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DECLARATION

I declare that: *Creating a culture of life: A Catholic ethical analysis of the causes and consequences of the breakdown of family life in Mariannhill, South Africa* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

……………………………….. …………………..

SIGNATURE   DATE

(Tobias Nhlanhla Mcunu)

Student number 3157-947-7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I dedicate this thesis to my parents Michael M. Mchunu and Maria F. Mchunu (maPhoswa) for giving me a gift of growing up in a loving and a caring family. I thank them for raising me in a Christian and God fearing family. I learnt my faith in their daily encounter and their care for each other and for us, their offspring. They made me realize that *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other people) and that *sonke siyadingana njengabantu* (we all need each other). To my siblings as well: Thokozani, Bhekumusa (+ 1997), Thandazile (+20 May 2012), Xolani, Khumbuzile (+1979), Sizwe, Ziningi, Sibusiso and Silindile

I also dedicate this work to all those families that are trying to live an exemplary life and all those persons who have been victims of family breakdown but have managed to overcome the odds of their ordeal. I further dedicate this research to all those families that are trying to build relationships of integrity by following the will of God. May your efforts yield fruits in abundance so that we can become a nation that truly respects the life and the rights of other citizens.

Last but not least, I dedicate this work to Thandazile Ritta Mchunu, my younger sister who passed away unexpectedly on 20 May 2012. For your kindness, gentleness and love my sister.

Glossary

AA	*Apostolicam Actuositatem*
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AFER	African Ecclesial Review
AMACEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of East Africa
ANC	African National Congress
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
FAMSA	Family and Marriage Association of South Africa
FC	*Familiaris Consortio*
GS	*Gaudium et Spes*
HFLF	Home and Family Life Foundation
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
LG	*Lumen Gentium*
LT	Letter to Families
MRM	Moral Regeneration Movement
NGO	Non governmental organisation
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACBC	South African Catholic Bishop's Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
VS	*Veritatis Slpendour*

List of key terms

Family, marriage, marriage breakdown, marriage preparation, pastoral care of families, covenant, sacrament, parenting, parenthood, motherhood, fatherhood, fatherlessness, discipline, moral formation, procreation, African traditional family, African ethic, nuclear family, Christian marriage.

Abstract

Vatican II provided the Catholic Church with an opportunity for deep reflection and to align its theological teachings with modern times. This reflection resulted in a resurgence of the importance of Christian marriage and family living. Beyond Vatican II, the Christian family has been described as a 'domestic' church. This description defines the family founded on marriage as a cornerstone for the church and society. The Church has realised that if she has to succeed in her mission of evangelisation, she needs to strengthen the families founded on the sacrament of marriage and also to take care of broken families.

The theme of a 'domestic church' was further explored and discussed in the 1994 Special Synod for the Bishops of Africa. This synod strongly used the image of the family as an effective tool for evangelisation in Africa. The rationale for this emphasis was that the institution of the family founded on marriage is held in high esteem in Africa and it is one of the most important custodians of cultural values. This institution, the bishops argued, can now be used as a custodian for Christian values. Hence, the family founded on marriage will become a school where these values are cherished and taught to offspring.

The family founded on marriage is celebrated across the global cultural spectrum. It is through the family that the age old wisdom of ancestors is propagated. This ensures the survival and the development of the different communities. Communities develop because they are built upon strong ethical, religious and cultural values which are safeguarded by the institution of the family founded on marriage. The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is the custodian of life. Marriage is about life. Hence, the respect of human life is safeguarded by the family. The collapse of such a pivotal institution has serious implications for the community.

The institution of the family founded on marriage is presented in this thesis as a turn around strategy to the challenge of moral permissiveness in our country. It is a commonly accepted theory that development can only take place where there is stability. The lack of infrastructural development in most African countries is due to lack of political stability. Instability often results in chaos and anarchy. Marriage promises stability which is rooted in the self giving of the couples. Such an environment becomes conducive for human life to be propagated, nurtured and developed. It further creates a sense of being loved and belonging to the child. These qualities are essential for proper and integral human development. Furthermore, marriage ties together the goals of parenting, namely, procreation and parenthood and they are inseparable. They prepare children for social integration.

The purpose of this research is to demonstrate how the institution of the family founded on marriage can help us develop a coherent moral vision in South Africa. This turn around strategy is proposed by systematically analysing the causes and consequences of family breakdown. The thesis establishes that the institution of the family founded on marriage is undergoing a crisis. This crisis manifests itself through single-parenthood, high rate of divorce, fatherlessness, etc. The consequences of this crisis are not favourable for individuals and the society.

CHAPTER ONE.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and context

In 1998, South Africa held a Moral Summit for the first time. The aim of this Moral Summit was to restore a sense of moral awareness in our society because people in South Africa felt that the standard of morals was deteriorating. This was experienced both in the public and private sectors. However, the greatest concern was expressed about the high level of crime, and the manner in which these crimes were committed. It was at this moral summit that former president Mr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela spoke of the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) of the soul. There was a feeling that our nation needed to undergo *uphuhliso*[1] because, there was a strong feeling that the moral fibre of our nation had broken down.

Some of the main symptoms of moral decay in our country are the lack of respect for the sanctity of human life, the breakdown of family life founded on marriage, breakdown of parental control of children, crime and corruption, abuse of drugs, lack of respect for property, unrestrained individualism, the lack of mutual care (the death of the virtue of *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu*[2]) and the abuse of women and children. Rakoczy laments that "this disregard for human life – the continual failure to respect each human being as an irreplaceable person created by God – has spawned a 'culture of violence' that permeates all facets of life" (2000:6). The events of 2008 when students in Bloemfontein racially harassed people as old as their parents are another example of the moral decay in our country. The ongoing sexual harassment and kidnapping of children on the Cape Flats - an economically deprived section of Cape Town - is further evidence of this moral decay. The xenophobic attacks in 2010 revealed a nation that is undergoing a moral crisis.

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[1] *Uphuhliso* is an isiXhosa word meaning to renew or to improve the current condition. *Uphuhliso* recognizes that there has been a challenge in the past that has created the need for *uphuhliso*.
[2] *Umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* is an isiZulu saying, that literally mean that a person is a person through others. This saying calls for a sense of mutual respect and support because there is inter-dependency and inter-connectedness among people. This concept is seen to be diminishing in our country.

Crime in our country seems to be nullifying our hard-earned democracy and the crucial work of nation building. The Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) endeavours to make every South African a moral regeneration agent. However, the restoration of moral fibre in society cannot take place in a vacuum. It needs a focal point where it can be intensified, so that it can easily spread and be able to permeate all the structures of society.

South Africans express different opinions about the most important ethical issues affecting our country. Kretzschmar (2001:285) observes that these different opinions range from issues such as crime and corruption to unemployment, black economic empowerment and housing. She further comments that these differences "are simply reflecting the personal and social interests relevant to the particular group and situation of these commentators" (2001:285). However, the majority of South Africans across the racial, socio-economic and political spectrum agree that the level of crime in our country is too high. Kretzschmar (2001) correctly points out that the Church needs to roll up her sleeves and get involved in the social ills confronting our society. Otherwise, the Church will fail in her mission of bringing much needed hope into people's lives and social situations. The Church is an integral and an indispensable component of society. Therefore, the socio-economic and political problems that affect society should prompt the Church to act. This was also acknowledged at Vatican II:

> The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men (sic) of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts (*Gaudium et Spes* 1965:1).

The Church of Christ cannot be silent when morality is unreflective and inadequately expressed at the expense of the revealed objective moral truths. The mandate the Church received from Christ was to teach all the nations: "Teach them to observe all that I taught you" (Matthew 28:20). This thesis endeavours to articulate the Church's response to critical issues of morality, especially the role of the family founded on marriage, because the presence of the Church in the world ought to be dynamic and engaging.

In his 2002 State of the Nation address, President Thabo Mbeki spoke about the urgency of moral renewal in South Africa.[3] He noted that the decay of morality in our country was polarising society as violent crimes continued to imprison South Africans. During that State of the Nation address, he called for the development of a common good that will become a moral adhesive in South Africa. This common good can be used as a means of regenerating moral values in South Africa. This call raises some questions: What is this common good? Who defines what the common good is? What processes should inform the definition of this common good? What lies behind these questions is the quest to identify the traits of the common good for South Africans.

In response to the call for the need of a common good in South Africa, the MRM was launched in Pretoria on the 18th of April 2002. The main objective driving this movement was the renewal of ethical norms and values within society. In the opening address, Jacob Zuma who was then Deputy President said, "We are disgusted by the sporadic incidents of moral depravity that occur in our country ... Compatriots, we are here because we believe that something is wrong within the fabric of our society, and that we urgently need to do something about it".[4] The post-1994 South Africa had realized that its past history had negatively influenced its moral fibre. This realization was also noted in a Cape Town-based newspaper, the Cape Argus of 04 April 2007. It stated, "that the role of apartheid and its state-sponsored violence and deliberate impoverishment of the black majority played a major role in our present crisis cannot be denied, except by those who choose to minimise the impact of the past."[5]

The MRM focussed on defining what morality is and tried to trace the history of moral degeneration. The vision and the objectives of the MRM were very noble and appealing. However, there was a lack of political will from the front runners of the movement. Hence, civil society did not take an active role in the implementation of its vision and objectives. These were mainly discussed in the political corridors. The Church faced the

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[3] http://www.gov.za/issues/mrm/index.html - Accessed 23 June 2007.
[4] Opening address by Deputy President Jacob Zuma, at the launch of the Moral Regeneration Movement – Summit held at the Waterkloof Air Force Base, Pretoria, 18 April 2002. <<http//:www.mrm.org.za/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view>> Accessed 11 April 2011.
[5] Http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200704040395.html – Accessed 25 June 2007.

dilemma of becoming an implementation agent of government policies, a situation that would compromise her independent approach to government policies. The Church and the government should have become equal role players in this regard. Jayendra Naidoo, an ANC activist noted,

> Following the 1994 elections … civil society has generally become muted and less effective. The level of participation of rank-and-file members on the ground has weakened. Today's challenge to civil society organisations is to re-establish the credibility and the influence they enjoyed in the pre-democracy period.[6]

Clearly, some of the contributory factors to the failure of the MRM were the lack of civic mobilisation, and the perception that some of its leaders showed great inconsistency by saying one thing in public, and at the same time being involved in corrupt practices.

In this thesis, the researcher proposes the institution of the 'family founded on marriage' as a measure of reconstructing a coherent moral vision in South Africa. Marriage provides a firm foundation upon which morality can be regenerated, because it forms a nucleus of society.

The family is the backdrop of society, the pillar upon which society is built. From civil engineering, we know that the construction of pillars upon which the building rests are built with utmost care and consideration. Strong material is used, because the entire building rests upon these pillars. The family founded on marriage functions in a similar fashion so that society does not collapse.

The most fitting focal point for moral regeneration is the family founded on marriage. It is within the context of the family that there is a sense of stability and commitment. Such an environment becomes conducive to the upbringing and rearing of children. Kretzschmar argues that "children learn their morality from those closest to them, for example their parents and families" (2007:24). It is from this perspective that the family founded on marriage is proposed in this thesis. Hence, a common good can be established because marriage is celebrated and cherished across the cultural spectrum in South

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[6] http://www.iss.org.za/pubs/Monographs/No114/Chap4.html - Accessed 23 June 2007.

Africa. In addition, it is within the context of the family founded on marriage that children get a sense of community and communal living. Kretzschmar (2007:24) points out that the process of socialisation of children is begun at home and then, later in life, is taken up by other social and cultural institutions. Consequently, the family's role is foundational and remains invaluable.

Undoubtedly, South Africa is a cosmopolitan society. The result of this is the global influence, which is channelled by the Euro-American mindset and lifestyle. Mugambi and Wasike (2003:4) argue that this mindset has eroded a number of good African values and ethical norms. In 2002 the Department of Social Welfare published on its website the role that the family plays in a child's life, and stated that, "the role of the family in respect of responsibility to children needs to be strengthened and emphasised".[7] It went on to say that "in many parts of Africa the traditional role of the family is collapsing".[8] In any society the collapse of the family carries with it detrimental moral consequences.

There is also a correlation between crime and violence and moral breakdown. This correlation is not a new phenomenon in social theory. It was presented, for example, by Emile Durkeim, a French sociologist at the turn of the 19th century and then by an American sociologist, Merton,[9] in the 1930s. This relation was construed around their theory of *anomie* or normlessness. The aforementioned sociologists stated that when a given society is disturbed by rapid change or major disorder, the semblance of solidarity is affected. Let us consider the following case as an example: The apartheid regime in South Africa created a state of *anomie* in the country as young people assumed more power on the political stage, which subsequently obliterated the role of parents at home. The power that young people had assumed was to create anarchy at home and in society. Parents lost authority in their households. This normlessness made young people feel that their ambitions were no longer subject to social discipline.

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[7] www.welfare.gov.za/documents/2002/June/1T06.html – Accessed 20 January 2008.
[8] www.welfare.gov.za/documents/2002/June/1T06.html - Accessed 20 January 2008.
[9] Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) was a well renowned sociologist amongst his contemporaries. He made notable advances in the field of sociology. www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_K._Merton - Accessed 25 January 2008.

This sense of normlessness was also noted by Bujo (2001). Therefore, it is not something peculiar to South Africa, but symptomatic of what is going on at a global level. Bujo is an outstanding African moral theologian at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He states that, "morals are the food which keep the society alive, healthy and happy. Once there is moral breakdown, the whole integrity of society also breaks down, and the end is tragic" (Bujo 2001:125). South African society experienced a moral breakdown which, manifests itself through corruption and criminal activities. The alarmingly high level of family breakdown impacts negatively on children and on society. These factors are discussed in chapter five.

If we accept that our moral fibre and a sense of community should be restored we need to develop policies that will strengthen and support families. We also need to mobilise families if we are to succeed in creating a culture of life. Therefore, it becomes imperative to study and analyse the causes and consequences of family breakdown in South Africa, and analyse its personal and social implications. The researcher used questionnaires and individual interviews in order to assist in establishing the causes and the consequences of family breakdown. The UNESCO preface to its publication on the Year of the Family in 1994 states: "Family life is most precious. It is the natural environment for the growth and well being of all family members, particularly children".[10]

This introductory section has briefly described the need for the resurgence of moral values and norms in South Africa as we experience a moral crisis. We shall now outline the statement of the problem that led to this research project.

1.2 Motivation for doing this research and a statement of the research problem

In my work as a priest in the area of Mariannhill in Kwa-Zulu Natal, I have been particularly interested in youth ministry. This provided me with an opportunity to get closer to young people and to listen to their stories. During my pastoral engagements, I

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[10] http://www.unesdco.unesco.org/images/0009/000999/099959eb.pdf - Accessed 31 January 2008.

was led to a striking observation among these young people. I observed that those who came mainly from broken and dysfunctional families tended to exhibit strange behaviour patterns compared to their counterparts from families with functional family backgrounds. This observation continued to play in my mind for some years and I kept asking myself certain questions: Why are young people from broken and dysfunctional families exhibiting such strange behaviour patterns? Could the situation of their family background have a bearing on this? Why are these young people frequently in trouble with school authorities and involved in criminal activities within the community? This last question made me ask further; what are the causes of the social challenges in the area of Mariannhill? What are the consequences of family breakdown? How are children and society affected by family breakdown? Why are young men from fatherless families exhibiting problems with authority?

This pastoral experience and these questions motivated me to undertake serious research into the causes and consequences of family breakdown and how these impact on young people and on society. This research arises out of a combination of this hands-on experience and rigorous academic study. Furthermore, this situation and these questions led me to embark on serious reading about the Catholic Church's teaching about marriage and the family, and the construction of the questionnaire. Interviews were informed by those basic questions, which are a result of my personal experience and in-depth reading.

Therefore, I am of the opinion that we need something more lasting to solve our problems. The following story demonstrates better what I mean by probing further into the problem of crime in South Africa. On the 2nd of April 2007 as I was driving towards the presbytery after visiting the elderly, the sick and the house bound, I was listening to SA FM's Midday Live programme, which is aired between midday and 1 pm. In the programme, it was reported that about 60 000 juveniles are behind bars in South Africa. Furthermore, the presenter communicated that the number of criminal acts committed by young people is on the rise. The programme host interviewed a young man, who had been an offender, and he stated unequivocally that his criminal tendencies were due to family breakdown. He reckoned that his family had disappointed him because nobody

cared about him. It is accounts such as this one, as well as my own experience as a parish priest that has prompted the writing of this thesis. Having said that, I need to mention though that not all criminals come from bad and broken families. However, unstable family backgrounds can be a breeding ground for negative socialisation since it is not the ideal situation in which to raise children. Terreblanche and Durrheim (2002:33-34) mention that a research problem arises out of a problematic situation. We really do have a problematic situation in South Africa.

In brief, this research intends to identify the causes and the consequences of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill and to propose how the family founded on marriage could help South Africans develop a culture of life.

1.3 Aim of the thesis

According to Terreblanche and Durrheim (2002:39), stating the aims of the research project at the beginning will help the researcher to clarify his/her purpose in conducting the research. Hence, the aim of this research project is to determine the nature, causes and consequences of family breakdown in Mariannhill, and to suggest ways of reversing this growing trend by building a culture of life within marriages and families. This will be achieved by presenting marriage, the family and parenting as taught by the Catholic Church as a strategic intervention, with insights drawn from Protestant theology, traditional African views, and the human and social sciences.

Therefore, this thesis addresses the following questions: What causes families to breakdown in the area of Mariannhill? What are the consequences of this marital breakdown for the children and for the society? How can we promote the culture of life within marriages? What can the Church, the government and the various social institutions do in order to avoid marital breakdown? The researcher expands on these questions in the entire thesis, especially in chapter three.

This research systematically analyses the causes and the consequences of family breakdown based on currently available literature and on a specific process of empirical data collection. Rediscovering the role of the family in our quest to create a culture of life provides a basis for developing a coherent moral vision. This is achieved by developing the notion that an ethic based on the promotion of the family founded on marriage becomes a continual hermeneutical reflection on the notion of human life and human living. It is also a prolonged reflection on the claim that a person is a person through other persons,[11] and consequently, life ought to be respected. Though this thesis focuses on Catholic ethics within a South African context, the focus on the family is equally important amongst all the ethnic groups, religious traditions and world views prevalent within the country.

By focussing on the role of the family founded on marriage, the thesis facilitates a process of providing a more comprehensive ethical basis for the respect of human life, because South Africa needs a societal attitude and a climate that sustains a consistent defence and promotion of a genuine human life and lifestyle.

1.4 Value of the thesis

The value of this thesis is its ability to demonstrate that the health of society and family are interdependent (section 5 of the questionnaire). These two social realities belong together and they ought not to be separated. The thesis demonstrates that South Africa can come out of this moral crisis by promoting the family founded on marriage. In rural areas of South Africa, where family life is strong, there prevails a stronger sense of community and solidarity. Pope John II (1998:4) wrote that where family is weak, social fibre is prone to disintegration. The situation in the area of Mariannhill illustrates the Pope's prophetic statement.

In addition, this thesis has value for the Church. Most specifically in the final chapter, the research shows that the mission of the Church is very urgent. The ministers of the Church

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[11] *Umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu.*

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need to utilise the resources available in fulfilling their pastoral mandate. It is hoped that the thesis will revive the ministry of preparing couples for marriage and develop programmes of on-going formation for married couples.

Finally, it has value for theological ethics as an academic discipline. Theology is not just talk about God, but also a reflection on people's lived experience. This leads to a continuous reflection on the Word of God and our social experience. The thesis will demonstrate that the theological underpinnings of marriage and family are relevant and they enhance our understanding of marriage. It is hoped that this will lead to a respect for and an appreciation of this primary institution.

1.5 Scope of the thesis

The thesis is conducted within the academic discipline of theological ethics. It endeavours to espouse the Catholic teaching about marriage, family living and parenting. The scope of its approach is not limited to Catholic moral theology, but includes Protestant theology, African ethics and views from the human sciences and social sciences. Its scope is limited to black African people of the area of Mariannhill where the researcher worked for nine and a half years as a parish priest. Focussing on the area of Mariannhill accords the researcher the ability to handle specific empirical data, since its scope is manageable.

The following scope of the argument is formulated according to the diagram proposed by Kretzschmar (Kretzschmar, Bentley & Niekerk 2009:91). The following method of arguing guided the researcher throughout this project:

- Analysis: The thesis analyses the level of moral breakdown in the area of Mariannhill. Many societal challenges in this area spring from the demise of family living. The researcher, as pointed out in section 1.2, observed that young people from troubled family backgrounds were not well socialised in comparison

with their counterparts. Therefore, the researcher intends to analyse this situation and identify the many causes of family breakdown.

- Evaluation: The researcher then moves on to evaluate this social challenge by embarking on a literature research in order to evaluate the situation of the family founded on marriage on a global and a local scale, and also to evaluate the causes and consequences of family breakdown. The four critical questions are as follows: Is the family founded on marriage undergoing a crisis or a transition? How ought marriage and the family to be understood from the perspective of Christian and African teachings? What are the negative consequences of family breakdown? What are the goals of the family founded on marriage according to Catholic moral theology? What are the key virtues pertinent to marriage and the family?

- Asking or probing: At this stage, the researcher needs to choose a method of probing into the situation at hand. The researcher used the mixed method as a tool of probing and dialoguing with the people at the grassroots. Hence, the conclusions of this thesis are not made in a vacuum, but are rooted in people's lived experiences (Kretzschmar, Bentley & Niekerk 2009: 95).

- Action: At the final stage of the research, in chapter seven, the researcher, through the help of the literature review and empirical investigation, reaches a conclusion. Based on the thesis, a plan of action is proposed which can be used by those engaged in family ministries.

1.6 The area of study

The research was conducted in the area of Mariannhill, the outer western part of the Durban metropolis. In 1882, the superior of an Austrian monastery asked his monks about the possibility of venturing into a new mission territory in South Africa in response to the call made by Bishop Jolivet. All the monks, but one, declined the call. One monk stood up and said: "If no one goes, I will go". This was the remote birth of the diocese of

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Mariannhill. Francis Pfanner[12] arrived in South Africa with his band of thirty young men in 1882. They founded the Mariannhill monastery on a hill, which was named after Mary (the mother of Jesus) and Ann (the mother of Mary) – thus, Mariannhill.

Francis Pfanner was a hard worker. His work philosophy was learned from his father who was a farmer. His philosophy was: "Nobody has to work more than I do". He never left manual work to be done by his new recruits, the Zulus. Instead, he criticised the white South Africans who left manual work to be done by Africans. The missionaries introduced multi-racial schools, which clearly defied the segregation policies of the regime of the time. These schools were geared to forming Christian families. Pfanner and his followers believed that strong Christian families could be formed through education, especially the education of women.

Mariannhill became a Vicariate in 1922, with Bishop Adalbero Fleischer[13] as its first bishop. The spirit of Francis Pfanner continued long after his death. His approach was personnel-intensive and orientated towards socio-economic upliftment. This approach was further taken up and developed by Fr. Bernard Huss's programme of "better fields, better homes and better hearts". The focus of this three-dimensional approach to evangelisation sought to improve the lives of African people in the area of Mariannhill.

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[12] Abbot Francis Pfanner was an Austrian monk. He arrived in Natal in 1882, founded the Monastery of Mariannhill, and started evangelisation among the Zulus. He opened schools and a teachers' training college, where locals would receive education. He believed in the power of education as a form of liberation. He was a visionary man. Already in his time, five young African men were sent to Rome to pursue philosophical and theological studies in preparation for ordination to the priesthood. One young man died in Rome and the four came back as priests. He founded the new community of Mariannhill Missionaries (CMMs) with the motto *Ora et Labora*. This motto characterised the work of his monks and religious women. Abbot Francis Pfanner also founded the Congregation of the Precious Blood Sisters (CPS). He died in 1909. For further information see: http://www.wiki.ulwazi.org/index.php5?title?St_Wendolin's:_1882-1914 or http://www.sacbc.org.za/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=197&Itemd=195 – Accessed 10 March 2008.

[13] Bishop Adalbero Fleischer founded St. Mary's Seminary in 1923. This was a boarding school for boys who wished to prepare for priesthood in the Catholic Church. Before moving to Pevency in Underberg, St. Mary's Seminary was also used as a Major Seminary. Bishop Adalbero also founded two congregations, one for African men and the other for African women. At this time, the two dominantly white congregations could not admit African people to their orders. These two congregations were thus opened for black vocations (FFJ – for men and FSF (Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi – for sisters).

This programme sought to take into account the people's socio-economic and political context seriously.

The land in the area of Mariannhill was previously owned by Catholic missionaries, but later it was given back to the local community. People who were not Catholic were not allowed to settle in this area, hence the predominance of Catholics up to today. The area of Mariannhill is a typical example of a settlement due to migratory labour. People first settled as tenants then later as *bona fide* residents who bought plots of the land from their landlords. The rate of literacy is high in this area because of the insistence of the missionaries on education.

The observance of traditional African belief systems and values has changed to a great extent in this community. The institution of the family founded on marriage has also undergone rapid social changes. These changes reflect what is taking place both at the national and global levels. People in rural areas are moving to cities in search of a better life and they are exposed to urban life. When they return to their rural communities they are perceived as 'enlightened' and young people emulate their life style.

The area of Mariannhill falls under the ecclesiastical circumscription of the Diocese of Mariannhill. The Diocese of Mariannhill is made up of 45 parishes and more than 250 outstation churches. It is the second largest Catholic diocese in Southern Africa and has a rich Catholic history. It is divided into five pastoral deaneries, namely, Umhlathuzana (7 parishes), Umlazi (8 parishes), Ugu (11 parishes), Ixopo (10 parishes) and Ukhahlamba (9 parishes). As a result, the Diocese of Mariannhill is too vast to be covered in this thesis. For practical purposes and reliability of the research, I shall concentrate on a specific part of Mariannhill, which mainly covers the pastoral deanery of Umhlathuzana.

As a priest, I served the parishes of St. Xavier and St. Joseph's Cathedral. These parishes are 6 km apart. They are both flourishing in terms of Sunday Mass observance. While St. Xavier has about 4 500 practising parishioners, St. Joseph's has about 9 000. The former has about 8 000 registered parishioners and the latter has about 16 000. There are

approximately, 35 000 inhabitants in the area of Mariannhill. That means that 69% of the population is Catholic. Today the number of other Christians in the area is 29% and non-believers is as low as 2%.

What are the demographics and the psychographics of the area of Mariannhill? The area of Mariannhill is densely populated and proper human settlement remains a challenge even today. Houses in this area are small. As a consequence, big families are forced to share a two-roomed house. Privacy is at a minimum. When children become teenagers, they often leave their homes and settle in the RDP houses on their own. Sometimes these houses have been called *ushiya abazali*.[14] They feel that staying longer at home amounts to intruding on the privacy of their parents.

Moreover, the RDP houses have led to the *"vat-en-sit"* [15] marriages in the area of Mariannhill. This type of marriage is common in densely populated areas of South Africa. This Afrikaans phrase is a slang word for an informal marriage. This form of marriage is contracted by common law, often without the necessary cultural prerequisites. Parents are not normally involved in this type of marriage. The couple simply decides to stay together by common agreement. The community, that used to frown upon such marriages, has become complacent because it is so common nowadays.

In many respects, the *vat-en-sit* marriages lack commitment, because it is often contracted for convenience purposes, for example, one partner needs a place to stay or the girlfriend wants to stop the boyfriend from seeing other women. Children born from these marriages normally do not meet or know their grandparents because the grandparents did not approve the arrangement. It frequently creates animosity on the side of the woman because her family expects *ilobolo* (dowry) from the man. If *ilobolo* is not paid, the man

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[14] The literal meaning of this expression is: leave the parents behind. This expression explains the attitude of young people when they settle on their own in these houses. For them it means doing what they like because there is no authority figure. Hence, they often become nests for criminal activities. Sometimes young girls have been raped in these houses, especially during the day when mothers are at work. Day care centres are expensive and parents leave their children with relatives, who sometimes run a tavern. Many cases have been reported of elderly men who rape young children in these places. Drugs also become common in these *shiya abazali* houses.

[15] Take-and-sit.

is never accepted as a legitimate son-in-law and his children are not accepted as members of the greater family. It is not unusual in the area of Mariannhill for a couple to stay in such a marriage for more than ten years. If this marriage breaks down, each partner simply moves on with his or her life and abandons the children born from the relationship to the care of the grandparents. This situation opens up a range of challenges for children who must keep on adapting to new mothers and fathers.

The layout of housing units is also unhealthy as they stand back to back. Human settlement is a serious challenge in this area. The Human Settlement department must consider the needs of the community, for example, the provision of schools, health facilities, running water, roads, sewerage, community halls and libraries, recreational facilities, gardens, etc. The area of Mariannhill is a good example of lack of proper planning.

Such an environment is prone to numerous socio-ethical challenges. Over the past eight years, Church marriages have dramatically dropped. People occupying the government's two-room houses are cohabiting with no commitment whatsoever. A person can live with two different persons within a period of three years. The level of alcohol abuse and drug abuse in the area is very high among young people.

The inhabitants of this area are low- and medium-income group earners. The high-income group earners have moved to the nearby suburbs of Pinetown. The low-income earners are predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. There is a high level of single parenthood.

The most common difficulties in this area are: crime, teenage pregnancy, and a high level of school drop-outs, abuse of drugs and the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Teenage pregnancy results in young girls and boys dropping out of school. The majority of teen fathers deny paternity because they are either school-going or unemployed. A father-child relationship is rare in the area of Mariannhill due to the high rate of out-of-wedlock babies.

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Sometimes, by the time the child is born, the teenage father has already moved in with another girl who is also likely to become pregnant within a short while.

Once teenagers drop out of school, they hang around taverns and on the streets and this has serious consequences for the community. This often leads to unplanned pregnancies and babies are left with grandmothers who live on pension grants. On the other hand, teenage pregnancy is also used as a means of accessing the government's child support grant. A number of families survive either on the pension fund of the grandmother or the child support grant.

The financial and the social challenges have adverse effects on the family because they destroy the family structure and this has far-reaching implications for the society. These challenges destroy the moral fibre of the society and result in moral permissiveness. The economic hardships lead to the abuse of alcohol and drugs by both the young and the elderly. Alcohol abuse leads to serious physical abuse within families in the area of Mariannhill and cause children to leave their parental homes. Children who come from violent homes tend to internalise violence as normative.

The scourge of HIV/AIDS poses a serious social challenge in the area of Mariannhill. Sickness incapacitates parents from supporting their families. Their poor health makes it impossible for them to raise their children and be attentive to their needs. For this reason, there is no proper care and supervision of the children from an early age. The scourge of HIV/AIDS results in child-headed households in this area. Socialisation of these children becomes a serious challenge because they need to raise their siblings. Family disintegration in the area of Mariannhill has led to a range of societal challenges. The moral fibre of this community is slowly disintegrating.

1.7 Outline of chapters

The outline of the chapters is now presented so that the structure and the argument of the thesis can be comprehended. The outline establishes the connection between the chapters

and it shows how the chapters relate to each other. This chapter focussed on presenting the current situation in South Africa, the motivation and the statement of the problem by highlighting the questions of this research.

The second chapter defines and discusses key terms that are employed in the thesis. The discussion helps us to understand how these terms are used in the thesis and how they relate to the discussion.

Chapter three discusses the method of research, which was employed by the researcher, namely, the use of a theoretical paradigm (consisting of mainly Catholic moral theology and African ethics, supplemented by Protestant theology and the insights of several writings from the human and social sciences). In order to obtain information about the actual situation in Mariannhill, empirical data collection was also employed. The mixed method, which combines the quantitative and the qualitative methods, was used.

The fourth chapter discusses the Christian and African understandings of marriage, the family and parenting. This chapter, like the fifth one, forms part of the theoretical framework of the thesis. The ideal theological perspective of marriage is also presented here. This discussion forms the basis for the construction of section seven of the questionnaire. The sources of our argument in this chapter are the Bible and Catholic moral theology. However, views from other traditions, the human and social sciences are incorporated because this approach broadens the theoretical scope of the thesis.

The fifth chapter provides information on what is actually happening around the globe and in our own context in relation to issues of the breakdown of marriage, family and parenting. The approach of this chapter is threefold. First, it defines what family breakdown is and what causes it; second, it cites the examples of family breakdown on a global scale in order to show the seriousness of the situation; and third, it relates family breakdown to our contemporary situation in South Africa. This assessment was made possible by the theological underpinnings of our discussion in chapters four and five.

The sixth chapter outlines the results of the empirical research. The findings from the questionnaire and the focussed interviews with respect to marriage, the family and parenting are discussed in detail. This chapter also notes in what ways this data confirms and supplements the discussions on marriage, the family and parenting contained in chapters four and five.

The seventh chapter is a consolidation of this research project, and represents the reflection of the researcher. Furthermore, it is intended to ascertain whether the researcher managed to achieve his aim in embarking on this study. The recommendations of this research are outlined and discussed. These are based on the analysis arising out of chapters four, five, six and the findings of chapter seven. The idea of designing research tools was to gather data that informed the process of formulating the recommendations so that they are congruent and concrete. Furthermore, the recommendations, it is hoped, will facilitate a further discourse within Catholic moral theology.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has laid down the foundations of this research by stating its aims. We began by reflecting on the moral situation in South Africa, and we saw that there is an urgent need for a coherent moral vision. The government tried to respond to this public outcry by developing two initiatives, namely, the Moral Summit and the Moral Regeneration Movement. These initiatives did not succeed because those who were tasked with them were implicated in corrupt practices. We have also postulated that mass mobilisation was lacking in these initiatives. We then proposed the institution of the family founded on marriage as a common good upon which a coherent moral vision can be developed in South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO
DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF KEY TERMS
2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we need to substantiate what this thesis is presupposing by defining key terms. On defining terms in a thesis, Hofstee mentions that this part is crucial because "it makes it absolutely clear to the reader what the researcher means whenever there is any possibility of misunderstanding" (2006:88). The definition of terms helps in building a common understanding and eliminates any misunderstanding between the reader and the researcher. The definition of the operational terms is conducted within the theoretical framework that guides the thesis (section 3.3). Definitions look to build a common premise as stated by Hofstee (2006:88).

The terms that are defined and discussed below are as follows: theological ethics, Catholic moral theology, the human person, the human person as a moral being, a traditional African view, traditional African ethics, marriage and the family, family and society, and culture.

2.2 Theological ethics

This research is conducted within the discipline of theological ethics. It is essential to delineate first what theological ethics is in order to create a common premise and understanding. This explanation demonstrates how theological ethics relates to theology in general and how it differs from philosophical ethics. It locates the academic endeavours of this research.

Theological ethics is a branch of theology, while philosophical ethics is a branch of philosophy. Given the strong influence of both theological and philosophical thinking in the work of Thomas Aquinas, writers often speak of Catholic moral philosophy and/or Catholic moral theology (Mahoney 1987:77). Both moral theologians and moral philosophers deal with issues of right or wrong, good or bad, but several philosophical

approaches make no reference to God or a deity. Not all philosophical ethics is atheistic, but there is a tendency to study it without any particular reference to a deity, especially since the Enlightenment in Europe. What ties theological ethics to moral philosophy, is that both disciplines are concerned with morality. A question then arises: what is morality? Morality refers to that aspect or dimension of human experience where we recognise a distinction between good and evil, right and wrong. This human dimension enables us to realise the good that ought to be done, and the evil that ought to be avoided. We identify this existential phenomenon emerging from within and in our relationships. Morality is not imposed from without, but emerges within, tied to our nature. In Catholic moral theology, this is called the natural law, our participation in the eternal law of God.

It has become common in theological ethics to distinguish between moral goodness and rightness. The former refers to the person and the latter to the actions of the human person. Gula (1989:12) concurs with the above point when he writes that "morality in the strict sense pertains to the person, to character. Actions are moral only in a derived or secondary sense because the person expresses herself/himself in actions" (Gula 1989:12). Since morality pertains to the human person, a sub-section of this chapter is dedicated to defining the human person.

Theological ethics and philosophical ethics are both academic disciplines or sciences and, as such, they aim at a methodical analysis of that aspect or dimension of human experience where we recognise the good that ought to be done and the bad that ought to be avoided. Their methodology is one of rational reflection. Nonetheless, each science has its own history, though they significantly share a common vocabulary and language. Theological ethics as a scientific study intends to address issues that confront society by making reference to the Bible, Christian tradition and God. The Catholic tradition also listens to the voice of the *Magisterium*, statements from the authority structure of the Church. In this sense, ethics becomes a living, a dynamic reflection and an analysis of a particular situation in the light of the living Word of God (Kretzschmar 2001:282).

Furthermore, theological ethics and philosophical ethics are both anthropological, because morality is about the human person and what it means to be human. Ethics is about being (character) and doing (conduct). Morality, as Vatican II defines it, studies the nature of human persons and their actions (Pontifical Biblical Commission 2008:93).[16] This anthropological aspect of morality links these two disciplines with other human and social sciences. Anthropology and ethics are connected by their interest in customs and culture. Ethics is the explication and evaluation of conduct and customs according to certain rational standards and, in the case of Christian ethics those standards are the living Word of God, the Bible. The interest of ethics lies in the discernment of values and why there are such values and whether they are adequate as a measure of what it means to be human. Ethics as a normative science is concerned rather with evaluating how society, economy, and political institutions should work for the betterment of human beings in relation with one another. However, morality is distinguishable from the other human and social sciences by its language. The basic sets of words in morality are: good and evil; right and wrong. Christian ethics claims that a good person is the one that lives and abides by the Christian imperatives.

Theological ethics is underpinned by making reference to God in its methodical and conclusive assertions. It further states that God is the source of all morality because God is an objective, transcendent referent for morality. On the other hand, many modern philosophical ethical approaches endeavour to be autonomous. This poses a problem because there are issues that are meta-ethical: the nature of the human person, the purpose of human life, the source and destiny of morality. Secular philosophical ethics will not address these realities, because they are transcendental realities.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is a major figure in the history of philosophical ethics. His ethical theory is found mainly in two of his works: *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*. His approach to ethics is often described as "autonomous", that is, within the limits of reason alone, without any recourse to divine revelation. His ethics is defined as deontological, because he

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[16] I will use the Harvard method throughout the thesis

considered duty as the cornerstone of morality. He rejected interest or inclination as the motivation sufficient for grounding the moral life. For example: I may not feel like doing X; I may not consider it in my own interest to do X. Nevertheless, it remains my duty to do X (Peschke 1993:82). Kant rejected the consideration of consequences as the criterion for determining our course of action. This led him to formulate the classical distinction between the hypothetical and the categorical imperatives. On the inadequacy of the categorical imperatives, Peschke writes, "ethics of values goes beyond the purely formal principle of the categorical imperative by maintaining the existence of moral values with concrete content. These values are thought of as some sort of ideal entities, somewhat like Plato's ideal forms" (1993:85).[17]

The hypothetical imperative takes the following form: If I want A, then I ought to do B. This means that my doing B is dependent upon on me desiring A. The Categorical imperative, on the other hand, always obliges. It takes the following form: I ought to do C. This means that it is my duty to do C. The categorical imperative is a purely formal principle of morality. It does not tell us what we should do. Instead, it tells us that an act is immoral if it cannot be made into a rule for all human beings to follow. Therefore, we can conclude that for Kant the human person is the source of moral obligation, and hence he dismissed revelation as the source of moral law. This was contrary to the earlier teachings of Thomas Aquinas who upheld that only God is the source of moral obligation. For Thomas Aquinas, human beings are the immediate source of morality and he called this participation (Te Velde 1995:14).

Theological ethics should speak in a comprehensive manner to the secular world. Only in this manner can it achieve its purpose of challenging people's lifestyles and ideologies in the light of *Dei Verbum* (the Word of God) (Mahoney 1987:304). This thesis examines South Africa's post-1994 attitude towards morality and values. From this perspective, morality cannot be divorced from faith. Even if theological ethics wants to address a broad spectrum of people, it cannot exclude faith. John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* warned about any dichotomy, which may exist between theological

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[17] http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/kant-moral- Accessed 24 March 2011.

ethics and faith, as dangerous. The Pope saw this as a "serious and destructive dichotomy…representing one of the most acute pastoral concerns of the church amid today's growing secularism" (VS, 88). Without faith, the Church runs the risk of simply becoming a secular NGO.

Theological ethics locates itself within the framework of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God. A study of theological ethics enables us to understand Jesus as **the** standard and norm of morality. It is only in relation to Jesus Christ that we see the horizon, the extent of the meaning of morality and of the demands of Christian discipleship. The central categories of Jesus' ethic are the justice and perfection of God (Mt. 6:33). This vision of Jesus should shape our moral character and conduct by our dispositions. The paradigm of theological ethics is not some abstract system, but is a conversion to the person of Jesus Christ.

As an academic discipline, theological ethics enables us to probe systematically the causes and consequences of family breakdown. This analysis is influenced by Catholic moral theology and is based on the Church's tradition and magisterial teachings. In addition, Protestant theological, and human and social science perspectives are considered in order to assist in evaluating and enhancing the Catholic Church's teaching on ethical issues. Curran reminds Catholic theologians that "theology itself has a pastoral dimension and is not merely a scientific discipline" (1982:24). The endeavours of this research take this reminder seriously.

2.3 Catholic moral theology

Catholic moral theology is another theoretical concept that needs to be defined and discussed. It traces its roots to Bonaventure (1221-1274) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). These two great Catholic theologians of the Middle Ages managed to produce a unified Catholic philosophy and theology. However, it was Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787) who made substantial strides in Catholic moral theology (Dewart 1968:104 & Gula 1989:26). What is Catholic moral theology? We have already established that morality is

concerned with the value of human acts, why they are wrong, good or morally indifferent. Catholic moral theology is concerned with a similar task. Our working definition of Catholic moral theology is that it is a systematic study of human behaviour from the point of view of revelation and tradition (Smith 2006:14-15). Curran develops this definition when he writes that,

> Moral theology involves systematic, thematic, and critical reflection on the Christian moral life. Moral theology is an academic discipline. Moral theology is a systematic discipline in the service of the Church ... Above all; moral theology must be seen as a constitutive part of Christian theology (1982:63).

Tradition distinguishes Catholic moral theology from theological ethics in general (Curran 1982:35). There are other ethical issues which distinguish Catholic moral theology from theological ethics, for example, the indissolubility of marriage, and the inviolability of human life from direct attack (Curran 1980:80-81). These are authoritatively proposed by the Church's magisterium and are based on natural human reasoning. Tradition includes teachings from the Church Fathers, papal teachings and magisterial documents, as well as natural law. Therefore, Catholic moral theology studies all human behaviour.

The differences of theological approach between Catholicism and Protestantism have their origin in the Reformation period in the 16th century. During the Reformation Martin Luther laid down the central tenets of Protestantism: *sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura* (faith alone, grace alone and Scripture alone). Rejected in these tenets are the possibilities of natural theology, natural law and the teaching of the Magisterium. This was because, "Protestant ethics had consistently emphasised the primary place of revelation and the need to see Christian ethics in this context" (Curran 1980:64).

Classical Protestant theology is constructed on the separation of revelation/human knowledge and reason/faith, grace and nature; whereas Catholic moral theology, following the terms of the Council of Chalcedon about the two natures of Christ, has distinguished but not separated these realities. Catholic moral theology states emphatically that moral obligation is rooted in the very order of creation. The adverse is true for some Classical Protestantism. Commenting on the differences of approach of

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these two traditions, Curran writes, "Classical Protestant ethics has generally downplayed the human and the role of the human in Christian ethics. Roman Catholic ethics on the contrary has insisted on the goodness of the human, and its natural law tradition claimed that human reason on the basis of its understanding of humanity can arrive at true ethical wisdom and knowledge. Catholic ethics traditionally has given a very important place to the human, whereas classical Protestant ethics has seen Christian ethics as starting from God and his action and not from man" (1980:67) Nevertheless, many Protestant ethicists today give a considerable weight to the human (Curran 1980:70).

The earlier distance between classical Protestant theological ethics and Catholic moral theology has closed significantly. Since Vatican II, there has been awareness among Catholic moral theologians that Protestant theological ethicists are an important *locus theologicus* (place of theology) in moral deliberations. It is precisely for this reason that the researcher read extensively beyond Catholic theology and included Protestant respondents both in the quantitative and qualitative research.

The contemporary convergence of theological ethics and Catholic moral theology has been facilitated by the renewal of biblical interest in the Catholic Church and a renewed interest in natural law in Protestant circles. To this effect, Curran writes,

> Before the Second Vatican Council there was little or no dialogue between Protestants and Catholic ethicists, but that situation has changed dramatically since the 1960s...As one very knowledgeable and competent Protestant scholar has pointed out, Catholic moral theology now gives more stress to aspects of ethics that were previously identified as typically Protestant emphasis...On the other hand, Protestants have striven to give more importance to Catholic concerns such as being, structure, order, continuity, nature, and law (1982:36-37).

The Protestant tradition reminds the Catholic tradition that it needs to stress the Bible in its treatment of ethics. Nevertheless, many Protestant ethicists today give a considerable weight to the human (Curran 1980:70). Hence, the Second Vatican Council encouraged that the seminary curriculum, especially in relation to moral theology, "should be more thoroughly nourished by scriptural teaching" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 16). Catholic moral theology follows the trend of Pauline morality in the sense that reason is illuminated by faith.

Catholic moral theology acknowledges that the relationship between scripture and morality is not an easy one. The Bible is a series of books, which are subject to linguistic and historic criticisms. There are human and social issues the biblical authors did not envisage, for example, artificial insemination, in vitro fertilisation, human cloning, the ecological crisis, nuclear war, etc. The approach of Catholic moral theology prior to Vatican II towards moral issues was authoritarian, legalistic and fundamentalistic. The renewed Catholic moral theology uses scripture in a more nuanced and critical manner.

The above discussion has described what Catholic moral theology is, because this understanding is crucial in understanding section six of the questionnaire. The data from that section will be interpreted in the light of this understanding. This thesis examines the causes and consequences of family breakdown in the light of Catholic moral theology.

2.4 The human person: a moral being.

Theological ethics is also anthropological in its nature, because it focuses on the human person's experience of morality (Curran 1982:69). Curran notes that the understanding of the human person has served as the basis for developing Catholic moral theology, because this "has opened Catholic moral theology to dialogue with humanistic psychologists and their approaches to growth and development in the human subject (1982:73) Gula (1989:7) expresses the danger of associating ethics with rules to the detriment of the human person. He argues that "to focus on behaviour and rules is not sufficient for understanding the scope of moral reflection…we are in danger of regarding them as something outside ourselves and as having a reality of their own" (Gula 1989:7). Hence, it is appropriate to study what the Bible, says about the human person. The biblical authors situate the human person as distinct from the Creator and from other creatures (Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 2). The human person is more than a collection of molecules, and not just a skilfully designed machine with a computer brain. In Genesis, we deduce that the human person is created with a moral sense, since God called Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 to account for their actions. The human person has a moral

sense, and an ability to make decisions and feel a sense of responsibility for his/her actions.

Observably, the biblical understanding of the human person gives us a different picture from that of secular writers. The Bible presents the human person as "God's project" (Ramsey 1995:42). The Bible teaches the equality of all people and presents human life as a gift from God which needs to be protected and respected.

The God who created the human person is a communitarian God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a result, human persons are fundamentally communitarian (Beller 2001:31). They are a family of humanity; they belong to the human race. Human beings are a result of the total self-giving of their parents. The choices of the human person do not only affect him or her, but also their contiguous fellows. We ought to respect others because they are also created in the image and likeness of God. By voluntarily or involuntarily disposing of the lives of other people, we also destroy the image of God in them. For all our actions, we are morally accountable to God.

2.5 Traditional African view

In this thesis, the researcher uses the generic term "African" to refer especially but not exclusively to the Zulu culture. Where relevant, some of the commonalities of African culture are noted. The thesis also draws on some African theologians who are not South Africans, as some of the problems related to family, marriage and parenting are also prevalent in other African countries. However, the focus of this study in on Zulu culture. This is because Mariannhill is in KwaZulu Natal, the researcher is Zulu and most people in the study are Zulu and he cites Zulu proverbs. It must be borne in mind that definitions are exclusive in nature. This means that differences can develop, because "one cannot treat Italy like England or Kenya like Libya. One needs to develop a moral theology that is for example, truly African..." (Smith 2006:13). Nonetheless, this does not mean that dialogue is impossible because theft will always be wrong. But the exclusive nature of

definitions does not intend to generate unhealthy tensions. Rather it is intended to build a common understanding. Let us consider our working definition of the term "African".

An African is born of African stock and shares in the African experience. This does not mean or refer to culture. Race and culture are mere accidents. They do not belong to the essence of personhood. There are two essential components and characteristics of an African: sharing and participation. Setiloane writes, "the essence of being is participation in which humans are always interlocked with one another...the human being is not only 'vital force', but more 'vital force' in participation" (1986:14). An African person is different from people of other origins and cultures, but this does not presuppose any sense of superiority or inferiority. This would contradict the biblical revelation that all people are equal, regardless of their culture, language and race. The majority of African people tend to despise their story and world view. Even in Catholic seminary formation as many have experienced it, the African world view is not incorporated into the academic programme. Sadly, differences have been equated with inferiority.

An African world view is basically accommodative in its philosophy. Its philosophy is based on integration. A lived experience has no need of explanation. That is why a Zulu person will constantly say during a conversation: *angazi* (I don't know). Living is more crucial than looking for systematic connections and explanations. Unlike the dualism of the West, the African experience does not address itself to thinking and feelings alone, but to totality (Bujo 2001:97). Our approach as a Church often misses this African experience and world view.

The African world view has a hierarchy of beings. In a descending order: God-ancestors-human beings-animals and plants. All these are permeated by a vital force. This vital force "...is not only biological but fundamentally spiritual too … many conflicts in the community can lead to a worsening of health" (Bujo 2001:97). This shows the unitary nature of the African experience and its world view. Things remain distinct and yet remain related to each other. Consequently anyone who intends to disturb this

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relationship is in isiZulu called *umthakathi* (a witch), hence *ukwanda kwaliwa ngumthakathi*[18] meaning "in this experience there could be no prosperity".

The African is a religious being, because of interconnectedness in his or her experience and world view. Desmond Tutu, former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, wrote, "The African worldview rejects popular dichotomies between the sacred and the secular, the material and the spiritual. All life is religious, all life is sacred, and all life is a piece" (1995: xvi). Consequently, morality cannot be divorced from existence, because there is a relationship with everything. Its philosophy is interconnectedness because everything 'influences the other to create the religion's system of morality or ethics" (Magesa 1998:72). Whoever you are, you are an agent of this interconnectedness to the vital force of existence. The African person participates in myth and ritual starting from conception to natural death. Rituals and myths find fertile soil in religion. For example, an expectant mother in the Zulu culture is given *izimbiza* (traditional medicine) to help her towards easy delivery. She is also not permitted to wake up early in the morning, in case *abathakathi* (witches) had been around at night and left *umuthi* (traditional medicine) which might cause complications during delivery. There are also rituals conducted at death that help facilitate the African to come to terms with death and deal with its traumatic experience.

Therefore, the world around an African person is a religious arena, because the world is a visible theatre of morality and ethical responsibility where humanity lives (Magesa 1998:72). In African life it is something not new for the African person to respect the other, because *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (I am because of other people) (Mcunu 2005:18 & Du Toit 1997:69). Yet, today South Africans do not respect human life today because they have lost the consciousness of this fundamental African notion. The sanctity of human life is well articulated in the following isiZulu proverbs: *unyawo*

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[18] This idiomatic expression, literally mean that *umthakathi* does not like prosperity. *Umthakathi* is frowned upon in the African culture, because s/he works against the harmony of the community. Any person, therefore, who works against the unity of the community causes his/her actions to be called *ubuthakathi*. Any person who does not show ubuntu is said to have this spirit of *ubuthakathi*. *Umthakathi* then, might not only refer to a person that uses *umuthi*, but also to a person who has evil thoughts and intentions.

alunampumulo (the foot has no rest) and *izandla ziyagezana* (hands wash each other).[19] Names of people have a religious significance: The name *Nomvula* is derived from the noun *mvula* meaning rain. Rain means life, prosperity and happiness. Natural phenomena become divine warnings. Things in the African world view and experience do not just happen. There must be a cause. A Zulu person will say: *Bathini abadala* (what are the elders/ancestors saying?). An African's existence is a religious phenomenon. Failure to recognise this results in superficial Christianity.

African life is integrated and balanced. However, our attitudes towards each other could be *ubuthakathi* if we disturb harmony in the community and society. Our correct attitude heals and helps us create a culture of life in South Africa.

2.5.1 Traditional African ethics

We have so far asserted that there are certain traits and characteristics that characterise an African person. If we state that there are traits peculiar to an African person, it logically follows that there should be an African way of behaving and relating to the other, as we have just established in the previous sub-topic. We can therefore ask, is there an African ethic which relates to a Zulu world view?

The term African ethics seems to raise concerns among some sceptics, particularly with reference to contemporary Africa. This scepticism comes from the concern about the present state of the African continent. It is maintained that in the past 50 years, Africa has undergone fundamental changes. The present Africa is no longer the same as the Africa of five decades ago. Therefore, this makes it impossible to speak of a traditional African ethic.

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[19] The literal meaning of the first proverb is that the foot has no rest. Since the foot does not have rest, it can one day take me to a place I never thought I would visit. Hence I ought to respect other people because I will need them one day when my foot takes me to their place. The significance of the second one is that, hands wash each other. Again the emphasis here is on mutual assistance and the recognition of human inter-dependence.

If we adopt this position, Catholic moral theology faces the same challenge. The Catholic Church has evolved over the centuries. But this evolution does not mean that the essence of Catholicism has changed. Similarly, though the African continent has significantly evolved in the past 50 years, yet the elements of continuity remain. Hence, this makes it possible for us to speak about an African ethic. The encounter between Christianity and the African culture did not cause a total extinction of the African world view. What happened during this encounter is that the African world view lost its prominence. Presently, we speak of a renewed interest in or a resurgence of the African world view. It is this resurgence that enhances an African ethic.

The norms concerning ethical conduct are handed down to generations, through various oral traditions. The most popular methods are the "fairy tale stories and legends that are told to children again and again, with special emphasis on the vices and virtues of the protagonists" (Bujo 2001:24). In the traditional African context, these fairy tales were told to children in the evening when all members of the family were back from their daily tasks. The family sat around the fire and the elders passed on the ethical norms to offspring. Strong families ensured strong and healthy societies. For children, this period was the process of conscience formation. Conscience formation enables individuals to make decisions based on moral objective truths. Bujo further highlights the importance of this crucial stage when he writes that "the children are to internalise these lessons for daily conduct and dealings with their fellow human beings" (2001:24). These examples of ethical conduct were learnt and internalised within the family. Before young people could interact with the structures of society, they had established a moral base, which was nurtured at home. The social structures did not replace the role of the family.

The African code of ethics was not written in books, journals and encyclopaedias, but was written in people's hearts and daily speech. The following Zulu proverbs demonstrate this: *umuthi ugotshwa usemanzi* (a tree is bent while still young)*; libunjwa liseva* (mould when it is still fresh)*; zibanjwa zisemaphuphu* (the best time to catch a bird

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is when it is still a chick)*; inkunzi isematholeni* (the bull is among the calves).[20] These proverbs reveal that the crucial stage of formation for children is when they are still young and this formation ought to take place in the home. The family, as a stable primordial society, was the place for moral formation. The core thrust of these proverbs is to "embrace every sphere of life" (Bujo 2001:25).

Conversely, urban society underplays the role of marriage and family life, with unfavourable consequences. The rise of capitalism forces parents to work and stay away from their homes and this deprives them of the opportunity to spend time with their children. Many homes today have become convenient places for people to sleep. There is a vacuum in the formation of children. As a result, children spend more time playing television games, which are frequently violent. These games socialise violence as something exciting. Often children come home before their parents arrive. By the time parents come home in the evening, their children are already in bed. Parents are not there when their children want to share news with them.

Another important game that is part of the traditional African way of helping impart ethical codes to children is *ukuphicaphicana* (to puzzle or to twist).[21] The role of *ukuphicaphicana* is to "communicate ethical goods and correct behaviour, and they often supplement and correct one another by means of contradictory assertions" (Bujo 2001:24). This game is played by way of posing puzzling questions to children. These questions were normally based on life in general, in order to help the youngsters to think creatively and reflectively. In life, children must not take things for granted. But they must discern their conduct and reflect hard before taking a decision in life. All these

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[20] The literal translation of these four proverbs is "a tree is bent while it is still young", "mould when it is still fresh", "the best time to catch a bird is still when it is a chick", and "the bull is among the calves". These proverbs mean that, children learn best when they are young. Therefore, it is important for the family and society to play their role of educating the children when they are still young. This role of education is begun at home by the parents, the members of the extended family and finally by the society.

[21] The word *ukuphicaphica* literally means to puzzle or to twist. The goal of this game was to provoke critical thinking in the children, so that they do not take life at face value. They had to identify good characters in the story and good qualities in that character. Life is indeed a great puzzle that ought not to be taken at face value.

games were played in a family setting. The community of the family was the first school, where children learnt to live with other people in a reciprocal and respectful manner.

The greatest value of the African ethic is summed up in one word, *Ubuntu*, meaning being human par excellence. This was treated at length in my dissertation for the master's degree (Mcunu 2005). There I stated that an African ethic was reflected in people's daily speech and was written in their hearts. The African ethic is based on solidarity such as is expressed in the following Zulu sayings: *izandla ziyagezana* (hands wash each other)*; isisu somhambi asingakanani singangenso yenyoni* (a visitor's stomach is a size of a bird's stomach)*; unyawo alunampumulo* (the foot has no rest)*; ukupha ukuziphakela* (to give is to help yourself)*; ukwanda kwaliwa ngumthakathi* (prosperity is disdained by a witch)*; ungadinwa nangomuso* (don't grow tired tomorrow to do the same good).[22] Failure to show ubuntu has unfavourable consequences: *ikhohlisana ihlomile* (deceiving each other as if all is well)*; wadlula ngendlu isakhiwa* (do not pass by without lending a hand)*; amathonya ayathonyana; utshwala bubila ngambizanye* (African beer in brewed in two pots).[23] The positive effects of ubuntu are:

> There is a continuous flow of life between all the community members, including the deceased … The life which issues forth from God becomes a task for all human beings to accomplish. They must ensure that this initial gift of life reaches full maturity, and this is possible only when we act in solidarity…Each one who commits himself/herself to act in solidarity for the construction of the community allows himself/herself to be brought to completion by this same community (Bujo 2001:88).

An ethic of solidarity brings about the respect of human life and the respect of the life of the members of the community. This was also affirmed by Laurenti Magesa in his book- *African Religion* (1998) which explores African morality and concludes that the basis of an African ethic is based on the promotion of human life, because the African ethic acknowledges that human life is a gift from *Umvelingqangi* (the Supreme Being – the

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[22] These literally mean: "Hands wash each other", "A visitor's stomach is a size of a bird's stomach", "The foot has no rest", "To give is to help yourself", "prosperity is disdained by a witch" and "Don't grow tired tomorrow to do the same good". These Zulu proverbs demonstrate the interdependence of people, without diminishing the individual. So, whatever one does for the other person will have consequences for the doer, whether positive or negative.

[23] Literally meaning: "Do not pass by without helping a neighbour who is building a house", "African beer is brewed in one pot". An African person is expected to lend a hand because you are a person through others.

One who came first). Magesa writes that, "Conception is not seen as merely a result of man and woman coming together in the act of sexual intercourse. It is most basically understood as the result of a blessing from God and the ancestors. Without divine and ancestral blessing, conception may well not be possible" (1998:82). This was also attested to by Shutte when he wrote that life in the African context "is like an organism, a natural rather than an artificial whole" (2001:26). African morality and Catholic moral theology converge on this point of respect for human life.

An African ethic evolved around the preservation of the community (Ackermann 1996:44). The reason for this being that "to be a human being, to be a moral, ethical person – *Mtu* (in Kiswahili) and *muntu*, it is not possible to live in isolation...one can only become truly human in community, in the context of other human beings in the world. (Magesa 1998:77-78). Hence, it can be understood as a morality that seeks a common good. While Africa is a big continent, there are consistent traits of behaviour which are common to African people. African morality does not have names like ethics or morality. In Zulu we say "*akaziphethe kahle*" (He/she does not behave well).[24] In African morality, the word "character" refers to the actions of the person. Character is about the person's conduct and relation to other people and this is important in the African ethic. Therefore, it is an ethic of care, because it is altruistic.

It has become apparent that the African ethic is not defined by ontological antecedents, but by relations. Each member of the community has a unique and a significant role to play. An African ethic is one of participation. Bujo affirms this when he mentions that "life in community demands alertness and maintenance of one's own individuality … so that the individual has an inalienable dignity and may not be discarded as something worthless" (2001:91). This ethic is underpinned by a spirit of reciprocity, "I am because we are, since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti 1970:141).

This ethic does not leave any room for the abuse of human life. Human life ought to be respected from the womb to the tomb. The new technological advances are viewed with

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[24] The reference here is directed to the character of the person: "He/she does not behave well".

suspicion in the traditional African ethic. For example, as much as the African community values and appreciates human life, it does not welcome human cloning and euthanasia. Human cloning is seen as diminishing the individual. Life on earth is a stage of passage towards ancestorship. Bujo challenges human cloning by stating robustly, "a cloned human being can never replace an ancestor. The ancestor is one who had his/her own experience, which cannot be communicated by purely biological means" (2001:94). In this world view euthanasia is unspeakable, because death should never come as a result of human intervention or omission. Death should come as a result of a natural process.

In summary, an African ethic is deeply humane because it is founded on the interests of the human person. The strong sense of community in Africa developed against background of the need to preserve the community. Every person had a duty to contribute to the well-being of the community. Social institutions like marriage were valued from this perspective. Therefore, the resurgence of such an ethic must ensure that the role of the family founded on marriage is restored.

2.5.2 Similarities between Catholic morality and African ethics

If we examine Thomas Aquinas closely, we observe that he does not separate the natural from the supernatural. But, he sees interconnectedness between the two. *Gaudium et Spes* article 11 speaks of this interconnectedness as well. In the African ethic, a living individual person is linked both to the community of the living and that of the living dead.

There are fundamental links between traditional African ethic and Catholic morality. Both traditions respect and venerate those who have passed on. In the African world view, the ancestors form a critical link between *Umvelingqangi* (the Supreme Being) and the living. Ancestral status is conferred during a sacrificial rite. The Catholic Church also presents the hosts of saints as people who have the power to intercede on behalf of the living. These are to be venerated publicly because of their heroic virtues that can be

emulated. There is a strong sense of respect for human life in both traditions. Marriage and family are central and are necessary for developing sound communities.

2.5.3 Dissimilarities between Catholic morality and African ethics

There are, however, dissimilarities between Catholic morality and an African ethic. These differences are mainly in their approach and foundations. Catholic morality is founded on revelation. Therefore, God is the source of all morality. Morality in the Catholic Church is understood as the human person's response to the call to be with God. On the other hand, the foundation of an African ethic comes from below. It comes from the people reflecting on their own situation in the world. There are no divine scriptures as a base for an African ethic. The community is the living expression of the tenets of this ethic.

There is no formal setting of an African ethic. This lack of integration in the African ethic makes dialogue with others a challenge. The traditional African view of life was hierarchical and patriarchal. Women and children had virtually no say in public affairs. An African ethic today needs to guard against this tendency. On the other hand, Catholic morality teaches that all people are equal because they are created in the image and likeness of God.

2.6 Marriage and the family

The institution of the family and marriage has been studied by various academic disciplines, namely, sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology, psychiatry, economics and theology. Family and marriage in this thesis are studied mainly from a Catholic theological perspective. Nevertheless, this perspective takes into account many insights, especially those from psychology, sociology and anthropology.

The term "family" plays a key role in this thesis. Hence, it is important to define it. The noun, family, describes people who are blood related or have come to be related through marriage or adoption. This narrow definition of family is underpinned by two types of

relation- consanguinity and affinity. In the last two or three decades it has come to include other persons who have important roles in the lives of people, especially within the confines of a household. Since this thesis is written from the perspective of theological ethics, which is informed by Catholic moral theology, we need to examine how the term family is understood by Catholic teaching.

The institution of the family is based on marriage "that intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman, which is constructed freely and publicly expresses an indissoluble bond of matrimony and is open to the transmission of life" (CCC 1603).[25] Some sociologists and anthropologists agree with the Catholic Church's definition of the family (Goodsell 1934:2 and Hunt 1979:14). Some psychologists develop it further (Georgas 2006:4). Early psychologists, such as Murdock (1949:2), stated that the family as a social group is characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. This includes a man and a woman who ought to maintain a sexual relationship for the propagation of the human species (Murdock 1949:2).

Based on the Catholic Church's understanding of family and that of some sociologists and anthropologists, we can state that a family ought to be founded on marriage. The family is preceded by marriage. The family is the first social unit. Chidammodzi's definition of the family is closely related to the Catholic Church's definition. He defines the family "as the concretisation of the social unit which is the result of marriage" (1994:125). This definition does not conceive of family without marriage. The argument here is that marriage and family cannot be separated because they are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, marriage and family are distinct but not separate. This was later affirmed by Thatcher (2007:115). Our contemporary society tends to separate these two social realities as if they don't necessarily belong together. Marriage is the foundation of family. Chidammodzi (1994:125) argues that "marriage gives birth to the family which is a duly recognised social unit". This means that family is the actualisation of marriage.

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[25] CCC – Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Therefore, the family is a society that exists prior to any larger society or community. Furthermore, it constitutes not only the juridical, social and economic unit, but also a community of love and solidarity. The family and society are two fundamentally linked anthropological and theological realities. They are linked by their common vision, which is the defence and advancement of the good of every person and of humanity. This link is explained further in the following subtopic.

Let us summarise the above explanations of the meaning of the family:
- There is relationship either by blood or adoption
- Living together under one roof, common habitation, home or household
- Interaction and communication as parents and as siblings
- Extended family relations
- Obligations of care, love and affection
- Must be founded on marriage.

The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 16 states, "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have a right to marry and to found a family ... The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state". Therefore, human reason tells us that men and women have a right to form a family and this formation becomes a corner stone upon which to build a society. Here we find natural reason and faith in agreement. Benedict XVI affirmed this when he said,

> Natural law, which is at the root of the recognition of true equality between persons and peoples, deserves to be recognised as the source that inspires the relationship between the spouses in their responsibility for begetting children. The transmission of life is inscribed in nature and its laws stand as an unwritten norm to which all must refer.[26]

Natural reason teaches us to respect and to value marriage and family as the building blocks of a healthy society. Faith confirms and deepens this reality, which is knowable to all humans by reason. Therefore, founding a family upon marriage is first and foremost

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[26] Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to participants in the International Congress organised by the Pontifical Lateran University on the 40th anniversary of the encyclical '*Humanae Vitae*', 10 May 2008.

knowable to all human beings through natural reason, *ratio*. In this regard, *ratio et fides* (faith and reason) are in complete agreement.

The Catholic Church teaches that the family based on marriage is a natural institution, a natural society. Let us now consider how Canon no. 1055 defines marriage: "marriage is a covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life and which of its very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has between the baptised, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament" (cf. CCC 1601 and GS 48). The points that are highlighted in this canon are further developed and discussed in chapter four when we discuss the Catholic view of marriage and family.

In brief, the Church's definition does not only take into account the data from revelation, but considers also the demands of natural law. Marriage has a close link with the bigger society. Hunt (1979:14), an American sociologist, agrees with the Church's definition of marriage, and the teaching that marriage is constituted by free consent and commitment. It is commonly accepted that the absence of these two realities renders marriage invalid.

2.7 Family and society

Peschke defines society as "a lasting association of men and women for the attainment of a common goal, necessitated by nature" (1985:222). Society, like the family, is characterised by mutual assistance. This definition highlights the fact that society is an existential human reality. Therefore, there is an interdependent link between the family and society. The family is primarily concerned with the character development of people on a small scale. This inner development considers the area of education, building and passing on of societal values (Peschke 1985:222). Society is "characterised by systematic organization and external institutions" (Peschke 1985:222). The value of the family for society lies in the essential vocation of the parents, which is to bring up their children properly and to educate them. Society expects that its future members be brought up well and be prepared for integration into it.

Marriage, then, is a social reality and not just a biological means of fecundity. Marriage has an important link with society and culture. Burgess examines the inter-relation between marriage and society as follows:

> The animal mates but man marries. The significant of this distinction is simple and clear. Mating is biological while marriage is social and cultural. Marriage implies a ceremony, a union with social sanctions, and recognition of obligations to the community assumed by those entering this relationship ... Every human society in the past and throughout the world has regarded marriage as important for the welfare of society and has been concerned...with its deterioration (Burgess 1963:1).

The family founded on marriage does not exist for itself, but has a goal to fulfil in society. Our definition stated that the family is a social group, and that it ought to have a specific function to fulfil within the social stratum. Cultural anthropologists agree that the role of the family is mainly twofold: procreation and the socialisation of children (Murdock 1949; Bender 1967; Yanagisako 1979 and Goody 1983).[27]

Any efforts that are directed towards moral regeneration in South Africa should begin with the renewal of the family, because the renewal of society depends on strong families. The Vatican II fathers affirmed this critical dependence stating, "...the well being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family" (GS 47). Messner also mentioned the invaluable place of the family in the process of societal renewal:

> The biological and moral strength of society essentially depends on the state of its families. History provides sufficient evidence that the decay of family life is the deepest cause of the decline of nations. The consequence of the position of the family as the cell in society is that all true social reform must begin with the family. All so called social reform which overlooks this law or acts against it is ultimately doomed to failure (Messner 1965:420).

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[27] These four American anthropologists were notable in their pursuit to demonstrate the positive functions of the family within the broader spectrum of the society.

The Pontifical Council for the Family, meeting in the Vatican in 1998, summed up beautifully the link between the family and society. This Council mentioned:

> The challenges such as threats to survival, the 'culture of death', violence, the lack of safety, underdevelopment, unemployment, migrations, etc can only be tackled successfully based on a conception of human rights that are developed through the family, thereby transforming the society that is generated in and by the family.[28]

2.8 Culture

The term culture is difficult to define with precision, because it is an interdisciplinary term that is investigated by various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, ethics, Christian anthropology, philosophical anthropology, moral theology, etc. These disciplines approach culture from particular perspectives. It will be an ambitious conjecture to think that a single definition will cover all the aspects of what culture is. Instead, it is appropriate to give a descriptive analysis of what culture is.

Geertz describes culture as a "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols by means of which men and women communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about, and attitude to life" (1973:89). Developing this definition further, culture is also understood to be a sum of beliefs which a particular ethnic group subjects itself to. These beliefs are common to the members of that particular group of people. On the whole, these belief-systems are well articulated and preserved in the rites, arts, dance and songs the people perform. Culture gives identity, direction and purpose in life and is used as a measure of people's conduct. Hence, culture is a conscious guiding tool in life.

The Second Vatican Council Fathers presented, though not an exhaustive definition of culture, a description of the key constitutive elements of culture. They stated:

> The word 'culture' in its general sense indicates all those factors by which man/woman refines and unfolds his/her manifold spiritual and bodily qualities. It means his/her effort to bring the world itself under his/her control by his/her knowledge and his/her labour. It includes the fact that by improving customs and institutions, he/she renders human life more human both within the family and in

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[28] http//: www.vatican.va/documents/ and settings/helpdesk/my/documents the family and human rights.html - Accessed 18 June 2007.

civic community. Finally, it is a feature of culture that throughout the course of time man/woman expresses, communicates, and observes in his/her works great spiritual experiences and desires, so that these may be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family (in Abbott 1966:257).

The Council Fathers highlighted three key elements of culture in the aforementioned descriptive definition. First, they saw culture as something that people develop for their own well-being. Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:27) also saw culture as something constructed by the people themselves. Second, culture is something manifested through rituals and customs (Geertz 1973:89). Third, the community uses culture to express itself and to assert its uniqueness in the global village. Comaroff and Comaroff also state that culture is that "which human beings use to represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories" (1992:27).

It is evident that culture is not only about rituals, dancing and beating of drums. Culture like ethics is about human beings. In cultural studies, a person is not an object of observation, but a subject that must be treated with dignity. Morality also is about human beings and their actions towards the "other". Therefore, these two disciplines are linked in a special and a profound way. Culture shapes views of human life and how we ought to relate to each other. However, it is also we who shape culture.

Culture also means a prevalent attitude in any given society. We often speak of a culture of learning, culture of violence, etc. This thesis endeavours to create a prevalent attitude in our society that respects human life. But, it can only achieve this by analysing the causes and consequences of family breakdown in South Africa, and by creating a prevalent attitude that respects and acknowledges the unique role of the family founded on marriage. Culture is descriptive in a sense that it is a way of life. This way of life is manifested in the values that a group of people embraces and to which they adhere.

Apparently then, culture is a given a priori. We are not born with culture embedded in our human nature; rather we are born into it. Since we are born into it, we can learn it or discard it. The family founded on marriage is the first place where we experience culture,

a prevailing attitude about life and societal values. The family is the first place of cultural encounter. Therefore, it needs to be nourished and promoted. The RDP of the soul begins within the home. Thus creating a culture of life will serve as a basis for the appreciation of the family founded on marriage.

There are two things which link culture and ethics, namely, values and norms of conduct (Mugambi 2003:11). These aspects tie the community together and they become distinctive marks of a given society or community. Ethics as an aspect of culture is of vital importance in advancing common goals. Also, ethical attitudes and actions need to transform negative aspects of culture, thereby creating a shared vision of a culture of life in South Africa. This shared vision of life will be based on the values and norms that we cherish as a country. One of these is the respect of human life, which is based on the values and norms taught in the home.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has defined and discussed key terms that are pillars of the thesis. The main intention of defining of terms was to create a common understanding between the reader and the researcher.

The following chapter discusses the method of research that was employed by the researcher.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and defined key terms used in this research. The focus of this chapter is the method of research which was used in gathering data about the situation of the family in the world, in South Africa and in particular in the area of Mariannhill.

A research method is used in order to obtain information and "to expand knowledge in a particular field of study" (Welman & Kruger 2001:2). The research method used in this thesis intends to identify and expand the broader implications of family breakdown in South Africa, and identify the implications of family breakdown for individuals and the larger society within the academic study of theological ethics. The primary reason for undertaking this is to propose the family founded on marriage as a model for creating a culture of life in South Africa. Therefore, this research is conducted in order to assess two things: first, to analyse the causes and the consequences of family breakdown and their impact, and second, to assess the role of the family founded on marriage in people's lives and its possible contribution to the advancement of society. We begin by briefly stating the research problem.

3.2 Research problem

As noted in chapter one, there has been a public outcry in South Africa about the level of moral decay and permissiveness. This outcry is due to the nature of crimes that are committed through corruption both in the public and private sectors, the vulnerability of human life, and, in particular, the high rate of abuse of women and children. In response to this outcry, initiatives have been undertaken in order to address this situation as a nation. A Moral Summit was held which was intended to be a platform for broader consultation and discussion. Unfortunately, it did not succeed because of its *modus*

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operandi. Key stakeholders felt that they were left out, and it did not have any bearing on the larger society. At a later stage, a MRM was also launched. This also did not succeed, because people who were spearheading it were found to be involved in fraudulent practices. Yet again, the MRM remained the brainchild of the government. These initiatives did not base the renewal of the society on a concrete reality, but remained where they had been created, in the realm of parliamentary corridors.

At this point, we need to state briefly the main research problem of the thesis. The term "problem" within the ambit of research refers to a situation that causes the researcher to be uncomfortable and to ask questions. Therefore, a research problem ought to be distinguished from the purpose of undertaking research. The research problem is one that causes the researcher concern; it is a problem with its related questions that require further research. Therefore, there ought to be a clear formulation of the research problem so that the aim and the purpose of the research could be easily achieved.[29] For this reason, a research problem serves as a foundation of the study. One cannot solve a problem if it is unclear or poorly articulated. A failure to articulate accurately the research problem could even lead to the poor construction and use of the relevant research tools. The researcher in this thesis is primarily interested in studying the role of the family founded on marriage.

Stating the research problem enables the researcher to be clear about the task at hand. Research often begins with a problem that has been identified. The problem could arise from a particular situation, or from gaps in the existing literature. The researcher worked as a priest in the area of Mariannhill for nine and a half years. During this time, the researcher observed that young people who came mainly from broken and dysfunctional families exhibited behavioural problems at school and in society. The researcher observed different behaviour patterns from young people who had loving and stable homes. The research question that emerged is: what causes family breakdown and how can families experience a culture of life in Mariannhill?

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[29] www.sharepointsecurity.com/research-methodology/formulation-of-research-problem-and-hypothesis Accessed 17 February 2012.

Having stated the role of problem formulation, we can now ask: what are the related research questions that arise from the main research problem? First, the researcher wants to know what are the causes and the consequences of family breakdown in Mariannhill and especially their impact on children and society. Closely related to this, the researcher also wants to identify the role of the family founded on marriage in assisting us create a culture of life in South Africa. The second question emanates from what the researcher observed among young people with both parents who came from loving and stable families. Another question that we need to reflect upon is: why does the researcher want to have these questions answered? As stated in chapter one, the researcher wants to contribute towards the revival of moral values in South Africa and to reflect on strategies that we can adopt in order to curb marital breakdown with its negative effects on children and society. This will assist us in creating a culture of life. Furthermore, the answers that will emerge from this research will contribute to the development of scholarly knowledge in the study of theological ethics and deeper insights for those involved in parish ministry.

This thesis demonstrates the invaluable role of the family founded on marriage in facilitating the creation of a culture of life in South Africa and also the restoration of moral values in society. The institution of the family achieves this within the context of the home environment by instilling good values in children. This is based on the African maxim: *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (A person is a person through others). The institution of the family founded on marriage, as we saw in chapter two, serves life because it is the garden of life. Therefore, it can help us to develop a coherent moral vision for South Africa.

3.3 Theoretical framework and literature review

Theories in a research project are constructed in order to assist the researcher to explain and to master data and the project under study. A theory is often based on one's training, observations and integrated set of ideas. In a research project, a theoretical framework serves as a basis for conducting research. Therefore, in this thesis, Catholic moral

theology is the main theoretical basis that has provided the researcher with a general framework for the data analysis that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. This was outlined in section 2.3 of the previous chapter.

According to Delport and Fouche a theoretical paradigm is "a frame of reference that underpins and guides the study" (2005:265). Therefore, a theoretical paradigm in research refers to the way in which theoretical and empirical data will be explained. The theoretical paradigm in this research project, based on Catholic teaching regarding marriage and the family, seeks to elucidate the following question: what are the causes and the consequences of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill, and how do these factors affect the children and society? Therefore, there are questions that need to be asked in order to ensure that the theoretical paradigm is linked with the empirical research conducted for this thesis. The questionnaire and the focussed interviews used in the empirical research were constructed in such a way that they relate to the topic of the thesis.

The theoretical paradigm and the empirical research are linked in a research endeavour in order to establish evidence to support the hypothesis. In this thesis, the theoretical information is derived mainly from books, Catholic Church documents and academic journals. This information will be related to and integrated with the empirical research information gained from the questionnaires and interviews.

A key hypothesis of this thesis is that family breakdown contributes negatively to the society. This hypothesis affords us the opportunity to explain in chapters four, five and six what marriage and the family ought to be like compared to the actual situation in which families find themselves. Without this explanation, the empirical research will lack precision. These two paradigms (theoretical and empirical) are thus inter-linked and connected. Already, we can see that an attempt was made in this thesis to connect all aspects of inquiry, for example, the aim of the thesis, the objective of the thesis, the motivation for doing this research, literature review, methods of research, data collection and critical analysis.

A basic assumption upon which this research is conducted is the conviction that the family founded on marriage has positive outcomes for children and society. This assumption comes from the researcher's hands-on experience in the area of Mariannhill where he worked with young people. This study is thus underpinned by the researcher's own experience as a Zulu Catholic priest working in a predominantly Zulu parish setting. Hence this thesis also draws on the African understanding of marriage, the family and parenting as discussed in chapter four, especially from the Zulu perspective.

3.3.1 The literature review

Below a few of the many sources used in this study are specifically mentioned to illustrate some of the key fields of study that are included in this thesis. It is not a complete list.

The first method of research used in this thesis is the literature review. Undertaking the literature review helps the researcher to form his/her theoretical paradigm and helps to provide the necessary information to answer the questions the researcher wants to study. The chief purpose of undertaking the literature review is to assist a researcher to locate his/her study in the broader academic and social context (Neuman 1997:88; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006:19). Furthermore, the literature review provides the researcher with an opportunity to assess the work already performed in the area he/she wishes to investigate. In this thesis, the literature review accorded the researcher an opportunity of delving into the Church's teaching about marriage and family, and also other fields of study, for example, the social and human sciences. This formed a critical evaluation of the literature read thus far. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to identify the gaps within the official documents of the church. The researcher's critical evaluation of the Church's teaching, its practice, attitudes and institutional structures is based on information gleaned from the literature review.

Hofstee (2006:106) identified five main objectives for a literature review that the researcher worked towards in constructing this thesis. The five objectives identified by Hofstee (2006) are as follows:

- The literature review provides the researcher with a broader picture of a chosen field of study
- It provides a theoretical base for the research being undertaken
- It helps the researcher to make connections with previous studies or topics on the chosen field of study. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to identify loop-holes in the field of study and so enable the researcher to make a unique contribution
- It highlights the significance of the researcher's work
- Finally, it helps to make a new and a unique contribution to the chosen field of study. This is how ideas and scholarly work develop.

A literature review is an important component of research, as the aforementioned objectives show. It has also provided the researcher with much needed extra reading (Van Dalen 1979:80). Hofstee (2006) concurs with Van Dalen (1979) that a literature review enhances the researcher's knowledge of the chosen field of study.

Several published sources relating to ethics, marriage, the family and parenting, and methodology were consulted while working on this thesis. These include many books, journals, biblical texts, an analysis of ways in which some of these biblical texts have been interpreted, especially by Catholic writers, and relevant Church documents, such as papal encyclicals. As noted below, some Protestant and social science sources were also consulted. All of these published sources illustrate the range of literature employed in forming the theoretical paradigm that underpins this thesis. This theoretical paradigm was influential in constructing the empirical research methods and tools. In turn, data collected in the empirical research efforts, influenced the theoretical paradigm, in particular the greater emphasis on fatherlessness in the thesis that emerged following the interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire.

A few representative sources that were consulted are mentioned below, in accordance with the key themes covered in this research.

3.3.1.1 Theological ethics

Van der Ven (1998) *Formation of the moral self*. This book is very important for the thesis, since it deals with the renewal of moral values. Van der Ven outlines stages which are important for moral formation, which parents can use as they guide their offspring. This will ensure that the future members of the society are well prepared for integration. This book is indispensable to this work because it address the notion of paying particular attention to building blocks of society, the family having a prominent place among them.

Connors, R. B & McCormick, P. T (1998) *Character, Choices and Community: The three faces of Christian ethics*. Good choices and character are ingredients necessary for building up a morally responsible person and community. This book links well with Van der Ven's assertion that moral formation is not about following a basic set of rules, but is a process. Through moral formation, which ought to take place at home, the parents through their supervision help the child to go through this stage of development. Hence, these authors see the family as having a positive function for society and this is the theoretical framework of the thesis.

3.3.1.2 African ethics

Christian ethics has been well explored and written about extensively by Western ethicists. But, work on Christian ethics in relation to socio-political issues affecting the African continent is scanty. I must admit, however, that this research is not an exhaustive treatise on African ethics. Rather, it intends to consider an African experience. The following are some scholars who have tried to engage in some ethical questions in relation to African culture: Alex Ivar Berglund, Benezet Bujo, Kwesi Dickson, John Mbiti, G. C. Oosthuizen, Remy Beller, Laurenti Magesa, Aylward Shorter, etc. Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1995) a well renowned woman theologian wrote a book entitled:

Daughters of Anowa: African women and Patriarchy. In this book, she discusses marriage and family from an African perspective and offers her views on how the African understanding of marriage has been blurred by secular Western views. Furthermore, she offers a critical examination of the African culture and cultural sexism that still pervades many African families today (Oduyoye 1995:159). The researcher also read the book *African women's theology: Gender relations and family systems theory* (Nyengele 2004:22). This book offers some pastoral and theological insights into gender issues and their impact on the family. Many of her insights are discussed in chapter four. The researcher is also aware of the challenges that face the Christian teaching on marriage, especially in relation to polygamy. For this reason, the researcher read in detail the book *Christian marriage in Africa: A report,* by Adrian Hastings (1973). This book proposes that the Church can still passionately teach the Christian ideals of marriage in Africa.

The African Initiated Churches have tried to a larger extent to arrive at a considered, healthy merger between the Christian faith and an African ethic. They have tried to interpret the Western faith within an African framework (Ngada 2001:55). Ngada (2001) attributes the moral decline in our country to the missionary onslaught on the African culture, and their failure to interpret this religion within the African framework.

Bujo (2001) has for the first time articulated what the foundations of an African ethics are. An African ethic is anthropological in its outlook. It deals with the human person within the context of his or her community (Richardson 1996:40). This ethic is characterised by two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. The vertical dimension relates to the world of the spirits, while the horizontal dimension locates the human person within his or her physical realm. Bujo (2001) in his book titled *African Christian morality at the age of inculturation* has far exceeded his previous efforts. Yet the consequences of family breakdown are not discussed. This thesis intends, in part, to make up for this omission.

The majority of commentators on African theology have spoken at length and have written extensively on the questions of ancestors, African humanism and communalism,

ubuntu and ritual practices. On the other hand, nothing much has been said about the causes and consequences of family breakdown and how this affects the people's lives.

3.3.1.3 Theological books and Catholic literature

Catholic moral theology also guides the theoretical argumentation of this thesis. Theological books showed that marriage belongs to the divine plan of God. It was willed by God to be a place where human life ought to be cherished and therefore, it is the sanctuary of love and human life. Several theological books and some papal writings state unequivocally that marriage ought to precede the family and that the family is the building block of society.

There is enough literature tackling the issues surrounding the family. Unfortunately, scholarly research in the area of the impact of the causes and the consequences of family breakdown in relation to issues of human life is very scanty. Church documents on the other hand, have tried to engage in issues surrounding marriage and family, but also very minimally. The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964) deals with the Church's teaching on the family and its mission in the world. The Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (28 October 1965) dwells on the role of the parents as primary teachers of their offspring and acknowledges the unique place of the family founded on marriage among the different social institutions. The Decree on the apostolate of the lay people, *Apostolicam Auctuositatem* (18 November 1965) invites married couples to be witnesses of faith to each other, to their children and to the world. The Pastoral Constitution of the Church, *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965) deals with burning issues in the modern world. The first chapter of this constitution treats marriage and family as first among the burning problems of the time. This document speaks of marriage in theological terms and less canonical terms. Some post-conciliar documents that we can mention are *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975) and *Catechesi Tradendae* (16 October 1979). These two documents recapture the theology of Vatican II in seeing the family as the primary agent of evangelisation. In 1980, there was a Synod of Bishops on the Family. The synod looked at the role of the family in the modern world.

What appeared to be a discussion limited to the specific functions of the Christian family, like evangelisation, catechesis and various other apostolic and ecclesial tasks in the life of the Church, eventually grew to encompass other aspects.

The hard work of the 1980 Synod of Bishops on the family paved the way for the publication of the Post-Synodal Exhortation. John Paul II in his *Familiaris Consortio* of 1981, for the first time discussed the challenges that beset the family today. In some detail, he contended that these challenges seem to shake the very foundation of society, namely, the family. Acknowledging the role of the family, Pope John Paul II stated that, "… marriage and family constitute one of the most precious of human values" (FC 1). John Paul II identified the four tasks of the family as: forming a community of persons, serving life, participating in the development of society, and sharing in the life and mission of the church (FC17).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the family as a domestic Church, where children ought to receive their primary education. It also acknowledges the unique role of the family when it states that, "the Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of faith. For this reason, the family home is rightly called the 'domestic church', a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity" (CCC 1666).

The book by Susan Rakoczy *In her name: women doing theology* (2004) offers perspectives from a Catholic theologian who has contributed meaningfully to issues affecting women within the Church and beyond. The researcher found her discussions on woman as person and ethical issues to be of particular interest to this thesis. The series *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teaching* (2003) edited by Charles Curran offered current debates on marriage and family, especially the article by Lisa Sowle Cahill, though her insights are from North American context.

3.3.1.4 Protestant literature

This thesis draws not only from Catholic moral theology, but also from a selection of Protestant theology. Protestant literature offers lived experiences of marriage, the family and parenting. Hence, their contribution in this thesis enriches the theological argumentation of this project. Richard B. Hays, a Methodist theologian in his book *The moral vision of the New Testament* (1996) offers the beauty of the Christian family as having deep scriptural roots. In this book, he also speaks about the holiness of motherhood and fatherhood. Stephen G. Post in his book *Spheres of love: Towards a new ethics of the family* (1994) discusses the theological foundations that ought to characterise love in marriage and family. Such love automatically leads to mutual respect and to children. From this point of view, Post challenges patriarchy as posing a stumbling block towards realizing the biblical notion of marriage and family. Jack Balswick and Judith K. Balswick in their book *The Family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home* (2007) offer a concise view of marriage, the family and parenting from Protestant and human science views.

3.3.1.5 Social and human sciences literature

This thesis draws from the functionalist theory[30] further discussed in chapter four. This theory sees the family as having a positive function to fulfil within the broader society. It dates back to Comte and Durkheim who saw the family functioning as a human body.[31] The human body though made up of different parts, functions well when there is equilibrium among them. The society also functions well when all its components/institutions function well. Among the social institutions, the family occupies a privileged position. The functionalist theory sees the family as the cornerstone of society.

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[30] http://www.sixthsense.osfc.ac.uk/sociology/research/approaches.asp - Accessed 24 March 2011.
[31] http://www.roxbury.net/images/pdfs/eftchap1.pdf: Functionalist theory – Accessed 24 March 2011.

The family has positive outcomes for society, because its functions are essential for promoting the teleological goals of society. The institution of the family does not stop at bringing new life into this world, but it extends its function by socialising the child. Furthermore, the functionalist theory settles well with theology in this context, unlike the Marxist theory which wanted marriage abolished as an institution. Jesus Christ promoted the well-being of society and all those things that bring wellness to society. Robertson (1989:249) sums up the functions of the family as: the regulation of sexual behaviour, replacement of members, socialisation of children, care and protection, emotional support and affection. This theory resonates well with African ethics because it promotes solidarity and marriage.

In addition, the researcher also consulted a wide range of sociological, anthropological and psychological books that deal with marriage, the family and parenting, including the following:

Blankernhorn, D. (1995) *Fatherless America: Confronting our most urgent social problem* by. The role of fatherhood has been generally ignored in the past. Recent studies show that fatherhood compliments motherhood within the family structure. The neglect of fatherhood leads to developmental difficulties in the life of the child. This book delves into the problem of absent fathers. Even if based on the American situation, this book was useful for this research as there is not much literature available in South Africa on this topic.

Cath, S. H.; Gurwitt, A. R. & Ross, J. M. (1982) argue the same case in their book *Father and child: Developmental and clinical perspectives.* This book demonstrates that fathers ought to have a rapport with their children and further shows detrimental consequences in a child's life if this paternal rapport was not created. The researcher observed the same outcomes in the structured interviews.

Balswick, J. O & Balswick, J. K. (2007) *The family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home*. This book written by two Protestant scholars shows how the

Christian understanding of marriage confirms the findings of social and human sciences. Most insights from the social sciences are drawn from this book. Jack is professor of sociology and marriage and Judith is director of clinical training and senior professor of marital and family therapy.

3.3.1.6 Methodology books

This research is conducted within the scientific discipline of theological ethics. Hence, a scientific method of research is required in order to provide a window into the social phenomenon of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill. Therefore, the researcher read those books that deal with issues of social research providing an overview and knowledge of appropriate research tools. The main authors here were: Hofstee (2006), E; Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006); Bless & Higson-Smith (1995) and Neuman (2000).

The construction of the empirical research tools and the interpretation and analysis of the data collected were guided and informed by these theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature.

3.4 Research constraints

Undertaking this research was not an easy task because it involved people's experiences. Some respondents whose contribution might have enhanced this study project, declined because they felt that they still needed some time to deal with their challenging experiences and backgrounds. This caused quite a number of respondents to decline taking part in this research. The researcher respected their withdrawal. Nonetheless, those who took part have given us a glimpse of the true story. The guarantee of anonymity assisted the respondents to freely share their stories.

Another constraint was the effort to try to get non-church-goers to participate in this research. It was a challenge because many non-church-goers do not see religion as having

any value in their lives. However, this does not necessarily mean that they are not profoundly religious/spiritual or are not theologically sophisticated. Nonetheless, explaining the objectives of this study gave them some sense of the value of taking part in the research. During the pilot study, 20 questionnaires were given out and 18 were returned. The two that were not returned were from the non-church-goers. However, with the final questionnaire all were returned. Thus, a general representation was ensured.

3.5 Ethical considerations

It is important that any research be underpinned by certain guiding ethical principles. These principles minimise any chances of digressing from the objectives of the study and from abusing the trust of the respondents. The following ethical principles underpin this thesis:

- Avoidance of generalisations assisted the researcher to tackle the key causes and consequences of family breakdown.
- Critical analysis of the Catholic Church's teaching about marriage and family. This critique will help the church to assess its *modus operandi*.
- Critical approach towards the patriarchal nature of African marriages, in order to identify problematic areas.
- Adherence to confidentiality that protected the respondents whose information and identification might taint their reputation and image.
- Professionalism, which ensured the integrity of the collection of the information and its analysis.

This research is conducted within the academic discipline of theological ethics. Therefore, adherence to an ethical code was deemed imperative. Dealing with people's experiences is a delicate process. Hence, questions in the questionnaire were designed with sensitivity in order to avoid offending the respondents. It was considered to be an ethical imperative that the researcher introduces himself and states clearly the objectives of this research so that the respondents were clear from the beginning on what was expected of them, so that they were not used as mere objects of observation and study. At

every level, confidentiality was essential. (Creswell 2003:64). Data is presented in a manner that does not identify any respondent and it was used only for the purposes of this study.

Researchers also need to be aware of the many ways in which they can inadvertently bias the results. It occurs frequently, especially when dealing with cultural, political and moral issues about which people have strong convictions. The researcher, by slanting the results in favour of what he/she believes, could jeopardise the entire research. This fallacious tendency is normally committed with the conviction that researchers are doing the society a favour, while their actions are compromising the integrity of the entire exercise. Therefore, all possible attempts were made by the researcher to avoid bias.

3.6 Limitations of this research

The researcher wishes to begin by re-stating his socio-theological position because it will reveal the limitations of this study, and the scope of the thesis pointed out in chapter one. I am a Catholic priest incardinated into the diocese of Mariannhill, who has worked in the area of Mariannhill from January 2001 to June 2010. This study is a result of my pastoral engagement with young people of this area. The focus of the theological content of the thesis is informed by Catholic moral theology. Because of the large presence of Catholics in this area, the majority of the respondents were from a Catholic background. Hence, the empirical part of this study is limited to the area of Mariannhill in its geographical scope.

This research is not a detailed study of different causes of family breakdown, for example, AIDS, spousal abuse, violence, etc. These are discussed only in relation to the topic. The sample is also limited because it was not possible to send out the questionnaire and to conduct interviews with all the residents of Mariannhill. Anonymity helped in avoiding the problem that the respondents will only say what the researcher wanted to hear. Furthermore, the questionnaire was constructed in such a way that it does not anticipate answers from the respondents, especially the open-ended questions. The same goes for the interviews.

What has been observed in the area of Mariannhill might not always be true for other areas. However, the literature review and the discussions in chapters four and five show that family breakdown has adverse consequences for any society. Moreover, the impact of domestic abuse and its impact on children are not discussed in detail in this thesis, although they are noted as causes of marital and family breakdown. Other researchers can pursue the specific impact of domestic violence and its patterns in the area of Mariannhill. This research is limited to the study of a variety of causes and the consequences of family breakdown; the research also deals with how the family founded on marriage can be an alternative. This perspective is done from a Catholic moral theologian's view-point.

Nonetheless, the insights that were gained from this research can give us a glimpse into what is happening when families breakdown, and the consequences thereafter. It is hoped that the conclusions of this thesis will spark further academic discourse about marriage and family living in South Africa, and also the role that this age-old institution ought to play in the socialisation of children.

Research is not a once-off endeavour, but is an on-going process. Today's answers might become tomorrow's questions. By stating the limitations of this research, the researcher intends to identify possible areas for further probing and research. It is also hoped that this research will continue the moral discourse of building a morally responsible South Africa, where the values of *ubuntu* abound.

3.7 Empirical research methods

The purpose of this chapter, as mentioned above, is to outline the research methods that were used by the researcher. Empirical research is not an overnight event, but a process that involves obtaining information by means of scientific procedures and methods. This process "is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research" (Terre Blanche, Durrheim

& Painter 2006:34). This research is underpinned by the following key aspects, as identified by Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006:37):

- The purpose of this research and the theoretical framework were seriously considered before designing the research instruments
- The context within which this research is carried out, is South Africa and particularly the area of Mariannhill
- Appropriate research techniques were used to elicit data.

These dimensions of designing a research method maximises the validity of the findings. The method of research then guides the researcher in the research process. A research method is much more than observation. Although it might be triggered by observation, the method goes beyond it. Terre Blanche et al. (2006:34)*,* argue that the research method is a systematic process because it ought to fulfil a specific purpose. The method of research is likened to a building which requires proper planning, namely, a budget, materials, the number of rooms and offices, and construction. (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:34).

We now examine more closely the empirical research method used for the gathering of data from respondents in Mariannhill. Creswell (2003:18) identified three methods of scientific research that are commonly used by social scientists, namely, the quantitative, the qualitative and the mixed methods approach. The nature of this research project requires that both statistics and descriptive data are obtained in order to establish the extent of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill and its impact on individuals and the society. This is necessary because the objective of this research is not only to quantify the experiences of people, but also to describe their experiences in some depth. Describing people's experiences will give us a window into the complex socio-economic reasons for family breakdown. The recommendations of this thesis are informed by these experiences. With that intention the mixed methods approach, which will be explained under the subsequent sub-headings, was considered indispensable for this research.

3.8 Steps of research

The first step of research, as noted earlier, was to undertake a literature review. The many written sources consulted formed the theoretical approach that underpins this thesis. This theoretical paradigm was constructed in chapters two, four and five. The second step was the quantitative method, where a questionnaire was used to collect empirical data. In summary, the quantitative research followed this sequence:

- Formulation of the questionnaire
- Identification of the respondents
- Pre-testing of the questionnaire
- Reviewing the questionnaire on the basis of the pre-testing views
- Administration of the final questionnaire
- Collection, analysis and interpretation of data
- Presentation of data using tables.

The third and final step was the focused interviews, which involved the use of a qualitative approach to empirical research as follows:

- Selection of twenty respondents amongst the ninety original respondents
- Conducting focussed interviews with the respondents
- Reading of the interview results several times for key aspects
- Data collection and collation
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Presentation of some extracts in the thesis.

The qualitative step of research was carried out in two stages. The first step, involved focussed interviews with fifteen respondents. After this step, the researcher realized that the voices of non-church-goers were missing. Hence, the researcher identified five further respondents to take part in the second step of the qualitative stage. This was done in order to be as representative of the community as possible.

3.9 Empirical research tools

It was stated previously that this thesis uses the mixed method of research: the quantitative and the qualitative. Therefore, this sub-section begins by defining and discussing each method of research. Thereafter, the advantages and the disadvantages of using the mixed methods approach are discussed.

3.9.1 The quantitative method

The word quantitative refers to something that can be measured in terms of size or numbers. Researchers using the quantitative method describe the situation by using numerical graphs in order to give a general picture of what is happening. The numbers show the extent of the problem that is being investigated.

The quantitative method in this research assists the researcher to measure the extent of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill by providing statistics. It might tell us, for example, that 65% of marriages in this area are breaking down every three years. With this figure, we are able to see the general picture and the extent of marriage breakdown in the area of Mariannhill.

In the questionnaire, the examples of quantitative research are the questions based on age, gender, marital status, employment, residence, religion, etc. The quantitative questions often have options and respondents are asked to choose an option, such as, Yes, No, Sometimes and Unsure.

Therefore, the quantitative method does not give the respondents an opportunity to express their opinions, because they are asked simply to choose from the given options. The quantitative questions are restricted to figures and do not go beyond them. Hence, the quantitative method does not provide an in-depth description into the phenomenon that is being investigated. For that reason, the recommendations based on the quantitative

method alone might not be defensible, especially when one is researching people's complex experiences.

3.9.2 The qualitative method

The qualitative method of research has the ability of further probing because it does not rely on figures. Instead, the qualitative method gives us perceptions and attitudes about the issue that is being investigated and the effect of these perceptions and attitudes on the respondents.

In this thesis, the qualitative method looks for the causes as to why marriages and families break down in the area of Mariannhill and how this phenomenon impacts on children and society. The examples of qualitative research questions are as follows: How can you assess your experience of growing up without your father? What is family breakdown for you? What do you think causes families to break down? These questions probe further into the figures that are provided by the quantitative method. The quantitative method tells us about 65% of marriages break down in the area of Mariannhill, but does not tell us why and how this affects the people. Furthermore, although we may know that approximately 65% of children grow up without their fathers, we will not know how it affects them.

3.9.3 The mixed methods approach as a research tool

Some scientists argue that the qualitative and the quantitative methods can be mixed in one research endeavour (Jankowizc 1991:102 and Jones 1998:76). This reasoning comes from the fact that these two methods are not in contradiction, but are complementary, if they are used well. Therefore, the mixed methods approach of research uses both the qualitative and the quantitative methods in one research endeavour. Moore mentions that the "quantitative methods collect information about things you can count ... and show you what is happening. Qualitative research is concerned with information about things that are less easily understood by counting them ... for example, attitudes...qualitative research

tells you why is it happening" (2000:102-121). Therefore, these two methods can be used together because they complement each other and they often overlap. The use of the mixed methods approach can be a daunting task, but it can produce better results. The mixed methods approach appears to be a *via media* between the qualitative and the quantitative methods.

As we shall see below, the researcher used the mixed methods approach because they complement each other. This was also acknowledged by King, Keohane and Verba when they said that the best research "often combines the features of each" (1994:5). This was further affirmed by Ragin when he mentioned,

> The key features common to all quantitative methods can be seen when they are contrasted with qualitative methods. Most quantitative data techniques are data condensers. They condense data in order to see the bigger picture ... Qualitative methods, by contrast, are best understood as data enhancers. When data is enhanced, it is possible to see key aspects of cases more clearly (Ragin 1994:92).

Therefore, these two methods of research are not opposed to each other, but they complement each other and thus enhance data.

This research required the use of the mixed methods approach because human experiences cannot be understood by providing figures and numbers only. The qualitative method, on the other hand, provides richer and deeper information about people's experiences and situations. The statistics give the reader a broader picture of what is happening, while the qualitative method goes beyond the descriptive statistics of family breakdown to its causes and its impact. The quantitative method gives us numbers of families that are breaking down and the children that are affected. But it will not tell us why families are breaking down and how this affects children and the society. Hence, human experiences cannot be reduced to 'yes' or 'no', 'agree' or 'disagree'. Further probing and exploration is needed. The qualitative method gave the researcher an opportunity to further dialogue with the respondents. This ensured deeper investigation into the problem of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill and the associated issue of fatherlessness in the area. Hence, new insight was obtained into the hypothesis that is being investigated (Oakley 2000:47). In this way, the empirical research both supported

and enriched the theoretical approach adopted earlier, based on the extensive reading done at the outset of this research.

Any researcher who wants to use the mixed methods approach successfully, needs to know first the characteristics of the qualitative and the quantitative methods. Knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of these methods will better equip the researcher. This knowledge equips the researcher with the necessary approach to the research. Failure to understand the advantages and the disadvantages of the mixed methods approach can jeopardize the entire research project. Knowing them will make the data gathered much more credible, especially that which relates to social issues. Hence, the strengths and the weaknesses of using the mixed methods approach in this research project are discussed below. The following strengths and weaknesses were considered by the researcher during the process of research.

3.9.4 Strengths and weaknesses of the mixed methods approach

The following are observed as strengths of using the mixed methods approach:

- It adds meaning to pictures and numbers
- It has the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods
- It provides a broader spectrum, which can be missed by using one method
- The strengths of one method can be used to overcome the weakness of the other
- It has a strong potential of providing trustworthy conclusions

The following are observed as weaknesses of the mixed methods approach which the researcher took into consideration before embarking on this study:

- It requires an in-depth study and understanding of each method. Therefore, using the mixed methods approach can be time-consuming.
- It can be difficult for some researchers to use, and thus complicate the research process. This weakness was first overcome by embarking on a serious reading about the use of the mixed methods approach. This enabled

the researcher to have a broader and a clearer picture of what is expected. Research materials that used the mixed methods approach were also consulted by the researcher, as was also suggested by the promoter. Second, this weakness was overcome by first dealing with the quantitative method before moving onto the qualitative method.

- The mixed methods approach can be very expensive to use as it aims at delving into people's experiences. This might require a lot of travelling. This was not the case in this study because Mariannhill is densely populated.

The above subsection has described the researcher's rationale for using the mixed methods approach in this research project. The next step was the construction of the questionnaire.

3.9.5 Designing the questionnaire

The questionnaire appears in Appendix A. The most important feature that must be borne in mind by researchers when designing a questionnaire is that it must address the needs of the hypothesis that is being tested. This means that the researcher ought to ask the right questions. A major purpose of constructing a questionnaire is to assist the researcher in achieving the objectives of the research which are to: collect data, analyse the findings critically and interpret them (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:63). The questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some particular topic that is given to a selected group of people for the purpose of collecting information concerning the topic of study (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein 1994:504). These questions can either be closed- or open-ended. Van Aardweg and Van Aardweg (1990:190) see the questionnaire as being composed of a set of questions that are distributed among respondents with the aim of obtaining some information. In order to get comparative data from all participants it is important that the same questions are asked (Gay 1981:128). The researcher was also aware of the limitations that the closed questions posed as pointed out by Neuman (2000:261).

Since the questionnaire intends to measure the hypothesis and also to anticipate new information, constructing it takes time. It is a culmination of a long process of reading, studying, reflection, evaluation, formulation and consideration of the research objectives. Therefore, a good questionnaire can really bring true light to the topic under research, while a poor one can compromise the integrity of research (Schnetter 1993:61).

Once again, it becomes pivotal that the objectives which informed the process of constructing the interview be stated. In this research, I wanted to investigate the role that the family founded on marriage plays in the upbringing and socialisation of children and the role that it can play in assisting us in the creation of a culture of life in South Africa. This will assist us to develop a coherent moral vision that will be a turn-around strategy to deal with the public outcry about the breakdown of morality in our country. The questionnaire was constructed in order to elicit information about the respondents' family breakdown, what it was like to be raised by married parents and the influence that their upbringing has on them. The process of designing the questionnaire became a lengthy one in this research as it involved the trial and error approach. The designing of the questionnaire took almost eight months.

The questionnaire, as it appears in the appendix A, contains both closed- and open-ended questions. The closed questions required rating, while the open-ended questions gave the respondents an opportunity to construct their own opinion on the questions asked, (Bless 1997:118 and Babbie 1998:148). The closed questions do not have this flexibility as they provide answers from a limited list (Van Vuuren & Maree 1999:295). An example of a closed question is: Were your parents supportive? A respondent will choose from the following list of possible answers: yes, no, unsure or agree, disagree or sometimes. While an example of an open-ended question would be: How would you assess the influence of your parents? This question gives the respondent an opportunity to tell his/her story. Hence, it provides more information and gives us a feeling or an attitude behind the answer.

The advantage of using both the closed- and open-ended questions is that it allows for a variety of answers to complex human situations. The closed questions are used because they are easy to follow and quick to answer. On the other hand, open-ended questions are used in order to clarify perceptions. It was important to make them intelligible and straightforward.

The questionnaire begins with instructions to the respondents. These instructions give clear directions to the respondents as to how to answer the questions. The main purpose of the instructions is to avoid misunderstanding. The questionnaire consists of seven sections that deal with:

- The biographical information of the respondents, ranging from the age to the denomination of each respondent

- The respondents' family background and experience. This helps the researcher establish how each respondent has been influenced by their world and how they conceive marriage and family today

- The influential role players in their lives. Here I want to see and test how they have been affected by these influential players. This influence includes parents, church and media

- The parental involvement in the life of each respondent. The intention here is to establish the degree of parental involvement in the lives of the respondents and to further assess the outcomes of this involvement

- The context of family breakdown. The intention here is to assess the respondents' understanding of what family breakdown is, and how it affects both children and the society. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to state what they think can be done in order to stop families from breaking up and what role the family founded on marriage plays

- The role of the church and religion. The religion that is the focal point of reference in this thesis is Christianity. It must be borne in mind that this study is conducted within the field of theology. It is then important to assess the role of Christianity as far as social issues are concerned so that religion can play a positive role. Respondents were asked in this section to assess the role their

churches play with regard to marriage and family. Undoubtedly, the church is a very powerful institution because it preaches optimum moral principles. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the Church's role concerning its teachings and the availability of her teaching documents to ordinary people. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to assess the kind of catechetical instructions they received and how this contributed in their lives

- Section seven was reserved for both single and married parents. The idea here was to assess parents' involvement in the lives of their children, how they administer discipline and to assess the challenges that they face in this area.

Dealing with people's experiences is a delicate process. Therefore the questions were designed with sensitivity in order to avoid offending the respondents. A good questionnaire must display certain characteristics. Hereunder the researcher briefly states those characteristics.

3.9.5.1 Characteristics of a good questionnaire

The designing of the questionnaire ought to follow a set of characteristics that will make the questionnaire valid and reliable. The following characteristics that were identified by Best and Kahn (1989:191), Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1990:190) and Hofstee (2006:133) guided the designing of the questionnaire:

- A good questionnaire must be keep to the point. The researcher should avoid long questions as they might de-motivate the respondents. Short questions help the respondents not to lose focus
- It must be constructed in such a way that it will give information that is not obtainable elsewhere
- It must be well planned and presented
- It must avoid technical words, because this might confuse the respondents.

- It must be constructed in such a way that it should provide accurate and unambiguous responses. An advantage of this is that it will minimise the danger of misunderstanding

- A good questionnaire ought to strive for sincerity, so as to avoid leading questions. Lack of this sincerity will compromise the quality of data collected.

- It must move from being general towards asking specific questions

The construction of the questionnaire used in this thesis was crafted according to the above-listed concerns and characteristics

3.9.6 Selection of the respondents

Respondents form a critical part of any research project. Hence, their selection is very important. The chief purpose of selecting respondents is to elicit information. Therefore, it was considered important in this research to consider the level of literacy among the respondents who took part in the questionnaire (Welman & Kruger 2001:146). The ability of the respondents to read and write ensured that they followed the instructions properly. Failure to consider this fact about the respondents can weaken the hypothesis and thus invalidate the conclusions. The purpose of this study necessitated that the researcher select respondents according to what Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:293) suggest. They suggest that the respondents ought to be able to follow the instructions properly and this is guaranteed by a certain level of literacy. This study demanded respondents who have a personal experience of what this research is about, people who have an ability to describe their experiences (open-ended questions and qualitative interviews), and people who are open and show an interest in participating.

The researcher used the purposive sampling method because it will be representative of the community of Mariannhill. Purposive sampling involves a decision about who should take part in the research project (Terre Blanche et al. 2006:49). Purposive sampling also takes into account the respondents' familiarity with the hypothesis that is being investigated (McMillan & Schumacher 1997:397). This research is about the role of the

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family founded on marriage as a strategic intervention into the challenge of moral decay in South Africa and the consequences of family breakdown. Therefore, it was important to identify individuals who can relate to marriage, family and family breakdown (McMillan & Schumacher 1997:397). The researcher used his knowledge to select appropriate respondents.

As a result of the purposive sampling method, 90 respondents were selected by the researcher from the area of Mariannhill. Consequently, 90 questionnaires were sent out to the purposively selected respondents. The size of the population ought to take into consideration the practical side of things. The composition of the 90 respondents reflects Catholics, Protestants and non-church-goers. The main idea in selecting the respondents is representativeness. The idea of choosing respondents among these three categories was to help the researcher obtain a broader picture of what is happening as far as family life is concerned and also to get opinions of people from other backgrounds. This helps avoid conclusions that are one-sided and biased.

3.9.7 Pilot study

Conducting a pilot study provides a researcher with the opportunity to test his/her research ability within a smaller scale. The aim of conducting a pilot study is to assess and analyse the viability of the research and the research tools. This is done in order to identify gaps and areas that need to be refined and improved. It further minimises the chances of the questions being misunderstood. If the questions are misunderstood the entire exercise might lose its credibility, and valuable data may be lost. During the pilot study, the respondents were not only asked to answer the questions, but also to identify three things about the questionnaire, namely, problematic questions, questions they found difficult to understand and also to state the time they spent reading and answering the questionnaire (Fowler 1993:102; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:185; Strydom 2002:215). This helped the researcher to be clearer in the instructions, so that the respondents could budget their time. The majority of the respondents spent about 10 to15

minutes reading the questionnaire and about 45 to 55 minutes answering the questionnaire.

The pilot study was carried out on a smaller number of the targeted respondents. It was also a stage of trial where the researcher used similar questions to those in the final questionnaire to test the results. This stage gave the researcher an idea of what the method of research would look like at the end. It was in the light of this that the pilot study was conducted with 20 respondents. The feedback from the respondents resulted in minor adjustments being made to the questionnaire.

Wellman and Kruger (2002:141) summarised the importance of conducting a pilot study, in particular they list:

- It provides the researcher with an opportunity to refine the wording and to prune the questionnaire
- It assists the researcher to check the planned statistical and analytical procedures
- It reduces the trap of falling into unforeseen problems
- Early feedback enhances the viability and credibility of the research
- Estimated time for the compilation of the questionnaire is established.

The pilot study clarified my aims and objectives in conducting this research, and it provided me with an ability to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument within a manageable scale.

3.9.8 Distribution of the actual questionnaire

The questionnaire was personally distributed by the researcher to the purposefully selected respondents. The main place for the collection of the questionnaire was the parish reception office. The respondents were not known to each other because they were distributed individually. The majority of the respondents (80%) posted their questionnaires back to the researcher. Each questionnaire contained stamped envelope

self-addressed to the researcher. The other 20% of the questionnaires were dropped at the parish office on the due date. An excellent return rate of 100% (90) was obtained when the questionnaires were returned.

3.9.9 Data collection

Data was collected from the 90 questionnaires that were distributed. The chief purpose of collecting this data was to assess the extent of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill. Data was further collected in order to assess the role that the family founded on marriage has in people's lives and in society and how this institution can contribute to moral regeneration.

Therefore, three methods of data collection were used in this thesis: the literature study, the questionnaire and the focussed interviews. The data from the literature study enabled the researcher to craft the questionnaire properly, while the data from the questionnaire assisted the researcher to elicit further information by using qualitative interviews. Here we see the interplay between the theoretical framework and empirical research. The literature review provided what is commonly known as the secondary data. While the questionnaire and the focussed interviews provided empirical information, the quantitative collection method provided the researcher with data that can be quantified. The tables in chapter six show the extent of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill. The questionnaire also had open-ended questions, and data was elicited by reading the responses several times. Since this research is dealing with human experiences, the focussed interviews became a valuable tool in going beyond the figures and clarifying questions to be used in the interviews. The structured interviews enabled the researcher to examine more closely the information from the questionnaire that was deemed to be insufficient.

By identifying the reasons for and results of family breakdown, the empirical research aspect of this thesis made possible an improved theoretical understanding of the problems in Mariannhill. In particular, the detailed discussion of the significance of the impact of

fatherlessness makes a contribution to the field of Theological ethics and the social sciences.

In brief, the theoretical paradigm developed as a result of my reading and my experience influenced the way in which the empirical research was conceived and conducted. In turn, insights derived from the empirical data influenced my theoretical understanding of marriage, the family and parenting and, thus, of the thesis as a whole.

3.9.10 Data analysis and interpretation

Once a researcher has decided on a certain method of research, it is important also to consider the manner in which data will be interpreted. Data provides the researcher with an opportunity to identify, analyse and present the information from the respondents (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein 1994:355). This process helps the researcher to assess the tenability or untenability of the hypothesis. The purpose here is to assist the researcher to evaluate the information so as to arrive at a defensible conclusion. Yet again, the theoretical discussions in chapters four and five informed this process in order to create an inter-play between theory and empirical observation. Descriptive statistics are presented in the form of tables.

3.9.11 Focussed interviews

The sample questions that were used for the focussed interviews appear at the end of the thesis as Appendix B. This third step of this research involved the use of the focussed interview. We saw in section 3.9.1 how limited the quantitative method can be. After the second step of research was conducted, the researcher needed to identify respondents' perceptions, experiences and feelings about the challenge of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill. The interview transcripts that are quoted in this thesis provide what are often called "rich" or 'thick" descriptions; they provide deeper insights.

Among the original group of respondents, the researcher selected a group of 15 people who formed part of the focussed interviews and later another five non-church-goers. The focussed interviews were conducted with these individuals. The focus of the interviews was mainly on two issues: family breakdown and its impact on individuals and the society in the area of Mariannhill. Second, on fatherhood in South Africa as there is little literature available about the topic. The three age groups that appear in the questionnaire were divided thus for the focussed interviews: 18 to 25 years eleven respondents; 26 to 35 years five respondents and 36 to 50 years four respondents. The first age group was deliberately made the majority because the researcher wants to obtain insights into their recent experiences. There is an isiZulu saying that goes: *inkunzi isematholeni*.[32] I also had to identify some respondents who did not grow up with their fathers. The last two age categories were identified in order to assist the researcher get a better insight into fatherlessness in South Africa. The interviews with these 20 people were conducted in one of two places; either in the respondents' homes or in the church.

The interviews also enabled the respondents to tell their own stories. Story-telling among African people is a very powerful tool of communicating. Any research conducted among African people should take cognisance of this fact.

There are a few considerations that need to be borne in mind by an interviewer. Conducting an interview presupposes that the researcher knows how to conduct an interview. The skill of conducting an interview is very important in gathering data. If an interview is conducted correctly, it will create a relaxed atmosphere for the interviewee who will feel welcomed and respected. This has been my experience since 2003, when working in the Inter-diocesan Matrimonial Tribunal. I have served this tribunal for six years as an associate judge. This involved conducting interviews with petitioners, witnesses and with the respondents. Therefore, the skill of conducting an interview is not new to me.

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[32] This saying literally means: the bull is among the calves. Hermeneutically, it means that if you want to build a better tomorrow you must focus on the young people because they can still be shaped in the right direction. Listening to younger people might help us to understand them better and also give them an opportunity to tell their stories.

The interviews were conducted in the mother tongue of the respondents. This was to afford the respondents a sense of comfort. The researcher used a tape recorder to record the interviews. Again, I had a brief introduction with each interviewee so that the aims and the objects of the interview were understood. Once data was collected from the focussed interviews, the researcher transcribed all the material to English. The transcription of the interviews was a lengthy and a tedious process.

Emanating from my experience in the tribunal, I had to ask simple, clear and straightforward questions. Ambiguity was avoided. Asking "double barrelled" questions was also avoided, because this might cause a respondent to answer a question that she/he is comfortable with and leave out the other one.

The use of interviews has a number of advantages:
- They give an opportunity to establish rapport and thus gain deeper insights
- They provide in-depth information about the research
- They allow for clarification of ideas and information
- They minimise the costs of printing; and mailing and data analysis
- They can be used with all groups young and old
- They are interactive, natural, inductive, comprehensive, expansive and flexible.

However, when conducting an interview, the researcher needs to avoid asking leading questions and also to avoid biasing the interview.

Family experiences are very diverse and these experiences affect people in numerous ways. Some of these effects leave lasting impressions on people's memories. This became evident during the interviews. Certain information that I found to be of a very personal nature and that told of extreme abuse was not included in the thesis. For easy reading and confidentiality, the interview extracts were assigned letters of the alphabets from A to Q.

3.9.12 Qualitative data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is a process of inspecting and modelling data with the goal of eliciting useful information. This process helps the researcher to draw defensible conclusions. It intends to offer explanations about data that has been collected in order to avoid misunderstandings. This process is linked to data interpretation. This interpretation was coded according to themes. Data gathered from the interviews is not as easy to analyse and to interpret as data gathered from the questionnaire. Creswell (1994:153) cautions researchers that the process of analysing qualitative data requires the researcher to be comfortable with developing categories, making comparisons and contrasts. Highlen and Finley (1996:186-189) have identified five steps that are involved in analysing qualitative data:

- Organisation of data. This process allows the researcher to obtain high quality data

- Generation of themes and patterns. Themes and patterns are generated by using code analysis as well as content analysis. This involves finding patterns in the data and placing each pattern into a category

- Testing emergent hypotheses against data. This means that as themes and patterns emerge, the researcher sifts through the data to challenge the hypothesis by searching for non-confirmatory data and to incorporate supporting data into larger constructs

- Searching for alternate explanations of the data. It is important for the researcher to approach data from various perspectives, because this increases the chances of validity and reliability of the study project

- Writing the research report. This enables the researcher to test whether the data makes any sense. The researcher tests this by asking questions such as: "What will be reported?" and "How will it be presented?"

A thematic analysis of data was used for the open-ended questions and the interviews. This process involved the identification of particular themes that occurred frequently in the material. The idea here is to see what people talk about. Hence, the interpretation is

based upon the emerging themes. This process was achieved by asking particular questions: noting the frequency of themes and their relationship and the identification of any contradictory reports. In this process, Terre Blanche & Kelly (1999:123-146) concur with Highlen and Finley (1996).

Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999:123-146) also identified useful tools that can be used by researchers to analyse qualitative data as identified by Highlen & Finley (1996:186-189) earlier on. They mention that the researcher should familiarise himself/herself with the data at hand by reading it several times. This will enable the researcher to identify thematic data. The answers to the interview questions were analysed and compared and a typology was developed. This meant that I had to go through the qualitative answers several times.

3.10 Validity and reliability of this research

Validity and reliability are important concepts in social study and analysis. These two concepts need to be carefully considered by researchers using the empirical method, whether questionnaires, interviews or both are used. The reason for this consideration is that the research outcomes become credible data for further study. Therefore, researchers need to ask the right questions. Failure to ask the right questions might compromise the outcomes of the research and thus weaken the conclusion. Therefore, the construction of the questionnaire and the way the focussed interview is conducted must be done in such a way that these succeed in obtaining the data that they were meant to gather. Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein define validity "as the extent to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it was constructed" (1994:560). The questionnaire and the structured interviews with the selected individuals were the instruments used here to gather data. These tools were employed in this thesis as instruments for measuring the extent of family breakdown and the role of the family founded on marriage. Based on the analysis and the interpretation of data gathered from the respondents, I am convinced that the questionnaire and the focussed interviews, at their best, did measure what they were designed to measure and to obtain.

Burns and Bush describe reliability as "a tendency in a respondent to respond in the same or in a very similar manner to an identical or near identical question" (2000:329). Therefore, the measuring instrument's reliability is its ability to produce desired results even if repeated several times. Dane (1990:256) and Neuman (1997:145) are quick to caution that a reliable exercise does not mean that it is valid. There are some factors that can affect the reliability of any research (Mulder 1989:209). Some of these factors are: mood fluctuations from a respondent and differences in scoring or interpretation of the results. Reliability of research endeavours to go hand in hand with consistency.

It is presumed in this thesis that the respondents completed the questionnaire with utmost honesty as was required in the instructions. Furthermore, honesty of the focussed group is also presumed. This presumption is sufficient to provide an academic defence for the reliability of the questionnaire and the structured interviews. As far as the questionnaire is concerned, I further presume that the guarantee of anonymity of the respondents provided honesty and reliability.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has comprehensively discussed the planning and the design of the method of research which was used in this thesis. Furthermore, it has systematically outlined the three steps of research that were followed. The first step involved undertaking a literature review which acquainted the researcher with the material within the discipline of theological ethics, African, Catholic, Protestant teachings on marriage, the family and parenting. In addition, it provided the insights of other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and psychology.

The second step of research, the quantitative method was discussed at length. It used a questionnaire to collect empirical data. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain data, mainly in the form of figures about what is actually happening in the area of Mariannhill concerning family breakdown and its impact.

The third step of research, the qualitative method was also discussed at length. This method consisted of interviews conducted with individuals who were selected from the 90 respondents who took part during the quantitative stage. The purpose of these individual interviews was to obtain unquantifiable data, because the thesis deals with people's experiences. Furthermore, the researcher defended his choice of using the mixed methods approach because it enhances the data. What became evident in this chapter is that, designing a research tool is laborious, but ultimately worthwhile because new knowledge is created that can be compared with the data obtained from the literature consulted to identify what is correct, false or what has been further elucidated.

The next chapter discusses marriage, the family and parenting from a Christian and other perspectives, such as African thought and experience, and the human and social sciences.

CHAPTER FOUR
AFRICAN, CHRISTIAN AND OTHER UNDERSTANDINGS OF MARRIAGE, THE FAMILY AND PARENTING

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses Christian marriage, the family and parenting from three perspectives: African, Christian, and the human and social sciences. This discussion is a result of my hands-on pastoral experience in the area of Mariannhill, my intensive reading on Catholic moral theology, Protestant theology, and some insights from the human and social sciences. Furthermore, this discussion outlines the theoretical framework of the thesis; hence, family breakdown (discussed in the following chapter) can be assessed in the light of the theological underpinnings highlighted here.

4.2 Marriage from an African perspective

The traditional African society, like every society, had its own structures that regulated the institution of marriage. This structure demonstrated the African understanding of the nature and purpose of marriage. There were rules which governed the relationship between spouses, between parents and children, and daily family life. This brief section discusses the nature, the purpose and preparation of African marriage.

4.2.1 The nature of African marriage

African marriage has two aspects, namely, the horizontal and the vertical. The former refers to the African family's ability to link with the living members of society, while the latter connects the living with the dead. This link of life is mediated by marriage. Therefore, marriage is a privileged place that serves, protects and perpetuates human life. Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter write that "in traditional Africa, to live meant also to transmit life" (1998:124). The Zulu people speak of *Umvelinqangi* (the one who came

first). This Being is said to be the originator of human life. The hierarchy of human life is seen as follows:

Umvelinqangi > ancestors > human beings > life to come

This Supreme Being mediates life through marriage. Therefore, marriage is a sacred institution because it connects the physical and the invisible worlds (Bujo1998:96). The nature of the African marriage is primarily to serve and to protect human life, because it is its legitimate channel. Bujo writes, "African marriage is regarded as the source of life" (1998:95). This was also confirmed by Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter (1998:110) when he wrote that marriage is a socially acceptable channel of transmitting human life. For this reason, this understanding of marriage can play a pivotal role in the construction of the culture of life in South Africa (Mcunu 2005:99). This conception of marriage has a resilient respect for life and human dignity. Nyamiti affirms this when he writes, "these and other values are topics for the education of children both by words and behaviour within the family" (1999:35).

Children are born into an ethic that cherishes human life. If children are born into a culture that celebrates life then the "world of humanity is the stage of morality" (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:61). Marriage, as mentioned above, is a link of life, because it is through marriage that the living, the dead and those yet to be born meet. Therefore, marriage is not only a cultural and a social reality, but a spiritual one too. Promoting and maintaining marriage is ethically important because it is through it that life is mediated.

Marriage in the African understanding marks the culmination of a long process begun at betrothal. This was also observed by Hastings when he wrote that, "marriage in Africa as in other societies was probably the most important public event in common life. It did not take place at one single moment of time, but came into being across a series of meetings, negotiations, and ceremonies ... the ceremonies of marriage, beginning with careful negotiations between the two families and culminating in the birth of a first child, were normally confirmed at every stage by big or little presents (1973:30). The steps towards marriage are marked by certain rituals and exchange of gifts between the families of the

spouses. These gifts are meant to strengthen the bonds of friendship and are a sign of welcome to the prospective daughter-in-law or son-in-law. Mbiti writes,

> The custom of presenting a gift to the bride's people ... is an important institution in African societies. It is a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom's people to those of the bride ... it is a reminder that she is a valuable person not only to her family but to her husband's people. The gift elevates the value attached to her both as a person and as a wife (1983:140).

The ancestors are part of all the steps that will eventually culminate in the marriage ceremony. Marriage in the African understanding has a social aspect to it. It is never about the spouses alone, but the whole community of the living and the dead take part in it. Commenting on the nature of African marriage, Mbiti writes that "it is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born" (1983:133).

4.2.2 The purpose of African marriage

Given the centrality of human life in the conception of marriage, fecundity and the socialisation of children become important. We need to bear in mind that the African view towards life is integral, because it does not separate between the physical and the spiritual worlds. The ancestors occupy a central role in the African marriage. For the African person "life implies the existence and interaction of mystical powers in the universe" (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:53).

If marriage serves life, then fertility is important. Therefore, marriage is not an end in itself, but a means of attaining a greater goal, the celebration of life (Oduyoye 1995:141). Life is the basis and foundation upon which marriage could thrive and prosper. Fertility is a man's pride, especially the birth of the first-born son. Hastings writes that, "there can be little doubt that in African traditional societies the stress was laid in marriage upon the production of children rather than the inter-personal relationship" (1973:28). The insistence on fertility was also observed by Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter when they wrote that, "the purpose and primary duty of the woman is to receive the male seed, nurture it within herself, and bring forth offspring. The woman, therefore, does not exist in her own

right or for her own sake. She exists first of all as mother of her husband's children (1998:118). This reflects the patriarchal nature of the African society and limits the dignity and the role of women (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:118). Essential ingredients of a loving relationship such as, "love and sharing, loyalty and confidence, female personality and female human dignity are liable to be bypassed or sometimes even completely disregarded" (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:118-119). Hence, an infertile woman is accorded an inferior role in the family. Her infertility is a cause of contempt, because genuine life is fertile. Sacrifices are made to the ancestors, because the purpose of marriage is giving birth to a new life.

Some African women theologians challenge the purpose of marriage in the African culture as narrow and as responsible for injustices that women have endured and suffered. Nyengele contends, "This confines women's experience ... and this distorts African women's true image" (2004:35). However, these theologians do not exclude marriage and motherhood as possibilities for women. Rather, they are challenging the excessive pressure that is put on African women by this cultural expectation. This excessive value of procreation has led to serious abuse of some married women. Therefore, womanhood needs to be affirmed in the African culture without attaching procreation to it. Such wounded images of women in the African understanding of marriage were also challenged by Isabel Phiri (Oduyoye 1995:195).

Placing too much emphasis on procreation limits the understanding and the nature of marriage, as the Christian discussion below will show. Such a conception of marriage misses out the sense of companionship (Nyengele 2004:36). Oduyoye (1995:196) further states that men are also culturally expected to marry. But for men, it is to ensure their comfort and security. African women theologians are of the opinion that the challenge begins with socialisation. Girls in the African family have a heavier work load than boys (Nyengele 2004:42). Ruth Besha, in her research conducted in Tanzania in 1990, found

> Food security, high maternal and infant mortality rates and child malnutrition have become endemic problems everywhere, and no great progress is in view. Many reports have shown a very clear link between these problems and the unequal gender relations in society. Thus, child malnutrition and infant mortality,

especially in the rural areas, have often been linked not to lack of food – although that could be a contributing factor, but to the heavy workload of women" (Nyengele 2004:38).

Unfortunately, what Besha pointed out 20 years ago still exists in many African families, thus posing a challenge in the creation of a culture of life in our society. This culture of life is based on the respect for human dignity, which is endowed to all, regardless of gender, creed, race, nationality, etc. The voices of these women, which have formed part of the recommendations of this thesis, are calling for cultural re-thinking and transformation.

4.2.3 African marriage preparation

As noted above, marriage in the African tradition is a culmination of a long process that is marked by different ritual celebrations (Oduyoye 1995:133). These ritual celebrations mark essential steps that young girls and boys go through in life. The rituals are also marked by intense programmes. These programmes prepare them for the goal of any young African woman or man, which is marriage. The rites bestow on the incumbent a certain social status which is gained after vigorous training. A young man is skilled and coached on how to become a man, eventually a father. This also involved lessons on male sexuality and masculinity. Women, on the other hand, were also skilled about social etiquettes which basically meant how they should become good wives and mothers.

In traditional African culture, especially the Zulu culture, a young man never approached a girl in person. The process of dating was done through a senior unmarried woman called *iqhikiza*. This unmarried senior woman was tasked with training young girls. If she approved of the boy, she would inform the girl concerned that a certain boy wants to marry her. Chief among the *iqhikiza's* role was to ensure that boys did not abuse girls. Should it come to the *iqhikiza's* attention that the boy did not undergo the necessary stages of formation, she would block any possibilities of him marrying a girl under her care. Her position was to train and safeguard the dignity of young and vulnerable girls.

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Though the African social structures were largely patriarchal, women were still protected from unwarranted abuse.

Upon winning the *iqhikiza's* approval, the boy tells his mother about the woman he intends to marry. The mother in turn informs the father. The family of the boy convenes a meeting of the extended family, especially the brothers of the boy's father (*obabomncane)*. From this meeting, two or three men are appointed to go and negotiate with the girls' family, especially her father. This initial step is called *ukucela*.[33] In isiZulu, the delegation team is called in isiZulu *abakhongi*. All that the mother of the girl can do is to either persuade the girl's father either positively or negatively.[34] Should the delegation team succeed, this stage marks the beginning of a long process towards marriage that will be marked by certain rituals and exchange of gifts. The idea behind the exchange of gifts was to strengthen the bonds of mutual cooperation and understanding between the two families and also to bring the two families much closer together. Regrettably, these structures have to a large extent collapsed due to colonialism and the missionary onslaught on African practices (Denis 2003:74).

The last step required before the celebration of marriage was the payment of *ilobolo*. This took the form of sending cows to the bride's home. This was to ensure that the marriage bond is protected. Today, it is possible to use money instead of the physical cows. This cultural practice has been misunderstood and abused due to the high costs of living and economic pressures. Some are of the opinion that the abuse of women in African culture emanates from the practice of *ilobolo*.

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[33] This word literally mean to request. That is why *abakhongi* (the negotiating team) upon arrival outside the gates of the prospective wife, will introduce themselves loudly and say: *sizocela isihlobo esihle*, meaning, we are here to request good relations. The father of the girl will then send his delegate to meet them outside and the process of money exchange begins from there.

[34] The voice of the mother cannot be taken lightly. Though women were not vocal during these stages, their silence was very powerful. The mother of the girl was and is still very influential. Women in traditional Africa have not always been as docile as they have been presented. Their role can be likened to that of the women who followed Jesus Christ. These women were present at the last supper and at Calvary, and they witnessed the resurrection. Yet they spoke volumes by their silence. They became models of true discipleship.

4.3 Biblical and Catholic theological perspectives on marriage

Catholic teaching regards marriage as a natural union. However, this teaching is underpinned by Biblical teachings. The Bible is the basis for theological discourse and pronouncements. Therefore, we need to consider what the Bible and some magisterial teachings state about marriage.

4.3.1 A Biblical perspective

The creation stories that are cited here below do not intend to give us the exact historical facts about the creation of humanity and the universe, however, their main thrust is of a theological nature (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:128). The biblical view tells us that "in marriage a new union of man and woman is formed not only, or even not primarily, for the sake of offspring thereby, but for the sake of those entering into the union themselves" (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:129). In the very first pages of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, we learn about the dignity of marriage and the special reasons for its divine institution. The human person appears as unique and the highest of God's works of creation. Humanity is made in the image and likeness of God. The Genesis story of creation puts God as the originator of animate and inanimate things. God brings about life into the world *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Genesis 2:18-24 (written about 1500 BCE) presents Adam and Eve as helpmates. In the Yahwist passage, the woman stands on the same personal plane as the man, and in fact she frees the man from his loneliness since they are made from and for each other. We are being told "in this passage that, like the man, the woman has a value in herself as a person" (Kisembo et al 1998:45). This equality of man and woman implies a very profound sharing between them because "it is a communion of life in which the partners disclose themselves as persons to one another and share with one another at every conceivable level" (Kisembo et al 1998:45). It is in their encounter that each achieves the fullness of his/her completeness.

The Yahwist story proposes four tenets of Christian marriage:

- The equality of husband and wife in marriage
- It is God who joins husband and wife, therefore God is the source of marriage
- The man must leave his father and mother and cling to his wife. This implies that Christian marriage is monogamous
- Man and woman are to become one flesh. This expression binds the man and the woman together in matrimonial partnership. In the New Testament, St Paul uses the term 'flesh' not only to refer to its physical meaning, but also in a psychosomatic way. In the intimate conjugal union, man and woman become one flesh and one spirit. (I Corinthians 6:16-17).

Genesis 1, written about 700 BCE, states that both male and female are created in God's image and likeness (1:26-28). This male-female polarity permeates the whole of creation, being especially evident in plant and animal life. But this reaches its high point in human nature. According to this Priestly Tradition, the likeness of humanity to God is realized in the unity of husband and wife, and both are called to rule the world. Here we learn three things about Christian marriage:

- Both male and female are equal because they are created in God's image
- The coming together of man and woman through marriage ought to be open to life, and the spouses become partakers in the divine plan of God of bringing new life into the world
- They have social and environmental responsibilities in addition to their marital and family responsibilities.

The Old Testament continues to use the bridal language when referring to the relationship that exists between God and the Israelites. This bridal relationship was sealed by the covenant that God made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai. This covenant implied a total and an unconditional self-giving of the two parties. This was further espoused by the different prophets in the course of the history of the chosen people (Hosea 1-3; Jeremiah 2:2, 2:32, 3:12, 31:3, 31:22 and Ezekiel 16:9-61).

The Old Testament clearly shows that God is a faithful husband to His often unfaithful wife, the Israelites. This unfaithfulness is fiercely rejected by God. However, God cannot divorce His people. Hosea uses his own marriage as a pictogram of this unfaithfulness. Amidst the unfaithfulness of his wife, Hosea continued to love her. God likewise declares, "I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh instead, I shall put my spirit in you ... You shall be my people and I shall be your God" (Ezekiel 36:26-28). This bridal relationship finds its metaphoric expression in the Song of Songs, "in the Old Testament the sanctity of marriage is clearly attributed the will of the Creator; marriage becomes, moreover, a prophetic symbol of the union of God with his people. St. Paul shows how this union is fully realised in the mystical bond between Christ and the Church" (Neuner & Dupuis 1995:711).

In the New Testament, Christ clearly indicated his intention to restore marriage to the ideal presented in Genesis and vigorously reinstated the law of marital unity. In the opinion of most Catholic scripture scholars today, what Jesus taught about the permanence of marriage was a radical departure from the traditional Jewish acceptance of divorce. Marriage is not simply a worldly affair, but an event within the province of the divine law.

It is in Ephesians 5:21-33 that St Paul intimates that the marriage of Christians is a sacrament, because it is a living image of the indissoluble union between Christ and his Church. Such an ideal cannot be attained without a special grace that is provided by Christ in the sacrament of matrimony. Marriage is a re-enactment of the mutual relationship of Christ and the Church and to this effect the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church" (CCC 1617). The Church is the "body of Christ" which parallels the Adam-Eve union of "one flesh" because Christ and the Church are one.

We can see that the biblical view of marriage is ideal in a world scarred by sin and human imperfections. However, we need to strive towards the ideal because the grace of God gives us the ability to soldier on. To this effect, Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter write that, "marriage cannot be a temporary, transient affair. It is a permanent commitment which always grows" (1998:131).

4.3.2 Some theological perspectives on marriage from Clement of Alexandria to the present

Some Christian and non-Christian Gnostic sects of the third century taught that sexual relations were evil and for that reason, marriage should be avoided. This is the context of Clement of Alexandria's teaching, "marriage in accordance with the Word of God is holy because it is a union that is subject to God, contracted with a sincere heart and full fidelity by those who have been washed and purified by the water of baptism that has the same hope".[35] Some early Fathers of the Church had some difficulty with reconciling the social institution of marriage with its intimate sexual nature because of the Gnostic influence.[36]

St Augustine of Hippo (354-430) conceived marriage to be a beneficial social institution that is necessary for the preservation of society and the continuation of the human race. On the other hand, he was also dubious about sexual desires as dangerous for society. This was the result of the thinking of some of his contemporaries and his own struggles with sexual desires. The stoic philosophers taught that strong impulses should be controlled in order for peace and harmony to prevail in society.

It must also be stated that the early Church was marked by many heretical influences. Some of these heresies came from the Church's obsession with attaining heavenly perfection. Hence, the body as a material composite of the human person was despised. The Church's attitude towards marriage was heavily influenced by this controversy. The

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[35] Stromata, IV, 20.
[36] Origen, *Homilies on the Book of Numbers*, 6.

human expression of intimacy in marriage was seen as a sinful act, especially if it is committed outside the procreative realm. St Augustine reflects this unfortunate understanding as he saw the good of marriage as procreation only, *bonum prolis*.

Nonetheless, we must not forget St Augustine's defence of the intrinsic good of marriage against the attacks of Manicheism. St Augustine stressed the equality of the spouses in marital relationships. But, he failed to integrate sexual expression into the spiritual convenience of the spouses. His influence in subsequent theology was undoubtedly enormous.

From the fourth century onwards, there was a growing emphasis on the ecclesial aspect of Christian marriage until the Church took over completely in matters matrimonial. Marital civil ceremonies were absorbed into the liturgy, and the canonists looked after the juridical aspects of marriage. Sexuality in marriage was considered good, but procreation dominated. Limited space was given to sexuality as a dimension of marriage. A limited understanding of biology also influenced the thinking of the time, for example, the male seed was regarded as the active element, while the female contribution was seen as purely passive, and hence loss of male seed (masturbation) was considered a serious offence.

During the medieval period, marriage was gradually accepted as one of the seven sacraments, but with hesitation and doubts abounding. Peter Lombard (1100-1160) considered that matrimony was a remedy for human concupiscence; therefore, it had only a negative significance and did not confer grace. Alexander of Hales (+1245) was the first to admit that it was salvific and could confer grace once entered into by the couple. The liturgical service though did not confer grace, but the agreement between the husband and wife. Duns Scotus (1265-1308) affirmed that it was the couple who are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage and not the priest.

Thomas Aquinas (+1274) maintained that marriage was a sacrament, the sign was the mutual consent of the couple, and the love of the couple was the *res et sacramentum* (the sign of the sacrament). The marital act was good in itself and meritorious as long as it is

rational and ordained to procreation. For Thomas Aquinas, the primary end of marriage is procreation and education of children, the secondary aim is the mutual help and support of the couple, which is a real and true end in itself but still subordinate to the primary one. Aquinas viewed marriage from a natural point of view, that is, its generic purpose lay in the biological order.

As far as can be ascertained, there seems to have been only one medievalist who held that the marriage act was more than a biological act, Albert the Great (1206-1280). He held that the marital act was also a personal act and one of merit. He also said that the grace of the sacrament was not merely in order to offset evil in matters sexual, but that it positively contributed to the couple so that they could fulfil better their marital lives.

The Council of Trent (1547-1563) came in the wake of the Reformation period, and as such, it was reactionary and defensive. Some of the Reformers maintained that celibacy and virginity were unnatural and impossible. Some held that because marriage itself was by nature too difficult, they advocated the acceptance of divorce in cases of adultery. This was born out of an extreme pessimism about human nature. As such, marriage for some Reformers was purely a natural institution over which the Catholic Church had no say. Both in the canons and the decree of Tametsi (1563) Trent articulated the Catholic Church's teachings (Neuner & Dupuis 1995:717):

- Christian marriage is a sacrament by divine institution and as such is a grace-filled experience
- It is monogamous, it is an indissoluble contract that cannot be broken while the parties live
- Virginity is a superior state to marriage
- The Church has every right to supervise Christian marriage about conditions of entry and the liturgical celebrations.

These canons led to serious debates within the Church, until new manuals of moral theology were made available for teaching in the seminaries. Thus, sexual morality was very much governed by a legalistic and physiological approach.

The contemporary period, especially after Vatican II, has seen radical social changes. These changes range from cultural changes to scientific revolutions. They compel us to re-examine our stance in the area of marriage and women. The Church needs to acknowledge that the role of women in society has radically changed (Cahill 2003: 258). It has, in fact, reminded us that men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. Christian marriage continues to be under pressure. Many modern parents are both working; modern society has become far too mobile due to work demands; modern medical developments mean that couples can limit the size of their family; modern psychology has emphasised that sex is also good for the couple much more than a desire to have children; divorce has become more socially tolerated. Some of these developments have positively shed light on the Church's teaching on marriage and family, while others continue to threaten Christian marriage. The Church has been positively led to re-discover that marriage is a partnership; therefore, it is good for the spouses, *bonum conjugum*. From the socio-theological point of view, the Church teaches that marriage is good for both the Church and society because it is the basic building block of society.

Some of the Pauline texts on marriage have been used negatively by some commentators in order to limit the role of women in marriage (I Corinthians 7:1-40; 11:3 and Ephesians 5). We need to look at the context and the content of these texts. The contentious word here is "submission". Submission here does not mean surrender, inferiority or withdrawal, but a mutual cooperation and commitment. Christ, by submitting to God's plan, cooperated with God the Father. Therefore, submission between equals is submission by choice, not by coercion. Our submission to Christ, who is the bridegroom of the Church, ought to be emulated by married couples. Therefore, submission is in the realm of symbolism and analogy. Subsequently, it does not promote discrimination and domination. On the contrary, it promotes and highlights fidelity and the covenantal relationship.

4.4 The nature of Christian marriage

The preceding discussion has outlined the biblical and the theological underpinnings of marriage from a Catholic perspective with a brief historical overview. Now, we consider the nature of Christian marriage and some key pointers to a good marriage.

The second chapter briefly defined and discussed marriage and now we continue with some characteristics of a good marriage which Canon 1055 points out "marriage is a covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life and which of its very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has between the baptised, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament" (cf. CCC 1601 and GS 48).

This canon highlights five constituent essential elements of what marriage is and what good marriage ought to be. Any marriage, at least within the Catholic thinking, that ought to be good must be modelled on these essential elements.

- Marriage is a covenant. Covenant is based on mutual self-giving. In a marriage covenant, spouses do not exchange something but themselves. This exchange ought to be freely given and freely received. Covenant is a biblical term referring to God's promise to his people the Israelites. Marriage as a covenant means that it is a total self-giving and is unconditional. Marriage then is not only a legal contract, but a covenantal relationship between the spouses.

   Catholic sacramentology teaches that all seven sacraments are signs of a practical nature. Sacraments really cause the grace they signify. Hence, sacraments are efficacious signs of God's presence and activity in the world. In the case of marriage, the external sign of the internal grace conferred is the matrimonial covenant. This covenant is brought about by the consent of the couples, which is free and does not lack knowledge of the essential properties and duties of the marital covenant (Neuner & Dupuis 1995:719). Marriage preparation becomes an indispensible ministry for priests and pastoral assistants, because these are explained to the couple at these encounters.

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The sacrament of marriage brings to its recipients sanctifying grace which enables them to carry out the duties and obligations of their state of life. Married parents are promised and assured of God's assistance as they embark on a journey of bringing human life into the world (Neuner & Dupuis 1995:722). The duty of parenthood is arduous. Nonetheless, parents can rely on the *res tantum*, the grace which is brought by the marriage covenant. Sacramental grace in matrimony is given in order to assist parents to discharge their conjugal rights and obligations, which are procreation and parenthood.

- Marriage ought to be between a man and a woman. In 2006, the South African parliament passed into law the Civil Union Bill which permitted the union of two men or two women. The nature of the Christian marriage upon which a family ought to be founded is for one man and one woman. The family can only be based on a heterosexual and on a monogamous union. This was also observed by Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter when commenting on the union of marriage wrote that, "their union is exclusive; they cleave to one another … cleaving implies total commitment and belonging to one another …" (1998:129).

- The purpose of this marital covenant is to build a partnership between the spouses for their whole life. The term partnership here recalls the fundamental truth about marriage that it is entered into by two equal persons. Cahill commenting on Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation on the family, writes that, "John Paul II nowhere advocates women's submission, and in fact, concludes not only that women should not be limited to domestic roles alone but that 'the equal dignity and responsibility of men and women fully justifies women's access to public functions'" (2003:260-261). They both have the same obligations and rights towards their union and are to make joint decisions about their life together. Cahill mentions that Pope John Paul II laments "the fact that women still suffer discrimination, that they have often been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude" (2003:263). The raising of the children should never be the responsibility of one partner, but their joint effort. Equality is the basis of a Christian marriage. Without equality, there can be no true Christian marriage.

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This understanding of marriage challenges any form of patriarchy and abuse of women in marriage.

- Marriage is ordered towards the well-being of the spouses. This good of marriage is known as the *bonum coniugum*. This good is recent in Catholic theology and the 1917 Code of Canon Law does not speak of it. The *bonum coniugum* refers to the good of the spouses and requires the commitment of each partner to the promotion of the other. *Bonum coniugum* is an ontological end of marriage intended by the Creator. Vatican II stated, "even in a case where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children, marriage still retains its character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility" (GS:50). The spouses are to grow and develop together as a couple. For this reason, marriage is not for egocentric persons, who want to pursue their selfish interests at the expense of the other person. Married people have a right to love and to be loved, a right to respect and to dignity, and a right not to be abused.

- Marriage is also ordered towards the procreation and upbringing of children. This good of marriage is known as *bonum prolis* (Neuner & Dupuis 1995:721). The good of the children is an essential sacramental component of marriage. Marriage intends to promote the well-being of children because it promises stability and love. The Catholic Church maintains that the family based on marriage is uniquely suited to teach and to transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values that are essential for the development and well-being of its own members and society.

Gaudium et Spes describes marriage as a communion of love and life. With this understanding, we see the re-assertion of scripture into the description of marriage. Pope John XXIII realised that it was impossible for him to change canon law, since the law of the Church is the application of her theology. For that reason, it was first necessary to change the Church's theology through an ecumenical council.

After Vatican II, marriage is no longer perceived as a biological and a juridical union only, but also as an interpersonal, spiritual and existential union (Cahill 1996:166). The biblical understanding of marriage distinguishes it from the views of other human and social sciences, especially anthropology and sociology. Christian marriage is not an accidental occasion for social convenience. Rather, it has its roots in the original plan of God for creation.

Having discussed above some theological insights from Church documents let us list some key pointers that constitute a good marriage.

The most natural habitat for love is marriage, because, "marriage is not only a commitment to the institution but also a commitment to the relationship" (Balswick & Balswick 2007:90). From our biblical discussion, especially the prophetic literature, we discover that this commitment endures, forgives, renews and restores. If the couple were only committed to an institution, then marriage will be a legal union only, and commitment to each other will only lead to humanism. But a commitment to the person, the institution and the relationship leads to a right balance in marriage, because these three are mediated by love.

Marriage fulfils the human person's deepest longing which is to embrace the "other" in total love and self-giving. This is well expressed in the words of consent as found in the Catholic Rite for Marriage: "I take you to be my wife/husband..." Marriage is born out of this love which is not selfish (I Corinthians 13), but self-giving. This love is not sentimental or simply romantic. Love in marriage is constant, rational, grows gradually, enduring, based on human qualities and future oriented. It recognizes each other's limitations and virtues. Pius XI spoke of marital love as that "deep attachment of the heart, which is expressed in action, since love is proved by deeds" (1931:28).

Clemens, an American moral theologian, described marital love as "the inclination of one human being toward another to a greater union with God" (1956:25). A good Christian marriage is one whose love is based on this union with God. Pius XI reminds us once

again that "by matrimony, therefore, the souls of the contracting parties are joined and knot together more directly and more intimately than their bodies, and that not by any passing affection of sense or spirit, but by a deliberate and firm act of the will" (1931:23).

Love in marriage is not only meant for the mutual joy and the advantage of the couple. True love is not locked within itself, but is always outward looking. This affirms the theological nature of the Christian marriage as we discussed above. Love in marriage creates a suitable environment for the growth and development of children. For this reason, marriage is the sanctuary of love and life. Love leads to respect of human life. Therefore, we need to support, defend and promote such a marriage if we desire to create a culture of life in South Africa.

Second, a good marriage ought to be built on intimacy. The word intimacy has been narrowly understood to mean only a sexual relationship. Being intimate within marriage means a desire to understand better the other person and a wanting to be close to them. This desire is rooted in love that we have just discussed above. Love is the key in creating intimacy within marriage.

Intimacy is about sharing my innermost part with the other person because I love that person, and because there is mutual acceptance, a sense of togetherness and communication. Intimacy means that I allow myself to be influenced by that person, and vice versa. It is about standing together, because the couple is in a relationship together (Cahill 1996:166).

Intimacy in marriage ought to lead to mutual acceptance. Total acceptance includes accepting the other person's strengths, faults, weaknesses, interests, talents, etc. It is based on the theological conviction that God accepts us, His covenant partners, as we are. Through this acceptance, the couple is called to grow together. This enables them to take care of the life that God entrusts to them, because mutual acceptance creates an atmosphere that is conducive for human life to develop and thrive. This facilitates

integral human development; hence, it can contribute positively to the child's life and society.

As succinctly discussed above, a good marriage is one that is a partnership. Who are the partners? Are they in competition with one another or are they complementing one another? The basic assumption here is that they are "in this together". Therefore, they ought to understand their roles and discover what they can contribute towards this partnership.

Each person in the marriage relationship has a role to play. Today, women expect marriage to be a partnership of equals. This is a result of the social, political, economic and theological emancipation of women. Women are showing greater independence and some husbands find this difficult to accept. If marriage is a partnership, the partners ought to share the responsibilities equally. For this reason, they are not to compete with each other, but complement each other. The element of complementarity helps them to build a true partnership in their marriage.

It is regrettable that in some African families, even in the area of Mariannhill, marriage is still not understood as a partnership of two loving equals. The men folk are still considered superior to women. The gospel of Christ is meant to illumine all cultures, but Rosemary Edet, a Nigerian woman theologian, notes that Christianity in other areas of the African continent has fuelled inequalities between men and women (Rakoczy 2004:20). This thesis is critical of such conceptions of marriage because they tend to be abusive and are not what the author of marriage intended. Such distorted and wounded views do not lead to holistic development of children. Rakoczy (2004:28) laments such views as responsible for causing so many burdens for women to bear for a number of years. Our understanding of the nature of marriage in this thesis challenges any form of discrimination. It does so because marriage is a partnership, which is brought about by two free adults, a man and a woman, who are created in the *Imago Dei* (Rakoczy 2004:33-36).

The above pointers of a good marriage are not exhaustive, but they constitute the most important pillars for developing a good marriage. They are linked together and they will build upon each other. Furthermore, they are not only applicable to Christian marriage, but are universal. The insights from the human and social sciences offer invaluable information on developing strong marriages and families.

4.5 The purpose of Christian marriage

Understanding marriage as a vocation reveals at the same time its purpose as conceived and taught by the Catholic Church. Marriage is a vocation just like the priesthood and religious life. Marriage is a vocation because the spouses are called to build up the people of God. In the past, there has been a tendency in the Catholic tradition to look down upon marriage as a vocation because of the value attached to celibacy and virginity. Eminyan explaining the vocation of marriage affirms:

> But it [marriage] is ... a very real call, the call which shows God's will as to the choice of a state for the life of human creatures ... This divine call, furthermore, does not only regard the state of marriage in general, but also marriage with this particular person. From all eternity God has foreseen and willed this particular man to get married to that particular woman. Their union in a sacrament of matrimony is an element in God's plan of creation, redemption and salvation. Their divine vocation is prolonged in time. He, who called the couple to marriage, continues to call them in marriage (1994:154).

The word vocation is typically a biblical term. In the Old Testament, this word appears to be an initiative of God directed to a certain person (Genesis 12:1; Deuteronomy 7:6). It is used to refer to the mission or a purpose that God wishes to fulfil through that person. Marriage as a vocation has a special mission to fulfil because married spouses are called by God to undertake this way of life. Christian marriage is a vocation "written in the very nature of man and woman as they come from the hand of the Creator" (CCC 1603). God sends the married couple to "love and live for each other, to be fruitful by cooperating with Him [sic] in the procreation of children, to educate their children preparing them to be committed Christians" (Eminyan 1994:102).

4.6 Similarities and dissimilarities between African and Catholic views on marriage

It is evident from the previous discussion that marriage is the basis and foundation of the family. On this basis, emanates the fundamental role that the family plays in the lives of individuals and communities. Both the African and the Catholic views uphold that marriage is a sacred institution and not only a sociological phenomenon. Marriage is sacred because some supernatural powers are involved in its celebration. Therefore, this makes marriage the only legitimate institution for channelling human life. This is born out of the recognition that both view marriage as a stable union that is meant to endure.

Since these traditions uphold the sanctity of marriage, therefore, openness to new life is crucial. This openness to new life enables the couple to participate in the divine mystery of passing on human life, the vital force. However, their approach to and emphasis on this openness to new life differs.

They both see marriage as a building block of society. It is through marriage that societies can develop and thrive, because the future of society depends on marriage. Marriage therefore serves the society. Since the Christian and African traditions value marriage, they both call for its preparation. Preparation ensures that those who to desire to marry are well grounded in their new vocation and way of life. Catholics who desire to have their marriage blessed in the Church are to declare their intention six months before the actual date. This enables the priest to prepare them well. In the African view, the initiation stages are a direct preparation for the couple. These rituals were normally organised at a group level so that the training and coaching was collective. The community took part by showing a keen interest in these lessons. The goal of these lessons was to prepare them for womanhood and manhood.

There are also remarkable differences between these two traditions. These differences do not belong to the nature and essence of marriage, but more on approach and emphasis. Despite the fact that they both cherish life and appreciate openness to human life, they differ in their approach and understanding of it. Catholic tradition teaches that openness

to life does not exclude infertility. This means that infertility is not an impediment towards marriage. While in the African tradition, infertility is frowned upon. Sometimes, unethical means were used in the African tradition if the marriage was childless, for example, the proxy father was organised in order to resolve male infertility. The proxy father was normally a brother of the infertile husband. Furthermore, the insistence on fecundity by the African tradition led to what is called leviratic marriage. This happened when the husband died and his younger brother was asked to take over the conjugal rights. The woman was not consulted, only the elderly people decided on her behalf. Sometimes, polygamy was an option in resolving a childless marriage.

Catholic tradition views these attempts as serious violations of the marital bond and the exclusive nature of the marital union. The leviratic marriage does not recognise the feelings, the opinions and the dignity of the wife. Catholic tradition upholds that death frees the spouses from the marital bond, unlike in the traditional African view where the wife was not allowed to move on with her life while the husband was expected to take a second wife in case the first one dies. Marriage in the Catholic tradition is both monogamous and heterosexual.

4.7 Insights from a Protestant perspective

Protestant Churches vary in their particular doctrines pertaining to the theological understanding of marriage. It is worth mentioning here that "Protestant Churches have, with varying degrees of leniency, permitted marriage to be dissolved in exceptional circumstances. The Anglican Church forbids divorce in theory, but sometimes permits pastorally the remarriage of persons divorced under civil law (Cahill 1996:183). Cahill (1996:183-199) further invites Catholic moral theology to consider different pastoral situations regarding those who experience marital hardships and abuse. Therefore, Protestantism does not refer to one set of doctrinal teachings. Nonetheless, there are areas of convergence on some fundamental teachings about marriage, its nature and purpose. The enduring understanding of marriage among the Protestant Churches is their view that marriage is a heterosexual and a monogamous union. This union between a man and a

woman was ordained by God, therefore, it is a sacred union and not just a purely legal and a social union. The primary aim of this union is the celebration of God's love in the world.

There is also a greater awareness that marriage is a legitimate channel for begetting human life, because this is in accordance with the divine plan of God. We saw earlier that the Catholic tradition, especially from St Augustine to the late medieval period, much emphasis was put on procreation and the relationship of the spouses was neglected. The Protestant insights remind the Catholic tradition that marriage is primarily about providing mutual help and support to the spouses. Catholicism recovered this insight after Vatican II.

The granting of annulments to the rich and the noble by the Popes reached its crescendo at the Reformation. This practice was rejected by the reformers and led to a series of questions about understanding marriage as a sacrament. The reformers argued that the sacramental understanding of marriage was only introduced by Rome in the 12th century, in order to control it, hence its strong emphasis on matrimonial jurisprudence. As a result, the reformers returned to the biblical teachings of marriage and discovered that it is a divine institution, which was willed by God.

John Calvin[37] also taught that marriage was not a sacrament because there was no ceremony and promise mentioned in the New Testament scriptures such as the promise of salvation that was confirmed by baptism.[38]

The Protestant reformers fell back on biblical concepts of marriage rather than the sacramental ones. They affirmed that marriage is a Christian reality and a divine union of friendship. The pillars of this union being: vocation, covenant and communion (Anderson, Browning & Evison 1998:13). Therefore, marriage constitutes the human person's response to the universal call to holiness. Marriage has the capacity of

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[37] www.reformed.org/master/index.html?mainframe=books/institutes. On Erroneous claim that marriage is a sacrament. Accessed 17 September 2012.
[38] *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV, 19, 34.

cultivating essential virtues, actions and patterns of life that can bring personal sanctification to the partners.

The Protestant reformers replaced the sacramental model of marriage and the family with a social model. They largely retained the contractual perspective of marriage as a voluntary association formed by the mutual consent of the couple. They also rejected the Catholic Church's tendency of subordinating marriage to celibacy, as her ministers were required to embrace celibacy. However, some of the reformers saw human nature as seriously wounded by original sin and therefore it lacked the capacity to refrain from sexual temptations.

Two key contributions of Protestant theology on marriage are the stress on the relationship between the spouses and liberation and the role of women. Its gender lenses have exposed the inadequacy of only looking at marriage and the family from a theoretical point of view. Some of the wounded and distorted images are discussed below under the purpose of the African marriage.

There are also notable differences between the two traditions as far as the nature of marriage is concerned, especially unity and stability. The Catholic tradition insists on these properties as belonging to the nature of marriage, because once a marriage has been validly contracted and consummated it can no longer be dissolved. When Luther broke away from Rome in 1520, he argued against the indissolubility of the marriage bond. He did not regard divorce as opposed to Christ's teaching about marriage. The teaching of Christ is important in formulating our ethical arguments because, "Christ stands at the core of the Christian faith and presumably stands at the heart of its ethics as well" (Spohn 2004:24). Instead, he accepted certain grounds as legitimate for divorce, for example, adultery (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9). Catholic tradition holds that Jesus in these texts condemned the patriarchal attitude that was present in the first century Jerusalem. The divorce at this time was favourable to men and not to women. Husbands could divorce their wives without going through a tedious legal system. However, for Martin Luther certain sins were enough to dissolve the conjugal bond. The reformers' rejection of the

sacramental nature of marriage was also the rejection of the doctrine of marital indissolubility Peschke (1997:482) reminds us that the teachings of the different Popes and the magisterium have always maintained the indissolubility of marriage. The Second Vatican Council made this statement:

> By that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other, a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their offspring as well as of society, the existence of this sacred bond no longer depends on human decision alone (GS 48).

The Catholic Church responded to the reformers' views on the indissolubility of the marriage bond through a series of declarations made at Trent (Peschke 1997:482). The Church traced its teaching from the scriptures and Christian Tradition. The Catholic Church upheld that Adam's proclamation, "this now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh ... wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh" (Genesis 2:23; Ephesians 5:31) proclaims the indissolubility of the marriage bond and this view was further affirmed by our Lord's teaching in Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9. Yet, the Catholic Church, on the ground of Pauline Privilege, accepts divorce as it appears in I Corinthians 7:15. This applies to two unbaptised married persons. The Pauline Privilege dissolves a natural marriage.

There is however an apparent exception to the doctrine of indissolubility in the gospel of Matthew. This text is the favourite among many Protestant theologians who write in defence of remarriage after divorce. This text is about the *Shammai* and *Hillel* teachings. The former taught that divorce was allowed only on the grounds of adultery, while the latter could grant divorce even on the basis of trivial matters. However, the Pharisees were surprised by Jesus' answer because it did not support either school. According to Jesus, neither the *Shammai* nor the *Hillel* schools were to interfere with God's original plan of marriage. Therefore, Jesus upholds the two properties of marriage as valid for a Christian marriage, namely, unity and indissolubility. The Mosaic exceptions that the Pharisees quoted were not of Mosaic origin but were a result of the obstinacy of their hearts. This brief discussion on divorce reveals that Christians sometimes interpret the moral teachings of Christ differently.

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In the 20th century, the Christian understanding of marriage was greatly affected even more than during the Reformation. The Industrial Revolution in the 18th century and the expansion of the natural and social sciences in the 19th century began to alter the basic values and norms of Western civilisation such that medieval concepts of marriage preserved by the Catholic Church began to be challenged more and more from within the Church itself. The very nature and purpose of marriage in the West began to change in the 20th century. Before it was a social right, but now it is an individual right that overrode the family as a social unit. Now it was a nuclear family with parents and children having less and less contact with aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins. The family became one social unit among many. People had jobs that took them away from the people they lived with, children went to schools, most occupations could no longer be learned from one's parents, and recreation was brought in by printed and/ or electronic media. Hence, the family was no longer needed for the education of the children as it used to be. Thus, the beginning of family breakdown was felt and it altered the way the members of society related to each other. We return to this discussion in depth in chapter five.

4.8 Insights from the human and social sciences

The contribution of the human and social sciences is indispensible in theology, because theology is anthropological. Therefore, these sciences make a unique contribution to the study of the human person. In turn, their insights help theologians to "read the signs of the times" in order to help the human person respond better to God's call. However, the human and social sciences alone cannot provide answers to the moral and religious questions posed by the current situation. The human person is a being that is open to transcendence; therefore, he/she has needs that go beyond the competency of these sciences. Nonetheless, these sciences offer theology invaluable insights. The multi-disciplinary approach of this thesis arises from this reality. This approach enables the researcher to offer an integral response to the social problem that is being investigated.

Our definition of marriage in chapter two stated that it is a relationship ordered towards the good of the spouses. Recent studies conducted at the University of Chicago by Dr. Waite clearly show that marriage has benefits to both women and men. We saw above that the Protestant tradition values this understanding of marriage. Dr. Waite writes "In the last two years several large studies that tracked people in and out of relationships over a long period have produced evidence that marriage actually causes psychological well-being in both sexes".[39] If recent studies in the human and social sciences affirm the positive impact of marriage on couples, one is led to conclude that such an environment is conducive for the rearing of children. Such a conception of marriage becomes an ideal basis for the founding of a family. Dr. Waite further affirms that "the findings suggest that there is more to marriage than just a social bond". We find here a convergence between the Christian understandings of marriage and the insights from some social sciences.

Some sociologists ask, "Why is marriage our most universal social institution, found prominently in virtually every society" (Anderson et al 1998:17)? The function that the family plays in society is a key answer to this question, and we shall discuss this further in the subsequent section on the family. Some psychologists see marriage as the epitome of a commitment one can make to another person (Iyengar & Lepper 2000:997). The human and social sciences enhance our theological discussion above by showing that marriage leads to happiness, especially the one that encapsulates the key pointers discussed above. Iyengar and Lepper mention that "data shows that the happiest people usually have strong marriages and that married people tend to live on average longer" (2000:997). Yet, there is an acknowledgement that marriage is not an easy affair as was also noted by the Protestant tradition. It is not easy because it is about two different personalities with different family backgrounds coming to live together for the rest of their lives. Therefore, couples are invited to work constantly on their marriage by paying particular attention to contentious issues. A couple grow together by learning to resolve

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[39] Quoted from: www.unification-family.blogspot.com/2011/04/positive-psychology-and-role-of.html - Accessed 12 December 2011.

their differences. By doing this, they will truly experience a life giving relationship and they will harvest good fruits from their marriage.

The human and social sciences value the unique role of marriage in the lives of couples, hence supporting our theological framework and my pastoral experience in the area of Mariannhill.

4.9 The African understanding of the family

Let us begin by quoting what the African Union declared in its Plan of Action on Families in Africa in 2004:

> For generations, the family has been a source of strength for guidance and support, thus providing members with a wide circle of relatives on whom they can fall back...therefore the African family network is the prime mechanism for coping with social, economic and political adversity in the continent. It is the principal focus for socialisation and education of children ... as a result the family is at the centre of the dynamic which affects all societies. Traditionally, Africa's development has been a result of the strength of the family...In the traditional African family, education, socialisation, behaviour and ethics were taught through oral traditions by parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, wise old men and women in the community (African Union 2004:4).

The traditional African understanding of the family goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate family. It includes the in-laws, aunts, the cousins, uncles, etc. The extended family in Africa served as a strategic support structure. Let us consider the seriousness of the interlocking process of family relations. My father's brothers are truly and rightly called *obaba*, my fathers. Their wives are my true mothers *mama omncane* (junior mother) or *umama omdala* (senior mother). Their children are my brothers and sisters, *abafowethu* and *odadewethu*. This interlocking of relationships is not only biological, but spiritual and ethical. This minimised the chance of child-headed households.

The traditional African understanding of the family is very communalistic and so is African ethics upon which it is founded: *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (A person is a person through others). Bahemuka writes that the value of *ubuntu* is "the pillar on which

the family was built and the source on which people based their sense of belonging..."
(1999:214).

The African family endeavours to prepare children for social integration, because
participation in the community life is vital. Hence, its fundamental role is dual: providing
the society with new members through offspring and the education of the offspring
(Kisembo et al 1998:144-145). The children were basically taught the African ethical
axiom that *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu*. One arrives at this socio-ethical code by
inculcating the social norms and values, customs and approved social etiquettes. Children
are expected to learn and to internalise these traits of *ubuntu*: honesty, love, justice, care,
altruism, kindness, prudence, friendliness, etc.

4.9.1 The impact of Westernisation on the traditional African family

The rise of technology in the 20th century has contributed to the demographic and social
changes in Africa. This has affected the society in many ways. Sociologists continue to
discern patterns of behaviour in a society and are able to predict the impact these patterns
have on society (Ndungu & Mwaura 2005:72). Sociologists call this change the Rapid
Social Change. This societal change refers to the process where society moves towards
forms of social arrangements which are more complex, and which seem to alter the past
radically. This has been evident in the area of marriage and family structures. In addition,
there are also socio-economic and political developments that have affected the African
family. Ndungu & Mwaura note that "the effects of rapid social change can cause
individuals to behave in a certain way. One way is that the individual might become
frustrated, disillusioned and disoriented in his or her own society. According to
sociologists, if an individual gets into this psychological state, he or she manifests what is
commonly called deviant behaviour" (2005:81).

However, these changes do not necessarily point to the disappearance of marriage as
understood by Africans. Instead, these demographic and social changes put the traditional
African understanding of marriage and the family under severe stress. This is evident in

the area of Mariannhill where the researcher observed these changes and the impact they had on children and the community. These are further discussed in the following chapters five and six, respectively.

The traditional African family has been affected by these global trends. Today, parents need to work in distant places as they are in search of better employment opportunities (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1989:143). On the other hand, children settle in areas far from their homes in search of education and lucrative opportunities of life. Consequently, family roles, functions and values are affected by this change. One result of this would be unwed parents. These are some of the pointers that society is changing and these changes have serious implications for the family.

It is evident that the traditional African family no longer enjoys the social cohesion of the past. What could be the way forward for the resurgence of a traditional African family? African thinkers and interested parties need to do some investigation of the African cultural riches that have been neglected by colonialism and apartheid. This endeavour does not intend to be a romantic exercise about the past, but a critical engagement with the past. This engagement will mean that the values of the African marriage are brought to the fore and are taken seriously. The greatest ethic that the traditional African family upholds is *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through others). This ethic reminds us that we ought to respect one another, because we are all created in *Imago Dei* (image of God). This was also acknowledged strongly by the synod Fathers in the Special Synod of Bishops for Africa in 1994.

4.10 The family from a Catholic perspective

We must remember that this research is done within the field of theological ethics and its point of departure is informed by Catholic moral theology, though drawing insights also from Protestantism and from the human and social sciences. Therefore, it is necessary to relate this discussion to the discipline of theology. This distinguishes this research from

understanding the family purely from the human and social sciences. This discussion is largely based on John Paul II's theology of the family.[40]

John Paul II can be described as a Pope of the family and of life (Cahill 2003:258). His long time secretary, now Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Archbishop of Krakow, also affirmed this description when he wrote, "taking into account the history of his priestly life, John Paul II can be described as one of the greatest pastors of the family in the history of the Catholic Church of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century".[41] John Paul II championed the cause of the family, at least as far as its vocation and mission is concerned. He was a tireless advocate for the defence and the promotion of the family based on marriage. He continuously brought to the global stage the nobility of this old, but yet important institution and spoke of it as "the sanctuary of life, whose role in building a culture of life and civilisation of love is decisive and irreplaceable" (*Evangelium Vitae* 92).

In 1981, John Paul II wrote a post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the family titled *Familiaris Consortio*. When 1994 was declared the year of the family, John Paul II used that opportunity to write a letter to all the families in the world. His Lenten message for 1994 was titled: *The family is at the service of charity, charity is at the service of the family*. The South African Catholic Bishops' Conference in that same year issued a pastoral statement: *Heal the family, heal the community*. These three documents endeavoured to locate the family in society in the light of Catholic teaching. The apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, developed four points that underpin the theology of the family, namely, forming the community of persons (18-27 cf. GS 48),

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[40] Pope John Paul II made a great contribution to marriage through his Christian anthropology. His philosophical interest led him to write, *Love and Responsibility* as a young priest. It is this work that revealed his unique anthropology. It is a deep meditation on human sexuality, love and marriage. When he was elected Pope in 1978, he developed further his anthropological quest which has the underpinnings of Thomism. He articulated strongly that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God and he returned to this in his encyclicals (*Centesimus Annus* 1991, *Veritatis Splendour* 1993 and *Evangelium Vitae* 1995). As a Thomistic student at the Angelicum University in Rome, he learned that the human person is a subject. From this he developed that the family is the nucleus of the communion of persons. For him, the future of both the Church and society are dependent on the family founded on marriage, because the family is the first and most important school of life and love.

[41] http://www.zenit.org – Accessed 07 July 2007.

serving life (28-41), participation in the development of society (44) and the family's share in the life and mission of the Church (51) (Curran 2005:58). These points were later echoed by Pope Benedict XVI when he stressed that "families are needed that do not let themselves be drawn by modern cultural currents inspired by hedonism and relativism, and that are willing to realise their mission in the Church and in society with generous dedication".[42]

Building a culture of life in society includes many things. In this research, the focus is on the role of the family founded on marriage as a strategic intervention for the construction of a consistent moral vision in South Africa. This focus is based on the notion that the family is the sanctuary and the garden of life and the basic cell of society. John Paul II called families to "take part actively and responsibly in the mission of the Church in a way that is original and specific, by placing itself, in what it is and what it does as an 'intimate community of life and love' at the service of the Church and society" (FC 50). Therefore, the family in Catholic teaching has a fundamental function to fulfil. This function is the specific vocation of the family, because the family is at the service of humanity.

The family is the guardian of life, just as we discussed when we looked at the African understanding of marriage. We need to promote family values if we want to succeed in creating a culture of life in South Africa. As theologians, we need to give witness to the truth by becoming soldiers in the warfare for life. The family is the beacon of life, because life begins in the family. To this effect, John Paul II writes, "the Christian family provides the home where new human life can take root and develop as it ought to develop. It is indeed the sanctuary of life whose role in building a culture of life and a civilization of love is decisive and irreplaceable" (EV 92). For that reason, the family must be nurtured and defended. The survival of our civilisation depends on the renewal of moral norms by restoring the family to its proper place. In 1994, Frederico Mayor wrote in the UNESCO Preface,

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[42] http://www.zenit.org – Accessed 08 October 2007.

> The family is most precious. It is the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all family members, particularly the children. Mutual respect, gender equality, social integration links and supportive emotional bonding should be its hallmarks (UNESCO Preface 1994).

Augustine Shutte further writes,

> The natural community of mother, father and child is the fundamental human community out of which all others must grow. It is also the creative nucleus for the personal growth of the child. So, if the main work of society is to produce persons then the family is the key to the human health of society ... If there is something wrong with the family life the society will be sick (Shutte 2001:96).

The Catholic Church calls the family the basic cell of society (Shutte 2001:100). Cells give life to the entire body so that there is coordination in the body. However, as cells act as the defence system of the human body, so does the family act as the defence of society. If the family is not functioning correctly, society becomes vulnerable, and once the family collapses, the entire body of society collapses as well. The moral crisis that South Africa is experiencing is a result of this collapse and its causes and consequences are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

According to Catholic moral theology, the promotion of the family based on marriage is an essential task in developing a healthy society. This understanding of the family has the capacity of producing persons that are caring and well grounded in their beliefs and personalities, because the family is a natural institution that arises from a man and a woman (Farrell & Farrell 1966:826). It is an inalienable relationship born from concrete human reality and not from ideologies and the human and social sciences have affirmed this. There is a consubstantial link between the family and life. This link arises from the mission of the family, which is to serve, mediate and promote human life (Haskell 1978:435 and Nelson 2005:29).

4.11 The family from a Protestant perspective

The Protestant Reformers saw the family as the basic and foundational unity for building social stability and conducive for fostering religious beliefs. They saw the family as

having a particular function to fulfil. Anderson et al. mention "the Protestant ideal remains: The family in its essence is the culmination of marriage between man and woman as marked by the birth (adoption) of a child in covenant love" (1998:21). This acknowledges marriage as the proper foundation for founding a family. Anderson et al. further observe that "the bringing of the children into the world and their socialisation through highly personal love are the main functions of the family, the essential fruit of marriage ..." (1998:21).

Family is a place where love is central because children naturally need the love of the mother and the father. The rearing of the children is better accomplished where such love is lived out daily and children get to experience it. Hence, such a conception of the family becomes a reliable support structure for the children. Anderson et al. warns that "the view that diversity of family types is a sign of progress is contrary to the facts as far as children are concerned" (1998:21). This warns us that we should not aspire to make extraordinary situations of living look ordinary or normal. Christians know the biblical ideals and should strive to live according to these ideals. However, it is true that some single parents have produced children of sound character and outstanding achievements. Nevertheless, this should not deter us from striving for the ideal, while we admire those who have overcome the odds of life.

The beauty of the Christian family in Protestant theology has also been articulated well by Richard B. Hays, a Methodist theologian, in his book *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (1996). Hays (1996:347-375) articulates the scriptural basis of the family and speaks about the holiness of motherhood and fatherhood. Family has scriptural roots that ought to guide us when contemplating about the family. The family is more than a social aggregate of persons. Hays recovers in Protestantism what some earlier Protestants said about the family. Patton and Childs had written that "there is no ideal form for the Christian family toward which we should strive. There is, however, a normative function: care (1988:12). According to this argument, any form of family living suffices as long as there is some form of care.

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Patton and Childs were responding to family injustices and patriarchy. However, while some Protestant theologians accept the concerns of Patton and Childs, they also argue that the biblical vision of the family cannot be totally dismissed and this vision is also supported by some human and social sciences. Post (1994:20-25) argues that the wounded practices, such as patriarchy, need to be challenged seriously and vigorously because they do not reflect the equalitarian nature of the Christian family as reflective of God's nature. Contemporary Protestant theological perspectives on the family are much more informed by the role of gender equality.

4.12 Insights on the family from the human and social sciences

Undoubtedly, it can be affirmed that the human and social sciences find a unique value and role in the family founded on marriage (Smith 1972:306). The research findings of these sciences are not too different from our previous theological and African discussions. Rather, they strengthen our argument and enrich our position against those who attack the notion of the family founded on marriage. Insights from clinical and sociological literature help us to identify traits that are important in building stronger families in this postmodern era. Balswick and Balswick (2007:47) argue that we need to build strong families that will resist the contemporary tendency of focussing on individual rights over the family and group relations. This earnest call finds fertile ground in the African view of life that cherishes community living. Balswick and Balswick emphasise that the family today "must be able to tolerate and respond to the changing needs of its individual members while providing a sense of belonging" (2007:47). This was mentioned when we challenged African theologians to find new ways of helping the traditional African family to express itself better in this age.

Therefore, there is acknowledgement from the human and social sciences that we need to develop strong families. This emerges from the conviction that the family has positive outcomes for children and for society. The following table, adapted from Balswick and Balswick (2007:47), helps us to identify characteristics of strong and weak families:

Area of Analysis	Strong Families	Weak Families
Cohesion	Individuation Mutuality	Enmeshment Disengagement
Adaptability	Flexibility Stability	Rigidity Chaos
Communication	Clear perception Clear communication	Unclear perception Unclear communication
Role structure	Agreement on roles Clear generational boundaries	Conflict over roles Diffuse boundaries

Our endeavour in this research is to propose pillars that will help us in South Africa build strong families, because we know that many of our social problems emanate from weak and dysfunctional families. Resilient families built on marriage have positive outcomes, as we mentioned above when discussing the positive psychological outcomes for married couples. This table shows that while there is relatedness among the members of the strong family, yet each member gets to enjoy a healthy personal space. Balswick and Balswick mention that in this type of family, "there is mutual respect for the unique qualities and personalities of the other family members. At the same time, there is family togetherness in which members belong to one another and realize they are dependent in their family unity" (2007:47). On the other hand, a weak family is characterised by a blurring of relationships, where individuality is severely oppressed. This family type does not encourage a sense of independence. In our discussion on the key pointers of a good marriage, we mentioned that love and intimacy lead to mutual growth. A weak family lacks meaningful co-existence among the members.

Societies develop and so does culture. Therefore, families ought to adapt to new social situations. Adaptation, however, does not mean total renunciation of past practices. Rather, it is about defining past practices and relating them to the new social situation in a meaningful way. A healthy and a strong family is marked by adaptability and flexibility (Balswick & Balswick 2007:50). Unlike in the weak family where there is rigidity, for

example, if dinner is served at 6 p.m. daily, a weak family will not accept any form of exceptions or excuses. The contrary is true for a strong family.

The technological revolution led to a greater recognition of the importance of communication. Constant and effective communication leads to healthy and strong families. The ability to communicate begins with parents. They need to learn first to communicate well and effectively between themselves. Effective listening includes also the ability to pick up non-verbal communication. This kind of communication will eventually touch children and they will be shaped by the way their parents relate to each other. In a weak family, issues are continuously postponed or the couple simply turns a blind eye. This stifles growth in a relationship and in the family.

A family is made up of a mother, father and children. This presupposes roles that need to be carried out by the members. Balswick and Balswick mention that, "in a family with two parents and children, every member has at least two roles: the adults take the roles of spouses and parent, while the children take the roles of the child and sibling" (2007:52). Parents ought to agree about their roles in the family, because presumption creates confusion. Healthy boundaries are also necessary in the definition of roles. Clear boundaries do not mean that family members cannot help each other, rather this means "that family members have the freedom to take on different roles" (2007:52). Respect for generational boundaries is of paramount importance.

4.13 The family and society

The family always expresses a new dimension of good for mankind and it thus creates a new responsibility. This particular common good includes the good of the person and every member of the family community. The social dimension of being married postulates a principle of juridical security. Becoming a husband and a wife pertains to the area of being and not just of acting and this dignity has a right to public recognition.

The right order of society is aided when marriage and the family are formed, as they truly are into a stable reality. The dignity of human persons requires their origin to be from parents joined in marriage, from the intimate, integral mutual and permanent union that comes from being spouses. This is good for the children. This origin adequately safeguards the principle of the children's identity not only from the genetic or biological viewpoint but also from the biographical and historical perspective.

Our definition of marriage in chapter two stated that marriage is ordered towards the good of children and society. Society ought to be built on the foundation that has been prepared in the family. The existential goal of society should be to provide opportunities for the sustenance of the family. The family founded on marriage has a unique function to fulfil in society (Munhall & Fitzsimons 2001:4). This function rises from the fact that the family produces individuals and communities of persons. Hence, the goal of marriage is not solely to procreate, but also to prepare offspring to become active members.

Family is the place where different generations come together and help one another to grow in human wisdom and to harmonize the rights of individuals with other demands of social life. At the same time, elderly persons can look to the future with confidence and certainty knowing they are surrounded and taken care of by those for whom they have cared for many years. Other goods for the whole of society which are derived from the conjugal communion as the essence of marriage and the origin of the family can also be considered. These include the principle of a citizen's identification, the principle of the unitary character of kinship which constitutes the origin of relations in society as well as their stability, the principle of the transmission of cultural goods and values, the principles of subsidiarity. Family constitutes much more than a mere juridical, social and economic unit, but a community of love and solidarity which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society.

Family founded on marriage is a necessary and indispensable good for the whole of society and it has a real power and proper right in justice to be recognized, protected and

promoted by the whole of society. It is this whole of society that is damaged when this precious and necessary good of humanity is wounded in any way. Our failure to appreciate the family founded on marriage implies a profound lack of recognition of the anthropological truth about the human love between a man and a woman and its inseparable aspects of stable unity and openness to life.

So far we have discussed marriage and family by considering theological, African and social sciences. The theological discussion is important because our Christian teachings can influence our response to the human and social science studies. In turn, these sciences help us to express better our theological convictions. Now we consider parenting.

4.14 Parenting

We have established so far the significance and the role of the family founded on marriage. Erik Erikson advocated that psychological perspectives develop within the context of a social unit (Robert 1994:38). The family founded on marriage proves to be an appropriate place for psychological perspectives of children to be formed, because marriage promises stability. True development takes place where there is stability. Developed countries progress because they are more politically and economically stable. Most African countries have not yet achieved the desired development due to political instability in the continent. Hence, we can arguably state that lack of stability results in underdevelopment. This scenario can be likened to the family and society. Human development will be actualised through the institution of the family, because it promises stability. We now consider parenting from an African perspective.

4.14.1 Parenting from an African traditional perspective

Producing children in the traditional African family is considered a blessing from the Supreme Being through the intervention of the ancestors. Child bearing offers a new responsibility to parents. These responsibilities are well defined and embedded in the social and cultural customs. The most important and crucial responsibility is taking care

of the children. Parents, by fulfilling this role with utmost care, help prepare their children for integration into the community. This involves the process of teaching a child the acceptable codes of moral conduct within the community. Parents are aware that *umuthi ugotshwa usemanzi*.[43] Commenting on the role of African parents, Schapera writes that "they teach them [children] their proper standing in family and tribe, and how to behave towards their senior and juniors respectively" (1939:243). Parents fulfil this by ensuring that children conform to the many rules of social and cultural etiquettes (Schapera 1939:250).

The roles of the parents in the traditional African family were not the same. The father's role was very limited compared to that of the mother, while the mother had a more personal and influential role on the children. The father's role was mostly being a public protector and provider, and he was liable for a fine for his children's misbehaviour. This was a way of reminding him that he is also responsible for the education of his children according to the acceptable social standards.

The mother was very close to her children and their education was mainly her responsibility. Children communicated with their father through her. In most cases, sons in the traditional Zulu family listened more to their mothers than their fathers. The mother was the foundational pillar of family relationships. Employing today's terminology, we can say that she was in charge of managing the household. Her motherly attributes, enabled her to indirectly exercise her power. This exercise of power is vividly potrayed in the way the king's mother was respected. The woman in traditional Africa was actively involved in the raising of the children. As an educator, the African woman led her offspring towards a good life. Therefore, she had to live a life worthy of imitation. This Zulu saying sums up well her role: *Intandane enhle ngumakhothwa ngunina*.[44]

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[43] This Zulu proverb means that, a tree bends easily when it is still small. Therefore, the proper stage of teaching a person is when they are still young because they learn much more easily and quickly. Parents are then influential on their children and are expected to use this influence positively.

[44] "A good orphan is the one that has a mother". The death of the mother had severe consequences for the children and the family. Her death was mourned more than that of her husband.

In the area of Mariannhill, the level of unemployment hinders parents from assuming their responsibility for educating their children. Parents cannot fulfil this important role when they do not have the basic minimum requirements for a life worthy of a human person. The level of unemployment poses the greatest challenge in this regard. We observe with sadness how in the area of Mariannhill, as well in the rest of the African continent political instability hinders parents from fulfilling their roles.

4.14.2 Parenting from Catholic and Protestant perspectives

What Christianity teaches about parenting emanates from the biblical assertion that God is a parent to humanity. The Bible is full of incidents where God' love and concern for us is spoken of in parental form. God sent Moses to bargain with Pharaoh to set the Israelites free. The goal was that God wanted to have an intimate relationship with the Hebrew people. This relationship becomes a model for Christian parents. God's actions as a parent clearly show a model of support (love) and control (discipline). These models were used by God in order to lead the Israelites towards maturity.

One of the purposes of Christian marriage is the propagation of human life, because God said to our first biblical parents, "be fruitful and multiply ..." (Genesis 1:26-27). As a result, the institution of Christian marriage becomes the sanctuary and the custodian of human life. However, procreation in marriage is not complete without the education of offspring. The education of children completes procreation. It extends procreation to include socialisation, proper physical care, mental care, moral and religious training. Procreation is the communication of human life which parenting intends to nurture, safeguard and develop. The reason for parenting is found in the dictates of nature. This natural obligation was observed by Thomas Aquinas thus:

> But, the child is a human person. By bringing hum [sic] into the world, parents
> contract toward him the obligation of rearing him in a manner that will enable him
> to face life in his turn. Parents are responsible for their offspring. Upon them rests
> the complete responsibility for a human being who has come into this world only
> because his parents brought him into. So, great is this responsibility, and of such

grandeur in the task which they have thereby taken upon themselves, that their entire life ought to be dominated by concern for their children's education.[45]

The child at birth is completely dependent upon its parents. Parenting, as argued above, completes the process of procreation. In the area of Mariannhill, the ever-growing absence of the fathers and the continuous denial of paternity do not complete the process of the procreative act. Marriage ensures that procreation and parenthood are not separated. Single parenthood, a growing phenomenon in the area of Mariannhill, suggests that procreation and parenthood are different. There is a difference between fathering and fatherhood. The former refers to the act of begetting a child, and the latter refers to the act of taking care of the child. These two acts ought not to be separated. Parenting is an all-round effort. This was affirmed by an early Thomistic theologian who wrote:

> This education will entail the proper physical care: shelter, clothing, nourishment; the proper mental development: instruction according to ability and social standing; the proper moral training; acquainting them with their moral obligations, by word and example assisting them to develop the virtues in their lives; the proper religious training: raising their virtuous lives from a merely natural level of virtue to a supernatural one, training their minds and hearts to God in the dutiful practice of their religious duties (Ostheimer 1939:82).

Our argument so far establishes that parenting is not a duty that parents can relinquish at will, but the dictates of natural law demand it. A 20th century French philosopher draws our attention to this when he wrote:

> But, who does not instinctively see, if his [sic] instinct is not perverted, who does not see with eyes of his intelligence, as soon as he opens them, that a child must have support, that support should be his father and mother? Who does not see in the case of men that procreation brings with it the charge of education and that persons must be supporters of free unions of the maddest kind when they think of entrusting their children, or others' children, to the public care (Meline 1929:85)?

This quotation draws our attention to the fact that parenthood is a natural responsibility. Reason informs us that parents are the primary teachers of their children. Logically, this delicate task cannot be completely delegated to other people or to other social institutions. These can only build upon the foundation begun by parents. In as much as procreation is an affair of love, so is parenting. The Catholic Church has always

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[45] *Summa Theologiae*, Suppl, q. 41a.

emphasised parenting and believes that marriage provides a suitable place for effective parenting.

Parenting is not about the exercise of authority in the negative sense of the word. Rather, it is about leadership (Kretzschmar 2002:46). Parents as leaders ought to inspire their children like good leaders who guide, inspire and encourage their followers (Kretzschmar 2002:46). This kind of parenting produces children that are holistic, children that are honest, fair, just, assertive and have *ubuntu*. Parents achieve this because they have the power and the ability to influence their children to be the best they can be (Kretzschmar 2002:51).

The family initiates the child into the intricacies of life and society. Parental influence can last throughout a person's life. Therefore, parents are the most influential parties in the child's development. Roehlkepartain (2000:248) argues that parents in the family are the primordial teachers. This challenges parents not to be so concerned about their own agendas, but that they should also act in a manner that will benefit the child. This is called positive parenting. It is positive because it is directed towards producing a person that is morally responsible (Van der Ven 1998:68).

The following poem sums up beautifully for me what we have been discussing above. This poem was written by a child and was aired on Metro FM on 22 February 2010 by DJ Wilson B. Nkosi. The title is: *When you thought I was not watching*:

> When you thought I was not looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.
>
> When you thought I was not looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.
>
> When you thought I was not looking, I saw you make my favourite cake for me, and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.
>
> When you thought I was not looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I was not looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to take care of each other.

When you thought I was not looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I was not looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it, and I learned that we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I was not looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good, and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I was not looking, I saw tears come from your eyes, and learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's alright to cry.

When you thought I was not looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I was not looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, "Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I was not looking".

4.15 Discipline and the Bible

The word discipline comes from the Latin word *discere*, meaning to teach or to learn. Therefore, discipline does not mean the administration of corporal punishment. On the contrary, it means a process of bringing the child to the realization of his/her inner goodness. This will bring awareness to the child about those choices that ought not to be pursued in life, and those that are good. Therefore, it is important that parents should apply some level of reasoning with the child.

The Bible is not silent about the issue of child rearing and discipline, especially in the Book of Proverbs. The fourth commandment of the Decalogue exhorts children to honour and to respect their parents (Deuteronomy 5:16). If we examine the Decalogue closely we find something deeper. The first three commandments of the Decalogue belong to the realm of divinity and the last seven to the realm of human relationships. The first commandment in the realm of human relationships is about the family: the respect that is

due to parents. Therefore, God expects the human parents to play their role towards producing holistic children.

Christians who support corporal punishment as a way of administering discipline often base their argument on biblical passages like Proverbs 13:24, "Those who spare the rod hate their children". Exegetical analysis of this text helps us to know that a rod in ancient Israel was used by pastors/shepherds as a way of guiding their flocks and not necessarily as a tool of beating. It is interesting to note how this same verse concludes: "but those who love them are diligent to discipline them". In her research of many years about the effectiveness of corporal punishment, Elizabeth Gershoff warns, "corporal punishment is associated with immediate compliance, with higher levels of aggression and lower levels of moral internalization and mental health" (2002:580). An example of this will be a parent who says to the child, "Do not put your hand on a hot stove because I will punish you". The child might refrain out of fear of being punished. In this instance, corporal punishment results in immediate compliance. But, what will this child do when the parent is not around? Positive discipline might say something like this, "Do not put your hand on hot stove because you will burn your hand". While Balswick and Balswick remind us, "disciplining children takes time, patience and wisdom. Parents who employ corporal punishment as the primary method of discipline are, by their very behaviour, admitting bankruptcy in disciplinary approaches. They are demonstrating an inability to be creative and effective in their discipline of children" (Balswick & Balswick 2007:107).

The same Book of Proverbs (22:6) exhorts parents to lay a foundation that will guide their children throughout life. This foundation will ground them in life and make them responsible members of the community and citizens. The goal of discipline in the Bible is to correct and train. This is based on the principle of the fear of the Lord. The Bible also mentions the rewards of effective discipline, "At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11).

One of the greatest strengths of good leaders is their ability to be firm, without being domineering. Parents when applying discipline ought to be firm and consistent. We mentioned previously that parenting is about leadership. Consequently, discipline is about leading children to the awareness that human actions have consequences. Parents ought to do this firmly, consistently and with love, because discipline does not make children passive recipients of a set of dos and don'ts. Rather, this makes children feel empowered about their own growth and development. Balswick and Balswick state that,

> In an atmosphere of mutual respect, there will be firmness without domination. An effective parent wins a child's cooperation by leading rather than coercing ... using everyday situations to teach consequences promotes the child's self-confidence, the ability to take others into account, and responsibility for one's own behaviour (2007:107-108).

The goal of discipline is to produce self-directing individuals, who have internalised moral values and abide by them not out of fear, but out of conviction.

4.15.1 Moral formation

Discipline and moral formation are closely related because they involve values, norms, customs, codes of conduct, etc. The family as a stable place plays a crucial role in the formation of the children and in the embodiment of moral characters. Parenting, as discussed above, refers to the process by which parents shape their offspring into mature persons (Hunt & Rydman 1979:253). The goal of parenting and discipline is to produce mature and self-directing adults who will contribute positively to the development of society, because *ukuzala ukuzelula amathambo*.[46]

Parents lay the foundation of moral awareness in the child. Discipline is a stimulant of moral formation. This was also observed by Chaube and Chaube when they wrote that, "the foundations of all the traits of the child are laid by the family environment. The traits of sympathy, generosity, love for justice, truthfulness ..." (1994:232). Discipline

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[46] Giving birth is stretching one's bones. This shows that parents take pride in their offspring when they make outstanding contribution in the community and parents receive honour because they have contributed in raising persons of outstanding characters.

therefore, leads to moral formation because it helps the child to emulate and to inculcate these moral traits.

In all this, Van der Ven (1998:81) emphasises the importance of the family. He tells a story of two boys in Chicago in 1994 who committed a heinous crime. These boys were between 10 and 11 years of age. Their crime was throwing a five-year-old boy over a bridge because he had refused to shoplift for them. The police reported that the fathers of these young offenders were in jail. The brutality of the crime shocked bystanders. Because of their absent fathers, these young boys lacked discipline and moral formation. Van der Ven articulates it well when he writes,

> Where the family fails in morally disciplining the child and morally socialising him/her in an appropriate way, the school cannot compensate. Where the Church lacks the opportunity to support and reinforce the values that the family fails to initiate the child into, the school cannot stop that hole. The school is not able to replace family or Church, because the school is neither family nor Church (Van der Ven 1998:126).

Moral formation is underpinned by an assertion that human beings are not born morally mature. Moral maturity is a process that begins at home with the parents setting an example. It involves discipline, habituation and self control (Van der Ven 1998:82 and Peschke 1985:242). The goal of moral formation is to produce individuals who have internalised the moral values and their actions are based on this internalisation. This process is not based on some authoritarian fear. Rather, it ought to emerge from a loving context that parents willingly share with their children. The child learns to observe moral norms and values out of ownership and not out of fear. The insights from the human and social sciences will further clarify the issues of parenting and discipline.

4.16 Insights on parenting from the human and social sciences

Human sciences remind parents that children are not adults in training (Balswick & Balswick 2007:103). Rather, parenting is a complex and a multi-faceted phenomenon, because there is no manual, or a one-shoe-fit-all theory. One can read a cooking manual for producing succulent meals, but unfortunately, there is no such manual for parenting.

There is one thing that characterises parents, the hope that their children will grow up well and turn out to be responsible and succeed in life. But relying on hope alone is not good enough. Recently, we have seen television shows that are developed around parenting skills, for example the Dr. Phil and Super Nanny shows. These shows reveal the seriousness, the importance and the challenges of parenting today. Some parents feel that they can no longer cope with the many voices that seem to compete with theirs; hence they look to counsellors for assistance.

Recent psychological studies reveal that parents need to know their children very well, and take a keen interest in each child (Balswick & Balswick 2007:104). Gaining personal knowledge about each child awakens a sense of confidence in parents. They can feel that they are in charge of the situation. For this reason, parenting is a team work, primarily between the mother and the father. The parents' interest in the child affords them a unique glimpse into the needs of each child. Balswick and Balswick talking from their personal experience of parenting and from their professional work remind us,

> Good parenting is a matter of interacting with our children day in and day out. It is these day-to-day experiences that build our relationship with them. The best advice we can give to parents is to throw away their how-to-parent books and simply become parents to their children. Even though these materials offer useful guidelines that contribute to an understanding of the child rearing process, parents can function more freely and openly in their role if they are simply willing to be more genuine with their children (Balswick & Balswick 2007:105).

This citation challenges those parents who completely relinquish their own efforts of developing a personal relationship with their children and rely completely on the how-to-parent manuals and books. While these may provide invaluable information, parents need to remember that they come from a particular context that might not be universally applicable. Good parents will read these manuals and books and adapt them in their unique and particular situations. We mentioned earlier that good and strong families are characterised by flexibility and adaptability.

Today, social science literature, speaks about good parenting "as making the child feel comfortable in the presence of the parents and giving the child a sense of being accepted

and approved as a person" , while bad parenting is about "directing the child to behave in a manner desirable to the parents" (Baumrind 1996:408; Balswick & Balswick 2007:106). Now let us dwell more on parenting and consider what these scientists say about instrumental parenting (Baumrind 1996:405; Balswick & Balswick 2007:108-109). They maintain that there are normally two dimensions that are involved in instrumental parenting: action and content, while parenting can be either described as high or low in action. By action, they mean that parents engage and demonstrate the type of behaviour they want their children to emulate, while other parents make no such effort, hence they will be low on action. Content refers to a rich elaboration of rules, norms, values and beliefs, while some parents simply do not care. The following chart taken from Balswick and Balswick (2007:108-109) demonstrates this clearly:

<p style="text-align:center">Action</p>

		High	Low
Content	High	Disciplining	Teaching
	Low	Modelling	Neglecting

The above figure demonstrates that parenting that is low on both action and content often leads to neglect of duty. Parents here do not give direction either by action or by words. Children are left on their own to figure out what life is all about and there is no parental support and supervision. We also observe that the teaching parent style is high in content, but very low in action. In this instance, the parents say to the child: "Do as I say, but just don't look at my behaviour". Such a parenting style leads to inconsistency between content and action and hence children do not attach any value to content because it is not matched by action.

The modelling style is low on content but high in action. This is the teaching style reversed. Children here learn by observing their parents, the manner in which they carry themselves. This style takes seriously the old proverb, "actions speak louder than words".

The final style of parenting is discipline. This style is high in both action and content. There is consistency between deeds and words of mouth.

The findings of human and social sciences concur with our biblical and theological discussions about parenting and discipline. These insights are meant to help us to strengthen families founded on marriage so that families can fulfil their vocation and mission in the world. This discussion has presented an integrated view of parenting and discipline by drawing from various insights and hence we are able to speak coherently and convincingly about the role of the family founded on marriage.

4.17 Toxic parenting

The word toxic in everyday speech refers to something that is poisonous, something that has a potential of causing severe harm and damage. Today we speak of toxic waste, referring to that which has a potential of causing damage to the environment. Toxic parenting refers to a certain style of parenting that is potentially dangerous to the development of the child. Parenting can be badly administered and consequently become toxic. It is dangerous when it does not respect the child's world view in its different stages of development. As a result, it damages the image and the development of the child. Toxic parenting often expresses itself through the excessive and inappropriate use of power. This manner of parenting alienates the child and eventually leads a child to abandon home for a much freer place.[47]

Toxic parenting includes everything that impairs a child's emotional, physical, sexual and psychological development. The failure of parents to exercise discipline is toxic and becomes another form of child abuse. Some parents do not correct their children because they are not available to do so due to work commitments. As a way of compensating for their absence, they tend to tolerate bad habits that children develop. In fact, such parents are not compensating the child; they are simply neglecting their duty. This neglect is an

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[47] This site is worth visiting it talks about toxic parenting: www.consistent-parenting-advice.com/toxic-parent.html. The following website has a range of informative books about toxic parenting: www.barnesandnoble.com/newslatters/kmp. Dr. Susan Forward- Accessed 04 October 2010.

abuse because it is a form of injustice. Christian parents need to dedicate some time to reading the Bible so as to know what God expects of them, to read relevant literature and join associations that can assist them.

As a priest working with young people, I was astounded when a fourteen-year-old girl said to me, "Father, I have a boyfriend because with him I try to solve my school and home problems. My father is very harsh and never speaks when he is at home. We fear asking him for anything. The affection that I need cannot be found at home. My mother does not reach out to us as well because she fears him as well". This father is a breadwinner and the mother does not want to deal with the issue. Some mothers will simply turn a blind eye on such abuses because they are dependent on their husbands.

There are fathers who do not want to get involved in the upbringing of their children and relinquish the full responsibility to the mother. In such cases, the father will only intervene when there is a serious issue and this intervention is almost always harsh. Such fathers often fail to recognise that they may have contributed to the unfortunate situation the child finds himself/herself in by not supporting the child. Such neglect of parental oversight becomes toxic.

Some parents might have been raised by authoritative parents, who use their authority to pin down the child. They fail to inspire the child towards being a mature moral person. Sometimes parents do not know how to use their authority and turn out to be authoritative. Parents exercise their authority when they love, support, affirm, criticise and discipline their children. Failure to do this will be toxic parenting.

4.18 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed marriage, the family and parenting from the perspective of Catholic moral theology and drew insights from African, Protestant, and the human and social sciences. Recent studies have confirmed that children perform better when both

parents are married to each other.[48] The major challenge that we face today is the lack of advocacy groups for families founded on marriage. Yet, the advocacy groups for family diversity are very vocal. These groups challenge the traditional form of marriage as a heterosexual and a monogamous union. The protagonists of traditional marriage are often perceived to be judgemental and imposing their morality on others. This is a false notion that is rooted in subjective morality. People from all walks of life have a sense of what is wrong and right, good and bad.

The family founded on marriage is both a theological and a sociological reality that is indispensable to human development. However, our presuppositions and premises in this research are predominantly theological in nature.

An enduring peaceful social order needs institutions that express and consolidate the values of life and peace. The institution that most immediately responds to the nature of human persons is the family. It is the family founded on marriage that alone ensures the continuity of society. Stakeholders in the creation of a sense of moral regeneration in South Africa should ensure that the family receives all the support it needs. The state ought to ensure that the conditions in society are conducive for the family to live and to fulfil its mission.

The following chapter discusses the meaning of family breakdown by citing global and local examples.

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[48] www.zenit.org. Accessed 25 April 2007 and
www.timeslive.ac.za/multimedia/archive/02005/First_to_Hea_2005432a.pdf. Accessed 18 April 2011.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BREAKDOWN OF MARRIAGE, THE FAMILY AND PARENTING

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theological and functionalist theories that underpin this research project. The family founded on marriage has a particular role to play in the development of children and society. The breakdown of the family founded on marriage is discussed and assessed in this chapter in the light of the theoretical frameworks of the thesis. The marital ideals discussed in chapters two and four tell us that a marriage, especially a Christian one, is meant to be a lifelong commitment of love and life. The construction of the questionnaire and the interviews on family breakdown were informed by the extensive reading on this topic, my pastoral experience and Catholic moral theology.

This chapter investigates the actual situation of marriage, the family and parenting. It achieves this by asking three fundamental questions that underpin this chapter: What is family breakdown? What is happening around the world and in South Africa regarding family breakdown? What are the causes and consequences of family breakdown?

The goal of any research project is to try to describe the situation of the hypothesis that is being investigated and state how it came about. This important feature of research was identified by Welman and Kruger (2001:18). The description of the situation is key to any research because it enables the researcher to locate the project in context.

5.2 The meaning of family breakdown

How one defines family breakdown rests on one's understanding and definition of the family. Chapter two defined the family founded on marriage as a community of persons (mother, father and children) which is brought about by affinity or adoption. The family is brought about by a certain relatedness of individuals to one another. This relatedness is

established by the marriage bonds between a man and a woman. In this community, each individual has a role to play and has certain functions to fulfil according to established social norms. The family is characterised by common residence, economic cooperation or pooling together of resources and reproduction. The family is a theological, anthropological and a sociological entity.

What is family breakdown? It is the disintegration of the bonds and ties that exist among the members of the nuclear family. Family breakdown is not a once-off event, but a process which is a result of a conglomeration of issues. This disintegration often results in hostility, tension, conflicts and ongoing misunderstandings amongst the members causing some members to feel isolated. It further diminishes the sense of belonging which people are naturally inclined to desire. The effects of this loss can have a bearing on the larger society as victims of family breakdown struggle to make sense of their situation. This is due to suppressed views, confusion of roles, economic, social, psychological and spiritual problems. In conclusion, family breakdown refers to the total or partial collapse of all forms of bonds that existed in the nuclear family. Hence, it is much more than the breakdown of an institution, but a potential breakdown in relationships and personalities.

Therefore, this chapter is dealing with the collapse and the break-up of a love relationship, the end of a partnership between husband and wife and, all too often, the splitting up of a family with subsequent trauma and problems for the children involved. So, the tragic breakdown of a relationship of two people may also lead to the start of innumerable problems for children and subsequently for the society.

Family breakdown became a particular problem in the 20th century. However, this does not mean that all previous marriages were highly successful and happy experiences. Divorce and marital breakdown have occurred as long as the institution of marriage has been in existence. But what makes it different now is that it has become a common experience. One needs only to glance through the divorce settlements in the courts of law. Marital breakdown is so common today that it is viewed as something normal and to be

expected in marriages. Enduring marriages are becoming a rare commodity. Yet, Catholic moral theology teaches that marriage is one, enduring and a grace-filled sacramental experience. What is so strange is that in an age in which we have all sorts of aids available to enhance marriages (communications, education, medical advances, sexologists, economic progress, etc) we still have such a high rate of breakdown of marriages, even among Catholics.

5.3 Instances of family breakdown globally

The world we live in today has been referred to as a global village, hence globalisation. This has been the result of the processes of information, technology and communication. As a result, we now live in a world of profound changes and these changes are affecting every sphere of society and our lives. These changes are progressively forming a new global and cosmopolitan society. Globalisation has not meant the coming together of different cultural beliefs, but a domination of the world by secular Western perspectives and life-styles. This has created a sense of cultural imperialism fast-tracked by the media.

There are some schools of thought that maintain that the family is not under any form of threat, but simply undergoing a change. This change commenced at time of the French Revolution (Georgas 2006:6; Anderson 2009:9-12). The result of this change was family disintegration. Later psychologists attributed family breakdown to the industrial revolution (Mitterauer and Sieder 1982; Popenoe 1988; Segalen 1996). The changes brought about by the industrial revolution have disseminated globally and affected almost all the cultures of the world. Demographic statistics also reveal that the institution of the family is declining in the European Union countries (Georgas 2006:24). Georgas (2006:26) cites the following as pointers to family breakdown:

- Increase in unmarried parents and one-parent families
- The increasing divorce rate
- The decreasing contact of divorced fathers with their children
- The increase in re-marriages and families with step-parents, step-brothers and step-sisters

- The gradual replacement of marriage by consensual unions
- Legalisation of same-sex unions
- The increasing absence of fathers

These changes are not temporary, they pose a serious threat to the family and there is evidence of it. The institution of the family is one among the many social institutions we have, for example, schools, Churches, scientific, legal/criminal, political, state, military, economic, etc. However, the institution of the family is different from these because it is the core institution as it precedes all these and other forms of social cohesion. The family is core, because changes in its life affect the ability of society to function as a whole.

The situation of the family founded on marriage, as defined in chapter two, continues to be under severe pressure on a global scale. In New Zealand and Australia, law commissions proposed a law allowing children conceived with the use of sperm or egg donors to have three legal parents. This proposal fails to address what would happen if the three parents begin to feud over the child. There is also increasing support from influential legal commissions and legal scholars in Canada and the United States of America for the legalisation of group marriage arrangements, such as polygamy and polyandry. These proposals, should they succeed, will eventually lead to clashes between parents and children. Subsequently, these proposals will have damaging consequences for the children and the society.

In May 2006, the Institute for Family Policies based in Madrid sounded an alarm about the challenges that beset the family today.[49] There is a major worry today about the dramatic drop of marriages on a global scale. This Institute found that among 25 member countries of the European Union, there was a drop of more than 663,600 in the number of marriages. Among the surviving marriages, high numbers of divorces were expected. In the EU countries, 10 million marriages broke up between 1990 and 2004. This means that more than 16 million children are affected. Furthermore, the same Institute noted that this

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[49] www.zenit.org – Accessed 05 October 2006.

situation is also exacerbated by governments' lack of resources and family-unfriendly legislation.

In 2006, *The New York Times* reported that 51% of women prefer to stay alone, without a male spouse. England and Wales also show that there are more single, divorced and widowed women than wives. This was reflected in the statistics of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) of the United Kingdom in December 19, 2006. The ONS further revealed that between 1996 and 2004, the number of single mothers increased by 1.5 million. Teenage pregnancy in Britain is very high. This was also echoed by the UNICEF report of 14 February 2007. The undesirable situation of the family in Britain has been ascribed to the disintegration of family life. This report noted, "Children in single parent and stepfamilies tend to be worse off than those living with both biological parents".[50] The common assumption that teenage pregnancy is a result of sexual ignorance has been disapproved by the *Independent* of 16 July 2006, which stated that "teenage girls who get pregnant are deliberately 'planning' to become mothers in the belief that a baby will improve the quality of their lives".[51]

Family life also faces challenges in France, observed an article published by the *Washington Post* of 21 November 2006. In 2004, it was reported that France had a marriage rate of only 4.3% per 100 persons. Ireland reveals the same low statistics. According to an article published by *Catholic Ireland*, Ireland's rapid growth in wealth and prosperity over the past 15 years is paralleled with rising divorce rates, lower fertility rates, and an increase in children born out of wedlock[52].

A British newspaper, The *Daily Mail* of 15 February 2007, published an article by Stephen Glover. Glover challenged the government to change its taxation system which seems to be penalising married couples. This penal taxation system was observed in two

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[50] www.zenit.org – Accessed on 26 February 2007.
[51] www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/teenage-mothers-see-preganacy-as-a-career-move-408186.html - Accessed 26 February 2007.
[52] www.catholicireland.net – Accessed 04 November 2006.

areas, namely, the legal and fiscal protection. The situation discourages people from getting married and further creates an unstable situation for the children.

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace also expressed its opinion against the undesirable situation of the family in the modern world. This Council stated,

> If the family is not given the capacity to carry out its educational task, if the laws contrary to the authentic good of people, such as those that attack life, mislead citizens on the good…if grass root morality is weakened by tolerated transgression, if conditions of life are degraded … it is not possible to guarantee a culture of life in our global community.[53]

Since his election to the Chair of St. Peter in May 2005, Benedict XVI has been defending the role of the family and speaking strongly about it. When addressing the members of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Benedict XIV spoke of the family as a basic building block of society.

Arguably we can state that, based on the above scenario, children from families founded on marriage have better outcomes in life, which is the same phenomenon the researcher observed during his ministry in the area of Mariannhill. Governments have put aside millions of dollars for the awareness programmes about the rights of children and their economic plight. Nonetheless, this focus does not delve into the child's life. What needs to be done, is putting the child first. The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights made this unwavering statement: "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state" (art. 16).

Protecting marriage and family calls for the spirit of *khomanani*, the spirit of caring together. If states are to promote the general good of society, they need to defend and promote the family founded on marriage. Pope Benedict XIV called for the respect and adherence to article 16 of the United Nation's Declaration on Human Rights. In his *Angelus* of 4 February 2007, the Supreme Pontiff mentioned, "We are all aware that the

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[53] www.vatican.ca – Accessed on 05 October 2006.

family founded on marriage is the natural environment in which to bear and to raise children and thereby guarantee the future of all humanity".[54]

The above discussion has shown us that there are substantial instances of family breakdown on a global scale. We now discuss our local situation, with specific reference to the area of study.

5.4 Instances of family breakdown in South Africa, and especially in Mariannhill

The Executive Summary of the African Union's Plan of Action on Families in Africa observes, "In Africa, the family is an equally important institution of society but it is undergoing tremendous changes and facing many formidable challenges thus increasing pressures on the family, including poverty, civil strife and conflicts, and vulnerability (African Union 2004:2). We now consider the situation of family living in South Africa and discern its impact on children and society.

5.4.1 Breakdown of traditional social and cultural structures

Prior to the arrival of the settlers and missionaries on the African continent, the African people had strong social structures. They relied on these structures to mediate the different social structures and these were the pillars of support. Within these social structures, roles were clearly defined and there was no ambiguity. These ensured that good social values were handed down to generations and societies thrived. Social challenges were successfully dealt with.

These social structures served as educational centres for young African boys and girls. Today, there are no adequate alternatives to these social structures. The initiation schools were a coordinated effort in traditional Africa to ensure that proper social values and etiquettes were transmitted to the young fellows. This was achieved because parents collaborated with these social structures. The old saying: "It takes a village to raise a

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[54] www.zenit.org – Accessed on 05 October 2007.

child" was very true in this African context. This concerted effort of rearing the child has sharply diminished in African communities today, especially in the urban areas. Families are becoming isolated social units with less relationship. The consequences of this change have serious implications for the broader community.

The changes of the colonial and post colonial periods ushered in a new morality, a new way of seeing the self and behaving that was less communal in its outlook. There were those who were either 'educated' or 'uneducated', and 'civilised' or 'uncivilised'. Those who received the Western form of education looked down upon their counterparts. This resulted in a spirit of unhealthy competition rather than co-operation among Africans. Good African values were ultimately despised by Africans themselves, especially those who were 'civilised'. When a fellow African saw another African slaughtering a cow or a goat for ancestral celebration that was seen as an act of being 'uncivilised'. But, when a white fellow puts a wreath on the tomb of his/her relative and whispers or mumbles some words, he was praised.

These conditions have strongly influenced the process of moral formation that was envisaged by the African social structures. The impact of this change cannot be over-estimated. The socio-ethical challenges that we face can be traced to this period. We need to take cognisance of what Pope Paul VI said on the value of the family in Africa: "For Africans the family comes to be the natural environment in which man and woman are born and act in which he/she finds the necessary protection and security" (1976:420). This natural environment has declined in Africa and the moral formation of persons has been largely compromised. This contributes to the breakdown of the moral fibre of South Africa. The following discussion points further to the role of apartheid in this connection in South Africa.

5.4.2 Politics and the family in South Africa before 1994

We shall now discuss the manner in which the political situation of South Africa contributed to family breakdown. This context cannot be taken lightly, because young

people were not immune to the effects of apartheid in South Africa. In fact, they are the ones who suffered the most, because they lost their parents through detention without trial, and forced removals.

The struggle against apartheid contributed to the moral degeneration in South Africa. The initial agenda of most political liberation movements in South Africa was to achieve liberation through amicable means. They thought that this could be achieved through persuasion and dialogue. However, those who had power were not willing to go through the route of negotiations. Instead, political movements were faced with harsh treatment and they lost some of their supporters. In the end, they became aware that negotiations would only be possible through the route of the armed struggle. Each political movement embarked on a different armed struggle strategy. A public statement made by Chief Albert Luthuli in November 1952 expressed his frustrations about the government's lack of commitment to negotiations "…on the contrary, the past thirty years have seen the greatest number of laws restricting our rights and progress until today we have reached a stage where we have almost no rights at all…in short, we have witnessed in these years an intensification of our subjection to ensure and protect white supremacy" (Braganca 1982:35).

Despite the appeals from different political movements for peaceful negotiations, the government of the day pressed ahead with its policies of segregation and silenced the leaders of these movements. Inkosi Albert Luthuli's statement on the Rivonia trial reveals the situation of the time, "the government sharpened its oppression of the people of South Africa, using its all-white parliament as the vehicle for making repression legal…" (Braganca 1982:41). These sentiments were later echoed by Oliver Tambo on 1 January 1968 when he said, "We know that the revolution in South Africa will be a long and a bitter one calling for maximum sacrifices from all lovers of freedom. Yet our national organisation with full support of the vast majority of the nation has chosen this path as essential if we are to lead our country out of the nightmare …" (Braganca 1982:42).

Violence in South Africa was born out of the belief that it was a necessary tool and strategy for solving the socio-political challenges of the time. A culture, which saw the police force use maximum violence in order to maintain and preserve the status quo, was born. The dignity of human life was almost nonexistent. In March 1960, the Sharpeville massacre of innocent people in changed the political course for liberation. This period saw large numbers of killings of people. Hay describes this period well when he writes, "The 1970s saw a greater degree of institutional violence and social outcomes of apartheid … the group areas act of 1952, together with forced removals, caused untold distress and suffering to the African, Coloured and Indian communities" (1998:24).

After the uprising on 16 June 1976, young people assumed greater leadership role in the struggle against apartheid. During this period, many young people were either killed or sent to detention without trial. A young generation of militants emerged in the townships sparked by the brutality of the police. Schools became fertile ground for political activism. Police harassment forced young people to take the law into their own hands. Elders and parents received orders from their children. This was something foreign to the African culture. As a result of this ever-increasing leadership role among young people, the traditional African family structure became dysfunctional. Parents lost control and authority in their own homes. Bongani Finca, a commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in East London, recalled with sadness the degradation some parents underwent at the time. He mentioned that what touched him the most during the TRC[55] hearings was the sobbing of a man as he reflected on the emasculation of his dignity when he was asked by boys younger than himself to expose his private parts for torture.

The *Weekly Mail* of 7 December 1985 reported a story of an eight-year-old boy who was charged with intimidation and refused bail. When he appeared in court the following day, he had sustained injuries to his face. The State of Emergency of 21 July 1985 saw the

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[55] TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission was established by President Nelson Mandela as a means of providing a platform for the victims of apartheid to tell their own stories. Perpetrators of violence were also accorded an opportunity to seek reconciliation with the victims' families. This Commission was intended to help South Africans to build up their country afresh and to facilitate the long and hard journey towards forgiveness and restitution.

detention of more than 2 000 children under the age of 16 (*Sowetan* 1985:12-13). The effects of detention on these children will be felt long after. Detention was one form of exposing children to violence. The presence of the South African Defence Force (SADF) in townships further exposed children to violence. Yet, South Africa was a signatory to the UN Charter on children's rights. Children became unruly as they spent less significant time with their parents. They spent most of their time in camps, and these camps later on harboured criminal activities.

The repercussions of apartheid were immense and the effects cannot be underestimated. During apartheid, an African child was born into a battle field. This battle did not begin at birth, but started at the moment of conception. Mothers were living under harsh conditions and did not have easy access to health facilities as they were not allowed in the cities. This was a period of hardship, not only for the mother but also for the foetus. The African child experienced the world as a harsh place, as a place of family disintegration where there is no father figure. The African child's world was an extremely violent one. It was a world of rubber bullets, teargas, detention and death on the streets. A mother is reported to have shared a story of her two-year-old boy, who saw a police vehicle, took a stone and tried to throw it at the passing vehicle.

Such a background contributed significantly to behavioural changes. Burman states, "Whilst young children are channelling their energies politically, there are those whose exposure and experiences of brutalisation will harm their social, physical, spiritual, moral and mental development" (1986:343). Undoubtedly, apartheid left emotional, spiritual, social and moral scars on the people, both the victims and perpetrators. Burman said prophetically, "The most tragic reflection of the war situation in which South Africa finds itself is that it faces years to come with children who have been socialised to find violence completely acceptable and human life cheap" (1986:344). The brutality of the day undoubtedly left emotional scars on peoples' memories. This was evident during the TRC hearings around the country. Unfortunately, thousands of people never got the chance to tell their stories. Feelings and emotions from the past are still etched in their lives.

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The struggle against apartheid destroyed families. Breadwinners were brutally killed in the police holding cells and detained without trial. Children grew up without the normal support structure, which their white counterparts enjoyed. Black police also bore some emotional scars as they committed some of the most gruesome acts against the people. The police had to leave their families behind and go to battle zones. Some White children also suffered, as they had to go without their fathers for a long time. Often when they came back from these battle zones they were themselves traumatised and brutalised and could not be good fathers or husbands.

The roots of a quantifiable number of social problems; from illegitimacy to drug abuse, and from child poverty to violence, can be traced to the breakdown of the family. This scenario will not be surprising if the level of crime in South Africa continues to escalate. Lyndon B. Johnson stated the importance of the family thus: "The family is the cornerstone of society. More than any other force it shapes the attitude, the hopes, the ambitions and the values of the child. And when the family collapses, it is the children that are usually damaged. When it happens on a massive scale the community itself is crippled".[56]

This situation contributed to the decline of African values and morals. Theologians and scholars who are serious about developing an African theology cannot ignore this context. There is, therefore, a need for an in-depth analysis, evaluation and rethinking of this situation and its impact on the moral fibre of the people. The moral decay of any society is progressive. It involves a number of factors.

5.4.3 Family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill

The past ten years have seen the mushrooming of the building of the government's two-roomed houses in the area of Mariannhill. These houses are mainly occupied by single mothers who are raising their children alone. The mother and the offspring normally live on the Child Support Grant (CSG). Raising children within these houses is challenging.

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[56] www.leaderu.com. Accessed 14 May 2008.

Frequently, children lack role models as mothers often change their partners. This creates an unstable situation for children. Young boys grow up without proper mentoring and socialisation, as their biological fathers are absent. These young boys look up to gangs in the area for acceptance. Girls on the other hand tend to become mothers at an early stage and eventually quit school. And so the society plunges into a moral crisis.

Philippe Denis mentions, "Marriage no longer governs relations between men and women … single motherhood has become the norm" (2006:5). Former Deputy President Jacob Zuma in his inaugural speech for the MRM noted that "42% of children under 7 are living with mothers only".[57] This increase of single mothers is mostly noted among females who are between the ages of 15 and 25. The majority of these girls are still school-going learners. Some of them have dropped out of school because they have to look after their offspring alone. The fathers of these babies normally do not support their children, let alone accept paternity. In the same speech, former Deputy President Zuma noted that 333,510 children had untraceable fathers and 99,000 households are headed by children aged between 10 to 17 years and it is feared these figures would increase in the next ten years. This further places African girls at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts.

Cohabitation is another serious social challenge in the area of Mariannhill. Besides the government housing subsidy scheme, there are many people in this area who are migrant labourers. About 65% of families around Mariannhill supplement their income by renting out rooms to migrant labourers. Some of these tenants have cut off ties with their rural homes and settled in these rooms. Cohabitation has become a norm in this atmosphere. Children are born from these relationships. Children need a proper space in order to develop and learn social etiquettes. In many instances, one finds that a family of six lives in a single room and this involves huge compromises. The parents' space is compromised as well as that of the children. This situation is prone to all sorts of moral challenges. Drinking parents tend to be very loose with their language and this affects children. Consequently, children flee from their homes because of this situation.

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[57] http//:www.mrm.otg.za. Accessed 21 April 2010

One day, I had an opportunity of counselling a sixteen-year-old boy who grew up in a single room with his mother and four siblings. The boy was the eldest of the four siblings. He has a vague recollection of his father who left when he was about four to five years old. The only thing that he remembers about his father was his heavy drinking and the abuse that he inflicted on him and his mother. The mother and the father were separated. The boy's mother met another man and they had three children together. The second boyfriend never accepted the son of the first boyfriend. But, with no place to turn to, the young boy endured the pain and the abuse. The mother separated from the second boy friend. The second boy friend was a heavy drinker too. The mother met a third boy friend with whom she had another child.

This boy has difficulty with authority at school. Teachers cannot reprimand him because the image of his abusive step-father still haunts him. He eventually dropped out of school and he is very angry with life because he never had a stable and a loving home. Staying in one room with his parents and siblings was a huge challenge, he recalls. He now looks up to peers who are in trouble with the law to give him what his childhood denied him. He never experienced the love, care, warmth and stability that a home should provide. Therefore, accepting other forms of union proves to be emotionally and psychologically taxing for children. If we have the best interests of the children at heart, our society and the Church should stand up and be counted by promoting marriage that it works.

There is also a cultural aspect that continues to affect marriages in this area. We discussed in chapter four the complex processes that precedes an African marriage. These cultural processes were aimed at strengthening the bonds of friendship between the two families. Today, this culture is more practiced in the rural areas than the semi-urban areas. The weakening of traditional practices leads to weak marriages and family ties.

Tied into the above paradigm, is the question of *ilobolo*. *Ilobolo* today is misused for economic purposes. As a result some potential husbands find it very difficult to pay the exorbitant monies that are being demanded. Money replaces the payment of *ilobolo* by livestock. Marriage is commercialised to a greater degree and now can only be afforded

by the wealthy. This phenomenon has financial implications for African families today. Sometimes a couple gets married without the husband having paid all the monies that are due to the wife's family. If this is the case, the two families normally negotiate about the payment of the remaining money. This has serious financial implications for the new family, because the money that would have gone towards the upkeep of the new family and the education of the children is channelled to paying *ilobolo* instalments. This was not the case in traditional Africa. For this reason, today many decide to settle together without any formal marriage. This contributes to family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill, as young people are deterred from entering into marriage by the costs that are involved in the process.

This *sitz em leben* calls for in-depth and a critical research for new values and schools of thought. Scholars and theologians need to begin to reflect on some of these questions: what is the situation of the family in Africa today? How has the African family changed since the arrival of missionaries? Could there be a way of preserving the African family from the negative effects of some Euro-American influences? What are the moral repercussions of the Euro-American influences on the African family? Answers to these questions should stimulate a healthy academic debate and research should be on going.

5.5 The causes of marital and family breakdown

Previously, we discussed the situation of the family in the modern world and we saw the statistics which are a cause of concern. The statistics provided us with global and local contexts. They showed that the institution of the family founded on marriage is under severe pressure. This sub-section discusses the causes of family breakdown.

Saying that the family is breaking down suggests that it is no longer able to perform its function in the society. We need to study and analyse the causes that provide fertile ground for families to break down. The cause are listed here and will be discussed below: Fatherless families, cultural changes, political changes, economic changes, social changes, theological changes, individualism, urbanisation and migration.

5.5.1 Fatherless families

A great challenge which besets the family today is the ever-increasing absence of a father figure during the child's development and growth. A decade ago, this was identified as a new cause of family disintegration. Our families are becoming fatherless due to a number of reasons that are discussed in this chapter. The presence of a father figure has positive outcomes for a child, especially the boy child. Boys who grew up with their fathers are more likely to obey the law and to be good citizens.

It is an accepted fact, both in the sociological and psychological spheres that children need both parents in preparation for integration into society. These two genders are important in complementing and facilitating the growth of the child. Recent studies have confirmed the role fathers play in marriage and in the family. The boy child needs to be coached about how to handle masculinity. Nelson, found in her research that, "the absence of the father figure leaves the male children without an adult model" (2005:32).[58] The important role of a father figure was also noted by American Judge Sheridan.[59] The website contains some disturbing statistics about the reality of ever-absent fathers. It was found that families where the father is absent make up 63% of all youth suicides in the USA; 71 % of all high school dropouts; 75% of all adolescent substance abuse patients; 70% of juveniles in state operated institutions; 85% of children exhibiting behaviour disorders; 90% of all homeless and runaway children.

The same disturbing statistics were observed in the United Kingdom[60]: 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes; 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes; 85% of all children that exhibit behavioural disorders come from fatherless homes; 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes; 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes; 70% of juveniles in

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[58] www.timeslive.co.za/multimedia/archive/02005/First_Steps_to_Hea_2005432a.pdf. Accessed 18 April 2011.

[59] www.marriagedonewright.com. Accessed 19 June 2007.

[60] http://www.megawarp.com/content.php?185-Family-Breakdown-Causes-Social-Problems. Accessed 12 March 2010.

state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes and 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home.

Recently, the South African Institute for Race Relations released the following disturbing statistics about the situation in South Africa:[61] Children living with fathers: Africans = 30%; Coloureds = 53%; Indian = 85% and Whites 83%. Children living without fathers: African = 52%; Coloured = 41%; Indian = 12% and White = 15%. Children between the ages of 0 and 17 years living with both parents were 35%, with the mother only were 40%, living with neither biological parents were 23% and living with grandparents were 8%. Urban single parents across racial lines are 44%. Foster child support grant increased between 2005 and 2009 by 88%, from 271,817 to 511,479.

Ensuring that fathers are present[62] during the crucial stages of their sons' growth will dramatically minimise violence against women and children. Fatherlessness is the generator of violence among boys. Purves notes that:

> Surveys of child well being repeatedly show that children living apart from their fathers are far more likely than other children to be expelled or suspended from school, to display emotional and behavioural problems, to have difficulty getting along with their peers, and to get in trouble with police (1999:31).

In an article by Zanele Mazibuko reported in the *Daily Sun* of 23 June 2008:13, she revealed some shocking statistics about teenage pregnancies in our country. About 10,000 per annum babies are born to teenage mothers in Gauteng alone. This shows that the number of children born without fathers is increasing. Furthermore, this means that their mothers have minimal chances of going to school, because they need to raise their children. Their own children will grow up without fathers, and possibly the circle will be perpetuated.

My own observation in the area of Mariannhill was that children from households that are without fathers were more likely to be involved in criminal activities. Nelson observed

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[61] www.timeslive.co.za/multimedia/archive/02005/First_Steps_To_Hea_2005432a.pdf. Accessed 18 April 2011.
[62] Here, I am referring to a presence that is positive and nourishing.

the same during the interviews she conducted in Heidedal, in South Africa. She found that, "it became clear that delinquent boys felt that their fathers did not pay much attention to them. They felt that their fathers did not make enough effort to build a relationship with them" (2005:33).

The absence of a father becomes a loud statement that the child will continue to suffer when Mom and Dad separate. The child often suffers for having opted to stay with his/her mother. This is particularly true for most African families where the father is the breadwinner. The biggest pain for the children is to see their father doing well in life, but they cannot communicate with him. When Mom and Dad separate, the father normally remarries while the mother raises the first set of children by herself. When the father remarries, he tends to forget the first set of his children and channel all his resources to the children of the second wife. This includes children whom he did not father. Fathers normally raise children whom they did not father as a way of demonstrating love for their second spouse. This further alienates him from his own children. Consequently, this act perpetuates the absence of a father in the child's psyche.

The father can be absent in a number of ways. There are fathers who opt to stay in the picture, but choose to be providers more than role models for their children. I know of a father who once came to me and complained about his three sons who are exhibiting strange behaviours at home. The father went on to tell me that he has an open policy at home, he buys his sons everything that they want. During our session I had to make him aware that he needs to develop a relationship with his sons. It is not enough that he remains a provider, but he must be close to them emotionally and take a keen interest in their lives by spending time with them. This man was a typical father who only asks the million-dollar question: how much do you want? This question limits the father's role in the family as it forgets that children also have emotions and a life.

Fatherlessness takes on different forms. Women who are abandoned for one reason or another by their husbands/partners try to meet their needs through other forms of relationships, for example, boyfriends and cohabitation. These forms of relationship

escalate the problem of family breakdown and sexual violence against children (Blankenhorn 1995:40). A mother who decides to settle with a boyfriend tends to put her children at risk of being abused. Studies conducted in the early 1990s in the USA found that of all cases of child abuse in which the perpetrator is known, fully one quarter are cohabiting 'parent substitutes', usually boyfriends (Sedlack 1991:6). Another study conducted by the University of Iowa in 1992 and 1994 concluded that:

> Of all reported cases of non parental child abuse, about half are committed by boyfriends, even though boyfriends provide only 2% of all non parental child care. About 84% of all case of non parental child abuse occurs in single parent homes. Among the cases occurring in single-parent homes, 64% of the perpetrators are boyfriends (Margolin 1992:545-546 and Malkin 1994:121-133).

Sometimes, it is under these painful situations that our children experience violence by someone close to them or someone who ought to protect them.

The promulgation of the Civil Union bill[63] in South Africa poses a serious challenge to marriage as understood and as taught by the Catholic Church. This challenge is not only a doctrinal matter but a sociological one as well. It exacerbates the challenge of fatherlessness in families. A study was conducted in Australia about the prospects of primary school children that come from homosexual homes. These children were compared to their counterparts who came from married heterosexual homes. The findings of this study revealed that children from homes that have married heterosexual parents performed better at school than their counterparts from homes where the parents/caregivers were homosexuals.[64] I am not aware of such current studies in South Africa, because the Civil Union bill is still new. But, what the study showed in Australia might be true for South Africa as well, with the strong adherence to cultural practices. In February 2010, the programme entitled 3rd Degree screened on the E-TV channel showed

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[63] In 2004, the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled in favour of same-sex unions and called for the common law on marriage to be changed. This was followed by another same ruling on 1 December 2005. The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, argued that the South African constitution safeguards the principle of equality (section 9(1). It further argued that the constitution mentions that the state ought not to discriminate individuals based on their preferences (section 9(3). While section 15(1) provides the right to individuals to pursue a lifestyle that is in accordance with their conscience. The court rulings and these arguments, led to the Civil Union Act (Act 17 of 2006). Persons who enter this union enjoy the full protection of the law of the land and have the same privileges as their heterosexual counterparts.
[64] http://www.christianaction.org.za/articles/whataboutthechildren.html. Accessed on 11 March 2010.

a resentful attitude from some townships towards gays and lesbians and they have also been subjected to violence, for example, attacks, abuse and "corrective rape". There is a general lack of literature on fatherhood in South Africa. However, logical conclusions can be deduced from what is happening in other countries, since the world has become a global village.

5.5.2 Political instability in Africa and South Africa.

We saw earlier how political correctness has led to new definitions of what constitutes marriage and the family. It has led to family laws being changed so that politicians can solicit more votes. In 2007, South Africa we saw the passing of the Civil Union bill into law. There was no engaging of the social structures before presenting this bill to parliament. There has also been minimal political will in enforcing new and important anti-domestic violence laws.

The African continent is riddled by political instability, which manifests itself through civil wars and coups. This political instability on the continent has contributed immensely to the displacement of millions of families. Still fresh in our minds is the Rwandan ethnic conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis left thousands of families displaced. Mayer (1990:467) portrays a disturbing picture of what took place in Mozambique between 1981 and 1988. He estimates that there were 900,000 war-related deaths, 320,000 children died, the physical damage was $5.5 billion, out of the 5,886 primary schools 2,655 were closed down by the end of 1987 and by the end of 1988 there were more than 870,000 Mozambican refugees in neighbouring countries (Mayer 1990:467).

We have witnessed the recent events in the region of North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (DRC). The political conflict there has displaced thousands of families. These conflicts lead to family separations as some go and fight the guerrillas. We have witnessed many children who became soldiers and were forced to abandon the warmth of the family and spend most of their innocent lives fighting for their masters. In most cases, these children do not recover from the traumas of the war. In 1998, when I

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was assigned at Ss John Fisher and Thomas Moore parish at Ixopo for my pastoral internship, I met an 18-year-old youth who was from the DRC. He looked very frightened and was crying because he did not know what had happened to the rest of his family. After giving him shelter that evening and some food, the following day I referred him to the civic authorities where he could be helped. I never saw him again. This encounter is a salient reminder that civil wars in Africa have contributed greatly to family breakdown. Today in Africa alone, refugees are currently estimated to be more than one and a half million.[65]

5.5.3 Economic causes

After the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union, the world experienced the rapid spread of global capitalism. Capitalism is the main driving force behind economic globalisation with its insistence on the maximisation of profit. This contributed significantly to redefining the role of parents in this fast-growing economic global village. Even in marriage child bearing is seen as a stumbling block towards profit making. The corporate world today does not appreciate women taking maternity leave, as this stalls the process of generating income. The globalisation of the economy increases the economic power of the rich and increases the number of poor families, especially in Africa and Latin America.

Hence, it is common today to have both parents working. As a result of this change, most of the childcare responsibilities are left to others. Although it might seem that both parents working does not create family problems per se, it does in most cases. In the area of Mariannhill, many children spend long hours in crowded child care centres which are not adequately equipped with personnel and equipment. These care centres, as a result of

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[65] In the 21 countries, studied in 2010 by the IDMC (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre), 11.1 million people were internally displaced in Africa by conflict and violence at the end of that year. This study further revealed that IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in Africa face security challenges and violence. The most affected were women as sexual violence was perpetrated against them, and also children who were forced to join the militant groups. www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpRegionsPages)/B3BA6119B705C145802570A600546F85?OpenDocument. Accessed 05 April 2011.

overcrowding, fail to create an environment where children can receive quality care and proper attention.

Furthermore, children born out of wedlock and from single mothers are more likely to face poverty than their counterparts living with their married parents. Jersild writes:

> One of every four children under six in the United States lives at or below the poverty line. Half of these children live with single mothers who are themselves poor. Some of these single poor mothers are divorced and some never married. Poor children are more likely to get into trouble with the law… (1998:87)

In South Africa, most fathers, once a divorce has gone through, never bother to pay the maintenance for their children. This further disadvantages the children.

5.5.4 Social causes

The industrial revolution in the 18th century and the expansion of the natural and social sciences in the 19th century began to alter the basic values and norms of Western civilisation such that medieval concepts of marriage preserved by the Catholic Church began to be challenged even from within the Church itself (Anderson 2009:9-12). The very nature and function of marriage in the West began to change especially in the 20th century. This change also affected Africa's understanding of marriage and family living, as the European lifestyle was extended to the African continent through colonisation. Marriage was no longer seen as a social duty, but an individual right. The role of the extended family diminished dramatically. It was now a nuclear family with parents and offspring who had less and less contact with the aunts, uncles and cousins. In Africa, by way of contrast, the family was the basic unity of the society. Families lived and worked together.

The family became one social unit amongst many. People had jobs that took them away from their families, children went to school, most occupations could no longer be learned from one's parents, and recreation was brought in by printed and electronic media or sought outside the home. The society's role was minimised because marriage was seen as

being between a man and a woman, and the extended family was no longer needed to educate children the way it used to be.

After the Second World War, through the influence of the philosophies of existentialism and personalism, marriage began to be redefined. Hence, the primary purpose of marriage was seen as the personal fulfilment of the couple with no reference to the benefit of the extended family and society. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, reaffirmed its teaching that the primary objective of marriage is the begetting and the rearing of offspring. Hence the family founded on marriage exists also for the good of the society. The documents of Vatican II also reflected this affirmation, especially *The Church in the Modern World*. This document spoke about marriage as a sociological, personal and a biblical reality.

Social problems contribute to the break-up of families. In certain countries' very young children are forced to live under inhumane conditions and are also shamefully exploited. Some families, because they are from other races, other cultures and from other religions, encounter a sense of rejection in countries where they have settled. These social causes continue to destroy the family.

The family founded on marriage is becoming more socially isolated, as society tends to undervalue its significance and contribution. There is also the lack of accessibility to community services by families. Here I am thinking of the Family and Marriage Association of South Africa (FAMSA), Marriage and Encounter, Retrovaille, to name but a few. Such social services need to be well publicised so that the community can easily utilise them.

Furthermore, South Africa is a country in transition. This transition is taking place not only at a political level, but at a social level as well. African people are steadily moving away from their cultural practices and are quickly adopting a new way of living. This calls for redefinition of social roles, even within the family. Hence, the role of women

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needs to be reinforced and cultural stereotypes challenged; theology should be in the forefront of this discussion and necessary social change.

5.5.5 Theological causes

There is also a lack of proper and thorough preparation of couples seeking marriage in our churches. Marriage preparation helps couples to build their marriage on a firm foundation, a reminder that they are entering God's call. The mystery of marriage is not explained to the people and thus they fail to understand their unique vocation. This tends to lead to a secularist view, which sees children as an inconvenience, rather than as a gift from God.

5.5.6 Individualism versus the family

The modern period beginning with the French Rationalist, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), saw a paradigm shift within philosophical systems. The Scholastics were suspended as uncritical in their approach and theology and philosophy were separated. This period was also a time of Reformation in the Church of Christ. Martin Luther, a former Augustinian priest, questioned some of the Church's practices, especially the indulgences. His approach was influenced by the thinking of the time. This influence led him to state his famous axioms: *sola scriptura, sola gratia and sola fide* (scripture alone, grace alone and faith alone). These tenets came to exemplify the modern world which was becoming individualistic. Individualism became very strong during the 20th century and it affected people's views on certain issues, including ethical issues.

The human person was seen more as autonomous and less as interdependent. People who enter into marriage are normally shaped by current social trends and thinking. The growth of this individualistic emphasis had negative repercussions for the family. In short, it is another contributory cause to family breakdown. Pope John Paul II mentions that this overemphasis of an individual over the communal aspect of persons is not good for marriage and the family (FC. 6). The Pope clearly states how interdependence should

nourish marriage. He observes that "in matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up – married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiations and fraternity – through which each human person is introduced into the 'human family' and into the 'family of God', which is the Church" (FC. 15). Families ought to be building on this firm ground of interdependence. Pope John Paul II further observed that:

> This communion is rooted in the natural bonds of flesh and blood and grows to its specifically human perfection with the establishment and maturing of the still deeper and richer bonds of the spirit: the love that animates the interpersonal relationships of the different members of the family constitutes the interior strength that shapes and animates the family communion and community. The Christian family is also called to experience a new and original communion which confirms and perfects natural and human communion (FC. 21).

The society has changed immensely. This change has not only taken place at a socio-political level, but also at an ethical level. There is a shift from the value of community to the value of the individual. Pope Benedict XVI, after his election to the chair of St. Peter criticised the dictatorship of relativism, which characterises this age. People are seeing themselves more as having rights than responsibilities. The spirit of altruism is disappearing in the public domain. The language of individual rights has replaced the language of community responsibility.

5.5.7 Urbanisation and migratory labour

The movement of people from rural areas to cities in search of work and a better life posed a new scenario for African people. Kisembo et al writes that "the migrant labour system is frequently blamed for the high rate of marital breakdowns in South Africa, particularly in the urban areas. There was plenty of evidence from the studies made in South Africa that the system does contribute to marital instability" (1998:64). Fathers lived away from their families for a long period. This resulted in the shifting of roles that were clearly defined by their culture. Urban life triggers a process of willingness to be active in public life. This life also changes the quality of relationship with other people, including one's family. This in turn causes socio-ethical disorder. This led to shanty-towns around many African cities. Sometimes, these shanty-towns consisting of shacks are bigger than the cities. They are often plagued by socio-ethical problems. In these

instances, children are often left on their own without the community's moral guidance. Urban areas have appeared to be breeding grounds for misconduct. Haselbarth has rightly pointed out the impact of urbanisation on the families: "Parents are largely unable to educate their children for the demands of the new situation. Many feel quite helpless and leave the children to themselves" (1976:113).

Migratory labour in South Africa, especially in the early 20th century, led to the building of hostels. These hostels provided accommodation for the men where cheap labour could be easily accessed by their employers. Living conditions were terrible in these hostels. Married women were barred from visiting their husbands as they were deprived of the pass permits.

Young boys, who had just attained the mature age, also left their homes in search of a better life in the cities. When things did not work out as well as was anticipated, they squatted in a hostel, where they did not have any adult role model. This resulted in the abandonment of cultural values and norms of respect and these were discarded as outdated and irrelevant in the city. Due to limited chances of employment in the city, the majority of these youth found themselves on the wrong side of the law.

5.5.8 Changes in human sexuality

Contemporary people are influenced by mass media and technology in their understanding of human sexuality. The mass media and technology influence how they express themselves as sexual beings. Human sexuality is considered as a human impulse that ought to be satisfied in the same way as the human person satisfies his or her hunger. This means that human sexuality can be satisfied without any love or commitment. Hence, sex is practised without any prospect of marriage.

Africa's understanding of sex as sacred and mysterious is breaking up because of the effects of sexual revolution accompanied by urbanisation, industrialisation and the media (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1989:154). This revolutionary culture needs to be

addressed through integral education and human development programmes that encompass the different spheres of the human person. In order to achieve this, Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter call for a sound "theology of sex and marriage that goes together with an adequate understanding of human psychology and personal development" (1989:156). This theology will have to take seriously the insights from African anthropology.

In this sexual revolution, there are two concepts which truncate an authentic understanding of human sexuality (Kisembo et al 1998:154). First of all, sex is seen as 'something I have' instead of as an aspect of 'who I am'. Consequently, sexuality is viewed as an object of consumer use and is stripped of all its responsibility. Secondly, viewing sexuality in the frame work of 'autonomy' contradicts the nature and purpose of sex which is supposed to be open to others. Consequently, the misunderstanding of the true nature and meaning of sexuality "can lead, and in fact has led, to psychosexual puerility in relationships and to sex being turned into a commercial commodity. Then, early, casual and discriminate sexual relationships, damaging to the human personality will result" (Kisembo, Magesa & Shorter 1998:128). The concept of 'self-fulfilment' in total 'self-giving' that is so much a part of the Christian view of sexuality is totally missing in our age.

5.5.9 Violence

Violence is a challenge in South Africa, both on social and family levels. We often hear about spousal abuse and child abuse within family situations. Further to this, graphic violence in the media, war toys and inflated military budgets are rampant throughout the world. Families suffer when the society resorts to violence to combat political differences and political conflicts.

Family violence occurs when any member of the family suffers emotional, psychological, physical or sexual abuse. In South Africa, children are more likely to be raped by someone they know than a stranger. In most cases, it is a family member. The majority of these cases are not reported, because in African communities there is a stigma attached to

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it. Failure to report these abuses makes it difficult for the family to achieve its mission which is the formation of well-integrated persons. Hence, family abuse poses a serious threat to the survival of the family founded on marriage. It is the responsibility of the society to safeguard this sacred institution.

5.6 The consequences of family breakdown

Chapter one stated that this research was born out of the researcher's pastoral experience in the area of Mariannhill, where he worked with young people. The informal study that the researcher conducted during his pastoral reflections, revealed that children, who are vulnerable and have the highest likelihood of dropping out of school, abusing drugs, and being involved in criminal activities, come either from dysfunctional or broken families. Nelson in her research also observed that, "Children who are most at risk and who are involved in delinquent acts come from dysfunctional families" (2005:29). These pastoral reflections led the researcher to conclude that poverty does not automatically lead to crime. But the breakdown of fundamental social structures, especially that of the family interrupts the moral fibre and integrity of the society.

Robert L. Woodson[66] from the United States of America enumerates a number of the consequences of family breakdown. He contends that children from broken families are twice as likely to become out-of-wedlock teen parents themselves; they are almost twice as likely to exhibit anti-social behaviour; and there is a rise in crime by youth; 10% increase in the percentage of children living in single-parent homes leads typically to a 17% increase in juvenile crime.[67] These statistics reveal what is happening on a global scale. They are not restricted to one country. Some of the same abnormal behaviour patterns are observable in South African schools, for example, teenage pregnancies, violence in our schools, and the rise in crime by young people. The website of the

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[66] He is an activist and a sociologist. His father died when he was nine years old, leaving his mother to support him and his four brothers and sisters. He once dropped out of school, but later returned to finish his studies .

[67] www.worldandi.com – Robert L. Woodson – *Breaking the cycle of family breakdown*. Accessed on 07 August 2007. Cf. Fagan, P. & Rector, R. 2000 – *The effects of divorce on America.* www.worldandi.com/specialreport/dovorce/divorce.html. Accessed 25 January 2011

National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Re-integration of Offenders (NICRO) states, "South Africa is gripped by a wave of teenage violence which defies any reason. Very young children, as young as 12 and 14 years, have perpetrated deeds so violent and cruel, that they result in the deaths of equally young and vulnerable victims".[68] NICRO[69] identifies two culprits behind this type of behaviour, namely, the society and mass media. These two issues were discussed already in the previous section as causes of family breakdown.

NICRO further states, "The role of parents and families in value generation and value acquisition of children is widely acknowledged. Beyond meeting basic material needs, this is the critical role of parents and adults. Strong values which reflect abhorrence of crime, a deep respect for the humanity of others, a respect for the dignity and value of the self should be inculcated from an early age".[70] There is a Zulu saying that testifies to the validity of NICRO's observations: *umuthi ugotshwa usemanzi*.[71] Woodson also points to the same end when he mentions, "More than factors of income, region, population density, and race, family structure has been shown to have the largest effect on juvenile robbery and homicide".[72]

Family and marital breakdown have serious consequences for the spouses, the children and society. For the spouses, it often leads to anger, irritability, depression, sense of loss, eventual breakdown of health, maybe even severe handicaps in regard to subsequent healthy relationships. It is a severe disruption of life at many levels, for example, economic, emotional, legal, social, psychological and spiritual.

Family breakdown leaves children uncertain about their own future prospects, since their normal environment is disrupted. Erikson's (1963) research helps in making this idea more plausible, when he states that the sudden change in a child's life can trigger an

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[68] www.nicro.org.za/Press_Release_detail. Accessed on 20 August 2008.
[69] Nicro – National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Re-integration of Offenders.
[70] Http://www.nicro.org. Accessed 20 August 2008.
[71] The literal translation of this proverb is that: the tree is to be bend when it is still young; children best learn when they are still young.
[72] www.worlandi.com. Accessed 27 August 2008.

identity crisis. He detected a need among adolescents for some continuation with the past. This creates a sense of being lost and hence the feelings of: "Who am I and where am I going" (Erikson 1963:54). Frequently, children tend to blame themselves for the breakdown. This sense of guilt is often carried throughout their lives, or channelled wrongly. They become emotionally vulnerable and this can have a lasting impact on their lives. There are very few cases of children who manage to get over this impact and become responsible citizens.

Children need support and love as they grow up. The family founded on marriage promises these two essential ingredients that children look for as they grow up. It often happens that parents get so absorbed in their differences and fights that they forget about the lives they have brought into this world. Hence, children feel left out and forgotten. Consequently, they will look elsewhere for love and attention as substitutes for the love and attention their parents failed to give them. Criminal activities become very attractive for these unsuspecting minds.

Furthermore, when parents separate, children often feel that their parents are also separating from them. The child feels uncertain and insecure in life. What the child thought of as a permanent home suddenly ends. The two people whom the child looked up to for love, attention and security, are now gone, and living separately. This creates feelings of anger and anxiety in the child.

Family breakdown also means that the defined roles within the family may need to be revisited, redefined and adjusted according to the new environment. This can be very hard for any person. In most African countries, fathers are still breadwinners and women are still confined to the kitchen and to the fields. Family breakdown in those instances always leave women and children in poverty. This further pushes women and children to unacceptable levels of poverty. Sometimes, children abandon school for work in order to support their siblings. The fathers who abandon their children in rural places intervene only if there are cultural ceremonies, which require them to be present. Family

breakdown continues to entangle women and children in the vicious circle of poverty in rural places.

For the society, relatives suffer trauma and burdens (child care, social security and legal implications). So far, it has become clear that family breakdown negatively influences society at large, because all social institutions are inter-linked. Rasheed writes that, "Family breakdown causes significant harm to society. Every break-up gives birth to many social problems".[73] Family breakdown leads to ill-socialisation of children. Defective socialisation means adopting ways of behaviour that are not socially acceptable. A child needs both parents for preparation for social integration. Family breakdown deprives children of the opportunity to experience parental love and this leaves them vulnerable. Consequently, children become involved in anti-social activities because this is the only life they know.

Normally, children are a couple's greatest pleasure and achievement because they have brought new life into this world. In turn, the child's greatest happiness is to grow and live in an environment of love and care from both parents. If children are deprived of this privilege, their whole psyche gets disturbed and they get involved in bad behaviour. Juvenile pregnancy comes as a result of satisfying the emotional need of being loved and a feeling of hopelessness and despair. Our recourse is the promotion of families based on marriage.

We can sum up the consequences of family breakdown thus:

Individual: Broken families make individuals feel robbed, abused and neglected. Family breakdown often leads to neglect of children, child's reduced physical and mental health. Family breakdown negatively affect the child's ego. It interferes with the child's understanding of the world as the child struggles to make sense of a once warm environment that has abruptly stopped. Jersild mentions the effects on the individual

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[73] http://www.maldivesculture.com/divorce 01.html. Ishmael Rasheed, 18 March 2000, Family problems suffocating Maldivan society. Accessed 03 August 2007

child as being, "One in five children under the age of 18 has a learning, emotional, behavioural or developmental problem that can be traced to the dissolution of the two-parent family" (1998:88). These emotional and behavioural upheavals in a child's life can have lasting impact. They can channel a child towards bad social lifestyles. Gangs, especially in the USA, and in South Africa in the Western Cape and in Mariannhill have been found to replace what the family failed to do. Young children from broken families feel a sense of belonging in these gangs.

Cultural: It perpetuates patriarchy in the society as fathers rarely pay for the upkeep of children. It also leads to the acceptance of a poor quality of family life. It further pushes women and children into deeper levels of poverty, emotional neglect and dependency. The values of the society are tampered with and this often leads to moral decay in society.

The rise of single parenthood in the area of Mariannhill stands to adjudge the African culture's insistence on marriage prior to the founding of a family. Single parenthood is viewed as something that is acceptable and the new generation might not value marriage. It further leads to the demise of respect for women and children. The abuse that women endure in two-roomed housing units is unimaginable. They endure it because most of them are financially dependent on men. Family breakdown leads to the death of the culture of respect as children grow up in these unfavourable conditions.

Social: The major role of the family is to prepare children for socialisation. If the family breaks down, no other institution can play its role and children remain vulnerable because they will lack supervision and support. In addition, social roles alter, as families continue to break down.

Family breakdown due to HIV/AIDS leads to child-headed households. In these cases, children act like parents to their siblings and are deprived of the enjoyment of being a child. Often, these child-headed households are targets of robbery, abuse and rape. The breakdown of the role of the extended family has left a gap in this regard.

Economic: If families break down, the state is expected to open more places of safety where children could be cared for. Consequently, the state will need to spend more on welfare grants. The result is that women and children are more likely to be poorer while male incomes rise.

Young people in the area of Mariannhill, especially adolescent boys become interested in having relationships with older women who are working. These relationships are normally not a result of love, but have financial implications. These young men will sustain a relationship as long as there is a financial gain. Very few of these relationships end in marriage.

Theological: Marriage is a divine institution, which was willed by the Creator from the beginning as a medium for channelling human life. According to God's plan, marriage is the cornerstone of founding a family. Family breakdown mean the disintegration and drifting away of humanity from the divine plan of God about creation. The fourth chapter presented the ideal of marriage as the basis of founding a family. It is this ideal that we ought to strive for.

The family is a 'domestic church'. It is within the family that children ought to hear the good news of Christ, where they learn the love of God and neighbour. Family breakdown has negative consequences for the Church, because it means that the Church of Christ is breaking up in its initial stages.

5.7 Conclusion

Family breakdown, as discussed above, ought not to be understood as a one off event, but a culmination of a long process that involves diverse and complex factors. These factors cannot be understood in isolation, but are part of the broader implications of family living. They interact in complex ways and have a cumulative effect. Family breakdown is not just about signing the divorce papers in court. This is an over simplification of a serious issue that involves people's emotions and lives. Therefore, family breakdown is

not just a breaking down of an institution, but a breakdown in human and personal relationships. This situation has serious consequences for children and society. We have discussed above the serious implications of this breakdown for children.

This chapter investigated the phenomenon of family breakdown from global and local contexts and it was evident that it has serious consequences. Our discussion in this chapter revealed that children are the most affected parties when their families breakdown. Children worry a lot when their parents break up. These worries are often based on practicalities, for example, the prospects of not having a shelter, of not going to school and the possibility of not being allowed to see and visit the other parent. These worrying feelings often leave marks and scars on the lives of the children. Family breakdown occurs when children need their parents and understanding the most. Finally, the consequences of family breakdown are far reaching, especially for children and society.

The following chapter will present and discuss the empirical findings that were gathered through the questionnaire and the interviews. This chapter is based on the methodology as discussed in depth in chapter two.

CHAPTER SIX.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter established that the institution of the family founded on marriage is under severe pressure. The causes of this pressure range from socio-economic, financial and political to cultural factors. These factors are main contributors to family breakdown. The consequences of family breakdown on children and society were also discussed.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: first, to present the empirical data collected and second, to analyse the information that was gathered through the questionnaire and the focussed interviews. The analysis of the findings is guided by the theoretical frameworks developed in chapters two, four and five (summarised in section 3.3). The chief objective of analysing data is to enable a researcher to draw defensible conclusions on the subject under investigation. In the process of presenting the data collected, comments are made on the tables and frequencies. The presentation, analysis and the comments will further strengthen the hypothesis that is being investigated in this thesis, namely, the role of the family in helping us develop a coherent moral vision for South Africa. In addition, the empirical data tests and expands the causes and consequences identified in chapter five. The questionnaire was used to collect quantifiable information and the focussed interviews to collect qualitative data.

6.1. The quantitative findings

6.1.1 Age of respondents

Table 1: *Frequency distribution of the respondents according to age groups*

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25	35	39%
26 – 35	30	33%
36 – 50	25	28%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that the largest percentage of the respondents (39%) who took part in the questionnaire was in the age group of 18 to 25 years. We need to remember that this thesis is a result of my pastoral engagement with young people in the area of Mariannhill. During these pastoral engagements the majority of young people that I had an opportunity to counsel were from broken or dysfunctional families. It was necessary for me to undertake a scientific study of this prevalence among the troubled young people. For that reason, I considered it crucial to give them the greatest say by deliberately making them the majority.

The people in the first age group (18 to 25) are mainly post matriculants. Around the area of Mariannhill, few young people in this age group access tertiary education. Most of them are either working as unskilled labourers or are at home without work. The main reasons for this situation are the lack of basic educational materials, poor teaching, and problems with outcomes based education, and that most of them lacked career guidance at school.

This age group might ask questions like: Who sets the moral code? A young person in this age group, especially those that have the privilege of going to a tertiary institution, might be tempted by some activities encountered in their new environment. But, a young person who was brought up in a good home, where she/he was listened to and respected, where a religious pattern was set, will probably maintain a high moral code of behaviour. Focussing on this age group gives us a window into what is happening to young people when they experience family breakdown and how they are likely to respond to it.

The second age group (26 to 35) is just arriving at the peak of life. The values of the family continue to be tested by the different experiences of life with which this age group interacts. The likelihood here is that those with a good family background are more likely to resist unfamiliar lifestyles that are morally questionable. Accordingly, it was also essential to have them reflect on their experiences.

The experiences and reflections of the last group are also significant, because most of them are parents. Their insight enriches this thesis as they reflect on parenting and the administration of discipline. This will help us assess whether there is a new trend of parenting and the administration of discipline or not.

6.1.2 Gender of respondents

Table 2: *Frequency distribution according to gender of the respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	35	39%
Female	55	61%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents (61%) who completed the questionnaire are females. Only 39% of males completed the questionnaire. The reason for this distribution is that women are naturally and traditionally care-givers both in the family and in society. Females often take care of other people before they take care of themselves (Ryan 2006:113). Most fathers in the area of Mariannhill are breadwinners and they usually do not spend enough time with their children. Nonetheless, this prevalence should not be seen as mitigating the weak role of the fathers.

6.1.3 Occupation of respondents

Table 3: *Frequency distribution according to employment status of respondents*

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	20	22%
Employed	15	17%
Self-employed	10	11%
Unemployed	35	39%
Part time employment	10	11%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

Poverty contributes to family breakdown, because it prevents families from meeting their basic needs. The majority of families in Mariannhill live on pensions and child support grants. Grandparents are breadwinners in many families around Mariannhill. In the areas of Tshelimnyama, Mpola, Dassenhoek and Nazareth there are no schools. This posits a

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serious financial challenge to the families that live on pensions and child support grants as petrol prices continue to rise. Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents (61%) are unemployed. This 61% is made up by 22% of the respondents who are students and 39% who are unemployed. The unemployed respondents are the single largest group (39%) in table 3. The rate of unemployment in the area of Mariannhill is steadily rising, as is attested by table 3. Those who are employed are mainly in domestic employment. The 11% of self-employed are those who rent out rooms to migratory labourers. Part-time workers are those who work two or three days in a week.

6.1.4 Marital status of the respondents

Table 4: *Frequency distribution of the marital status of the respondents*

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	45	50%
Single	20	22%
Divorced	20	22%
Widowed	5	6%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

Table 4 shows that half of the respondents (50%) are married. The basic postulation of this thesis is to establish the relevance and the role of the family founded on marriage. Hence, it is important to solicit data from people who are married and assess how they relate to their marital vocation. In section 2.14 of the questionnaire, the majority of the respondents (80%) who consider marriage as a commitment, a sign of God's love and as faithfulness come mainly from the category of married respondents. This is a positive indication that marriage is still viewed positively amidst the current challenges. Hence, their contribution helps to validate the findings of the thesis. Research projects are meant to be reflective of the population that is being sampled and studied. Hence, the marital status of different respondents was deemed pivotal.

6.1.5 Residence of respondents

Table 5: *Frequency distribution of the residence of respondents*

Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Own home	45	50%
With relatives	10	11%
With parents	25	28%
Place of safety	10	11%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

The above table shows that half of the respondents (50%) reside in their own places, either as married or single parents. A home provides a space and a safe environment for the child. It creates a sense of belonging. It is within the context of a home that a child experiences communal living and a sense of being a community member. Therefore, it was considered imperative to assess the experiences of those who either own a home or stay at home with parents or relatives. Twenty-eight per cent of the respondents stated that they were living with their parents. The remaining 22% of the respondents were not staying with their biological parents. Most of the respondents, who grew up with relatives, actually had worse experiences than those who grew up in a place of safety. These are some of their feelings about growing up with relatives:

> *"Sometimes I felt that I was given more tasks to perform than the other children. I did not feel good about this".*

> *"There were times when I was treated differently from the other children. My parents divorced when I was young and my mother passed away shortly after that. I have never seen my father since then. I grew up with my mother's younger sister (Umamekazi), who is also married and they have their own children. I miss my own family."*

> *"I was not treated well and I received more corporal punishment than my cousins. This made me very angry. I always looked forward to the day when I will leave my relatives and find a place where I could be accepted. At grade 10, I decided to run away from the place I was staying with my relatives ...life is hard without a home and without parents. Even if you anger your parents, but you are still their child they will love you…"*

> *"I was not given an opportunity to finish my secondary education, because I grew up with my grandmother. My grandmother was looking after 6 children and we were living on her pension grant. I had to leave school from standard 7 and go and look for a job so that I can support the other cousins...There are no high*

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schools around Tshelimnyama, so we had to take a bus to school every day and this was too much for my grandmother."

These experiences reflect the plight of some children who grew up without biological families. Lack of love and acceptance creates feelings of rejection and anger. This often results in poor self-esteem, which could be compensated for by bad social patterns. A number of children with these challenging backgrounds end up on the streets or on the wrong side of the law.

Social challenges are inter-linked and one challenge often leads to another. One respondent to the questionnaire related a story of her parents who died of HIV/AIDS related diseases. She grew up with her grandmother who could barely afford her school fees. She eventually dropped out of school in order to take care of the other cousins and her aging grandmother.

The questionnaire revealed that respondents between 18 and 25 years of age preferred staying in a place of safety to staying with relatives, because life was more difficult with relatives than in a place of safety. For these children, a comfortable environment was created for them by being in the place of safety with other children in a similar situation.

6.1.6 Church belonging

Table 6: *Frequency distribution according to church belonging of respondents*

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Belonging to a church	80	88%
Do not belong to a church	10	12%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

Purposive sampling intends to consider the different sectors of the community that is being studied, so as to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. The majority of the respondents (88%) belong to a church. Church here refers to Christian denominations. The other 12% does not belong to a Church for various reasons: disappointment with fellow parishioners, lack of support from the church, disinterested in religious affairs.

6.1.7 Denominations of respondents

Table 7: *Frequency distribution according to denominational belonging of respondents*

Denomination	Frequency	Percentage
Catholics	60	66%
Methodists	15	17%
Presbyterians	10	11%
Other	5	6%
TOTAL	**90**	**100%**

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:49) mention that representivity should guide researchers when selecting respondents. Table 7 demonstrates that denominational representativity was considered by the researcher in order to give a broader picture and a more realistic context. The majority of the respondents (66%) are Catholics. The endeavour of this thesis is not only to present the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage and family, but also to evaluate critically the Church's teaching and practice about marriage and the family. Furthermore, it endeavours to demonstrate the availability and value of church resources/materials on marriage and family to the people. Hence, it was considered essential to have respondents from other denominations in addition to Catholics to take part in the research. The Catholic Church teaches certain truths about marriage and family as explained in chapter two. Thus, it is pivotal to test these religious convictions against the experiences of ordinary people. The reflections of ordinary people guide the Church towards re-examining its approach to complex social issues. It is through this effort that the Church will be relevant. However, I must hasten to caution that the mission of the Church is not to bend moral objective truths to deal with complex social issues, but to mediate the truth of Christ that is objective. The *modus operandi* of understanding and communicating the objective truth of Christ is, nonetheless, open to re-examination.

6.1.8 Family background and experience

Table 8: *Frequency distribution according to the family background and experience*

Question	Yes	No	TOTAL
Were your parents married?	73	17	90
	81%	19%	100%
Did you grow up with both parents?	61	29	90
	68%	32%	100%
Did your parents get on well with each other?	61	29	90
	68%	32%	100%
Was it easy to talk to your parents?	57	33	90
	63%	37%	100%
Were you a close knit family?	73	17	90
	81%	19%	100%
Did your family move around during your childhood?	12	78	90
	13%	87%	100%
Do you have brothers and sisters?	90	0	90
	100%	0%	100%
Did you get along well with them?	90	0	90
	100%	0%	100%

Table 8 presents the family background of the respondents. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (81%) come from families with married parents. The findings of this research show that 68% of the respondents grew up with both parents, while 32% did not grow up with both parents due to various reasons: death of one parent, separation and divorce. There is consistency in the results between the second and the third question in the table. This consistency explains the reason behind the 32% of the respondent not growing up with their parents. The reason being that, in the third question 32% of the respondents said that their own parents did not get on well with each other. Consequently, they either separated or got divorced. Nonetheless, the majority of the respondents (68%) mentioned that their parents got on well with each other. Married people are more likely to raise children that are caring, loving, and altruistic, because they learned these virtues from their parents and/or from each other.

The ideal of married love was delineated by St Paul when he wrote to the Ephesians: "Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the Church" (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19). Consequently, the love that marriage is intended to foster between husband and

wife is not the passing lust of the moment or romantic sentimentality, but that deep internal attachment of heart that is expressed in action and proved in generous deeds. This is the deeper meaning that is attached to the third question that appears in table 8. Their free and willing commitment comes from an internal transformation due to their mutual dedication. Total self-giving is the ideal every marriage should strive for. Unfortunately, the current media representations of fleeting and selfish human relationships seem to obscure this reality of Christian marriage, which is the basis for founding a family.

Parents cannot overestimate their importance to their children, not just of physical care, but also of making time for their children. This involves spending quality time with them and talking to them. Sixty-three per cent (63%) of the respondents expressed that they did not have difficulties relating to their parents. This is the result of parents who get along well with each other and this created an environment for children to learn to express themselves. This finding dispels the perception that African children are uncomfortable expressing themselves to their parents. This finding comes mainly from respondents who frequent the Church. Here we see the role of the Church slowly challenging culture.

Table 8 further shows that 81% of the respondents come from close-knit families. Again, this percentage is consistent with question three in the table. If parents get along well the probability is very high that their own children will also get along well with others. When respondents were asked how this closeness came about, they expressed the importance of communication in the family and that they never saw their parents quarrel in public. The 17% of the respondents who stated that they were not a close-knit family came from single parent households.

The majority of the respondents (87%) expressed that they did not move around a lot during their childhood. Stability is important for the family and it should not be taken lightly. All the respondents (100%) expressed that they have siblings and they got along well with each other.

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The respondents were also asked to assess their experience of growing up with their siblings in section 2.8 of the questionnaire. Seventy per cent (70%) stated that they supported each other while 18% stated that they argued a lot. The latter is in concurrence with the findings of questions 1, 3 and 4 in table 8. Only 6% of the respondents stated that they were a favourite child at home and 70% cared for each other as siblings. This shows that parents are the first educators of their children. If parents care for each other, their children will emulate this and demonstrate it to their own siblings.

It is Plato, quoting Socrates, who said: "an unreflected upon life is not worth living" (Stumpf 1988:38). Respondents were asked to reflect upon and state the experiences of their own families: Six per cent experienced the death of one parent, 8% experienced abuse, 19% experienced threat from siblings, 12% experienced alcohol abuse, 2% experienced threat from a parent, 6% experienced verbal abuse, 10% experienced emotional abuse. The majority of the respondents (63%) said that these experiences continue to affect them today in diverse ways. Counselling is a new phenomenon amongst African people. It is still seen as something for those who are mentally disturbed, so they want to disassociate themselves from it. The findings here reveal that family experiences have far-reaching consequences. If these experiences are not addressed, they have the potential of poisoning the person's self-image and their relationships.

The respondents were further asked to state the impact of their family backgrounds. The rationale behind this question was to decipher the role of the family in the larger society. If family experiences were traumatic, we can see the kind of society we are building, but if family backgrounds were positive, the society stands to benefit greatly from this. The following are the results from the respondents: 69% now relate well with people, 75% learnt to trust people, 75% still believe in marriage, 50% want to have their own children, 19% do not trust people easily and a further 19% said that they get angry easily. It is worth mentioning that the 19% of the respondents come from troubled families, where parents did not get along well with each other and where parents quarrelled in front of their offspring.

Given the different family impacts on the respondents, 94% of them stated that they still regard marriage as an important social institution. This confirms the view of Pope John Paul II who noted, "Marriage and family constitute one of the most precious of human values" (FC 1). Therefore, this institution can contribute positively to the renewal of society.

6.1.9 Respondents' understanding of marriage

Table 9: *Frequency distribution of what the respondents' understanding of marriage is*.

What is marriage for you?	Unsure	Partly true	True
A commitment	11 12%	0 0%	79 88%
A good friendship	9 10%	8 9%	73 81%
Losing your freedom	33 37%	57 63%	0 0%
Escape from unhappy home life	51 56%	34 38%	5 6%
Escape from loneliness	28 31%	62 69%	0 0%
Proper place for raising children	6 7%	11 12%	73 81%
Sign of God's love	0 0%	11 12%	79 88%
Equal give and take	0 0%	28 31%	62 69%
The best place for sex	11 12%	22 25%	57 63%
Outdated in today's world	56 62%	22 25%	12 13%
Faithfulness	5 6%	6 7%	79 88%
The best way to live	15 16%	25 28%	50 56%
A way of holiness	22 25%	28 31%	40 44%

Table 9 demonstrates that the majority of the respondents are optimistic about marriage amidst the contemporary challenges. This optimism about marriage is based on a number of factors that influenced the respondents, namely, their own experiences of living with

their parents, lessons from catechetical instructions, lessons from pre-marital sessions, magazines, books and the media.

Marriage is a commitment because it is a covenant. It mirrors God's commitment to his chosen people, the Israelites. Since marriage is a covenant, therefore it is a sign of God's presence and love (CCC 1603). This covenantal relationship of the spouses demands faithfulness from both parties and it finds its meaningful expression in Ephesians 5. Just as Christ committed Himself to His bride the church, so are the spouses to be committed to each other (Peschke 1997:493).

Since marriage is a partnership, it is ordered for the well-being of the spouses. An additional majority (81%) admitted that marriage for them is a partnership. Man and woman are made for companionship. This reality is brought about by the sacrament of matrimony. Another 81% of the respondents mentioned that marriage for them is the best place to raise children. Here we find a dichotomy between what people know and practice. Nonetheless, the respondents concur with what the Church teaches about marriage, the *bona prolis*. The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is not only unitive but is procreative. Vatican II stated that:

> Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward begetting and educating the children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage…the couple must be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Saviour, who through them will enlarge and enrich His own family day by day. Parents should regard as their proper mission the task of transmitting human life and educating those to whom it has been transmitted (GS 50 cf. CCC 1652).

Sixty-nine per cent (69%) of the respondents see marriage as a relationship of equals. This was discussed at length in chapter four under the nature of marriage. Another 63% of the respondents see marriage as a proper place for exercising conjugal rights. The present challenges that the institution of the family faces have cast a sense of doubt over some respondents' minds, as 56% mentioned that they are not sure if it is realistic in today's world.

Sections 2.16 to 2.21 of the questionnaire are dedicated to the form of the administration of discipline that the respondents received. The questionnaire revealed that it was mostly the mothers (50%) who administered punishment, 25% said that it was administered by both parents, 15% said that it was administered by their fathers and 10% said they received no punishment. The reason for this prevalence is that mothers spend more time with their children than the fathers. The questionnaire further revealed that the majority of mothers who administer corporal punishment are between the ages of 36 and 50. The mothers in the second age group (26 to 35) are using less corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. This is a positive change.

The respondents were asked to reflect on the type of punishment they received and how they felt about it. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (85%) admitted that they received some form of punishment as children. 75% stated that they received corporal punishment in the form of being beaten with either a belt or with a stick, while 10% of them said they were shouted at by their parents. The other 15% said that they received extra housework as punishment. More than 50% of the respondents felt that corporal punishment was not acceptable to them, but could not express reasons for their dissatisfaction about it.

Sometimes the structure in the African family can create a difficult environment for the child to express himself/herself and to be heard. However, with the Church playing its positive role this African outlook can change, as was observed previously. Only 30% of the respondents stated that it was sometimes acceptable to them and 20% said that it was unacceptable to them. When the respondents were asked why corporal punishment was not acceptable, some said:

> *"I was afraid of the stick, but I had to put up with it."*
> *"I was sometimes beaten up for small issues and I felt very bad about this."*
> *"I became afraid of doing wrong things."*
> *"He did it when he was drunk. I still have scars in my body even today."*

There is a growing awareness in many countries about the side effects of corporal punishment on children. South Africa has also joined the global community by banning

corporal punishment in schools. This ban is based on traumatic experiences that children endure as a result of corporal punishment, which is often abusive. Furthermore, corporal punishment has been seen as an ineffective means of instilling discipline, moreover it can lead to fixation. Fixation here means that the child stops developing into a morally mature person at an early stage. Thus, the process of development is drastically stopped at an earlier stage. The final stage of moral development according to Van der Ven (1998) may never be actualised. Self-control is a result of a process that takes into account the world of the child and respects it. Moral decisions in the future are based on well-grounded convictions which know that *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other people).

Children need to be engaged so that they understand why some forms of behaviour are acceptable and others are not. This approach brings understanding to the child. Understanding means the ability to make connections. If a child is made to understand, he/she will be able to make connections about moral values as an adult. Some parents complain that they do not have sufficient resources for alternative disciplinary methods. They feel that this lack often leads to stress and frustration. Hence, corporal punishment is used as a substitute for this lack of facilities. This justification fails the parenting method. There is a Zulu proverb that says: *Induku ayiwakhi umuzi* (the stick does not build a home).[74]

There is another form of punishment, which is not productive and seldom used by parents: the use of inappropriate language. Ten per cent (10%) of the respondents said that they were shouted at by their parents. The use of such language has psychological effects on the child. When talking to one boy who had turned very bad, he said to me: "*My mom says to me 'You stupid, I'll hit you'. She always talks like this*". This boy felt unloved and rejected, and later became rebellious. The child started behaving 'stupidly' because this is what he was told all the time by the person who was suppose to love him.

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[74] This saying literally means that: the stick does not build a home. The non literal meaning of this saying is that, parents who use a stick to punish their children are actually not building them up. A true home cannot be built by using corporal punishment. This saying acknowledges the need for parents to sit down with their children and engage them. Our forefathers saw that the use of corporal punishment cannot bring about a holistic development to the child.

Research has shown that in classes where corporal punishment is still used, the same learners get punished for the same offences over and over again (Porteus, Vally and Ruth 2001:45). Corporal punishment fails the basic ethical pedagogy, because it makes children passive recipients instead of being involved as persons. Then they avoid doing certain things out of fear and not out of understanding. Children can just as well be turned into robots because there is no internalisation of the values.

In section 7 of the questionnaire, parents were asked to reflect on the methods they use to administer discipline and their effectiveness. Without exception, parents (100%) said that they administer discipline. Parents often think that when they administer discipline, change will quickly come. The same technique or method of discipline cannot be universalised for all the children. Parents need to bear this in mind when administering discipline. It can work for child A to be deprived of his/her favourite television show, but it might not work for child B because she/her does not like watching the television.

When the parents were asked who administers discipline; 60% said that it is both of them (the parents). Here there is a positive change that both parents are beginning to take an equal role in the rearing of their children. This growth is steady, but significant. Unlike in section 2 where the majority of the respondents in the third age group said that discipline was primarily administered by their mothers, fathers are now coming to understand that they have an irreplaceable role to play in the education and rearing of their offspring. It is therefore crucial that both parents agree on the method and manner of applying discipline. However, 40% of the mothers still administer discipline by themselves.

The questionnaire reveals another striking difference between sections 2.17 and 7.9. The younger parents who are in the middle age group (26 to 35) have a different approach of administering discipline. When asked how they administer it, they said:

> *"We sit down and talk with them."*

> *"They do extra work in the house."*

> *"At home my mother was the one who administered discipline. My father was just not there. We try to work as a team with my husband. We both sit down with the*

child and talk. If we have to withdraw certain privileges, we tell the child so that she or he can begin to see the implications of her or his wrong doing".

"Sitting down with the child is not an easy task for us as parents. I come from a culture where a child could not sit down with his parents and talk things over. But, I also realised that things have changed. Today's children are more open than we were. I realized that if I do not sit down and talk with them, the media will do it for me and I will only have myself to blame. Parents must engage their children."

"We first discuss the implications of their wrong doing and we apply a verbal warning, we talk and we reason with them."

"I have learnt that talking with them is far better than using a stick. I struggled myself in life to overcome the flashbacks of corporal punishment I received as a child. I said to myself that I won't subject my own children to such torture and it is working for me."

These responses show a new trend of parenting and discipline among the parents in the area of Mariannhill. Younger parents are talking with their children now. This is the result of the awareness about children's rights. Parents are becoming aware that their children have rights. Parents who said that this method of engaging their children is working were 78%, and only 22% said it is not working for them. And 78% of the parents stated that they know their child's friends and companions.

6.1.10 Influential role players

As human beings, there are numerous factors that influence us, from the environment to personal relationships. These factors leave a mark in our lives and they shape our personalities and our opinions in some way. The majority of the respondents (90%) stated that the influence of their parents (mother and father) was good and 10% said it was not good. It is worth mentioning that this 10% of the respondents, experienced corporal punishment. Those who noted the good influence of their parents said:

"My parents taught me to stand on my own and they continuously told me that respect is essential"

"They taught me to be good to others, even when you do not see eye to eye."

"I also learnt to be social, but not to depend on other people too much."

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"My parents have made me realise that in life you should not put yourself first always, but must also listen to other people and respect their ideas".

"My parents taught me good values, they taught me about Christianity and they always gave me good and solid advice. Through their influence, I am now able to make a difference between good and bad things".

"They taught me about God. Today I know God because of them".

"They influenced me to strive to live by good morals and to strive for what is right".

"They were good role models".

"They taught me to love selflessly and I believe marriage is blessed from above".

"They always encouraged me to be a good person by talking to me. They led me to church and to school".

"My parents were exemplary to me. I have stayed in my marriage for 28 years, because of their example".

Undoubtedly, parents are very influential to their offspring. This was also noted by Kelly when he mentioned that, "the transmission and accumulation of civic culture, social trust and political power begins in the home environment. The parent-child relationship offers substantive influence on a growing child's beliefs and perceptions of self in society..." (2006:447).

Some respondents acknowledged the good values they learnt from their parents:

"You strive to live by good morals and to strive for what is right."

"To be able to differentiate between good and bad things."

The respondents were further asked to identify other influential role players in their lives. The choice ranged from peers to extended family. The analysis of these influences is based on the three age categories that appear in section 1.1 of the questionnaire.

Table 10: *Frequency distribution of influential role players*

Role player	18-25	26-35	36-50
Peers	71%	17%	29%
Television	51%	33%	20%
Media	43%	33%	20%
Soapies	40%	16%	14%
Siblings	68%	16%	14%
School authorities	14%	50%	57%
Culture	30%	67%	72%
Church	70%	80%	85%
Extended Family	55%	64%	82%

Table 10 shows other influential role players in the lives of the respondents. It is evident from table 10 that 71% of the respondents who are between the ages of 18 and 25 are mainly influenced by their peers. The influence of peers comes second after that of parents. The influence of peers is much higher than that of siblings (68%) and that of the extended family (60%). The Church's influence on young people continues to be prominent as 70% of the respondents admitted. Young people from the area of Mariannhill still look up to the Church for guidance. Hence, the church ought to use its resources to reach out to these young minds. The role of the extended family is slowly diminishing in the African communities due to the pressures of Westernisation. If the same study were to be conducted in ten years time, I am sure that the influence of peers among this age group will grow by at least 10%. The influence of television (51%) is high in this age category. What they see on television will most likely shape their worldview, either for good or for bad. Parental awareness and intervention is crucial.

In chapter four, we discussed the impact of urbanisation on children as they go to cities in search of better education opportunities. Children who find themselves in this situation normally rent a flat or stay with other relatives who are studying at tertiary institutions. Media becomes very important for these children, because there is no parental supervision. About 43% of the first age-group category mentioned that the media influences them. Bansikiza argues correctly, when he states that media censorship does not contribute positively to moral formation. Children ought to be well educated about the content and impact of certain programmes (Bansikiza 2001:81). They need to learn to

ask about the value and truth of what they see portrayed, especially, is it right, good, true and life-enhancing.

The second age group (25 to 36) is normally the age for consolidation and people at this stage are beginning to experience a broader vision of life. The majority of the respondents (80%) in this age category said that they are influenced by the Church and least by peers (17%), soapies (16%) and siblings (16%).

It is interesting to note that the respondents in the first age category (18 to 25) said that culture has no influence on them. Could this be the result of the effects of globalisation? The respondents in the first age group category grew up when the world had really become a global village, the cyber world. Globalisation has blurred culture and that is why it has little significance for the first age-group category. Culture plays a significant role in the lives of the last two age categories. In the last age category, 85% of the respondents are influenced by the Church and 72% by culture. Amongst the three age categories, the influence of the Church is high. The Church, with its structures, can reach out to people of all ages and speak with authority on issues that affect human life. If culture is less significant for the next generation, then the traditional understanding of the family is on the brink of extinction. The African traditional understanding of the family needs to be redefined in this global village so that it remains influential and relevant.

The first two age categories (18 to 25 and 26 to 35) admitted that television does have an influence on them. The first group were 57% and the latter 33%. Television has the power of forming perceptions and these can be more powerful than reality. The amount of time and content of the programmes that young people watch should be considered. Television also propagates values like sexual gratification, power, selfishness, materialism, etc. Assessing the impact of violence in TV cartoons, Williams (1987:224) observed the following traits in children who watch them:

- Physical fighting and choking

- Short temper

- Inhumane treatment of animals

- Lack of respect for other people.

Other respondents mentioned the effect that television has on them:

> *"Sometimes it had a negative effect on me. It had me wanting to try things that were outside of my character."*

> *"What I sometimes see on television becomes very appealing to me. The games that I watch have made me think that I am a boss to other learners. I have been involved with fighting at school."*

> *"I always admire a hero in a movie. He normally does not get hurt or caught when he does something. I have also been influenced by this that one can get away with things in life because I always see heroes in movies getting away with many things."*

> *"When I watch soapies on television, I see that there is no more true love in the world. There is cheating in all the soapies that I have watched and I am afraid to get married. This is what we talk about with my friends. They are also afraid of getting married. Those who are portrayed as honest to their partners appear to be stupid on television. Now this makes cheating to be seen as something cool."*

These extracts tell us about the impact of television on young people. The content that is broadcast on our screens leaves indelible marks on our children. The findings of Williams (1987) concur with the findings in the area of Mariannhill. However, these findings do not call for a complete censorship of television. My argument is based on Bansikiza's call (2001:81) that parents ought to engage with their children about the contents that television programmes have and the impact those programmes have on them. Education and communication between parents and children is a key factor in this matter. Watching television with children can offer parents an opportunity to explain certain things afterwards. Parents can discuss soap operas with their offspring because they have a huge impact on township children.

6.1.11. Parental involvement

Table 11: *Frequency distribution according to parental involvement*

At home:	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	TOTAL
My parents were supportive	81 90%	9 10%	0 0%	90 100%
My parents related to me	81 90%	9 10%	0 0%	90 1005
My parents were role models	68 76%	4 4%	18 20%	90 100%
My parents taught me good values	90 100%	0 0%	0 0%	90 100%
I was taught respect	90 100%	0 0%	0 0%	90 100%
I was taught to be honest	90 100%	0 0%	0 0%	90 100%
I was taught to be trustworthy	90 100%	0 0%	0 0%	90 100%
I was taught to be caring	77 86%	0 0%	13 14%	90 100%
I was taught the difference between right and wrong	90 100%	0 0%	0 0%	90 100%
I was taught self control	77 86%	9 10%	4 4%	90 100%
I was not encouraged to express myself	45 50%	33 37%	12 13%	90 100%
I was expected to obey instructions	72 80%	9 10%	9 10	90 100%
Issues were not explained to me	14 16%	55 61%	21 23%	90 100%
My parents had no time to spend with me	8 8%	68 76%	14 16%	90 100%

Children come to experience the world through the eyes of their parents. Hence, parents are influential, as we argued in the previous discussion. Close to one hundred (90%) of the respondents noted that their parents were influential in shaping them and their worldview. Therefore, it is important to assess this influence in the lives of the respondents. Table 11 shows the influence and involvement the parents had on the respondents. The table further shows that this influence and involvement was very positive for the majority of the respondents.

The values that the parents conveyed to their offspring are very critical in South Africa as we endeavour to revive the moral fibre of our society. The majority of the respondents who had a positive parental involvement in their lives, mainly come from homes with married parents. On the contrary, those with negative influences come either from broken families or single-parent homes.

The findings of this research clearly show that the family founded on marriage and good parenting has positive outcomes and influences. Our country critically needs values that the respondents received from their own parents: respect (100%), honesty (100%), trustworthiness (100%), difference between right and wrong (100%). The family founded on marriage ought to be the starting point for moral regeneration in South Africa. This kind of family remains the privileged place where human life ought to be transmitted and nourished

6.1.12. Family breakdown and the role of the family

Chapter five established that families are undergoing a radical transition both globally and locally. This transition profoundly affects the institution of the family founded on marriage.

Families are breaking down in the area of Mariannhill. The majority of the respondents (90%) validated the argument of the thesis that families are breaking down in the area of Mariannhill. A fraction of 10% of the respondents felt that the claim is not true. The majority of the respondents cited lack of communication as the main cause of family breakdown.

Respondents were asked in the questionnaire (section 5) to state their understanding of family breakdown. They said:

> *"When a husband and a wife can no longer live together and sort out their difference."*

> *"It is communication breakdown and interference by the in-laws."*

"When the family is not talking to each other and there is no communication."

"A situation where the family members do not want or wish to spend time together or share anything among themselves."

"When parents do not get along with each other and this affects the relationship of the family".

"It is when family members lose communication and they fail to love and to support each other."

"It is when parents get separated from each other through lack of love".

"It is when the parents do not take care of each other and the children and there is no communication within the family and no respect for each other".

"It is when families are no longer close".

"It means that God has been lost and there is no more trust in the family".

"I believe it is when there is no love and warmth in that family and divorce comes along".

"A situation where family members do not want or wish to spend time together or to share anything among themselves".

"When members lose respect for one another, when the love that prompted the marriage is nowhere to be seen/found. Without love, marriage is like a house without a foundation".

The above citations reveal that marital breakdown does not happen overnight, but is a process. Furthermore, these citations concur with the discussion in chapter five that family breakdown is a social reality. If this system fails, then the family is left vulnerable, especially the children. The majority of the respondents (86%) expressed that family breakdown affects children, 11% said it does not and 3% was unsure about its impact.

Table 12: *Frequency distribution of the role of the family according to the respondents*

What is the role of the family?	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	TOTAL
Instilling good values	85 94%	0 0%	5 6%	90 100%
Prepares children for good citizenship	85 94%	5 6%	0 0%	90 100%
Provides care and love for children	85 94%	0 0%	5 6%	90 100%
Builds up individuals	64 71%	9 10%	17 19%	90 100%
Builds up the society	73 81%	7 8%	10 11%	90 100%
Decreases social problems	64 71%	4 5%	22 24%	90 100%
Provides a sense of belonging	85 94%	0 0%	5 6%	90 100%
Needs to be supported	90 100%	0 0%	0 0%	90 100%

Undoubtedly, the family founded on marriage has a role to play in society. This role varies from the individual to the larger society. If the family has such a significant role to play in society, it can arguably contribute to the regeneration and restoration of moral values. However, this calls for a concerted effort from the various organs of the state and the Church. The state can play its role by ensuring that there are enough resources for families to thrive and the Church by promoting the good values that are attached to marriage and family. These values are tenets of a healthy society. More than sixty per cent (64%) of the respondents said that the family decreases social problems. If we support families, the government expenditure on social grants can be drastically reduced. This money can be channelled to create job opportunities or provide better and safer schools for children. Family breakdown is not only affecting individuals but also the organs of state in various ways. While being aware that marriage and family are breaking down in the area of Mariannhill, the respondents (100%) agree that it needs to be promoted.

6.1.13 The role of the Church and the Christian religion

The Church is a powerful institution that forms people's perceptions about themselves, their relationship to others and ultimately their relationship with God. Religious beliefs are held in high esteem and people are ready to lay down their lives for what they believe is the truth. If the Church has such power, then it is important to critically evaluate her role regarding her approach to marriage, family and other social issues. Jesus reminded his disciples to read the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3).

In the past, the Church played a significant role in South Africa by openly criticising the apartheid policies of the former regime. The Church became a beacon of hope for the multitude of people who were discontented with the socio-political status quo. Yet today, many critics speak openly about the silence of the Church amidst the current moral turbulences in the post 1994 period. The Church still has a voice that should be heard about the moral ills that permeate the structures of our society. The Church should never underestimate her role of being the conscience of the society.

The respondents were asked to assess the role religion played in their families, 100% of the respondents admitted that religion played a role in their families. Even the 6% of non-Church-goers admitted that religion had a role to play in their families. They assessed this role as a positive one. The majority of the respondents (71%) mentioned that they prayed together as a family. Pope John Paul II offers words of wisdom regarding family prayer:

> Family prayer has its own characteristic qualities. It is a prayer offered in common, husband and wife together, parents and children together…The words with which the Lord Jesus promises his presence can be applied to the members of the Christian family in a special way: 'Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them'. Family prayer has for its very own objective the family life itself … Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear to us, etc, all of these mark God's loving intervention in the family's history (FC, 59).

The pope here stresses the importance of family prayer. Twenty-one per cent of the respondents said that they sometimes prayed together as a family while 6% said they never prayed as a family.

Another (62%) noted that they went to Church as family and 38% said they occasionally went as a family. When asked if both parents went to Church, only 49% said "yes", 29% said "no" and 22% said "sometimes". In contrast to section 6.1.3 of the questionnaire, the majority of the respondents seem to have excluded their fathers from the answer. Family to them means mother and the offspring going to Church. In many families, going to Church is seen as a responsibility for women and children. This explains the exclusion of the fathers in section 6.1.3.

The majority of the respondents (96%) indicated that they received religious instruction as children. Only 4% said that they did not receive any instruction. The goal of religious instruction is to build on the foundation that is begun at home by the parents. The objective of the religious curriculum is morally to mould the young person. Hence the question was asked about how they felt about the instructions they received: 57% felt very positive, 38% positive and 5% felt negative about them. In addition, the majority of the respondents (67%) noted that marriage and family were mentioned during their catechetical instructions. On the other hand, marriage was only mentioned as a sacrament. Therefore, it was less relevant to life in general.

The application and the relation of the sacrament of marriage to life were seen as minimal. This may perhaps be explained by the method which is often used by the majority of the catechists around Mariannhill, the jug and mug method. This pedagogical method presupposes that students are empty vessels that need to be filled. This method fails to acknowledge that people are not empty vessels. The main challenge with this pedagogical method is that it does not begin with the life experience of the child. The children's worldview and opinions are not sought, because they are seen as vessels that need to be filled.

Though the majority of the respondents felt very positive about the instructions they received, 33% of them rated the instructions as good, 29% as fair and 38% as bad. The method of teaching is still a challenge even today in Mariannhill. The majority of the catechists (*abahlwanyeli*) are not teachers by profession. Their lack of teaching skills seriously challenges the quality of the content and presentation methods they use. On-going formation of the catechists cannot be compromised if the church wants to make her voice heard.

The Church today continues to proclaim the good news of Christ through the voice of her ministers. Respondents were asked to state the frequency of hearing a homily about marriage and family: There were three categories to choose from: monthly (24%), annually (76%) and never (0%). From these responses, it can be seen that homilists are not talking enough about marriage and family life to their parishioners. Earlier on, I stated that perceptions are very powerful. If the Church's voice is not audible enough, the media will simply overtake it. This gap creates a vacuum and other voices will utilise it. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate their preference of hearing a homily about marriage and family life: monthly (96%), annually (4%) and never (0%). This shows that parishioners want to hear priests talk about marriage and family.

The questionnaire also tested the availability of Church documents about marriage and family life. The majority of the respondents (73%) noted that they have never come across any Church document on marriage and family; only 19% said that they had. This is a serious challenge that needs to be considered. Availability of appropriate material would help to disseminate the Church's teaching on marriage and family life.

Seventy one per cent (71%) of the respondents said that they were aware of families breaking down in Mariannhill. The biggest challenge is that 67% of the respondents mentioned that they are not aware of family structures in their parishes/churches. Family structures mean an organised structure whose apostolate is the promotion of the sacrament of marriage. If 67% of the respondents are not aware of such structures in their

parishes, this raises a concern. Only 33% noted that they were aware of such a structure in their parish/church.

The pastoral care of couples should not end on the day that they get married, but should be an ongoing project for parishes/churches. Priests and pastors ought to have time dedicated to family pastoral ministry. In the questionnaire, there were several questions about the pastoral visits of priests and ministers to families and the frequency of these visits. On the frequency of the visits, the respondents said: once a month (10%), once a year (52%), only when there is a problem (0%) and never (38%). This shows that priests in Mariannhill area are not visiting their families frequently. Priests seem to do these visits on a yearly basis. There is another side to this situation. The area of Mariannhill has a high density of Catholics which is served by six parishes. Catholic families in Mariannhill are estimated at 4 340, each household having between 8 and 9 children. These estimates are based on the family cards that are kept at St. Xavier Parish = 250, St. Kizito Parish = 210, St. Charles Lwanga Parish = 190, St. Wendeline's Parish = 230, Sts Mary and Ann Parish= 110 and St. Joseph's Cathedral = 350. This roughly means that each priest needs to take pastoral care of 223 families. The scarcity of priests can also be a contributing factor to the fewer family visits by priests. The majority of the respondents (94%) noted they would like a visit from a priest more frequently. Only 6% noted they did not need a priest's visit.

6.1.14. Parents

Section 7 of the questionnaire was answered by parents only. This section included married and single parents, divorced and widowed parents. The purpose of this section was to establish two basic things: the parents' experience of discipline with their children and the effectiveness of marriage preparation lessons. The majority of these parents belonged to the second age category (26 to 35).

The majority of the parents (76%) noted that discipline was now a shared responsibility between them, and only 24% wrote that it is done by one parent. We need to remember

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that this section was inclusive of all the parents. The 76% is encouraging because it shows that fathers are also beginning to take their role seriously.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (75%) stated that they received punishment in the form of corporal punishment. But section seven revealed that parents between the ages of 26 and 35 are applying different methods of discipline other than corporal punishment. It must be stated that two male respondents still choose the use of a belt as a viable method of enforcing discipline. The majority of the parents (85%) wrote that they prefer to talk and reason with their children.

In connection with pre-marital instructions, only 15% of the married parents said they received these instructions and 76% never received any instructions. The 15% who received the pre-marital instructions said that they recommend it to couples who want to have their marriage blessed in Church. Pre-marital instruction is discussed at length in the next chapter.

6.2. The qualitative findings (Interviews)

The previous discussion on the quantitative data has given us a general picture of what is happening in the area of Mariannhill regarding family breakdown, its impact on children and society. The following discussion is about the presentation and analysis of the qualitative findings. These in-depth interviews were conducted in order to help us better understand the situation that was presented by the quantitative empirical research. The qualitative findings provide reasons, attitudes and feelings of the respondents. Here we want to know why families are breaking down, and how the impact is received by those who are affected by the breakdown. Furthermore, we want to know why fathers are absent from their families and how this affects their children, especially the boys. As a general procedure, the biographical details of the respondents that took part in the qualitative research are now presented. Let me add also that they were chosen from the ninety respondents who answered the questionnaire.

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Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher stated the aims of conducting further research with them. No respondent was coerced to participate without their knowledge and without giving their consent. Furthermore, they were informed that some interview extracts would be presented in the thesis without any identification. This was also acceptable to the respondents.

6.2.1 Age of respondents

Table 13: *Age of respondents*

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	11	55%
26-35	5	25%
36-50	4	20%
TOTAL	**20**	**100%**

Table 13 shows that 20 respondents were selected by the researcher to take part in the focussed interviews. These twenty respondents were selected from the ninety respondents who took part in the quantitative research.

Data that was gathered from the questionnaire did not give us a satisfactory meaning behind the numbers, so more information was needed. The majority of the respondents (55%) who took part in the focussed interviews belonged to the 18 to 25 age category. It was important for me to listen more to young people, because *inkunzi isematholeni* (the bull is among the calves). Reflecting on the experiences of younger people will give us a window into their world and on how they are affected by social changes. The other age categories that participated were divided as follows: 26 to 35 years old = 25% and 36 to 50 years old = 20%.

6.2.2 Gender of respondents

Table 14: *Frequency distribution according to gender of respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9	45%
Female	11	55%
TOTAL	**20**	**100%**

Table 14 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents according to their gender. The majority of the respondents (55%) were females. In the African culture, the views of women are rarely sought because patriarchy still persists even in the new dispensation in South Africa. The content analysis was mainly influenced by the views that were expressed by this 55% of the respondents. Male respondents constituted 45%.

6.2.3 Occupation of respondents

Table 15: *Frequency distribution according to occupation of respondents*

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	10	50%
Employed	5	25%
Unemployed	5	25%
TOTAL	**20**	**100%**

Table 15 shows that the majority of the respondents (50%) were students. If we are concerned about changing the moral landscape of our country, we need to listen to young people. The political landscape of South Africa was altered after June 1976, because young people were in the forefront of the resistance struggle. Their minds are still open and not yet fixed by long traditions. Hence, it is much easier to educate them. After all, one cannot teach an "old dog new tricks". Student life is a period of learning, engaging and interacting. Another challenge in the African culture is its failure to listen to young people. The other two sectors of the community of Mariannhill who were also interviewed: were the employed – 25% and the unemployed – 25%.

6.2.4 Marital status of respondents

Table 16: *Frequency distribution of respondents according to marital status*

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	10	50%
Married	4	20%
Divorced	6	30%
TOTAL	**20**	**100%**

Table 16 shows that the majority of the respondents (80%) have experienced single parenthood, fatherlessness and family breakdown. This 80% is made up of the two

groups, namely, the single group (50%) and the divorced group (30%). The focussed interviews were conducted in order to get more detailed information about family breakdown and fatherlessness in South Africa. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter mention that it is important to choose respondents who have "a personal experience of what is being researched" (2006:293). Married people (20%) were also interviewed in order to balance the data that was gathered.

6.2.5 Residence of respondents

Table 17: *Frequency distribution according to residence of the respondents*

Residence	Frequency	Percentage
With parents	6	30%
Own home	4	20%
Other	10	50%
TOTAL	20	100%

Table 17 shows that 30% of the respondents live with their parents, and 20% of them live in their own homes. These 20% of the respondents are married. The rest of the respondents (50%) come from either a place of safety or are staying with relatives. These are the people who have experienced the meaning of growing up without parents, without a father and with divorced parents.

6.2.6 Denominations of respondents

Table 18: *Frequency distribution according to denominations of the respondents*

Denomination	Frequency	Percentage
Roman Catholics	10	50%
Protestants	5	25%
Non-church-goers	5	25%
TOTAL	20	100%

Half of the respondents (50%) were Roman Catholics. In order to get a more balanced view Protestants (25%) and non-church-goers (25%) also participated in the interviews. Involving other Church denominations and members of the community who are not inclined to any Church will enrich the data that was gathered in this thesis.

6.3 Family breakdown: its effects and the role of the family

Before tackling the question of family breakdown, during the interviews the respondents were asked to explain what they understand by family. The majority (87%) of them stated that a family is composed of a father, mother and children:

> *"For me, a family is a unit or structure comprising of parents, children and possibly, extended family members."*

> *"My definition of a family is that it is usually made up of a man and wife that are married. These two become united and work like a well oiled machine. Where there is understanding and communication, forgiveness and love. If there is a problem, people sit down and discuss it and iron it out. The family also involve children."*

> *"Family is a unity of husband and wife, including their direct and indirect offspring, married within the legal requirement of the country including other cultural and religious laws depending on the circumstance."*

> *"Family is formed by people who are married and related by birth".*

These citations reveal that in a family there ought to be a mother and a father. These two persons are united by some form of union, which can be cultural, religious or civil. The results of such a union are offspring. The respondents were further asked to enumerate the characteristics of a family. These are some of the characteristics that they mentioned: there must be a parent/guardian, usually there are children, usually there is a husband and a wife, there must be a common law governing the family, close bonds, understanding, forgiveness, love, honesty, respect, tolerance, mutual understanding, sharing, caring, communication, equality, warmth, sympathy. The main feature, which the respondents expressed, was that it must be a supportive structure.

Seeing that the questionnaire did not elicit sufficient information about the meaning of family breakdown, its impact on children and the society, the focussed interviews were conducted so that more data could be elicited from the respondents.
The following interview extracts demonstrate what the respondents said about family breakdown, its impact on children and the society. These extracts tell us that family

breakdown is a reality in the area of Mariannhill and that it has negative repercussions for the children and the society.

(Extract A)

Interviewer: *In your opinion, what causes families to breakdown?*
Interviewee: *Families today have forgotten their Christian roots. Today, I notice a decreased level of Christian commitment which I think is contributing to family breakdown in our area. People go to church, but commitment is missing.*

Interviewer: *What can be done in order to stop families from breaking down?*
Interviewee: *(a slight pause). The church needs to restore the Christian values about marriage. Priests and marriage counsellors must speak about marriage as a vocation. I think this lacking in our church.*

The following interview extracts begin by asking the respondent to state what their understanding of marriage breakdown is.

(Extract B)

Interviewer: *What do you understand by family breakdown?*
Interviewee: *Family breakdown is when the family unit is disintegrated as a result of multifaceted reasons, for example, economic, social and personal reasons.*

Interviewer: *In your own opinion, what causes families to break down?*
Interviewee: *Families break down because of a number reason.*

Interviewer: *Can you state some of those reasons?*
Interviewee: *I can name three of the reasons, which for me causes families to break down these days. The first one is economic reasons: people these days are pursuing their careers and are putting more value on material things at the detriment of nurturing their families. The second causes are social reasons: many societal ills and deaths as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Third reasons are personal reasons: People enter into marriage partnership with unrealistic expectations and false pretences. For me, these contribute to families breaking down.*

The above interview shows us that economic pursuit has seriously affected families today. Parents have settled in distant areas from each other and from their children because there are targets that ought to be met. The growing numbers of HIV/AIDS

related diseases in the area of Mariannhill continue to pose a serious challenge to the family. There is a steady growth of child-headed households. Such families are further vulnerable to attack and abuse. Society today is lacking in protection for young children who are most vulnerable.

Let us note the responses of the respondents who are in the first age category (18 to 25) about the meaning and the effects family breakdown has on children:

(Extract C)

Interviewer: *What does family breakdown mean to you?*
Interviewee: *It means instability and that always has a negative effect on children. Sometimes children cannot handle this well.*

Interviewer: *What do you mean when you say children cannot cope well?*
Interviewee: *I know a friend of mine whose parents divorced when she was 12 years old, she use to cry a lot at school and will sometimes not do her homework.*

Interviewer: *How was her performance at school?*
Interviewee: *That year she did not pass at the end of the year. But the teachers tried to talk to her.*

The argument of this thesis is that the family founded on marriage provides a stable platform for human life to be channelled. Since marriage promises this stability, it becomes the best place for the rearing of the children. The above interview attests to the fact that marriage breakdown affects the stability of the child and this further affects other aspects of the child's life. This particular friend of the respondent could not cope well at school because the stable world, which she once knew, was gone.

It is also interesting to note in the thesis what one non-church-goer said about family breakdown. She belongs to the first age group category:

(Extract D)

Interviewer: *What do you understand by family breakdown?*
Interviewee: *Family breakdown is when there is no father or mother figure in the family, because both these figures are important in ensuring a holistic*

development in the life of the child. Both mother and father contribute uniquely to the development of the child and this minimises future problems.

Interviewer: *What do you think causes families to breakdown?*

Interviewee: *What I have observed in our area of Mariannhill is that it is caused by divorce, death or just that the other parent disappears. I have observed that amongst our peers the main reason is the disappearance of the fathers. They run away from their responsibility. This is hard for us because we normally do not know where to go.*

Interviewer: *Given what you have said about family breakdown in this area, do you think it affects children and our community here?*

Interviewee: *I think it does affect both in a negative way though. I am a single mother of two children. I have strong belief that the high crime rate in South Africa is largely due to unstable families. The recent incidents of violence in our local schools point to children who come from either broken or dysfunctional families. Sometimes kids grow up without any parental care, so they turn bitter and hate other people. Some single parents cannot afford to be everything to their children. Troublesome kids in our area come mainly from failed marriages and relationships. Rape is increasing because of kids growing in unstable families where they are brutally abused by stepmothers or stepfathers even by uncles. Substance abuse is also an issue here, sometimes these kids drop out of school and end up selling drugs for quick cash.*

(Extract E)

Interviewer: *What does family breakdown mean to you?*

Interviewee: *For me, (a little pause) it is a failure to give each other some space which somehow existed before getting together. This can also be a result of failure to prepare couples in all spheres for this life. This should be a specialist area of intervention by a priest/pastor/marriage officer or even by traditional councils.*

Interviewer: *Do you feel there is not much intervention in this regard?*

Interviewee: *I am aware that in the Catholic Church there is a programme for people who want to be married in church. The challenge is that many people do not plan their marriages well in advance. I have seen people who rush into marriage because they want something out of it. Such people will then not follow what the church requires. I think that in the Catholic Church an intention to get married ought to be declared six months to the actual day of marriage.*

This situation reflected by this respondent is very prevalent in the area of Mariannhill. Even Catholic couples go to the civil court or pay any pastor to bless their marriage. This was discovered in the sodality (guild) of St. Ann's which requires a canonical form of marriage before a member is inducted. However, this respondent is calling for an adequate preparation of the couples prior to marriage. In the following chapter, marriage preparation is discussed.

Let us now consider the impact of family breakdown on children.

(Extract F)

Interviewer: *Now you have enumerated the causes of family breakdown. Do you think that children get affected by it?*

Interviewee: *The breakdown of family structure affects mostly the children, because they are not raised in a normal situation from which they can shape and model their lives around. This affects their mental being. They grow into adulthood with this negative outlook on life and thus create a 'sick' society.*

Interviewer: *It is then obvious from your comments that family breakdown affects children. Is the society affected as well?*

Interviewee: *The family plays a pivotal role in shaping the society. In fact, it is the foundation for the society. It is the microcosmic structure of the society where children should be taught about values, norms and standards which they will then implement even as they become adults and members of the society.*

Interviewer: *If then that is the case, what do you think can be done to stop families from breaking down?*

Interviewee: *By going back to our roots. Going back to basics and educating people about the important role families can play in shaping a better society.*

(Extract G)

Interviewer: *Do you think that family members, especially children are affected by family breakdown?*

Interviewee: *Yes, I think they are affected due to loss of reasonable access to both parents. This loss results in lack of sufficient parenting and support. Children are often forced to take loyalty of one partner and they can confuse the role of each parent. This results in lack of role modelling.*

Interviewer: *Is the society affected in anyway by family breakdown?*

Interviewee: *Yes, family unification is the cornerstone of any culturally and religious society. People or communities are derived from families as I indicated earlier on.*

Interviewer: *What can be done to stop families from breaking down?*

Interviewee: *There has to be proper preparation. Failure to prepare couples in all spheres of life will only exacerbate the problem. This should be a specialist area of intervention by a priest/pastor/marriage officer, traditional councils (Izinduna and Amakhosi). Women also need to be given the freedom to choose. Emphasis on the child's upbringing, for example, as part of life orientation during early puberty preparation.*

(Extract H)

Interviewer: *Does family breakdown affect children?*

Interviewee: *Family members in general suffer from family breakdown, especially the children because they are forced to choose between the two parents. In most cases family breakdown is never amicable. There is always mud-slinging, one parent trying to buy the favour of the children.*

Interviewer: *Is the society affected in anyway by family breakdown?*

Interviewee: *Our society is affected. That is why we have children who are bullies because they see this happening between their parents. The society does not love anymore. They have lost the loving feeling because of family breakdown.*

Interviewer: *What can be done in order to stop families from breaking down?*

Interviewee: *Going back to basics. Before people get married they must seek knowledge from those who are married because dating and marriage are very different. Married life is full of challenges. Mina nje (Myself) I told myself that marrying my husband will be a bed of roses. I was not prepared for what happened 20 years down the line. The elders and spiritual directors must prepare all who want to get married intensely, telling them about the realities of marriage.*

Interviewer: *Do you think that the family has any role to play in society?*

Interviewee: *Yes. The family that has values build up wonderful people. Families that communicate and iron out all the problems teach the society to be able to live together in harmony. Families that pray and have events together build a society that is able to take care of each other.*

These extracts show that family breakdown affects children because normality disappears. This leaves them torn apart and confused. The family was a safe environment for them and it gave them a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is very important for human development to take place. Children usually love their parents. When parents separate, they get torn apart spiritually and psychologically. Therefore, this interferes with their growth and development towards being mature and responsible citizens. These extracts relate to the discussions in chapters four and five. In chapter five, we discussed the causes and consequences of family breakdown. Here we stated that children and society get affected by family breakdown. In chapter four, we discussed the Christian ideal about marriage and we linked this to the African traditional understanding of marriage and with the Protestant view. We further discussed in chapter four the role of the family in building up the society, because the family founded on marriage is the cornerstone of the society. The above interview extracts show that family breakdown affects the society as well.

This is what other respondents in the focussed interviews said about the effects of family break down on children:

> *"What is a child without another parent, there is no stability and strength. When my parents separated I had to go and stay with my relatives. I was not treated well by them; I ended up doing work which was for the elderly women. I had to fetch water after school and do the washing for everybody; by the time I go to bed I was too tired to do my own schoolwork. This how I became a failure at school. I tell you it's not good."*

> *"Emotionally, they get torn apart and lose a sense of family stability and then can become a problem in the society. It leaves children vulnerable to all sorts of ill social behaviours. The majority of them in our area have got into drugs and alcohol. They are without supervision. The members of the community do not seem interested in helping these young boys. Girls seem to cope well than with boys. I know some girls who come from broken families that seem to be doing pretty well. I think it's much easier for girls to adapt than with boys."*

There is no doubt that family breakdown affects children. The latter comment from this respondent suggests that girls adapt better than boys. However, this does not completely exempt the girls from the effects of family breakdown. Children younger than 17 years of

age suffer more than those who are much older. School-going children are still mostly dependent on their parents for many things. One parent can decide to move on with his/her life and get a new partner. One respondent mentions that:

> *"The children suffer so much because they will be brought up by one parent who will also have another partner who might ill-treat the kids born from the previous marriage. I have seen this happening in our area where the mother ill treats the kids that were born by the previous wife. All the boys have left the home after matric and they are staying on their own in the government subsidy houses. They are completely on their own. Their father also does not care about them. I wonder how they are living."*

Family breakdown leaves children with emotional scars and a certain amount of unattended anger. Parents often think that their children will get over it soon. This fallacious thinking intends to make children 'little adults'. Children are children.

> *"Children can hardly think for themselves, so, what they see happening in their own family, what they see their own parents do, is what they will take as a way of life."*

> *"Children end up not knowing which side to take"*

> *"Children can grow up with no respect, no love, and no passion to succeed. They will also give up on life, because they can experience it as a harsh place where the people who were suppose to love them left them. This can lead to serious anger."*

> *"They are affected because they are torn between the two parents and sometimes they love them both. It can really compromise the children. And sometimes parents use their children to fight the other spouse and the children seem to drift between the two."*

> *"Often times, children will blame themselves if Mom and Dad separate. This blame can result in poor self-esteem and many children from broken families opt out of school."*

The discussion in chapter five and the responses of the interviewees have diagnosed the current situation about family breakdown. This diagnosis acknowledges that family breakdown is affecting children with far-reaching consequences. If children are affected that means that the society is affected as well. Children are the future participants in the society. Their contributions will determine the fate of the society. The majority of the respondents (100%) agreed that something ought to be done in order to stop families

from breaking at such an alarming rate. Family get-togethers were strongly encouraged, family counselling for hurting families, families to spend more time together especially on a Sunday, pastoral care of families. These and other suggestions will be discussed in the next chapter.

The interviews reveal that families are breaking down in the area of Mariannhill and they give us reasons for this phenomenon. The empirical findings so far confirm and expand the findings of chapters four and five. Furthermore, the respondents suggested some preventative measures that can be taken in order to curb family breakdown. In point form, the following were suggested by the respondents:

- The need to restore the Christian teachings about marriage.

- Educating people about the important role of marriage and family living.

- Adequate pre-marital preparation programmes in parishes.

- Pastoral care for marriage and families

These preventative measures that were proposed by the respondents will be developed further in the following chapter.

6.4 Single parenthood

Single parenthood is another contributing factor to the demise of the family founded on marriage. This social trend is not favourable to holistic and integral development of a child as we saw in extract D of the interview. The following interview relates the struggle of this mother who raises two children on her own:

(Extract I)

Interviewer: *As a single parent, how is your experience of growing up your children?*
Interviewee: *It is very difficult, with lots of challenges. People see me with a big house and driving a nice car, but that is not all that is needed in growing up a child. Growing up a child needs partnership, ukubambisana in isiZulu. One can only do so much.*

Interviewer: *What are the main challenges that you face as a single parent?*
Interviewee: *The biggest challenge that I faced was to first explain to my children the whereabouts of their fathers. This was very hard for me to tell them that they have different fathers and they are all still alive. I am afraid because I don't know how they will take this issue of having two fathers. Maybe they won't see me as exemplary and therefore question my authority. I just don't know what to expect. I also worry a lot about what will happen to them if I die... (the respondent pauses and coughs a bit then wipes her eyes).*

Interviewer: *Would it have been ideal to raise them with a father figure and why?*
Interviewee: *I think it would have been better indeed, because a father figure is needed to raise kids especially the boys. There are things that need to be dealt with by a man....*

Interviewer: *Do you believe that good marriages assist in child development? Please explain.*
Interviewee: *Yes I do, because most often children raised by single parents grow up hating the man, especially boys. But I have noticed also that girls are also becoming disappointed in men who run away. This has led to some girls thinking that men are useless. If the father is around and is supportive and have a relationship with his child, the child will know that a man is not an animal.*

The following interview reveals the harsh reality of some young women in the area of Mariannhill. The following interview was conducted with a young man who belongs to the first age group category. The young girl became a single parent after being used by this man who clearly had no intention of loving her or caring for her. The interviewee admits that this young woman was a virgin when they met and he robbed her of her dignity. This interview also recalls what the researcher said about the disintegration of the traditional social structures in the area of Mariannhill. If the *Iqhikiza* institution was still around, this young girl could have been spared from this unfortunate incident. The *iqhikiza* would have known that this young man is already going out with a certain girl.

(Extract J)

Interviewer: *How many children do you have?*
Interviewee: *I have one child.*

Interviewer: *How old were you when you got the child?*

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Interviewee: I was twenty years old.

Interviewer: Are you still in a relationship with the mother of your child?
Interviewee: No, we broke long time ago. I think we broke up when she was about four to five months pregnant.

Interviewer: What caused the breakup of your relationship?
Interviewee: (brief pause is maintained) Now that is a bit difficult to say, but I will be honest with you. Before Jabulisile (not her real name), I already had a girlfriend whom we were involved since 2004. I have always loved this girl because we had grown together in our relationship. I met Jabulisile in a party somewhere and we happened to talk. It transpired in our talk that she was serious about me and honestly speaking, I was not serious with her. It was just one of those boy things, you know. She was a virgin when we met. Our relationship broke up because I was no longer interested in her and also I was afraid what they will say at home. Her family never came for inhlawulo (damages).

Interviewer: Do you have a relationship with your son?
Interviewee: It is hard to see my child because I did not pay the necessary cultural damages that are expected from a man. In that sense I virtually do not have a relationship with my child. Her mother sees to his daily needs.

6.5 Fatherlessness

In chapter five, we discussed the challenge of fatherlessness as a causative factor to the radical change within the family. However, there was a challenge about getting relevant literature about it in South Africa. I wanted to know what is happening in the area of Mariannhill about fatherlessness. Interviews were then conducted with respondents who grew up with and without their fathers. The following interview extracts reveal what is happening in the area of Mariannhill.

(Extract K)

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about your relationship with your father?
Interviewee: (a brief pause and a cough)... My relationship with my father is not a good one to be honest with you. I can say that he does not spend time with us as his family. During the week he wakes up early in the morning and rush to work and he comes back very late. On weekends he is hardly at home. He spends most of the time with his friends.

Interviewer:	*Based on what you have just said, do you feel that your father is distant from you?*
Interviewee:	*Yes, he is distant from me. (Shaking his head) I do not have a father-son relationship with him (longer pause with tears on his eyes). You know, my father is a very successful man and he has worked hard to put our family where it is now. For that I admire him and I respect him. But also I feel that he is too distant from me as a son. I want him to find time to be with me or at least to talk to me. I want him to mentor me. Sometimes when I talk to him, I even doubt that he is listening to me and this frustrates me so much.*

Interviewer:	*What is it that you are looking for in your father?*
Interviewee:	*I want him to mentor me into adulthood because I also want to take care of my family one day. I want to learn from him how to be a proper father to one's family. I also want to learn how to be a man through him.*

The above extract clearly shows that this young man is looking for a relationship with his father. His father is a material provider, but not a coach and the son feels that his father is distant from him. This young man wants to learn how to be a man through his father. Fatherhood is not just about asking the million dollar question: "How much does it cost?" Fatherhood is about fulfilling a social role, that of mentoring and parenting a child. This is a reality with psychological implications. Children, who grew up without a father, as we shall see in the following extract, often have an urge to find their father, especially the boys. In my ministry as a priest in the area of Mariannhill, I have come across many boys who were born out of wedlock and never saw their fathers. Often these boys will search for their fathers or at least his relatives. Somehow, they want to be connected to their fathers. If this urge is not met, it often ends in bitter frustration. Regularly, this leads to a conflict with their mothers who feel that their own sons have betrayed them by changing their surnames to that of the father who ran away. This leads to family disputes and the family disintegrates further.

So, the fatherhood role is as important as the motherhood role. The role of the father "is crucial as a complement to the mother" (Cath, Gurwitt & Ross 1982:124). This is the same complementarity that we spoke about in chapter four. That is why God in Genesis declared that they are no longer two, but through matrimony they become one. They become one so that they will take an equal share and responsibility in the rearing of their

children. The boys' first role model in life is the mother. Cath, Gurwitt & Ross mentions, "The mother provides the first model of parental power" (1982:180). This is the first stage that any child awakens to. However, Cath, Gurwitt & Ross (1982:180) further argue that there is a second stage that is very crucial for boys. This stage involves fatherhood. They see the role of the second stage as "an important role where the father is helping the child to begin to establish a male gender-role identification…Father, in being available as a figure identification, can then take an active and concrete part in helping his son to learn to grow… (1982:180). This clearly demonstrates that motherhood and fatherhood are meant to be hand in hand and that these two spheres of parenting are distinct but not separate.

The following interview extract is about a young man who grew up without his father. In this interview excerpt, we see a lack of the other sphere of parenthood, the fatherhood.

(Extract L)

Interviewer: *How was it like growing up without a father?*

Interviewee: *It was not easy for me as a boy. I remember during my school days I was very much into sports. On certain weekends we had sporting activities at school and our parents were invited. It was very hard for me to see other boys with their fathers supporting them and being with them. It was hard for me because, I knew that my father was somewhere around, but could not be with me because of something that happened between him and my mother. I became a victim of something that I was not responsible for. (Pause and stutters a bit) This really makes me angry. Honestly, I am angry at both of them. I know that he takes care of the other children, but not me (Brushes his head with his hands).*

Interviewer: *How do you deal with this anger and gap?*

Interviewee: *My mother is a very prayerful woman and is very strong. Her strength helped me a lot to cope with life's challenges and it helped me somehow to come to terms with my anger. I am managing to go on with life. She also encouraged me to join the youth sodality (guild) in our church and this has helped me a great deal.*

Interviewer: *How has the youth sodality helped you to cope or at least to get along with life?*

Interviewee: *In our youth sodality we hold monthly meetings and we discuss about various issues that affect us as young people. Listening to other young*

people sharing their stories made me realize that I was not the only one who was battling with some realities of life. This made me stronger also. I remember also that our youth leaders organised what they called 'men's conference'. Men who are outstanding fathers in our parish came and addressed us about men issues and this was very helpful for me.

Interviewer: *Tell me, what do you look for in a father figure?*
Interviewee: *I am looking for somebody who can mentor me as a young man, somebody who will guide me along life and show me what it means to be a true man. I need somebody who will support me and have a man to man conversation with him.*

Interviewer: *Do you feel you missed out on these?*
Interviewee: *Yes, I can say so because I still have this gap within me. There is this father thing within me that is missing.*

The qualitative interviews have shown that fatherlessness is a challenge in the area of Mariannhill. Fatherlessness poses a serious mentoring problem of young boys into adults. Palkovitz (2002:108) maintains that the involvement of the father in the rearing of his children contributes positively to their formation. Creating a positive father image is very important for the children's psychological, emotional and spiritual growth. Men are more prone to be involved in violence than women. That is why the above extracts focussed more on males.

The following interview extract tells of societal attitudes towards fatherless families. In this instance, the family had to relocate because it was subjected to the community's patriarchal stereotypes. A number of African families still migrate today due to fatherlessness. This trend is more observable among the rural African communities.

(Extract M)

Interviewer: *How was it like growing up without a father at home?*
Interviewee: *It was very difficult. We grew up in a rural area. A home that is without a father is not respected in the community because there in no one who speaks on your behalf. So, my mother struggled a lot.*

Interviewer: *How did this affect your family?*
Interviewee: *We had to relocate to this place because it was really hard. I think the African community is still very much patriarchal. A home that is without a*

father is not respected and it is taken for granted. We had to leave behind vast agricultural fields and some livestock, because it was being stolen.

Interviewer: *How is your experience in this area?*
Interviewee: *Well, there is not much difference. We are still victims of house burglary because they know in the area that it is only females who stay in that house.*

Fatherlessness in the area of Mariannhill reveals cultural stereotypes that still exist in this community, 18 years into the new dispensation. Some families are tortured simply because there they do not have a male figure to look up to in their lives.

There is also a growing negative phenomenon in the area of Mariannhill of teenage boys denying paternity. When teenage boys father children, paternity in most cases is denied. This tendency among the young fathers further exacerbates the troubling phenomenon of fatherlessness. There are various observable trends in this regard. In Black communities, generally speaking, there is still lack of a healthy rapport between parents and children. This creates a distance between parents and children. Consequently, children often fall prey to peer pressure.

Social challenges are always inter-linked. The denial of paternity in the area of Mariannhill is linked to poverty, the destruction of traditional systems and lack of proper mentorship. The majority of teen fathers in this area are either school-going children or are unemployed. Hence, they deny paternity because they do not have the necessary means of taking care of the child. In chapter one, I mentioned that there are no secondary schools at Tshelimnyama, Mpola, Nazareth and Emshinini. Parents pay monthly taxi fares for their sons to go to school. The majority of these parents are domestic workers. Out of fear of disappointing parents, teenage boys often deny paternity. Boys raised by a mother often feel that they have let down the mother who struggled to raise them. Another factor contributing to the high rate of fatherlessness in this area is that by the time the child is born the mother and the father are no longer in a relationship. Hence, it makes it difficult for the teenage mother to point out the father of the child. Normally, by

the time the child is born the teenage father is yet in another relationship that will eventually end with pregnancy.

If paternity is accepted by the teenage father, his family pays *inhlawulo* (damages) to the girl's family. Normally this relationship will only go as far as that. A true father-son relationship never happens. As a way of punishing each other, the young couple go on and beget children from a new relationship.

The causes of the rise of teen fathers in the area of Mariannhill are:

- Lack of recreational facilities in the area.

- Availability of alcohol and drugs that often lead to pre-marital sexual encounters among young people.

- Lack of proper rapport between parents and their children, hence teenagers are influenced by their peers, television and print media.

- Availability of pornographic material through cell phones.

- The challenge of fatherless homes.

- Cohabiting which often leads to numerous partners over a short span of time. This leads to lack of role models.

- Due to the high rate of unemployment, pregnancy is used as a means of accessing the child support grant.

- Decline of Christian witness and the failure of the Church to reach out to young people.

During the qualitative interviews, it transpired that some fathers see their role as only providing. Some fathers reduce their role to that of being an "automatic teller machine". Married fathers are good at playing this function. They think that fatherhood goes as far as providing for the material needs of their children only. While material needs are important, fathers need to see the bigger picture of fatherhood.

Positive outcomes of growing up with a father were also noted by the respondents. This is what some female respondents had to say:

(Extract N)

Interviewer: *How can you assess your experience of growing up with your father?*
Interviewee: *This experience has been very good for me, knowing that Mum and Dad are there for me all the time. I have a good relationship with my father. He really shows concern, not only towards me but also to other members of the family.*

Interviewer: *How does he show this concern to you?*
Interviewee: *My dad spends most of the time with us at home and when he goes visiting his friends, he does not stay till late. Some of my friends complain about their fathers who spend most of their time away. My father is there for us.*

Interviewer: *Your father's presence, what does it do to you as a child?*
Interviewee: *The atmosphere is very good; I really feel that my life is complete somehow.*

(Extract O)

Interviewer: *How can you assess your experience of growing up with your father?*
Interviewee: *Wow! It has been very great! My Dad is such a loving father. He really helps my Mum a lot at home and he takes full responsibility of our lives at home. My Dad is there for us and I am very excited about this.*

Interviewer: *You are very excited about your father and this is obvious in your face and in your expressions. How is your father helping you to grow?*
Interviewee: *He is helping me a lot. Through him I have learnt to be loving and to be kind. He really demonstrates these qualities to us. I have also learnt the importance of keeping and honouring my commitment.*

Interviewer: *What would have been your feeling if your father was not around?*
Interviewee: *That will be bad for me, because I need both my parents and I am learning a lot from them. It is so good to see us together as a family. My friends always tell me about the difficulties they have in their homes as their mothers are struggling to raise them. We do have challenges as well at home, but my parents have a way of dealing with them and we never get affected as children.*

These extracts tell us about the importance of fatherhood in the family. The impact of the presence of the father figure does not only have positive outcomes for the boy child but also for the girls. The presence of both parents makes the second objective of marriage, parenting, easier and bearable because the load is shared between the two parents. This illustrates the importance of the family founded on marriage.

Some respondents who grew up without their fathers expressed their resentments towards authority. The focussed interviews revealed that some male respondents who were neglected by their fathers are very angry towards them and most of them do not know how to channel their anger. About 75% of the boys interviewed who are badly socialised admitted that they grew up without their fathers. They grew up without a mentor. Young boys look for mentorship in their fathers. The problem of sexual assault of children and the abuse of women could be reduced if fathers were to be involved in the rearing of their children. Pastoral programmes in parishes should offer courses on motherhood and fatherhood. The assistance of professionals in this regard must be solicited.

The following interview epitomised what the model of understanding the situation is like. It is from a male respondent who belongs to the first age category (18 to 25). The eloquence and the understanding of the challenge of fatherhood and leadership made an impact on me.

(Extract P)

Interviewer: *Did you grow up with your father?*
Interviewee: *No, I did not.*

Interviewer: *How come you did not grow up with your father?*
Interviewee: *(a little pause) Umm...My father abandoned us when I was about 10 years old.*

Interviewer: *What was your reaction to this?*
Interviewee: *(a brief pause) It was very painful for me and I was truly saddened by this because I thought that there was something wrong with us, even with me. When someone you love walks away from you it is not easy. It is not a good thing, especially for me I know that my father is living with another family now. (With a mild cough, the respondent continued) Fortunately,*

God has blessed me with a strong, loving, caring and a faith filled mother (with a small smile on the face).

Interviewer: *Would you have loved to grow up with your father?*
Interviewee: *Yes, yes that would have been very nice growing up with my parents.*

Interviewer: *What makes you say this?*
Interviewee: *I guess my father would have taught me how to react to different situations and how to take control of them. Again, he would have taught me how to be man and how to act like a gentleman. (with a brief silence) The memory I have of my father is that he was a gentleman. My mother has tried her best, really. However, there are things which are inappropriate for my mother to talk about with me.*

Interviewer: *What would be those inappropriate things?*
Interviewee: *(laughing a bit) I will really have a difficulty discussing boy friend and girl friend issues with my mother. I want to learn from my father how to treat a woman and how to take care of one's family. I also want to have my own family one day. So, I want to see how a man should treat his family.*

Interviewer: *From what you say, do you think that fathers have a role to play in the family and what would be this role?*
Interviewee: *I strongly believe (nodding his head) that fathers have a role to play at home. The father is the head of the family. The father is supposed to see that things are going well at home. He is a protector and a provider and ensures that there is order and discipline. Oh! I have seen also in our area that families without fathers are also targets of robbery.*

Interviewer: *What do you mean when you say the father is the head of the family?*
Interviewee: *For me, a family is like an organisation. Organisations need people who are leaders in order for them to operate smoothly. A father at home is also a leader.*

Interviewer: *How do you understand the father as a leader at home?*
Interviewee: *(a brief pause is maintained) For me, a father as a leader at home is supposed to be exemplary. He must not talk and then do something different. As a leader at home, he should be there for us to inspire us and to guide us as his children.*

Interviewer: *What do you think of children who grew up without their fathers?*
Interviewee: *I want to think that there are things they will miss out on about life. I mean they will miss out on the joy of being raised by a mother and a father. The mother at home normally takes care of certain things and a father will take care of others and thus they complement each other. They also react differently to situations. Having both of them will help children to balance*

their act. Eish! I nearly forgot something. I have noticed in our area that young boys who are doing drugs and alcohol grew up without their fathers. They are doing this because they are showing disrespect to their mothers. They know she is alone.

This interview extract tells us about the invaluable role of the father in the family. Children want to have a meaningful and a fruitful relationship with their fathers. This respondent states clearly that he would have loved to grow up with his father and enumerates the reasons for this yearning. The majority of the respondents stated that their absent fathers would have mentored them into manhood and adulthood. However, those who have strong Christian mothers seemed to be coping better than their counterparts whose mothers are not strong in their faith.

Furthermore, this respondent shows positive understanding of the leadership role of the father in the family. Some boys who grow up without fathers show a troubled understanding and meaning of leadership. They mistake leadership for authoritarianism. This understanding of leadership is troublesome in a patriarchal society like ours. The respondent's understanding of leadership concurs with Kretzschmar's understanding of leadership. We saw earlier that Kretzschmar defines leaders as "people who are able to inspire, encourage and guide others" (2002:46). The respondent states, "As a leader, he should be there for us to inspire us and to guide us". Kretzschmar (2002:46) and the respondent reveal that leadership is essentially about bringing people to the realisation of the need for their own self to grow into goodness and the importance of their role in the family and in society.

Moreover, the respondent mentions that a father ought to be exemplary. Good leaders walk their talk and are able to guide those whom they lead. The leadership role of the father in the home ought to be understood in this context. Jesus as a leader possessed some authority. But, he never used his authority to undermine or to abuse the people. Rather, the people "spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth" (Luke 4:22), "They were all amazed and said to one another, 'what is there about his word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean

spirits, and they come out'. And the news of him spread everywhere in the surrounding region" (Luke 4:36-37). People were amazed because Jesus inspired them. This means that He was able to bring them to the realisation of their inner giftedness and goodness. The leadership of a father in a Christian home ought to be seen from this perspective.

Jesus vigorously challenged those who abused their leadership in the community. He challenged the leadership style of the Pharisees and the Scribes, and their inability to inspire and to encourage others. In Luke 11:42-44, he challenged the Pharisees for their lack of love and exemplary leadership. In Luke 11:46, he challenged the Scribes because they "impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them". A good leader, according to the standards of Jesus, does not make life burdensome for the people; rather s/he inspires the people to face challenges with determination and faith. This is the style of leadership that fathers at home ought to emulate. If this kind of leadership becomes a lived experience in homes, children will be exposed to healthy leadership and we will be able to develop a coherent moral vision in South Africa. We shall enjoy the fruits of our democracy, because there will be no corruption, no child abuse and no sexual exploitation of our daughters and mothers. The researcher is convinced that South Africa needs to strengthen families in order to develop a coherent moral vision.

The following interview extract comes from a female respondent belonging to the first age (18 to 25) category. This interview tells us about the emotional hardship this respondent endured as she grew up without her father. Her experience is similar in many ways to the above interview. Both of them would have loved to grow up with their fathers. They both recognise the role of the father in the home as that of providing guidance. I have also extracted some part of the interview that adds more information on the topic of fatherlessness in the area of Mariannhill:

(Extract Q)

Interviewer: *Did you grow up with your father?*
Interviewee: *No, I didn't grow up with my father.*

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Interviewer: How was it like for you to grow up without a father?
Interviewee: It was hard and painful and will always be, because I needed him in my life (a pause with some tears). Seeing other children growing up with their fathers was killing me inside because I wanted to grow in front of him and I wanted his wisdom.

Interviewer: As a female, what role would have your father played in your life?
Interviewee: His role would have been to look after me financially and support me emotionally and also finance my education as my mother does now.

Interviewer: What do you look for in a father figure?
Interviewee: I look for guidance in life as general and I also look for financial support.

Interviewer: How can you describe the father as a leader at home?
Interviewee: In our culture, a father is seen as a head of a family and as a person who oversees the overall running of a family.

Interviewer: What is your take about children who grew up without their fathers?
Interviewee: (a brief pause is maintained by the respondent) I think Umm…it's difficult because when children grow up they need both parents. In some cases it's easier to talk to the father on different issues and there will always be a space for a father figure.

Interviewer: What else do you want to say about fathers and the family?
Interviewee: Yes please, I want to say something. I think that umm… fathers are important to the family. They play an important role because they assist in bringing up the children unlike when there is a single parent. A father in a family plays a role to assist the mother emotionally, financially and otherwise. They both bring up a good family if they are both there.

The role of the father cannot be stressed enough. His presence in the rearing of the children fulfils God's wish that the two shall be one. Through marriage, they ought to take equal share and responsibility in the rearing of their children. Lack of fatherhood supposes that procreation is sufficient. Both the mother and the father were involved in the procreative act of marriage and therefore, they must both be involved in the upbringing of that life.

As marriage continues to deteriorate in the area of Mariannhill, this leaves a serious challenge for the children who have to adapt to different fathers almost three times before they turn 10 years old. Children suffer confusion as fathers keep on changing all the time.

Each father comes with a completely different outlook on life to the previous one. Then the children's world is fundamentally disturbed. The new father might just favour his own offspring more than the ones of the previous father. This creates resentment to the new Dad and the boys normally leave such an environment to settle in other places where they feel accepted. Normally, this place is the street or one of the two-roomed houses provided by the government. Criminal activities are often planned in these places, because there is no adult supervision.

The researcher has argued for the critical role of the father in the family, especially in the rearing of the children. The interview extracts have confirmed the researcher's argument. The respondents stated that they are looking for mentorship, emotional support, relationships and guidance in many areas of life. However, I know some people who were raised by single parents and are responsible and respected citizens in their respective spheres of life. They are to be commended and admired for performing a difficult task extremely well. In these difficult situations, the Church invites her ministers to adopt the Good Shepherd model. In *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul II says:

> The Church's pastoral concern will not be limited to the Christian families closest at hand; it will extend its horizons in harmony with the Heart of Christ, and will show itself to be even more lively for families in general and for those families in particular which are in difficult or irregular situations (FC 65).

The Church of Christ, as a mother, knows the ideals but also knows that some of her children find themselves in difficult situations. The Good Shepherd does not only accompany the flock tirelessly, but goes in search of the lost and guides them towards the goal. These too need to be led to the green pastures of the Good Shepherd.

However, this thesis is conducted within the framework of theological ethics which is informed by Catholic morality. Therefore, we need not depart from the original plan of God about creation and marriage specifically. God from the beginning intended that the rearing of the children be the duty and obligation of the mother and the father, because "male and female, God created them in God's image" (Gen 1:26-28). When both parents take this responsibility equally, they exercise God's image that indwells them.

It is not normal theologically for a single parent to raise a child on her or his own. We need always to strive for the objective moral truths. We need to remember the meaning of morality. Gratsch describes morality as the "conformity or nonconformity of a human action to its norm" (1981:225). The norm for human action is that which God has established. God established that for the good of any society, human life should be propagated through marriage and be nourished by it. Marriage is the sanctuary of human life. Therefore, our action as humans should not willingly depart from this biblical revelation. Hence, we cannot make normative what God did not establish as a model to be normative. The begetting of children outside marriage falls outside the norm of divine revelation. Catholic moral theology requires that the object conforms to the norm of morality.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of the research as data was gathered through the questionnaire and the focussed interviews. The findings of the empirical investigation have demonstrated that the family is very crucial in socialising the child. This process of socialisation begins at home and continues through the various structures and institutions of society. However, the role of the parents in this process cannot be delegated to these structures and institutions of society. It is the parents' prerogative and duty to teach their child.

The empirical study has further shown that the family founded on marriage has positive outcomes in the life of a child. Hence the family has a role to play in society. Family breakdown was also discussed and the responses of the respondents were cited, which revealed that family breakdown affects the children and the society. The Church's role was also discussed and concrete suggestions were proposed, especially the method of catechetical pedagogy. We return to this point in the last chapter. The last section of the questionnaire focussed on parents. This section revealed that middle-aged parents are adopting a new method of applying discipline, a method that is different from the one that was used by their own parents.

The following chapter begins by highlighting the main features of each chapter and gives the conclusions that can be deduced from each chapter. Chapter seven then discusses the recommendations based on my pastoral experience, extensive reading and empirical data.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed at length the findings of the empirical research. The quantitative data, which was collected through the questionnaire, was presented and discussed. It showed us the extent of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill by providing statistics. On the other hand, the qualitative data gave us reasons, feelings, and attitudes behind family breakdown in Mariannhill. Hence, the qualitative data gave information that went beyond the figures of the quantitative method. Therefore, mixing the two methods of research in this thesis has proven to be valuable. A much richer source of data was elicited by the focussed interviews and hence, the thesis managed to probe deeper the issues surrounding family living and family breakdown in Mariannhill, especially through the eyes of the respondents.

This chapter summarises the research objectives, the findings and recommendations based on the extensive reading on marriage, the family and parenting, Catholic moral theology, my hands-on experience in the area of Mariannhill and the empirical research that was conducted. Thereafter, linked with these conclusions, a way ahead is suggested. These recommendations seek to propose solutions to the problems that have been identified in this thesis, especially in terms of what the Church can do to assist families.

7.2 Research objectives

I wish to re-state my aims and socio-theological location at this stage. I am a Catholic priest for the diocese of Mariannhill. In my ministry, I had an opportunity of working with young people. During my pastoral engagement with them, I became aware that young people who came either from broken or dysfunctional families were troublesome at school and in the community. After serious reflection and contemplation about this sociological trend in the area of Mariannhill, I set out to embark on a systematic study of

this phenomenon from a theological perspective. On the other hand, I observed that young people who came from families with married parents tended to be more alert and responsible. This observation prompted me to investigate further the role and the effect that the institution of the family founded on marriage has in people's lives and in society. The role of the family founded on marriage was then investigated by carefully researching the causes and consequences of family breakdown and their impact on individuals and society. In addition, extensive reading of a variety of sources, the questionnaire and the focussed interviews assisted me to achieve the aims of this research project. The institution of the family founded on marriage was presented from a perspective of Catholic moral theology, but drawing insights also from Protestant theology, African culture, and the human and social sciences.

The family founded on marriage is a "miniature church", because it is a school of positive values and a guardian of human life. Hence, this thesis upholds the Catholic Church's teaching that families ought to be founded on marriage. The rationale for this teaching is that marriage promises the necessary stability required for the rearing of children, where both parents take an equal share and responsibility.

As stated in chapter four, a good marriage provides a stable environment for human life to be brought into the world. Parental commitment and love provides an environment for human life to develop and thrive. The parents' mutual love and respect moulds children by inculcating positive moral values and good societal norms, which are critical for building a healthy society. The family founded on marriage is a cornerstone for developing a coherent moral vision for South Africa. The objective of this research argued that this coherent moral vision depends upon the promotion and defence of the institution of the family founded on marriage, especially if it meets the purposes already outlined.

7.3 Summary of Chapters

The aim of this sub-section is to offer a summary of the chapters in order to link the thesis as a unit and to lay a foundation for the recommendations. The conclusions of each chapter are highlighted.

The first chapter stated the aims, the objectives and the motivation for undertaking this research project. The main purpose of the thesis was to investigate the causes, and the consequences of family breakdown and their impact on children and society. The first chapter began by outlining the public outcry in our country concerning the breakdown of the moral fibre of the nation. There is an acknowledgement that South Africa has progressed in terms of stressing the importance of human rights and democracy, but is regressing in terms of morality. This regression is compromising South Africa's hard-earned democracy and is impeding the efforts towards nation building.

We can conclude from this chapter that some intervention strategy is important in order to help South Africa develop a coherent moral vision, which is based on the culture of life. The institution of the family founded on marriage was presented as a turn-around strategy upon which South Africa can build a coherent moral vision. This vision inculcates the value that *umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through others). A conclusion drawn from the first chapter is that South Africa needs a new moral vision and the family founded on marriage can facilitate this process.

The second chapter defined and discussed key terms. This chapter provided a basis upon which a common understanding could be achieved on sometimes contentious terms, for example, marriage and family. Marriage here was described as the basis for founding a family, because the family precedes all other social institutions. In turn, the family is the basis upon which society is built. Therefore, the family and society are sociological realities that belong together. Society needs to ensure that the family thrives, because its existence depends on the quality of family living. It needs to provide a suitable environment for the family to play its primordial role, which is the socialisation of

offspring. Children need three basic aspects in order to develop properly; namely, love, stability and permanence. The other aspects, for example, acceptance, moral formation and relational development are built on the three aforementioned aspects. Our definition of marriage in chapter two encapsulated these three developmental aspects and the thesis has argued that these three can contribute towards producing mature persons. The family founded on marriage promises to fulfil these because the couple give of themselves within the sacrament of matrimony.

From the second chapter, we conclude that marriage is a sacrament of love, expressing personhood according to the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. Formed as an icon of the Trinitarian God, the human person is made for mutual love, the love between man and woman. The image of God is not given to the man alone or to the woman alone, but to both of them (Gen 1:27). This biblical text challenges an understanding of marriage that is not based on the mutual love and respect of the couple. Oduyoye contends that if the Church does not challenge wounded and distorted images of women, then the Church ought to declare Genesis 1:26 to be a lie, but "if we stand with the text, then the male alone cannot stand for God if the female cannot also do so".[75] Nyengele also mentions that some African women theologians have also commented on these unbalanced views about the human person. He mentions that these women write from their personal experiences as mothers and as theologians, "African women's theology is not concerned with women issues in isolation from other issues that affect the setting in which they live. Rather, we see here that their concern is holistic and has wholeness as its goal" (Nyengele 2004:31). The divine image in the couple is a relational image, manifested not in isolation but in community. This primordial bond between husband and wife is the foundation of all other forms of social life.

The third chapter discussed the method of research, which was employed by the researcher. This method of research was informed by extensive reading, my hands-on experience in the area of Mariannhill, my theological formation as a Catholic priest and

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[75] www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_2065/is_N4/ai_18069979/pg_4/?tag=content;col1. Accessed 17 February 2012

by the use of the mixed methods, namely, the quantitative and the qualitative empirical data collection methods. The quantitative method gave us a picture about the extent of family breakdown in the area of Mariannhill. It was constructed after conducting a wide literature review, which, in turn led to the formation of the theoretical framework of the thesis. The construction of the research tools and the interviews were based on this theoretical framework of Catholic moral theology, together with data drawn from Protestant theology and the human and social sciences.

Dealing with people's experiences required that the researcher supplements the quantitative method. Hence, the qualitative method was used after the questionnaires were collected, analysed and interpreted. The qualitative method gave us a window into the respondents' experiences and, accordingly, provided more data than could be elicited from the questionnaires.

A conclusion drawn from chapter three tells us about the importance of using the right tools to maximise and to enhance data. The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis guided the different steps of constructing the empirical research tools. Hence, there is a relationship between the theoretical research and the use of empirical research tools in a research endeavour. This integrated approach was used in order to validate the argument of the thesis. The empirical data that was gathered by using the mixed method approach (quantitative and qualitative data collection), tells us that family breakdown is a reality in the area of Mariannhill and it does not contribute positively to society.

The fourth chapter discussed marriage, family living and parenting from the perspective of Catholic moral theology. However, insights from Protestant theology, traditional African culture, human and social sciences were also solicited. Concerning the nature and the purpose of marriage, the African perspective revealed that marriage is an important social institution that serves life. Marriage in this perspective is an honourable institution because it contributes positively to the community by providing new members and teaching them the acceptable codes of conduct. We further discussed that marriage in the African perspective has a religious nature, because it also involves the ancestors and

anticipates the life that is yet to be born. For this reason, all sexual acts are to be reserved until marriage.

This chapter also offered a critique of the African purpose of marriage with its emphasis on fecundity. This emphasis, which is patriarchal, led to the relegation of the role and dignity of women to reproductive functionaries. Insights from African women theologians cannot be taken lightly if we want to develop strong and resilient families (section 4.2.2). The culture of life needs to begin from families and develop to other areas of society. The recommendations of this research will touch on this as well.

The Catholic and Protestant views on marriage have their foundation on the Bible, especially the first two chapters of the book of Genesis. The basis of the Catholic teaching on marriage is Scripture, Tradition, natural law and the Magisterium. Genesis 1:26-28 states that marriage was created by God in God's own image, *Imago Dei*. Man and woman are both God's representatives in married life of love, equality and harmony as these exists in the Triune God. Both have equal dignity and partnership. Christian marriage is monogamous. Genesis 2:18-25 states that God gave Adam a helpmate fit for him. Theologically, the themes of Genesis 2 are unity, mutuality, complementarity and equal dignity. These two accounts of creation show that marriage is of divine origin and is for the perpetuation of the human race. The Yahwist account of creation concludes by showing the mutual confidence between man and woman who lived in the Garden of Eden and "were naked, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). Chapter four of the thesis presented this theological foundation of marriage as a moral norm that was intended by the Creator from the beginning.

Marriage is an important institution in human life. It is to be understood as a socio-theological reality. Hence, it ought to be based on the positive attributes of love, intimacy, mutual acceptance and partnership. Nature has made man and woman complementary. Their partnership constitutes the first form of communion between persons (GS 12). If marriages thrive, the family and society will likewise thrive.

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The Christian and the African understanding envision marriage as a life-long commitment. This lasting commitment has developmental benefits for the children because of stability. Consequently, the society in general benefits from this permanent commitment of the couple. Both visions consider the *telos* of promoting families founded on marriage. Furthermore, they observe marriage as a pivotal social institution. The purpose of marriage is the building up of the society and the propagation of the human race. Here we notice theology and sociology complementing each other. It was God who declared to our first parents, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). Theology and sociology agree that procreation is not sufficient, but instruction should be perpetuated throughout the different stages of raising a child.

The human and social sciences affirm the importance and the unique role of the family founded on marriage. Marriage is a good institution for the couple, for the children and society. The insights from these sciences help us to identify problematic areas in marriages and also propose tenets that could be used in building resilient marriages and families. Since these sciences are frequently involved in empirical research, their findings could enrich our theological discourse.

Towards the end of the fourth chapter, we discussed the meaning of parenting. Parenting in the African culture was considered as an indispensible role of the parents. Therefore, parents are the primary educators of their offspring. Here we note an area of convergence between the African and the Christian views on parenting. The Christian perspective showed us that God entrusts the young and vulnerable life to the parents, therefore they have a moral responsibility to take care of that life. Parenting extends and fulfils the procreative nature of marriage. For that reason, parents cannot relinquish this duty or delegate it to other social institutions.

The human and social sciences showed us that parenting is not an easy affair that could be carried out without any reflection. Parenting is not the same as reading a manual or a 'how-to-do-it-yourself' magazine. Rather, parents ought to develop a relationship with their children so that they will get to know each child with its unique needs. In addition,

manuals tend to be prescriptive for all situations with less regard for particular unforeseen situations. Therefore, parents cannot solely rely on manuals or books that deal with issues related to parenting. These can offer valuable insights and suggestions, but they should never replace the parent-child relationship. Failure to cultivate this parent-child relationship could be tantamount to toxic parenting, which is both low in action and content as described and discussed in section 4.9.5.

Sociologist Togni mentions, "The family is very suited to the important task of socialising children. Socialisation is the way people acquire personality and learn the ways of a society or group" (1996:23). The role of socialising children remains the primary function of the family and this role cannot be taken over by other social institutions. The other social institutions ought to build upon the foundation that was prepared by the family. But, family breakdown constitutes a threat to this primary role of the family resulting in other social institutions needing to fulfil the primary responsibility of the family. Togni decries this when he states:

> In modern times, however, the process of socialisation is increasingly becoming the task of other agencies in society… In several societies in the world, experiments were conducted whereby more efficient organizations were asked to raise children. However, these alternative agencies of socialisation proved to be less effective than the family and brought long-term problems to the individuals" (1996:23).

Parenting is a process of assisting children to learn the basics of human life and conduct so that they will contribute positively to the society. Some sociologists recognise the need for a stable environment for the rearing of the children (Togni 1996:24, Hunt & Colander 1984:203). They mention that this environment brings a sense of belonging and a sense of security to the child. Hunt & Colander mention, "A secure family background can give a child that sense of security that most psychologists believe is essential to the development of an emotionally stable and responsive personality" (1984:208). The child comes into contact with the society through the family. Chapter five presented how the majority of the respondents were influenced by their families. The neglect of parenting has serious repercussions for the child and the society.

A conclusion drawn from chapter four is that the family founded on marriage was intended by God from the beginning to be the custodian of human life. This is the moral norm that was established by God. Moreover, chapter four also concluded that marriage serves as an ecumenical platform among Catholicism, Protestantism and the African traditional religion. These three schools of thought appreciate and value the institution of marriage and the marital relationship. Hence, the family is the appropriate place for procreation and parenting. The human and social sciences demonstrated that marriage has positive outcomes for the couple. They further proposed strategies for building resilient families.

The marital ideal for Christians was outlined and discussed in chapter four with insights from other human sciences. From our discussion in chapter four, we know that ideally, a Christian marriage is meant to be a lifelong commitment and the Church acknowledges that there are difficult situations. For this reason, the Church's teaching in these difficult situations is not erected like an insurmountable wall leaving no space for understanding. The Church knows herself to be a Mother only in the measure in which she is Christ's faithful Bride. The Biblical image of the Good Shepherd is simple, but extremely important and meaningful here. The Good Shepherd, does not only care for the flock, but also goes out in search of the wounded and guides them towards the goal.

The fifth chapter defined the meaning of family breakdown. The conjecture in chapter five is that the institution of the family founded on marriage is undergoing a crisis. Factually, marriages and even Catholic ones do breakdown, some separate and never return to each other, some go ahead and get a legal separation or in some instances the Church may declare certain marriages to be null and void through a tribunal process. The Church in this instance would adopt the attitude that we discussed in the preceding chapter, the spirit of a Good Shepherd.

Therefore, in the fifth chapter we discussed the breakdown of a love relationship, the ending of a good marriage between a husband and a wife. For that reason, it was deemed necessary to analyse the causes and the consequences of marital and family breakdown.

This analysis revealed that the institution of the family is declining both globally and locally.

It became evident during the discussion that the troubled history of South Africa has had lasting effects on the fabric of our society. Apartheid did not only affect the victims, but the perpetrators as well. Redressing the imbalances of the past will take a long time, but we ought not to lose hope. The challenge of moral decay in our country is an aftermath of the *anomie* that was inculcated during the apartheid era.

A conclusion drawn from chapter five is that the institution of the family founded on marriage is under severe pressure. This pressure emanates from economic, social, political and secularist influences. Hence, families are breaking down and this reality has negative consequences for the children, the family and society. A further conclusion drawn from chapter five is that fatherlessness is a serious problem in our contemporary families. However, there is not much literature about families in Mariannhill or fatherlessness in South Africa. This shortfall of literature on fatherlessness in South Africa was supplemented by the focussed interviews.

The sixth chapter presented and analysed the results of the empirical investigation. The information provided by the quantitative findings through the questionnaire was presented in the form of tables and gave us a picture about the extent of family breakdown. The qualitative findings were analysed and interpreted by examining the content several times in order to identify common themes. For example, for the meaning of family breakdown the following themes emerged: lack of love, lack of communication, divorce, separation, etc. The qualitative findings further revealed that fatherlessness in the area of Mariannhill also contributes significantly to family breakdown. This stage of the research revealed that family breakdown is also a reality in the area of Mariannhill.

A conclusion drawn from chapter six reveals that marital breakdown is an existential reality in the area of Mariannhill. This conclusion is deduced from the opinions of ninety respondents who took part in the quantitative research stage and also from twenty

respondents who took part in the qualitative stage of the research. The respondents mentioned that marital breakdown affects both the children and the society. Further to this conclusion, chapter five revealed that fatherlessness is also a challenge in the area of Mariannhill. The significance of these conclusions is that they provided a glimpse into the complex issues that we experience as a nation and as a Church.

Let us summarise in point form the findings of the empirical research about the situation of families in the area of Mariannhill, as presented in chapter six. A reader will note that all these points are of a pastoral nature. Therefore, the Church ought to seriously reflect on the following pastoral insights that were gained during this research.

- There is a lack of pastoral care for marriage and families in the area of Mariannhill

- Lack of integral preparation of couples desiring to get married in church

- Lack of support structures in parishes for families

- Some couples do not want to undergo marriage preparation, because they normally do not plan their marriage in advance. The diocesan directives of the Diocese of Mariannhill require that an intention to have a marriage blessed and celebrated in Church must be given three months in advance. Some parishioners consider this period to be too long and then they decide to have a civil court marriage

- Inadequate and under-skilled catechetical teachers. Parishes are also lacking resources for catechetical formation, for example, study material and classrooms

- Inadequate catechetical formation programmes in parishes

- Non-availability of church documents in the vernacular

- Lack of homilies focussing on marriage and family living

- Lack of Christian witness by Christian families

- There is a move away from the matters of the external values towards a more individualistic/subjective approach to morality. Spouses today see themselves more as individuals than as couples

- Discrepancy between verbal instructions and practice by parents

- The challenge of fatherlessness

The endeavour of any research project is not merely to identify the problem, but also to offer preventative strategies and solutions. Therefore, the next section of this chapter proposes the preventative strategies and identifies a way forward. I call this way forward the action plan. This action plan is based on the Catholic teaching about marriage, the family and parenting, additional reading about marriage, the family and parenting and the empirical research findings.

A key argument in chapter seven is that the Church ought to use her internal structures of communicating its message, avail resources for catechetical formation of children in order to form a firm basis and that the Church needs to come up with pastoral programmes in order to curb the challenge of family breakdown, and reach out to the divorced and the widowed.

7.4 A plan of strategic intervention.

Marriage breakdown and the breakdown of family living in South Africa is an existential reality. This is a pastoral concern for those who are engaged in ministry. Marriage preparation emerges as an urgent pastoral need that demands our attention. If we value marriage and its role in society and in the Church, we need to take this institution seriously. The role of the family founded on marriage cannot be overstated, as 94% of the respondents said that it instilled good values in them, 94% affirmed that it prepares children for good citizenship, 94% stated it provides care and love for the children, 71% said it builds up individuals, 81% said it builds the society, 71% said it decreases societal problems and 100% said it needs to be supported. The recommendations are based on the

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thesis as a whole, drawing on the theoretical and empirical data, which show that the family founded on marriage needs to be supported. Our intervention strategies ought to be sustainable.

7.4.1 Marriage preparation

The neglect by some priests in ensuring that couples undergo proper marriage preparation is a disservice to the couple and to the entire Christian community. Chapter four discussed the African traditional social structures, which ensured that young people were properly initiated into adulthood and married life. These structures were dismantled by colonialism and apartheid in South Africa because of migratory labour, hostels and townships. Since the African structure of preparing young people for marriage has disappeared, the Church cannot afford to neglect this pivotal role. The Church needs to embrace this role since the traditional structures are no longer operating as they used to.

The first plan of strategic intervention about the problems that face marriage, family and parenting is presented and discussed below. This is presented from a Catholic position, but drawing also from Protestantism and social sciences. With the dawn of the of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the Catholic Church gave a new impetus and significance to preparing couples for marriage. She teaches that marriage preparation accords the couple an opportunity to discern their vocation in the light of *Verbum Dei* and the living tradition of the Church. Evangelisation is not a one off event, but progressive. Therefore, marriage preparation is another opportunity for an in-depth catechetical formation where the couple is led to the mysteries of God. It is an opportunity of deepening the faith of the couple and to help them celebrate their faith together (FC 68). Thus, it cannot be understood as simply imparting information about marriage, but is a real path of personal formation based on education in the faith. This journey of faith by the couple becomes important in an ever increasing secular world. Marriage preparation can lead to the maturation of faith, and also emotional development, and moral character development.

Numerous Church documents speak about the necessity and the fruits of marriage preparation, namely, *Gaudium et Spes* (52), Code of Canon Law (1063), Catechism of the Catholic Church (No. 1632), *Gratissimam Sane, Evangelium Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio*. These documents accentuate the sanctity of marriage and stress that marriage is rooted in human nature. Since marriage is rooted in human nature, its existence is good for the society.

Marriage preparation is a sign that the Church values and respects marriage, because it was willed by the Creator from the beginning. The researcher argued that the breakdown of marriage and family contributes to the breakdown of moral fibre in South Africa. Therefore, marriage preparation becomes the first turn-around strategy to meet this challenge.

A second element that must be considered in the preparation of couples is the role of the media. The media plays a crucial role by informing the public and creating a public opinion. Some of the challenges that marriage and family living face today are a result of distorted notions about marriage and family living which are propagated by the media. The religious bodies, for example, the South African Council of Churches, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), Diakonia Council of Churches need to criticise wrong images, praise better programmes, also create their own, for an example, the Heartlines series that was created by the Salvation Army.[76]

On a smaller scale, homilies, strong catechetical formation programmes and marriage preparation offer the Church an opportunity to engage critically with parishioners and couples about the notions that are propagated by the media. This engagement is on-going formation of parishioners and leads to deeper catechesis. Young people can also be included in these projects because they need to share in the treasures of the faith. When welcoming young people into the faith, we need to address the historical inequality between girls and boys, women and men. This will help us create the culture of life within families and develop resilient families. This will be a serious effort in rectifying

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[76] See http://www.heartlines.org.za. Accessed 21 February 2012

the historical imbalances that still exist today in some families. Young people are invited because we want to shape a future that is free of inequalities and thus contribute towards building healthy families.

One of the major difficulties I observed in my priestly ministry in the area of Mariannhill was that by the time a couple approached me requesting a Church wedding, they had already committed to each other. They wanted to get married quickly, because their lifestyle was not acceptable to their mother who was a prominent member in the parish. In this situation, they were more likely to be concerned with the logistics of the wedding than with marriage preparation. Postponing short notices, proved to be effective in giving the couple enough time to rethink their decision and motive. The goal of marriage preparation is for the couple to evaluate their potential to become married partners and a good family (FC 15-16). Therefore, if the programme is to facilitate the evaluation process it must be introduced to the couple before they have made a commitment to each other. So, it could be said that the time ideal for a marriage preparation programme begins in the home. It continues at home, school, until and after the altar (Wallace 1971:13).

In marriage two persons with different personalities, different family background, different sexualities come together to effect a union of their being, which we call marriage. Marriage preparation should be indicative of the pastoral concern of the Church for marriage and the family. It should not only focus on the sacramental aspects, but also the couple's interpersonal relationship. It is their day-to-day living out of their personal relationship in faith, hope and love that the couple come to experience Christ and become concrete signs of his saving presence in the world. We now examine the goals of marriage preparation.

7.4.1.1 The goal of marriage preparation

Before dealing with the three stages of marital preparation, let us begin by discussing its goal. Considering the following points helps us appreciate the role of the family founded

on marriage. Marriage preparation ought to be seen as a necessary intervention strategy in curbing the crisis of family breakdown in South Africa. The question then is: what is marriage preparation? The following points intend to address this question:

- It is a moment of deepening of the faith and an on-going evangelisation for the couple as they are about to become parents

- Marriage preparation offers the couple an opportunity to tell their individual stories because they have been shaped by them

- It helps the couple see themselves through each other's eyes and begin or advance in the ability to communicate with each other

- To espouse the mysteries of Christian marriage and Christian family living

- For the Christian community to develop a friendly relationship with the couple so that in times of need later in their married lives they will have a listener available to them

- To create a feeling that the pastoral personnel and the Church community are interested in helping those who choose marriage and so to provide an atmosphere in which they can more easily grow in faith

- To help the couple plan their marriage ceremony that goes in accordance with Christian beliefs

- To detect serious problems, especially family background, personality, character challenges, which might destroy the marriage, and to take steps necessary to assist them find a solution

- To learn more from the couple about the intricacies of human nature and from the relationship with them, to grow into more understanding of complete human beings

- Teaching on life, marriage and family living

Marriage preparation involves three crucial steps that ought to be considered. The objective of these steps is to ensure that marriage preparation is holistic in its approach. These steps are: remote, proximate and immediate preparation (Dalton 1995:140-146).

7.4.1.2 Remote preparation

Marriage preparation does not begin when the couple declare their intention to get married to the priest. Rather, it is begun at home. Family experience occupies a central role in the life of the child. Children learn by observing their parents interact with each other. Hence, the family provides an opportunity for the child to acquire basic knowledge about love, sexuality, commitment, forgiveness and stability. The home provides a foundation upon which all other values are built and developed. The respondents in section 5.8 of the questionnaire demonstrated that the influence of the home cannot be underestimated.

Remote preparation includes infancy, childhood and adolescence. The emphasis here is on the person's background, the way they were brought up, the manner in which the challenges at the home were dealt with, how they saw their parents relate to each other and how they related with their siblings. People are often shaped by these experiences either for better or for worse. Remote preparation offers each person an opportunity to tell their own story and to reflect on it. This reflection helps the person to come to terms with their past, so that they can move forward with a renewed hope and vigour. Hence, emotional baggage from a person's family background or a cycle of abuse, for example, can be broken if detected during marriage preparation.

7.4.1.3 Proximate preparation

Proximate preparation refers to the period of courtship and engagement. This stage accords the couple an opportunity for growth and maturity in their personal relationship. This stage can be called 'let us get real' stage because now it consists of a curriculum, which the engaged couple ought to follow.

The proximate stage is a period when the couple come into contact with the Church personnel that will take them through the programme of preparing for their life together. During this stage, the doctrine of the Church about marriage, family and parenting are presented and explained to the couple. But also, their vocation as Christian parents is explained. We said in chapter four that marriage is a vocation. Therefore, the Church discerns together with the couple what it means to be a Christian parent. The help of other Christians is also solicited because it is not the priest's sole duty to prepare couples for marriage. Though, Christian formation in the parish is his indispensible pastoral oversight. Some key aspects that can be looked at are: family background, personality differences, different views on money, family, children, work, spiritual and moral maturity, different faith traditions, etc. Involving married couples and inviting experts are concrete ways of assisting the engaged couples to deal with some of the aforementioned aspects.

7.4.1.4 Immediate preparation

This stage is dependent on the previous stages of marriage preparation because it builds on their foundation. This stage aims at meeting the following three goals:
- A synthesis of the previous preparation and filling the gaps
- Experiences of prayer (retreats, spiritual exercises for the engaged) in order to lead them towards an in-depth appreciation of the beauty of marriage and family life
- A suitable liturgical preparation, which also envisages the active participation of the engaged.

This stage is mainly about the fruitful celebration of marriage. The beauty of the celebration ought to assist the couple to draw out the deep mysteries that are associated with their new state of life.

7.4.2 Pastoral care of families

Pastoral care of families ought to build on and continue from the previous stages of marriage preparation. Since marriage is a vocation and is lived within a changing context, on-going formation for couples becomes indispensible. On-going formation programmes have been put in place for priests and religious, while marriage programmes have been significantly neglected. The Church in South Africa must begin to consider seriously the vocation of marriage and give it the attention it deserves.

The pastoral care of marriage and family life should always consider its *modus operandi*. Pastoral care of families is not a secular work done within a Church atmosphere. Rather, it is informed by our theology, *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding). The Church is a community of believers united by their faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Through pastoral care of marriage and family living, the Church attempts to influence the quality of Christian marriages from a faith perspective.

Families are first called to minister accordingly and appropriately to their own members. Canon 1063 exhorts priests "to ensure that their own Church community provides for Christ's faithful the assistance by which the married state is preserved in its Christian character and develops into perfection". The key word here is 'community'. This canon recognises the indispensable role of the community in the pastoral care for marriage and families. Prior to Vatican II, this pastoral task was reserved solely for priests. But today the role of the priest is to ensure that the community exercises its baptismal right by taking care of marriage and family living in their locality. The Christian community ought to provide an environment where Christian families thrive. This is a moral responsibility for the community.

Parishes can be compared to the way municipal governments function or not function. The municipality government is the sphere of government which ensures the implementation of policies that must lead to service delivery. Similarly, it is through the structure of the parish that people come to experience the Church. It is in the parish

where people are baptised, confirmed, married and buried. Hence, priests have a close relationship with the people. People often come to priests for spiritual direction and guidance, for family counselling and consolation. Priests should use the means that are proposed by the Church to reach out to their parishioners.

A post-marital ministry in parishes is crucial and the how of this ministry is detailed below. There is a basic assumption that 'they lived happily ever after'. This post-marital ministry ought to be extended to the divorced, remarried and widowed. The intention of this ministry is to re-integrate these members into the community and into the Church's ministry of care. Hence, their experience is invaluable. Finally, we need to make couples and families ministers of marriage in the local parishes. This can be achieved by soliciting experts within the Church and community to address fellow parishioners. A pool can be created by bringing nearby parishes to collaborate with each other and exchange experiences. This will work well in the area of Mariannhill where six parishes are within the radius of ten kilometres. The aim here will be to support families of all kinds.

The Church is both a universal and a local community. The universal Church promotes the good of all persons, because we are all members of the family of God. Therefore, there is a collective aspect to our faith. These include the sacraments, the *Magisterium*, papal primacy and infallibility. These universal marks of the Church do not hinder the originality of local communities. Rather, they open up this originality to new heights so that the universal Church may be enriched by local experiences. The parish community is the privileged place where people get to experience the Church. It is at the level of the parish where pastoral directives are implemented. Parishes ought to develop consistent apostolates for marriage and family. The age of confirmation can be a targeted age for raising awareness among young people about the Church's teaching on marriage and family. Many parishes in the diocese of Mariannhill have not begun thinking about the apostolate to families.

7.4.3 The role of support organizations

The pastoral care of marriage and family living ought to be a concerted effort that involves the people of God. Church based organizations ought to be on board as well. Various sodalities (guilds) in the diocese of Mariannhill have chaplaincies. The same idea can be used for groups which focus on marriage and family living. The Home and Family Life Foundation (HFLF) did not succeeded because of lack of funding and lack of leadership in higher structures. The main objective of the HFLF was to build strong Christian families in the community and to raise awareness about the plight of families in the area of Mariannhill.

The HFLF had relevant programmes for the area of Mariannhill. During its operation, it was very effective in helping families in this area. It managed to mediate between families and to intervene when there was a report of abuse. Women and children were empowered by availing resources that would help them identify and report abuse to relevant authorities. Some of their programmes included: an HIV/AIDS desk, children's desk dealing with child abuse and domestic violence, outreach programmes, home-based care, counselling, nutrition, psycho-social support and youth programmes. Some of these can be an area of ministry in local Churches and hence resources and information could be shared among them. Workshops on parenting were conducted by HFLF which aimed at equipping parents with parenting skills; the workshop on child development focussed on the development of children from 0 to 12 years. The aim of such workshops was to assist parents understand their children and to assist them meet the developmental needs of their children. Youth Pastoral Care programmes were aimed at identifying the youth stage as crucial in instilling positive values. These workshops involved counselling programmes for the youth. Women's conferences aimed at focussing on women's rights and issues affecting women such as motherhood, parenthood and to help them develop coping mechanisms. Women were also trained to identify abuse and were helped to know what channels to follow to bring it to an end.

HFLF also dealt with alcohol abuse within the family. Earlier we saw how alcohol abuse is a challenge in the area of Mariannhill. Other crucial workshops that were conducted focussed more on family violence. These workshops were aimed at assisting the participants to understand the effects of violence in the family and to help them identify the necessary steps that they needed to take in order to prevent further abuse or to report it.

Regrettably, the HFLF has become defunct in the Diocese of Mariannhill. This unfortunate situation has created a gap between families and the support they were getting from the Church. Tensions between the foundation and the diocese intensified in 1999, because the foundation wanted to work independently of the diocese and the bishop of Mariannhill. Bishop Mngoma of Mariannhill, wrote a letter (22 November 1999) appointing two priests to conduct an investigation about the activities of the foundation within the diocese. The bishop identified four areas that the priests were to conduct their investigations on: the work of HFLF, the financial reports, how the department is run and the employees and their salaries. The commission advised that the diocese should cut its financial assistance to HFLF because there were financial malfeasances.

The foundation, however, needs to be resuscitated because the programmes it focussed on are very relevant. Its services went beyond the Catholic borders. HFLF was focussed on building stable Christian family living. The social challenges that were identified above can be addressed by HFLF because parishes were identified as places for conducting workshops. Parishes were identified because of lack of infrastructure in the area.

Beyond Catholic circles, there are also ecumenical bodies in South Africa that take a keen interest in marriage and family life, for example, FAMSA (Family and Marriage Association of South Africa). FAMSA was founded in London in 1938 because there was an acknowledgement that the families were under siege. This organisation in South Africa is interested in ensuring that families function well in society. Their website states that, "it is thus imperative to initiate and co-ordinate resources to maintain a healthy and

happy marriage and family life".[77] Their programmes are offered in conjunction with Churches, schools, women's groups, etc. They also run specific groups that target young people.

South Africa needs the pooling of resources in order to restore the family founded on marriage. The pooling of resources remains a critical challenge for the Church in South Africa, especially the Catholic Church. Each Catholic diocese runs its own programme without any interaction with others. This deprives the local Churches of an opportunity of learning from each other with the view of intensifying their programmes. Ecumenism in South Africa poses another challenge as Churches do not cooperate on such critical issues that touch society.

Good families ensure societal stability. Government and business need stability in society in order to develop and prosper. Therefore, good families are a good investment for the government and the business sector. The government is a critical role player in building and restoring good families. The public private partnerships are ideal in this regard because the government and the business sector can sponsor organisations that promote good families, for example, HFLF, FAMSA and others. Furthermore, the government can incentivise married couples by there being less interest on home loans when investing or buying a home. Government departments can enter into partnership with various Church bodies, for example, the SACC, and the SACBC, to support their marriage and family programmes.

7.5 Critique of *de facto* unions: the role of the state and the community

Other forms of unions, for example, single parenthood, cohabitation, *vat en sit*, are taking on special importance in society today (especially in the area of Mariannhill as discussed in sections 1.6 and 5.4.3) so that some initiatives insist on their institutional recognition and their equivalence to families originating in a marriage commitment. The considerations presented in this thesis and empirical findings are not only shared by the

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[77] www.famsa.org.za/about.asp. Accessed 16 December 2011

Catholic Church but also belong to the other different Churches, the African traditional view, and the human and social sciences. The difference between the family originating in marriage and other unions is that the family community comes from the covenant of the spouses' union. The marriage that comes from this covenant of conjugal love is natural and original.

In today's open and democratic societies, the state and the public authorities must not institutionalise *de facto* unions by giving them a status similar to marriage and the family or making them equivalent to the family based on marriage. This would be an arbitrary use of power which does not contribute to the common good because the original nature of marriage and the family precedes and exceeds, in a radical way, the sovereign power of the State.

The family based on marriage must be carefully protected and promoted as an essential factor in social existence, and in the stability and peace necessary in a broad future vision of the society's common interests. Equality before the law must respect the principle of justice which means treating equals equally and what is different differently. This principle would be violated if *de facto* unions were given a juridical treatment similar or equivalent to the family based on marriage. If the family based on marriage and *de facto* unions are not equivalent in their duties, functions and services in society, then they cannot be similar or equivalent in their juridical status.

Marriage and family are of public interest and they are the fundamental nucleus of society and the state, and they should be recognized and protected as such. Two or more persons may decide to live together with or without a sexual dimension, but this cohabitation is not for that reason of public interest. The *de facto* unions are the result of private behaviour and should remain in the private sphere. In marriage rather, commitments and responsibilities are taken publicly and formally and this has relevance for society. Marriage is not a way of living sexuality as a couple, nor is it simply the expression of a sentimental love between two persons, this characteristic is usually in every loving relationship. But, marriage is more than that because it is a union between

man and woman precisely as such and the union can only be established through an act of the partner's free will but its specific content is determined by the structure of the human being – the woman and man, mutual self-giving and the transmission of life.

The Second Vatican Council pointed out that the so-called free love, *amore sic dicto libero* (*Gaudium et Spes*, 13), constitutes a factor that breaks down and destroys marriage because it lacks the constitutive element of conjugal love, which is based on the personal and irrevocable consent, whereby the spouses give and receive one another mutually. This gives rise to a juridical bond and a unity sealed by a public dimension of justice. The right of the family based on marriage to be protected and promoted by society and the state must be recognized by law.

The critique of the present state of the family is not based on some idealistic fashion; on the contrary, the nations of the world committed themselves to protecting this natural institution. The following citations from international and national documents mention that the family is the pillar of society and state. On the international level, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 10 December 1948) defines the family "as the natural cell and the foundation of society and therefore has a right to be protected by society and the state".[78] This was again stressed by the UN on 16 December 1966 in article 23.[79] Furthermore, on economic, social and cultural rights the UN article 10 number 1 states, "The protection of the family and the greatest possible care must be accorded to the family which is the natural and fundamental group of society, particularly for its establishment because it is responsible for the care and education of children. The marriage must be celebrated with free consent of the intending spouses".[80]

The European Social Charter of 18 October 1961 states in its preamble, "The family as a fundamental unit of society has the right to appropriate social, legal and economic

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[78] www.un.org/en/documents/udhr. Accessed 05 January 2012
[79] www.unric.org/html/italian/humanrights/patti2.html. Accessed 05 January 2012
[80] www.unric.org/html/italian/humanrights/patti1d.html. Accessed 05 January 2012

protection to ensure its full development".[81] The Arabic Charter of Human Rights of 15 September 1994, article 33, number 1 states, "The family is a natural and fundamental cell of society".[82] The heads of African states meeting in their OAU convention in Nairobi in 28 June 1981 declared, "The family is the natural element and the base of society. It must be protected by the state and must take care of its physical and moral health. The state has the obligation to assist the family in its mission as guardian of morals and traditional values recognised by the community".[83] The Irish constitution states, "The state recognises the family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptibly rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law. The state therefore, guarantees to protect the family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensible to the welfare of the Nation and the State (article 41 numbers 1 and 2)".[84] Many other European constitutions maintain that marriage is foundational in founding a family (Albania article 32, Belarus article 32, Polish article 19, Slovenia article 41, and Hungary article 15). South African law in general accepts that the family is the basic unit of society.[85] These articles demonstrate the unique role that the family founded on marriage accomplishes. This reality does not originate from the state, but it pre-exists the state because it a natural institution. The state and society need to support, promote and protect it.

7.6 Recommendations

In chapter three (section 3.2) we stated the problem which gave rise to this thesis. The researcher there stated the questions that prompted this project. Articulating the research problem is inadequate without proposing concrete answers. The recommendations are responses to the stated research problem. These are based on my hands-on experience in

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[81] www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/presentation/escrbooklet/English.pdf. Accessed 07 January 2012

[82] www.unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/public/does/la_cartaaraba_2004.pdf. Accessed 07 January 2012

[83] www.unipd-centrodirittiumani-it/public/docs/ua_cartaafricana_1981.pdf. Accessed 07 January 2012

[84] www.federalism.it/ApplOpenFilePDF.cfm?artid=4485&dpath=16052006034328.pdf&content=Cost.+la=Costituzione+irlandese+del+1937+(EN)+stati+eu-ropei+-+. Accessed 07 January 2012

[85] www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96(cons).htm#27. Accessed 08 January 2012

the area of Mariannhill, my extensive reading and the empirical findings of this research. They are very practical and thus implementable on a parish and community levels.

Let us begin by considering what the government can do. We recall that in 1994, the UN declared that year as the year of the family. The 10th anniversary of the Year of the Family was celebrated in 2004 and South Africa's ambassador to the UN, Mr. Dumisani Khumalo, noted, "The family, had been recognised throughout humanity as an important and basic element of society. In South Africa, it was regarded as a potentially powerful agent for political, economic, cultural and social change, as well as a potential for the care, protection and development of its members".[86] Therefore, supporting the family founded on marriage could alleviate many social problems that are burdensome to the state and financial resources could be diverted to other issues like job creation. The 10th anniversary of the Year of the Family led to the establishment of the Plan of Action on Families in Africa. The Executive Summary of this Plan of Action states, "It is imperative to provide sustained support and encourage cohesion of the family to enable it to play its role. In this regard, it is necessary to develop and implement social policies to address the various concerns of families" (African Union 2004:2). It further states, "Africa must improve the quality of life of all the families through strengthening of family centred components of policies and programmes as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to sustainable development" (African Union 2004:8). Therefore, the government of South Africa could adopt and intensify the proposals of this Plan of Action Committee:

- The government is to invest in organizations that promote healthy family units

- The government could introduce a Parents Day in order to highlight and enhance strong family values

- Formulate, implement and monitor policies and programmes in order to ensure protection and assistance of the family. Therefore, the government could put into place policies that are to promote the family founded on marriage

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[86] United Nations Press Release GA/SHC/3779 – 2004.

- Government is to put into place policies that will stimulate the economy and hence deal with the challenge of unemployment in South Africa. Unemployment prevents young people from establishing families and it deprives many families of the ability to fulfill their roles easily and fully

- Create structures that effectively respond to family problems, for example, abuse of women and children

- Encourage on-going family research because societal trends change rapidly. This could improve the quality of family life in South Africa

- Create a gender sensitive community where women and children are respected. This will require on-going efforts

- Invite the private sector as well to adopt a work schedule that is characterized by a reasonable amount of flexibility and allowing leave for family business

- Ensure that the private sector has flexible human resources policies and financial assistance. We can also mention here that labour should be structured in such a way that women are not forced to choose between having children and work/advancement.

These are some recommendations that the government could adopt. These are mainly based on the suggestions of the AUs Plan of Action which all African states subscribe to. We now look at what the Church can also do to promote a culture of life in families.

- Increase the number of sermons or liturgies focusing on marriage and the family. This will be giving family ministry a priority in our parishes if we are convinced that the family is the domestic Church and the pillar of society

- Strengthen the Christian views on marriage, while remaining open to respectful dialogue with the findings of human and social sciences

- Have more responsibilities in the liturgy that require married couples to engage practically and meaningfully

- Have workshops for the youth focusing on human sexuality, courtship, marriage, the family and parenting

- Have couple's seminars and this must involve Church members as speakers and facilitators. At St. Joseph's Cathedral we held an annual seminar for married couples and we invited married ministers from other Churches to address couples and the engaged, and we also had some couples from the parish addressing the participants. This led to more active participation that was exciting and effective

- Parishes could empower parents through on-going formation programmes in order to assist them in their task as primary educators and formators of their children. These programs could also endeavour to restore equality of dignity and co-responsibility partnership of husband and wife in various roles in the family

- Eradicating the evils of patriarchy and liberating women from oppressive and traditional values and structures that do not recognize their equality of dignity with men. The Church has a prophetic nature to its missionary character. This prophetic voice ought to ensure that a programme for women empowerment is a fundamental component of ministry at the diocesan and parish levels

  Many parishes in the Diocese of Mariannhill have a sodality (guild) for men called, St. Joseph's Sodality (*Umhlangano kaJosefa*). As part of on-going formation for these men and as a way of challenging them to move beyond their cultural views, on certain occasions I invited women to address them about fatherhood and family issues as understood and perceived by women. Some of these men expressed their eye-opening experiences because they had never listened to women speak on issues that affect them. It was on a small scale but worth it, because I knew that these men were going to be different husbands and fathers in their homes.

- Couples who have been married for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, or more years could be honoured during a solemn celebration in order to encourage and motivate others

- Couples could be given a slot to share about their marriage and how they got to where they are

- Pastoral agents, especially priests, to attend on-going formation courses on marriage counseling, family living and parenting

- Seminary formation programmes that focus on marriage and family living to be offered in conjunction with married couples and experts in human sciences

- The National Family Life Desk of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference to ensure that dioceses have functioning and effective family ministries. Because of the urgency of the situation and the importance of the family, the Bishops Conference could make this desk a fully fledged department

- As a Good Shepherd, the Church ought to provide pastoral care for families in special situations.

These practical recommendations will help us to close the gap between the rhetoric of our vision and the reality of our ministry. This means that we have to put concrete pastoral action programmes in our parishes. The majority of the respondents (67%) stated that they are not aware of any support structures in their parishes which are of service to families. Closing this gap will mean that we are building a Church that relates to people and cares. In turn, this care of families will revitalise the community.

7.7 Conclusion

The question that lingers on at this stage is: what has been achieved? Through my hands-on experience in Mariannhill, the theoretical data and the empirical research methods, this thesis has shown that the institution of the family founded on marriage is beset by several challenges. It has further demonstrated that families founded on marriage in the area of Mariannhill are also disintegrating. Therefore, this thesis has managed to diagnose the causes of the many social ills within this community. Moreover, it has also revealed the impact of the consequences of this breakdown in family living and on the community.

This thesis offers a new vision and a role that the family founded on marriage ought to play. The researcher does not intend to leave the reader wondering about the future prospects of marriage, especially Christian marriage. It is still possible amidst these staggering findings to articulate convincingly a Christian vision of the family founded on marriage. In chapter four, the researcher has re-constructed what a Christian marriage ought to be, namely a loving and an intimate union. This re-construction embodied and exemplified the values of its theological, sociological and psychological referents.

This new vision of the family ought to be underpinned by the values of *diakonia* and *kenosis*. The Christian family is the bearer and herald of good news amidst crisis. In this new vision, the role of women cannot be ignored. This acknowledgment of women stems from the role that women play in the family, Church and society. Rakoczy writes that, "Transformation is the process of hoping since it is never complete. African women work for transformation of their cultures, of their societies and of the Church" (2004:435). Therefore, creating a culture of life requires that children see this and experience it at home, in the way their mothers are treated.

The thesis has presented, examined and argued about the role of the family founded on marriage as a major role player in assisting us in South Africa develop a coherent moral vision. This moral vision will be a reversal of the breakdown of the moral fibre in our country. The institution of the family was presented as a turn-around strategy to the problem of breakdown of moral values in the country. The rationale behind this is that the family should be the place of love and life. Love is an indispensible part of building a healthy family. All that the family does ought to be built upon love.

Second, the family is the sanctuary of human life. God entrusted the transmission of human life to married parents. Marriage then serves human life. Chapter four discussed how procreation and parenting are the two sides of the same coin. Parenthood extends the process of procreation so that human life is safeguarded and developed. This is achieved by instilling essential values and virtues into children.

Third, families do not exist for themselves, but they have a specific goal to which they are directed. The family exists also for the betterment and development of society. The institution of the family achieves this by socialising children and preparing them for integration into society at a later stage. Hence, the development and progression of society depend on the family, the primary community. John Paul II argues, "Far from being closed in on itself, the family is by its nature and vocation open to other families and to society and undertakes its social role" (FC No. 42). It is precisely by this broader outlook of the family that this primordial institution can contribute positively to the construction of a coherent moral vision in South Africa. The operational principle of this coherent moral vision is the eradication of moral permissiveness in our country.

Given the above reasons, the Catholic Church can respond with new commitment and creativity to our social problems and challenges. Our faith and facilities can become beacons of hope and safety. The Church should be the first point of referral for spousal and child abuse. Priests and catechists can incorporate ways to deal with family conflict during catechetical formation and sacramental preparation programmes. The Church can work in partnership with other Church communities in developing programmes for family sustainability.

The family is a universal existential reality, because it is found in the many cultures of the world. Togni (1996:23) writes that the family "is found throughout history in every single society in one form or another, and is the basis of all human society". The family, therefore, underpins the society. The survival of the society depends on the quality of family living. The literature study showed the importance of promoting the family, the questionnaires revealed the role that family influence plays on children, and the focussed interviews revealed the serious implications of family breakdown and the challenge of fatherlessness in the area of Mariannhill.

The family founded on marriage is the key to the development of positive values. Bansikiza noted the adverse consequences of depriving children of a family context. He argues:

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The deprivation of family protection and guidance makes the moral formation of young people incomplete. The making or unmaking of their future moral life depends on early experiences in their families. Mothers influence their children because of the close contact right from conception. After mothers, next are the fathers, siblings ... All these leave their impact on the children (Bansikiza 2001:73).

This was also affirmed by Chaube and Chaube when they stated, "The family has to see that children develop good traits of character such as honesty, politeness, truthfulness, affection and self-sacrifice. For these, parents have to maintain a suitable atmosphere in the family..." (1994:237). Marriage ensures that the supervision of children which Chaube is calling for is not compromised. The family, as was stated in chapter three, facilitates the stages of human development and endeavours to form a morally and a socially responsible person. The family founded on marriage contributes enormously to the reduction of social challenges.

The researcher has argued, therefore, that the family founded on marriage is a solution to the problem of moral permissiveness in our society. To achieve this first we need to encourage marriage, and good marriages need to be nurtured, the institution of the family needs to be renewed and strengthened. These can be achieved by implementing the following suggestions from the respondents:

- Identifying the needs of youth and having youth programmes
- More homilies on marriage and family living
- Arranging conferences on family living, and inviting guests
- Preparing Church documents on marriage, pastoral care of families prior and beyond the wedding day, and family living. Making these available and translated into the vernacular.

The advantage of having on-going conferences is that abusive situations can be identified much earlier and assistance can be given to such situations.

The researcher hopes that this study and its findings will be studied thoroughly and used by all those concerned South Africans who want to create a safer South Africa. Furthermore, it is hoped that it will be an invaluable asset to the study of theological ethics and to other sciences that study marriage and family life. All those that are engaged with preparing couples for marriage will take into serious consideration the period of preparation. Finally, it is hoped that marriage preparation and family support will be adopted as a necessary step towards curbing family breakdown in South Africa.

My final conclusion can be summed up by Benedict XVI's message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace on 1 January 2011:

> The family founded on marriage, as the expression of the close union and complementarity between a man and a woman, finds its place here as the first school for the social, cultural, moral and spiritual formation and growth of children, who should always be able to see in their father and mother the first witnesses of a life directed to the pursuit of truth and the love of God...The family, the first cell of human society, remains the primary training ground for harmonious relations at every level of coexistence, human, national and international. Wisdom suggests that this is the road to building a strong and fraternal social fabric, in which young people can be prepared to assume their proper responsibilities in life, in a free society, and in a spirit of understanding and peace (Benedict XVI 2011:10).

On Saturday, 8 October 1994 at St. Peter's square in Rome filled with families bearing candles; John Paul II spoke at length about marriage and the family. Towards the end of his address, he turned to the gathered families and asked: "Family, what do you say about yourself?" After a brief moment of silence in the square, the Pope proposed this answer, "I am *gaudium et spes"*, "I am joy and hope".

ST JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL

98 Abbot Francis Road	P. O. Box 11011
MARIANNHILL	MARIANNHILL
3624	3624
Tel: 031 – 700 2671	
E-mail- tobi@myconnection.co.za	

Dear Respondent

I am Fr Tobias Nhlanhla Mchunu of the Catholic Diocese of Mariannhill in Pinetown, currently serving as administrator of St. Joseph's Cathedral.

I am currently doing a research with UNISA towards a Doctoral Degree in theological ethics. My research focuses on the role of the family founded on marriage. As a priest, I am concerned about the high rate of family breakdown, its impact on children and society and also the challenge of fatherlessness in the area of Mariannhill.

Therefore, I want to find out from other people how their experiences of family and family background have been and how they have been shaped by these experiences. By taking part in this questionnaire, your experience will shed light into this important exercise and will further enrich others and thus make a significant contribution to this study.

Thanking you in advance for your willingness to share your experience and to take part in this research by answering the questionnaire.

With best wishes,

_____

Fr, T.N. Mchunu

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RESPONDENTS

1. This questionnaire consists of 7 sections. Section 7 is to be completed only by parents.
2. Please read each question carefully.
3. Please make sure that you answer all questions as honestly as possible.
4. Please do not discuss the questions or your answers with anyone.
5. Kindly mark with an X in the appropriate box.
6. Please write clearly.
7. Please return the questionnaire after completion.
8. Remember not to write down your name, your confidentiality is guaranteed.

SECTION 1 GENERAL *INFORMATION*

1.1 What is your age?

Age	Mark
18-25	
26-35	
36-50	

1.2 Your Gender?

Gender	Mark
Male	
Female	

1.3 What do you do at present?

Occupation	Mark
Student	
Employed	
Self-employed	
Unemployed	
Employed part time	

1.4 What is your marital status?

Status	Mark
Married	
Single	
Divorced	
Widowed	

Separated	

1.5 Where do you stay?

Residence	Mark
Own Home	
With Relatives	
With Parents	
Place of safety	

1.6 Do you belong to a Church?

Yes		No	

1.7 If yes, please state the name of your Church _____.

SECTION 2 *FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE*.
(Please indicate the answer that is closest to you)

2.1 Were your parents married?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.2 Did you grow up with both parents?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.3 Did your parents get on well with each other?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.4 Was it easy to talk to your parents?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.5 Were you a close family?   Yes ☐   No ☐

Please explain

_____
_____
_____

2.6 Did your family move around during your childhood?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.7 Do you have brothers and sisters?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.8 Did you get along well with them?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.9 Please indicate your experience of growing up with them was like? (Please mark X in all the relevant box)

2.9.1 We supported each other   ☐

2.9.2 We grew up in different places. ☐

2.9.3 We argued a lot. ☐

2.9.4 I was the favourite child ☐

2.9.5 My parents favoured the others ☐

2.9.6 We cared for each other ☐

2.9.7 We were very close ☐

2.9.8 We bonded ☐

2.10 Have you experienced any of the following in your family? (Please put X to that which is applicable to your experience)

Physical Abuse	☐	Emotional Abuse	☐
Verbal Abuse	☐	Threats from parents	☐
Threats from siblings	☐	Divorce of parents	☐
Death of one parent	☐	Lack of parental love	☐
Lack of parental guidance	☐	Alcohol abuse	☐

2.11 Do these experiences still affect you today?   Yes ☐   No ☐   No Sure ☐

Please explain your experience:

_____
_____
_____

2.12 How has your family background influenced you? (Please put a mark in any of the boxes that are applicable to your situation).

I now relate well with people ☐

I learnt to trust people ☐

I respect other people's views ☐

I don't trust people easily ☐

☐

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I have difficulties with relationships

I get angry easily ☐

My self-esteem is low ☐

I have lost confidence in marriage ☐

I want to have my own family ☐

I still believe in marriage ☐

Any other comment about your background? _____
_____
_____

2.13 Is marriage important to you?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Sure ☐

2.14 What is marriage for you about? (Please circle the number on this basis – 1 unsure; 2 partly true and 3 true).

A commitment	1	2	3
A good friendship	1	2	3
Losing your freedom	1	2	3
Escape from unhappy home life	1	2	3
Escape from loneliness	1	2	3
Proper place for raising children	1	2	3
Sign of God's love	1	2	3
Equal give and take	1	2	3
The best place for sex	1	2	3
Outdated in today's world	1	2	3
Faithfulness	1	2	3
The best way to live	1	2	3
A way of holiness	1	2	3

2.15 Were things explained to you in your family?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.16 Did you receive punishment at home?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2.17 In what form? _____

2.18 Who administered punishment?   Mum ☐   Dad ☐   Both ☐

None ☐

2.19 Was it acceptable to you?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

2.20 If yes, what form and if no why was it not acceptable? _____
_____

SECTION 3 *INFLUENTIAL ROLE PLAYERS IN YOUR LIFE*

3.1 How would you assess the influence of your parents?   Good ☐   Bad ☐

No experience of ☐

Please explain: _____
_____

3.2 Has the church played any role in your life?   Yes ☐   No ☐ Unsure ☐

3.3 How did you experience the church's role?   Good ☐   Bad ☐ Unsure ☐

3.4 Please explain this role and how it has influenced you. _____
_____
_____

3.5 Have the following influenced you? (Please mark the box as applicable to you)

Peer ☐   School Authorities ☐

Television ☐   Siblings ☐

Media ☐   Culture ☐

Soapies ☐   Church ☐

Extended Family ☐

3.6 How have you been influenced by the above? Please explain. _____
_____
_____

SECTION 4 *PARENTAL INVOLVEMENTS*

At Home

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
4.1 My parents were supportive			
4.2 My parents related well to me			
4.3 My parents were role models			
4.4 My parents taught me good values			
4.5 I was taught respect			
4.6 I was taught to be honest			
4.7 I was taught to be trustworthy			
4.8 I was taught to be caring			
4.9 I was taught to differentiate between right & wrong			
4.10 I was taught self-control			
4.11 I was not encouraged to express myself			
4.12 I was expected to obey instructions			
4.13 Things were not explained			
4.14 My parents had no time to spend with me			

4.15 Do you wish to make any other comment?

_____
_____

SECTION 5 FAMILY *BREAKDOWN & THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY*

5.1 How would you define what family breakdown is?

_____
_____
_____

5.2 Do you think families are breaking down in your area?   Yes ☐   No ☐

5.3 Please explain your answer. _____
_____
_____

5.4 Does family breakdown affect children?   Yes ☐   No ☐   not sure ☐
Please explain. _____
_____

5.6 What can be done to stop family breakdown? _____

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_____
_____

5.7 What do you think the role of the family is?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
5.7.1 Instilling good values			
5.7.2 Prepares children for good citizenship			
5.7.3 Family provides care & love for children			
5.7.4 Builds up individuals			
5.7.5 Builds up the society			
5.7.6 Decreases social problems			
5.7.7 Provides a sense of belonging			
5.7.8 Needs to be supported			

5.8 Do you wish to make any other comment?

_____
_____

SECTION 6 *THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND RELIGION*

6.1 Can you assess the role religion played in your family?

6.1.1 Did religion play any role in your family?   Yes ☐   No ☐

6.1.2 Did you pray together as a family?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

6.1.3 Did you go to church as a family?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

6.1.4 Did both parents go to church?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

6.2 Did you receive any religious instruction?   Yes ☐   No ☐

6.3 What was your feeling about this instruction?

Very Positive ☐   Positive ☐   Negative ☐

6.4 Was marriage and family mentioned?   Yes ☐   No ☐

6.5 How would you rate the instructions that you were given at church?

Very Good ☐   Good ☐   Fair ☐   Bad ☐

6.6 Did the instructions you received change the way you think about marriage and family?　　Yes ☐　　　No ☐　　　Sometimes ☐

Please Explain.

_____
_____

6.7 How was this change for you?　　Positive ☐　　　Negative ☐

6.8 If the change was positive, Please explain

_____
_____

6.9 Do you think the church is playing her role?　　Yes ☐　No ☐　Unsure ☐

6.10 Do you belong to any group within your church?　　Yes ☐　　No ☐

6.11 Do you discuss marriage & family issues in your group?　Yes ☐　　No ☐

6.12 What do you discuss?

_____
_____

6.13 How often do you hear a sermon about marriage in your church?

Monthly ☐　　　Annually ☐　　　Never ☐

6.14 How often would you like to hear a sermon about marriage and family?

Monthly ☐　　　Annually ☐　　　Never ☐

6.15 Have you come across any church documents on marriage and family?

Yes ☐　　　No ☐

6.16 Do you know any families in your church that are experiencing hardships?

Yes ☐　　　No ☐

6.17 Does your church have support structure for such families?

Yes ☐　　　No ☐

6.18 How often does your family experience a visit from a priest?

Once a month ☐　Once a year ☐　When there is a problem ☐　Never ☐

6.19 Would you like to be visited more?   Yes ☐   No ☐

6.20 Do you celebrate family Sunday in your church? Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't know ☐

6.21 What can your church/group do to promote marriage and family?

_____
_____
_____

SECTION 7 *(TO BE ANSWERED BY PARENTS ONLY)*

7.1 Are you a parent   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.2 Are you married   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.3 Are you a single parent   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.4 How many children do you have? _____

7.5 Their Gender   Boys ☐   Girls ☐

7.6 How is your relationship with them?

Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐

Please explain. _____
_____

7.7 Do you discipline your child?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

7.8 Who usually does it? _____

7.9 How is it administered? _____

7.10 Has your method always worked?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

7.11 What challenges you as a parent in the area of discipline?

_____
_____
_____

7.12 Do you explain things to your child(ren)?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

7.13 Do you often shout at them?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

7.14 Do you use mostly your authority?   Yes ☐   No ☐   Sometimes ☐

7.15 Do you know your child's friends/ companions?   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.16 Do you relax together with your child(ren)?   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.17 Did you receive marriage preparation lessons?   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.18 From whom? _____

7.19 Were they useful to you?   Yes ☐   No ☐ Unsure ☐

7.20 Were the lessons clear?   Yes ☐   No ☐

7.21 Did they adequately prepare you?   Yes ☐   No ☐ Unsure ☐

7.22 What areas did they cover?
_____
_____

7.23 What areas would you have liked to be covered? _____
_____

7.24 Would you recommend that couples undergo some marriage preparation lessons
before getting married?   Yes ☐   No ☐

Please explain _____
_____
_____

7.25 Do you wish to make any comment? _____
_____

Thank You very much for your time and honesty, your experience will enrich others.
Please drop your answers in the reception office or post to

Fr. Tobias Nhlanhla Mchunu
P.O. Box 11011
MARIANNHILL
3624

Appendix B-Interview questions

Sample questions for the qualitative interviews

The focussed interviews were conducted mainly to elicit more information on three things: the respondents' understanding of what marriage and family breakdown is; to reflect with the respondents on the impact of family breakdown on children and on society and finally, to reflect with the respondents on the challenge of fatherlessness in the area of Mariannhill. These questions were set by the researcher as a guiding tool. The researcher always introduced himself first to the interviewee and briefly shared with the interviewee the objectives of this research.

1. What do you understand by family breakdown?

2. How many are you in your family? How can you describe your relationship with your brothers and sisters? And with your parent(s)?

3. Can you please describe for me your experience of growing up with your mother alone?

4. Can you please describe for me your experience of growing up without your father? Or with your father? Or with both parents?

5. How has this experience been like for you?

6. In your opinion, what causes families to breakdown?

7. What can be done in order to stop families from breaking down?

8. How are children affected by family breakdown?

9. How is the society in general affected by family breakdown?

10. What do you look for in a father figure?

11. What role do you think fathers have within their families?

12. What do you think of children who grew up with (without) their fathers?

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