexuality.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Cahill, L. 1998. *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics.* Cambridge: University Press.

Casley, D.J. 1987. *Data Collection in Developing Countries (2nd ed.).* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Clerici, L.A. (Ed) 1995. *A Reader in Early Patristics.* Gweru: Mambo Press.

Code of Canon Law (With Index) 1983. London: Harper Publishers

Coleman, G.D. 1992. *Human Sexuality: An All-embracing Gift.* New York: Alba House.

Collins, R.F. 1986. Quoting Summa Theologiae, III, 68, 11. *Christian Morality: Biblical Foundations.* Indiana: University of Nortre Dame Press.

Connell, F.J. 1953. *Outlines of Moral Theology.* Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company.

Curran, C.E. 1977. *Themes in Fundamental Moral theology.* London: University of Nortre Dame Press.

Curran, C.E. (Ed) 1993. *Readings in Moral Theology No. 8: Dialogue About Catholic Sexual Teaching*. New Jersey: Paulist Press.

Curran, C.E. 1978. *Issues in Sexual and Medical Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

De Haro, R. 1993. *Marriage and the Family in the Documents of the Magisterium: A Course in the Theology of Marriage*. San Fransisco: Ignatian Press.

Delaney, J. (Ed) 1958. *The Catholic Viewpoint on Marriage and the Family*. New York: Hanover House.

De Vinck, J. (translator) 1962. *The Works of Bonaventure. vol II*. New York: St. Anthony Guild Press.

Dhlamini, A.M. (n.d). *Customs, traditions, etc. of the Zulus*.

Dowling, K. 2001. *The Church's teaching and Humanae Vitae*. 22 July 2001: (Unpublished).

Drury, R. (Ed) 2001. *The Furrow : Condoms, Catholics and HIV/AIDS Prevention* by Fuller, J.D. & Keenan J.F. Vol. 52 No. 9, Sept. 2001 PP 459 – 467.

Drury, R. (Ed) 2002. *The Furrow : Rethinking Sexual Morality*. Dorr, D. Vol. 53 No. 12. Dec. 2002 PP 651 – 657.

Flannery, A. (Ed) 1981. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and the Post-Conciliar Documents*. England: Fowler Wright Book Ltd.

Fresen, P. 2001. *The Response of a South African Woman Theologian on the Position taken by Bishop Dowling on Condom use as a means of Preventing Disease and Death*. (Unpublished).

Genovesi, V.J. 1987. *In Pursuit of Love: Catholic Morality and Human Sexuality*. Southampton: The Camelot Press.

Genovesi, V.J. 1994. *In Pursuit of Love: Catholic Morality and Human Sexuality*. Minnesota: A Michael Glazier Book.

Gonsalves, M.A. 1985. *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practise*. Toronto: Times Mirror / Mosby College Publishers.

Grace & Truth: A Journal Of Catholic Reflection. Vol. 10 No. 3-4 April 1991.
Ecclesiastical Authority In Moral Matters with special reference to Sexual Ethics
by Hartin, P.J. PP 111-131

Gula, R.M. 1989. *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality*. New York: Paulist Press

Haering, B. 1966. *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity Vol III*. Westminster: The Newman Press.

Haering, B. 1969. *Road To Relevance*. New York: Alba House.

Haering, B. 1979. *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral theology for Priests and Laity. Vol 2*. Middlegreen: St. Paul Publications.

Haering, B. 1981. *Free And Faithful In Christ: Moral Theology For Priests and Laity. Vol III*. Middlegreen: St. Paul Publications.

Hirmer, O. 2000. *Pastoral Letter on HIV/AIDS*. (Unpublished.)

Hlengwa, B.C. 1992. *Pastoral View of Christian Marriage in Relation to Zulu Customary Marriage in the Changing Context of South Africa*. (Submitted in partial

fulfilment of the requirements of the Th.M. Degree (Thesis). Cambridge: Weston School of Theology..

Hume, B. in The Times, 1987. Time for a Moral Renaissance. 7 January.

John Paul II 1994. *Letter to Families from John Paul II*. Pretoria: V&R Printing Works.

John Paul II, 1995. *The Church In Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Jurgens, W.A. 1979. *The Faith of the Early Fathers Vol. III*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press.

Kanyadago, P.M. 1990. *Evangelising Polygamous Families: Canonical and African Approaches*. Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications.

Kelly, G.A. 1962. *The Catholic Youth's Guide to Love and Love*. London: Robert Hale Ltd.

Kelly, K.T. 1998. *New Directions in Sexual Ethics: Moral theology and the Challenge of AIDS*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.

Killian, J. 1989. *Form and Style In Theological Texts: A Guide To The Use of Harvard Reference System*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Kizito, J. 2001. *Forms of Outercourse*. SACBC National Youth Desk: Khanya House. (Unpublished).

Krige, E. 1981. *Essays on African Marriage in Southern Africa*. Kenwyn: Juta & Company Ltd.

- Lamula, P. 1963. *Isabelo SikaZulu*. Pietermaritzburg: City Printing Works (PTY.) Ltd.
- Lawler, R. 1985. *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation and Defence*. Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Inc.
- Mackin, T. 1989. *The Marital Sacrament: Marriage in the Catholic Church*. New York: Paulist Press.
- McCormick, R. 1981. *Notes On Moral Theology: 1965 through 1980*. Washington: University Press of America Inc.
- McDonagh, E. (Ed) 1963. *The Meaning of Christian Marriage*. Dublin: The Furrow Trust.
- McGarry, C. (Ed) 1995. *What Happened at the African Synod?* Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Monette, D.R. 1989. *Applied Social Research: Tool for The Human Services (2nd ed)*. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.
- Msimang, C.T. 1975. *Kusadliwa Ngoludala*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter (Pty) Ltd.
- Mugambi, J.N.K. 1995. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*. East African Educational Publishers Ltd: Nairobi.
- Mugambi, J.N.K. & Nasimiyu-Wasike, A. (Eds). 1999. *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity: A Challenge for African Christianity. Changing Morals In Africa* by Mwikambi, C.M. PP 83-105. Nairobi: Acton Publishers
- Munro, A. (Ed) 2001. *Grace and Truth: A Journal of Catholic Reflection HIV/AIDS in Africa* vol 18 no.2. Dowling, K. – *The Church's Response To AIDS* PP 16 –

27. Viljoen, J. – *AIDS: How Is The Church Responding* PP 62 – 66. *Proposed Guidelines for the Catholic's Church Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Southern Africa* PP 67-68.

Neuner, J & Dupuis, J. (Eds) 1986. *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*. London: Collins Liturgical Publications.

Ngubane, H.S. in Krige, E. J & Comaroff, J. L. (1981). *Essays on African Marriage in Southern Africa*. PP 84-95. Cape Town: Juta & Company Limited.

Ngwane, Z. 1997. *ZULU*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.

Okolo, G.G. 1994. *The African Synod: Hope for the Continent's Liberation*. Eldoret: AMECEA: Gaba Publications.

Pelikan, J. (Ed) 1958. *Luther's Work: : Lectures on Genesis 1-5 Vol I*. Saint Lois: Concordia Publishing House.

Peschke, K.H. 1986. *Christian Ethics - Moral theology in the Light of Vat II: Vol. I: General Moral Theology*. Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale.

Peschke, K.H. 1985. *Christian Ethics - Moral Theology in the Light of Vat II: Vol. II: Special Moral Theology*. Alcester: C. Goodliffe Neale.

Phiri, I.A. 2003. *Virginity-Testing: A Perspective of African Women Theologies*. (An unpublished paper delivered on 20 June 2003 at the Theological Society of South Africa at the University of Pretoria: Hammanskraal Campus.)

Pietermaritzburg Dominicans 2001. *The Sacredness Of Life: A Catholic Opinion on Condoms and AIDS*. Press Statement. 14/08/2001.

Pope Paul VI 1968. *On Human Life: Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI "Humanae Vitae"*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

Pope Pius XI, 1957. *Christian Marriage: Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI 'Casti Connubii'*. London : Catholic Truth Society.

Pope Pius XII 1959. *MAN: Extracts from the Teachings of Pope Pius XII*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Quasten, J. (No Date). *Patrology Vol II; The Ante- Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*. Westminster: The Newman Press.

Rahner, K. (Ed) 1967. *The Teaching of the Catholic Church*. New York: Pauline Fathers.

Rahner, K. 1973. *Theological Investigations vol X*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

Rassool, M. 2001. *Nuns take Bishops to Task On Condom Stance*. Southern Cross, August 29 – September 4 P3.

Reader, D.H. 1966. *Zulu Tribe in Transition*. Manchester: University Press.

Regan, G. 1971. *New Trends in Moral Theology: A Survey of Fundamental Moral Themes*. New York: Newman Press.

Rotelle, J.E. (Ed) 1998. *Answers to the Pelagians. The Works of St Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*. New York: New City Press.

Rotelle, J.E. (Ed) . *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Marriage and Virginity 1/9*. New York: New City Press.

Ryan, C. in Bate, S.C. (ed) 2003. *Responsibility in a Time of AIDS: A Pastoral Response by Catholic Theologians and AIDS Activists in Southern Africa*. PP1-29. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

SACBC 1988-1990. *The Bishops Speak Vol. V. Pastoral Statement of the SACBC on AIDS*. Jan 1990 PP 129-136. Pretoria: Khanya House.

SACBC 1981- 1985. *The Bishops Speak. Pastoral Letter of the Diocese of Bethlehem on Family Life*. March 1983. PP 46-48. Pretoria: Khanya House.

SACBC 1967-1980. *The Bishops Speak. Vol. II. Pastoral Directive on Family Planning*. 4 Feb. 1974. Pretoria: Khanya House.

Sapsford, R., and Jupp, V. (Ed) 1996. *Data Collection and Analysis*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Sarantakos, S. 1998. *Social Research (2nd ed.)*. London: MacMillan Press.

Schroeder, H.J. 1941. *Canons and Decrees of The Council of Trent: Original Text With English Translation*. London: B. Herder Book Co.

Shorter, A. 1977. *Christian Family Power in Africa. Spearhead no. 48*. Nakuru: Nakuru Press.

Shorter, A. (et al.) 1977. *African Christian Marriage*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Shutte, A. 2001. *Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Sisters for Justice . 2001. *Continuing the Conversation*. Press Statement 16/08/2001.

Slater, J. 1999. *Theological Workshop on AIDS: Spirituality of Sexuality*. Durban : Glenmore Pastoral Centre . December 1999 . (Unpublished material.)

- Slattery, H. 2002. *HIV/AIDS: A Call to Action*. Nairobi: Paulines Publication House.
- Tedder, V. 1968. *The People of A Thousand Hills*. Cape Town: C.Struik.
- The Southern Cross 2001. *Message Of Hope*. (Newspaper) 8-14 August 2001. P3.
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church* .1995. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Thomas, D.M. 1983. *Christian Marriage: A Journey Together*. Delaware: Michael Glazier Inc.
- Thomas, G. (translator) 1968. *St.Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae vol 43 Temperance*. Great Britain: Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited.
- Treacy, G.C. 1939. *Five Great Encyclicals*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Treacey, G.C. 1942. *Arcanum Divinae Sapientia; Christian Marriage: Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII with Discussion Club Outline*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Vilakazi, A. 1962. *Zulu Transformations: A Study of The Dynamics of Social Change*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- wa Lele, B. 1978. *Family Spirituality in Africa*. Nakuru: Nakuru Press.
- Wales, S. (ed.) 2003. *Grace & Truth : A Journal of Catholic Reflection*. Vol 20 No. 1 Mc Ainsh ,R. *Formation for Healthy Sexuality: Part 1* PP58-65..

Interviews:

- Biyase, N. 2003. Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba

Gwala, S. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Jili, W. 2003..	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Khanyile, M. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Malinga, J. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Malinga, M. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Mbatha, N. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Mdletshe, N.J. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Mswane, N. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Ndlela, F. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Ndlela, S. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Ngobese, N.P. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Ngubane, N.E. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Zondi, M. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Zondi, P. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Zondi, S. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Zondi, S. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba
Zondi, T. 2003.	Interview with Author. Pietermaritzburg: Kwa Mzimba

APPENDIX 1

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

From the Catholic Bishops to the People of God in South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland.

We the people of Southern Africa find ourselves in the middle of a great crisis in our nations caused by HIV/AIDS. Many people despair when they are stricken with HIV/AIDS because they feel rejected and sometimes are rejected by their families and communities. Some even commit suicide. In this desperate situation we, the Bishops of Southern Africa, bring a message of hope to all who are living with this killer disease:

Do not despair - you are not abandoned by Christ nor by us. When you find yourself in a hopeless situation on account of AIDS, Jesus, your brother, remains right next to you and never abandons you. We encourage your families and communities to accept you with love and stand by you. We urge them not to abandon you but to continue Christ's mission of mercy, compassion and love. The Church loves you, welcomes you and reaches out to you in many ways.

We have a message for our nations, the youth and married couples.

1. MESSAGE FOR OUR NATIONS

Many people and especially Governments promote condoms for preventing AIDS. This is a matter of deep concern for us in the Church.

The Bishops regard the widespread and indiscriminate promotion of condoms as an immoral and misguided weapon in our battle against HIV/AIDS for the following reasons.

- * The use of condoms goes against human dignity.
- * Condoms change the beautiful act of love into a selfish search for pleasure – while rejecting responsibility.
- * Condoms do not guarantee protection against HIV/AIDS.
- * Condoms may even be one of the main reasons for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Apart from the possibility of condoms being faulty or wrongly used they contribute to the breaking down of self-control and mutual respect.

The promotion and distribution of condoms as a means of having so-called "safe sex" contributes to the breaking down of the moral fibre of our nations because it gives a wrong message to people. What is really said is this:

- * "It is alright to sleep around as you like even if you are still young - as long as you do not contract HIV/AIDS."

- * "There is no need for training yourself in self-control".
- * "There is no need to prepare yourself to be faithful to a future spouse.
- * "It is alright to use another person for selfish pleasure.

What undermines the morals of our countries?

- * It is lack of self-control and lack of respect for others.
- * It is unfaithfulness and irresponsible sexual behaviour.
- * It is loose living, which destroys human dignity - UBUNTU- and self-respect.

This is our conviction as Catholic Bishops of Southern Africa. We proclaim our message loud and clear, a message which will strengthen again the moral fibre of our countries:

"Abstain and be faithful" is the human and Christian way of overwhelming HIV/AIDS. Abstain from sex before marriage and be faithful to your spouse in marriage - this is the answer, which Christ gives us. With his help we will overcome AIDS and build up a new, happy and healthy South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland.

2. MESSAGE TO THE YOUTH

Dear young people, we are well aware that you are searching for real love, happiness and meaning in your lives. God says, "I am offering you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live..." (Deuteronomy 30.19). Make sure you choose life by accepting God's way.

Do not allow yourselves to be misguided by people who show you the wrong way by offering you condoms. Abstain from sex before marriage and be faithful to your spouse in your future marriage - this is the way Christ shows us.

We often hear people saying, "Condoms save lives and therefore they should be promoted." Our answer is, "If we follow Christ's way, we shall save far more lives and encourage people to grow in self-control and responsibility for others."

Dear young people you should not say: "It is impossible to abstain". You must prove to yourselves that abstinence is possible and that lust is not love. There are many groups of young people who help one another in their struggle to live chaste lives. There are groups such as "Youth Alive" which promotes "Education for Life" through workshops and programmes inspired by the mottoes "True Love Waits" and "Choose Life". Yes, it is difficult to abstain, but is not impossible with God's help, which we obtain through prayer. Do not listen to people who say, "You will go mad if you do not have sex!" In fact you will be very healthy in mind and body.

To young people who are living with AIDS:

We encourage you to speak up openly and help your companions to avoid the disease. In this way you will truly become promoters of life. You are continuing the mission of Christ who said, "I came so that they may have life and have it more abundantly"(John 10,10.)

We call on young men:

Respect girls and young women and relate to them without making sexual demands of them. St. Paul says, "God wills you all to be holy. He wants you to keep away from sexual immorality" (1Thessalonians 4, 3)

3. MESSAGE TO MARRIED COUPLES

We make a strong appeal to all married couples, Husbands and wives, remain faithful to each other as you promised on your wedding day. In this way you proclaim God's faithful love for us. In your difficulties, our God who is faithful will never abandon you. Keep in contact with God through prayer and listening to his word. We encourage you to support one another in your struggles of life.

There are couples where one of the parties is living with HIV/AIDS. In these cases there is the real danger that the healthy partner may contract this killer disease. The Church accepts that everyone has the right to defend one's life against mortal danger. This would include using the appropriate means and course of action.

Similarly where one spouse is infected with HIV/AIDS they must listen to their consciences. They are the only ones who can choose the appropriate means, in order to defend both husband and wife as equal and loving partners.

CALL TO CONVERSION

We proclaim Christ's message to you, the people of today, "The Kingdom of God is near. Turn away from your sin and believe in the Good News"(Mark 1,15).

So often we blame God or other people for what happens to us. Instead we have to take responsibility for our actions before God. This involves listening to God's word and to the teaching of the Church so that we can have informed and mature consciences.

The message from the gospel is very different from that which we receive from Television, videos, Internet, newspapers and magazines, which so often promote uncontrolled sex and infidelity.

Dear People of God. We have to solve our problems in this "Kingdom Way". Therefore let us heed the call of Christ to return to the way of self-control and fidelity. St Paul encourages us to shine among corrupt people like stars up the sky as we offer them the message of life (see Philippians 2, 15 - 16).

CALL TO ACTION

We call on all people of our nations to break the silence around HIV/AIDS by calling AIDS - AIDS and by accepting people who are living with this disease.

We express our deep appreciation to all who are working generously (and very often with little remuneration) for people living with AIDS and for AIDS orphans. We also pay tribute to the Priests, Religious Sisters and Brothers and to men and women of the community who so often work quietly and generously to bring Christ's healing ministry to the most neglected and forgotten.

As Bishops we are proud of the enormous outreach in every diocese in AIDS prevention, caring for those living with AIDS and those affected by AIDS, especially children and orphans.

We call on small Christian communities, prayer-groups, sodalities, priests, religious and pastoral workers, to join hands with all people who are engaged in the struggle against AIDS.

We wish also to encourage others to volunteer their time to visit and care for those who are afflicted by this disease.

AIDS must never be considered as a punishment from God. He wants us to be healthy and not to die from AIDS. It is for us a sign of the times challenging all people to inner transformation and to the following of Christ in his ministry of healing, mercy and love.

CALL TO PRAYER

We invite all people to unite in prayer to Almighty God in this time of crisis in our nations. In the past in South Africa we approached God to help us in our struggle for freedom and human dignity and we experienced the great miracle of transition. Now we pray for another "miracle" to bring us that inner freedom which will enable our nations to choose the right way to uphold human dignity in our new struggle - the battle against HIV/AIDS. Jesus is with us still today on our way of the cross of HIV/AIDS.

Jesus invites us in his hour of agony to join him in deep prayer to the Father as the way to resurrection and life.

May the Lord guide us all, give us strength and touch us with his healing hand.

We greet you with affectionate love and bless you, in the name of the +Father, the +Son and +Holy Spirit.

The Catholic Bishops who are assembled at the Plenary Session of the Southern African Bishop Conference at St. Peter's Seminary, Pretoria, July 30, 2001.

APPENDIX 2

The Address at the UN Special Assembly by Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi

“HIV is transmitted through the most intimate and private human relationships, through sexual violence and commercial sex; it proliferates mostly because of women’s poverty and inequality... In Mozambique the overall rate of HIV infection among girls and young women estimated at 15%, is twice that of boys their age, not because the girls are promiscuous, but because nearly 3 out of 5 are married by the age of 18, 40% of them to much older, sexually experienced men who may expose their wives to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases..... Abstinence is not an option for these child brides. Those who try to negotiate condom use commonly face violence or rejection...”

“As a man, I know men’s behaviour must change, that we must raise boys differently, to have any hope of eradicating HIV and preventing the emergence of another such scourge...”

“...Most political leaders still view adolescent sex as a politically volatile subject to be avoided. Community and religious leaders wrongly believe that sexuality education promotes promiscuity. Health providers and teachers are ill-trained about sexuality and ill at ease with it. Parents know little about sexuality, contraception or sexually transmitted diseases, and many believe that early marriage will ‘protect’ their daughters. They may themselves condone or perpetrate sexual violence as a legitimate expression of masculinity....”

“For the long-term, we need to develop HIV vaccines and provide treatment to everyone with HIV. We need to develop protection methods like microbicides that women can use with or without a partner’s knowledge or co-operation. Above all, we must summon the courage to talk frankly and constructively about sexuality. We must recognise the

pressures on our children to have sex that is neither safe nor loving. We must provide them with information, communication skills and, yes, condoms.”

“To change fundamentally how girls and boys learn to relate to each other and how men treat girls and women is slow, painstaking work. But surely our children’s lives are worth the effort.”

(Pascoal Mocumbi was the former minister of health in Mozambique, and is a physician. His is at present Prime Minister.)