

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

**TITLE: THE CHALLENGES OF AKAMBA SINGLE MOTHERS IN
REFERENCE TO PARENTING THE BOY CHILD IN THE LIGHT
OF CHRISTIAN COMPLEMENTARY FEMINISM: A CASE STUDY
OF MWALA DISTRICT IN MACHAKOS COUNTY.**

BY

WAILA BEATRICE NDUNGWA

**A STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF MASTER
OF ARTS DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

TITLE: THE CHALLENGES OF AKAMBA SINGLE MOTHERS IN REFERENCE TO PARENTING THE BOY CHILD IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN COMPLEMENTARY FEMINISM: A CASE STUDY OF MWALA DISTRICT IN MACHAKOS COUNTY.

By Waila Beatrice Ndungwa

Reg No: C50/7504/03

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original Study and has not been submitted to any college or University for academic credit.

Information from other sources and my main respondents has been duly acknowledged.

Signed: Waila Date: 19th OCTOBER 2012

This Study has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors

Fr. Dr. P.N. Wachege – First Supervisor

Signed: [Signature] Date: 19th October 2012

Dr. P.M. Mumo - Second Supervisor

Signed: [Signature] Date: 23/10/2012

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents Dad Mwalimu Abraham Wambua and Mum Ellen Waila who took care of my siblings and I, irrespective of our gender and to my loving husband and family. May you all be blessed abundantly.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS OF TERMS

- ACS - African Christian Studies.
- AFER - African Ecclesiastical Review.
- AMECEA - Association of Member Episcopal Conference in Eastern Africa.
- C.B.D. - Central Business District.
- CCC - Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- C.H.S.S. - College of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- CHIEA - Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa.
- CUEA - Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
- DB - Dictionary of the Bible.
- DBT - Dictionary of Biblical Theology.
- DNT - Dictionary of the New Testament.
- EBT - Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology.
- FR - *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason) – Pope John Paul II's Encyclical issued on 14 Sept. 1998.
- GS - *Gaudium et Spes* (the Church in the Modern World). This is Vatican Council II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World issued on 7th December, 1965.
- Ibid. - *Ibidem* (in the same work just quoted).
- IDB - Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.
- JKML- Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.
- LR - L'osservatore Romano
- NJB - New Jerusalem Bible.

- NJBC - New Jerome Biblical Commentary.
- NRSV - New Revised Standard Version.
- NCE - New Catholic Encyclopedia.
- NDCT - A New Dictionary of Christian Theology.
- NT - New Testament.
- OT - Old Testament.
- RCC - Roman Catholic Church.
- SCC - Small Christian Community.
- SCCs - Small Christian Communities.
- CSM - Concise *Sacramentum Mundi* (Encyclopedia Edited by Karl Rahner published in London by Burns & Oates, 1975).
- TDNT - Theological Dictionary of New Testament.
- TI - Theological Investigations (Diverse Theological Volumes by Karl Rahner).
- UoN - University of Nairobi.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

African Theology: The scientific and systematic effort, guided by reason illumined by faith (faith seeking understanding), to understand and present Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality (Charles Nyamiti).

African Christian Theology: A systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and concrete authentic interpretation of the Christian faith/Gospel/Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality of the Africans i.e., an ongoing evangelization process of confronting Christianity with the African cultures (P.N. Wachege).

Analogy: The attribution of one particular term to two or more realities according to a meaning which is similar and dis-similar at the same time.

Ancestor-ship: It is a sacred kin-relationship which establishes a right or title to regular sacred communication with one's own kin through prayer and ritual offering/oblation (Charles Nyamiti).

Ancestral ritual: A rite intended to venerate the ancestors.

Ancestral status: The designation of a worthy departed person enabling the qualified person to acquire the following five vital Items (thanks to Charles Nyamiti's findings): Consanguineous kinship; Supernatural sacred status; Exemplarity of conduct; Mediation; and Right or Title to regular sacred communication with one's earthly kin through frequent prayers and ritual donations.

Ascending Christology: It means discourse on Jesus Christ starting from His beingness as Jesus of Nazareth. It is also called Christology from below.

Church: It is the community of those who have committed themselves to the Person and cause of Jesus Christ and who bear witness to it as a hope of all men and women. Substantially linked with the Redeemer and Savior, the Church is no isolated, self-satisfied religious association, but a community which forms a comprehensive community with others (Hans Kung).

Christian Feminism New Agenda: This is a contemporary theological reflection /investigation that focuses on hermeneutical questions challenging women to do their own authentic exegeses from the point of view of women and their experiences for the plight of women in particular and common good of all in general (P.N. Wachege).

Christology: A systematic and scientific study of the person, works and whole phenomenon of Jesus Christ.

Complementary Feminism: It is a mode of feminism which not only acknowledges the distinctive nature of women and men but also strongly creates the awareness that women with their femininity and men with their virility necessarily fulfill and essentially accomplish one another thereby being God's co-creators with regard to establishing families and parenting as intended by the Creator in Genesis creation narrative – Gen 1-2 (P.N. Wachege).

Conscientization: It is helping to learn to perceive social, political, economic and cultural contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Paulo Freire).

Conversion: This is derived from the Greek term "*metanoia*" meaning "change of heart" signifying a return to God by turning away from Satan and, indeed, from sin thereby re-establishing grace in life and living (P.N. Wachege).

Cosmotheandric: A philosophy of life that belongs to the inter-related realm of nature, spirits and people that provides a strong foundation in metaphysics from an African point of reference (P.N. Wachege).

Culture: It is a people's way of life, through which they view the whole of their domestic, political, social, economic and religious experiences.

Devil: This is a most powerful contingent creature who is extremely diabolically evil, supra-malicious, the compendium of evil and radically the perfect personification of sin and what appertains to it credited for being a forceful impediment to salvation and being saved (P.N. Wachege).

Feminism: It is critic of culture and society in the light of sexism i.e., the oppression and injustices meted out against women on the grounds of their gender ...It is primarily concerned with the unmasking of such injustices and it aims at their elimination thereby effecting women liberation (T. A. Mbari).

Eschatology: Derived from the term "*eschaton*" meaning last things, final meaning of human life and teaching about human beings after death e.g. death, final judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory and ancestral life.

Grace: It is a fundamental gratuitous Gift which bestows on the recipient with blessings of redemption/salvation, peacefulness and joyful happiness to be accomplished in heaven. It is a generous encounter reaching its summit in our Redeemer and Savior (Mt 21:37). It is a fructifying Gift whose impact surpasses that of sin (Rom. 5:15-21). It is an invaluable Gift effecting a rebirth into new life (Jn 3:3ff.) thereby proving to be Good News (1Pt. 5:12; Acts 14:3) even in our life setting rebelliousness (P.N. Wachege).

Hierarchy: The name given to the entire social canonical, responsible, human and visible structure of the Church, with the Holy Father the Pope as the head in union with the Bishops assisted by the Priests and the Deacons.

Inculturation: It is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation' (Pedro Arrupe).

Liberation Theology: It is nothing other than the theological moment of the experience of Christian faith when it undertakes to consciously transform a world in a situation of dependence on the basis of the Gospel (Leonardo Boff).

Maternal Feminism: It is a mode feminism which promotes all the virtues of nurturing, preservation, growth, acceptance and pacifism developed through child care and mothering (Elizabeth S. Fiorrenza).

Magisterium: The highest teaching authority in the RCC authorized by Jesus Christ to guard, guide, propagate authentically and correct distortions with regard to the kernel of Christianity under the leadership of the Pope.

Modes of feminism: These are diverse and diverging categories of feminism like:

Maternal feminism; Complementary Feminism; Relationality feminism; Eco-feminism; Lesbian feminism; Post-Biblical feminism; Religious feminism; Marxist/Materialistic feminism; third World feminism; Contextual feminism; Postcolonial feminism; and International feminism thanks to the four United Nations Conferences on women that took place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) together with the conference on population in Cairo (1994) that debated issues on women welfare, equality and women liberation among others (E.S. Fiorenza).

Repentance: This is a genuine and total conversion described by Jesus as becoming a child of God thus turning away from once evil past and beginning a new life of grace (Mt 18:3).

Rites of passage: These are culturally recognized traditional rituals symbolizing upward mobility in status or social position that transform the recipient into new phases in life and living.

Sacraments: These are the seven efficacious sacred actions of the Church in Her liturgy and life which are indispensable in the economy of salvation namely: Baptism; Eucharist; Penance; Holy Orders; Marriage; and Anointing of the sick.

Sacraments of Christian Initiation: These are Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist... The Faithful are born anew in Baptism, Strengthened in Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life (CCC).

Satanism: This involves the belief in some form of ritual magic which has the power to propitiate occult forces, whether they are clearly and directly identified with the Satan of the Bible, or are conceived in a vaguer impersonal way, but nevertheless connected with the dark side of the cosmos and life, of are only seen to be vital cosmic forces opposed to an ordered and solar vision represented by God, the Creator of heaven and earth (Andrea Porcareli).

Single Mother: This is a lady or a girl or a woman who has own biological or adopted a baby or babies, a child or children outside marriage or within wedlock when the husband walks out on her- or she on him- or is unusually confined/distant or dies (P.N. Wachege).

Synod: An official assembly of the Church which is held Diocesan, Provincial, Regional, National and Inter-national Levels.

Women oppression and exploitation: It is a distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity and self-fulfillment (P.N. Wachege).

ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism as a case study of Mwala District in Machakos County. The study is both anthropological and theological: Anthropological as it investigates the role and meaning of Akamba traditional rites of birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death through oral and written sources; theological as it examines the nature of Christian Complementary Feminism, the Christian Doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting. Inculturating the Church doctrine on family and parenting using Akamba religio-cultural values through Christian Complementary Feminism for single mothers and the above Church doctrines for a fruitful boy child parenting and the resulting consequences.

The main goal of the study is to investigate and elaborate the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism, the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting. This will be realized through the following six-fold specific objectives namely: To discuss the Christian Complementary Feminism as among the tools for the study; To investigate the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County; To peruse the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting; To provide an effort in Inculturating the Church doctrine on family and parenting using

Akamba religio-cultural values through Christian Complementary Feminism for single mothers' fruitful the boy child parenting; To suggest ways of integrating the Akamba traditional family values with Christian Complementary Feminism in addressing the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to the boy child; and To spell out the implications of the study and emerging recommendations useful for assisting Akamba single mothers to productively confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child.

The main hypothesis of the study is that a serious investigation and elaboration of the challenges the Akamba single mothers encounter in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism and the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting assists such mothers a great deal in parenting more fruitfully. This will be realized through the following specific hypotheses: Christian Complementary Feminism is among the crucial tools for investigating the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child; An investigation of the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County ensures family solidarity despite the stumbling blocks single mothers encounter in parenting the boy child; A critical perusal of the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting provides a strong stance towards solving the problems single mothers encounter in parenting the boy child; There are invaluable implications and emerging recommendations that can be drawn from the study which are useful for assisting

Akamba single mothers to productively confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child.

The study follows the following sequence: Chapter One which provides the crucial background to the study thus giving the required setting; Chapter Two which discusses the Christian Complementary Feminism which is of immense importance for the study; Chapter Three which investigates the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County; Chapter Four which peruses the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting; Chapter Five which provides an effort in Inculturating the Church doctrine on family and parenting using Akamba religio-cultural values through Christian Complementary Feminism for single mothers' fruitful parenting of the boy child; Chapter Six which summarizes and spells out the implications of the study; and Chapter Seven draws out the emerging recommendations and the conclusion thereby. The study then ends with a list of bibliographical documentations and four itemized appendixes.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

For a proper setting, this Chapter handles the following items namely: Chapter's introduction; Statement of the problem; Goal and objectives of the study; Justification of the study; Scope and limitations; Literature review; Conceptual framework; Research hypotheses; Methodology; Expected outcome to the study; and Concluding remarks.

1.1 Chapter Introduction

Feminism is an issue of great concern to the society today. A lot of emphasis is being laid on liberating women and the girl child from what is considered to be perennial unfair male dominance. Some feminists argue that it is time for women to obtain whatever has been denied to them over a long time. However these children are socialized in an African culture which has value and norms which dictate expected behavior in society in which holistic parenting, despite the gender of the child, is propagated hence the conflict.

John S. Mbiti¹ observes that in African societies one can only define himself or herself in relation to others in society. He comes up with the famous Africa Philosophy of "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am". Hence any feminist approach should put into account such African setting. Despite the fact that many Africans have embraced Christianity, traditional values still influence their

¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 130ff.

worldview and manner of behavior. Children of both gender are socialized on the societal expectation and roles they are supposed to play to ensure order and stability.

There is no dispute that liberation of the girl child is important. In fact, it is long overdue. However, there is a serious need to take a more moderate approach which is devoid of biases subjected to the boy child as one propagates the emancipation and empowerment of the girl child. The current generation of men should not be punished for discrimination committed by others in the past as well as in the present. Both men and women play, or rather ought to play, respective Complementary roles in society and hence any genuine empowerment should readily include both sexes as inclusive entities. As the study will verify, African tradition is rich in marriage issues, establishing families and holistic parenting and can, therefore, provide useful insights to the manner in which children are integrally socialized while respecting their gender specificity. This should be taken into account in order to prepare them for their Complementary roles in the contemporary society.

Men and women are actively involved in the socialization and upbringing of children and, therefore, influence their life either positively or negatively. Cultural norms and values are taught to young children taking into account the distinctive femininity in the girl child and distinctive virility in boy child both being essential parts of the whole beingness even before they are introduced to Christian doctrines. Hence, any effort towards liberation cannot take such African philosophy of family and parenting for granted and, indeed, more meaningful family solidarity by way of adequately

confronting the Akamba socio-religio-cultural family values through Christian Complementary Feminism with the Christian doctrines of marriage, family and integrated parenting whether one is in married status or in single motherhood/fatherhood. This is the invaluable task the study grapples with to not only correct the extreme one-sidedness of one gender over the other but also to help promote a more harmonious family-hood cum parenting as intended and exemplified by the founder of Christianity i.e., Jesus Christ.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem

Feminists argue that women and the girl child need to be given equal rights and opportunities with men and boy child. However they tend to over-emphasis on the girl child and seem to forget that even the boy child has needs as well as parental attention and this could lead to antagonism even between brothers and sisters. Feminists seem to be out to liberate women while in turn oppressing the men. Hence it is a problem for this study, which will seek to find out the challenges of Akamba Single mothers in reference to the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary and maternal feminisms.

Cahill (1996) points out that, feminists should acknowledge the differences found in different societies and cultures. Traditional African culture is rich and should be put into account when liberating the girl child. Every child is socialized in a culture, which greatly influence his or her worldview and perception of life. Through socialization children learn societal expectation and the roles they are supposed to play, which are determined by ones sex. Culture dies hard and cannot be ignored

when addressing the issue of liberation. Women can be instrumental in ensuring that there is justice in society and equal distribution of opportunities.

Feminists seem to be out to liberate women and the girl child without considering the boy child. Gustavo Gutierrez² argues that there cannot be liberation if the oppressor is turned into the oppressed. Hence it is a problem for this study, which seeks to address the challenges of Single mothers in socializing the boy child. Mothers spend a lot of time with their children and much more so as single parents and hence through socialization influence them to a large extent. Akamba traditional, family and cultural values can be an inspiration in creating a balanced society and a more human one; in which each individual get his or her rights.

Despite the penetration of Christianity in among the Akamba, traditional values and beliefs still influence the people in this community. The male child is expected to prepare for the role of being head of the family. This is by being taught to be responsible and hardworking in order to meet his needs. In the Akamba traditional society, the boy child of a single mother is socialized by the maternal uncles to become a responsible member in the community. This shows the seriousness with which role taking was considered and the importance of a male role model in the life of the boy child. Therefore, if he is subordinated, this poses a threat to the existence of the family as the basic social unit.

² G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973).

Since despite being Christians, the Akamba still embrace traditional beliefs and practices, it is not possible to address the challenges of single mothers in this community without taking into account their socio-cultural background. The Akamba culture influence their behavior and socialization of children. Single mothers are faced with challenges especially in the socialization of the boy child. Such children do not have a father who is living with them and directly influencing their behavior and values. Hence the researcher observes that Akamba traditional family values together with Christian Complementary and Maternal feminism can address the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to the boy child.

1.3 Goal And Objectives Of The Study

The main goal of the study is to investigate and elaborate the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism and the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting. This will be realized through the following specific objectives:

1. To discuss the Christian Complementary Feminism as among the tools for the study.
2. To investigate the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County.

3. To peruses the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting;
4. To provide an effort in Inculturating the Church doctrine on family and parenting using Akamba socio-religio-cultural values through Christian Complementary Feminism for single mothers fruitful the boy child parenting;
5. To suggest ways of integrating the Akamba traditional family values with Christian Complementary Feminism in addressing the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to the boy child.
6. To spell out the implications of the study and emerging recommendations useful for assisting Akamba single mothers to productively confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child.

1.4 Justification Of The Study

The core of this study is that Akamba single mothers are faced with challenges in the socialization of the boy child. Although the Akamba claim to maintain Christian beliefs and values often many issues are addressed using traditional values. The debate on liberation of the girl child has not spared Christians either. Feminists are advocating for the liberation of the girl child from unfair male dominance at the expense of the boy child. Yet both the boy child and girl child are socialized and brought up within the African culture. Christian teachings also, have not been able to resolve this debate adequately.

This raises the question as to the challenges encountered by Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child. When addressing the liberation of the girl child the boy child is apparently ignored in our contemporary society. Children of single mothers are even faced with a greater challenge in an African setting which is Patriarchal in nature. In this setting children get their identity through their fathers and are given surnames using their father's names. Properly understood, Complementary Feminism gives important insights into addressing the challenges of Single mothers in socializing and, indeed parenting, their male children.

African culture is rich and can be used positively to address issues like diverse modes of feminism which are of concern to modern society. Moreover, Christianity is Cross cultural and can fit in any culture. Yet, it is common knowledge that Christian evangelism in Africa was done using the Western culture which was wrongly considered to be superior to the African culture. In this regard, scholars like P.N. Wachege³ rightly observe that there is need for an African inculturated Christianity to make the Christian doctrine, especially that on family and parenting, more meaningful to the Africa people. Likewise in the debate on liberation of girl child the African family values are of immense importance. The married mother has a husband who introduces the boy child to male responsibilities, while the child of a single mother lacks a father figure within the family. Hence African traditional family values are of great importance to this study in understanding the traditional approach to the socialization of the boy child of single mothers.

³ P.N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study based on the Agikuyu Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), pp.1ff.

There are ways in which men and women relate in society in order to ensure social stability, and in African traditional societies there were specific roles that men played. The current campaign on empowering the girl child alone then threatens the traditional roles that men are supposed to play. Affirmative action seeks to help the girl child attain the same opportunities with the boy. Yet it only worsens the situation because less qualified girls are favored in place of boys with higher qualification. This is a kind of injustice to the boy because the current generation of men should not pay for the deeds of past or even present generations.

Even though women were discriminated upon in the past, it is unfair to solve such a case by creating an even worse problem like the one indicated above. This is because by subordinating the boy child then it follows that the family which is the basic unity of any society is threatened and as such the society as a whole suffers. P.N. Wachege proposes an African Inculturation-liberation theology approach, which takes into account the African holistic worldview as well as religious and cultural heritage.⁴ The researcher wishes to investigate and elaborate on the challenges of Akamba Single mothers in reference to the boy child without neglecting issue of liberating the girl child utilizing Christian Complementary Feminism imbued with Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting. To the best of our knowledge, this is an area which the researcher strongly feels has not been addressed adequately.

⁴ P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), pp.179-193.

1.5 Scope And Limitations

The study will be conducted among the Akamba of Eastern Province of Kenya and specifically Mwala District in Machakos County. The Akamba community is chosen due to the fact that African traditional culture has an influence in the life of the Akamba and the area will be used to represent the views of the people in the whole Region.

The area was purposely chosen because of the fact that there are more girls' schools than boys' schools. Hence this shows that there are efforts to liberate the girl child and empower her at the expense of the boy child –either by design or unintentionally. The boy child in this area is, therefore, threatened because even the Non Governmental Organizations dealing with orphans emphasis on giving priority to the girl child. One of this organizations, Tumaini International Organization (TIO), insist on assisting the girl child as a priority arguing that she is more vulnerable, delicate and has more needs than the boy child. The boy child of single mothers is not given any preferential treatment in getting funding for their education. Another reason for choosing this locality is that there is a proliferation of single mothers of diverse categories parenting both girl child and boy child single handedly whose parental duties are made most cumbersome through the vivid trend of over accentuating on the girl child while undermining or even neglecting the boy child yet belonging to the same respective families.

Akamba traditional family values play a major role in socialization of children in this area irrespective of their gender. Yet, there has been little or no effort in drawing out such Akamba socio-cultural family values to help solve the dichotomizing of the

families by plitting the children's gender. As a result of this omission, the challenges facing single mothers in this area have not been addressed adequately.

Another observation is that, although the people in Mwala District in Machakos County embraced Christianity long ago, they constantly refer to their traditional culture when bringing up their children. Single mothers experience challenges in socialization of their children and interactions in this African setting. The researcher also comes from this area and understands the people and their language well.

1.6 Literature Review

Among the fundamental works that enrich the study are as follows:

Raymond F. Collins' book titled *Introduction to the New Testament*⁵ is a crucial monograph for our kind of study. In this book, the study will gain from the historical critical method of NT study through the lenses of **redaction criticism** as propagated by scholars like E. Kasemann, H. Conzelmann, W. Marxsen, E. Fuchs and G. Bornkamm.⁶ We will use insights from this book as a tool for critically sourcing from the Gospel as unified literary unit, i.e. considering each author, his peculiar preferential purpose, his approach, his stress, and his theological inclination also perusing how each author composed and arranged his material. As such, we will be enabled to tackle relevant Scriptural sources not only critically but also authentically. Nevertheless, Raymond's invaluable work has a limitation namely: it over-accentuates faith in Jesus from historical perspective and somehow undermines the experiences of the recipients of Christianity. The study will fill up this gap by taking

⁵ R.F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp.196-229

⁶ Read more about this in- P.N. Wachege, *CRS 202: Introduction to the New Testament* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2010), pp.170- 180.

not, however, focus on the issue of the challenges single mothers encounter in parenting the boy child as ours does.

Patrick N. Wachege's book titled *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective*¹⁸ assists this study in overcoming the above gap in Hinga's work. From this monograph, we learn that: "women oppression and exploitation is a distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity."¹⁹ Our study enriches itself also in understanding how men exploit women especially on the issue of parenting creating the awareness that : "Men exploit women when they abuse and misuse them as their tools for cheap labor, objects of their sexual gratifications and subsequent hedonism, things for self-aggrandizement and means for the promotion of their ego, self prestige and assertion of their virility and fecundity."²⁰Wachege goes on to explain that "men also exploit women when they arrogantly sideline them from vital human activities thereby excluding them from participating in the making of vital decisions."²¹The author further enlightens that men, furthermore, exploit women because they are of another sex and another gender taking advantage over them in the state, in society, in life and in the Church manipulating and taking advantage of their physical weakness.²²In all this, Wachege refers to women in general. Our study will complement his work by narrowing the focus to single mothers in Mwala District

¹⁸ P.N. Wachege *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.22.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.23.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

into consideration the experiences of the believers in their encounter with their Savior and Redeemer. Despite the shortcoming, the book will, nevertheless, assist the study in doing a proper exegesis with regard to relevant Biblical passages that will shed light to the study taking into account that the Bible is a major source on the realization of the Family of God which does not discriminate anyone not even on gender basis.

Francis Martin's book titled, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition*⁷ handles all kinds of feminism cum feminist theologies. He does this positively, though critically, viewing the phenomenon as a worthy challenge in view of women liberation while prudently subjecting the multifaceted reality of the attribute "feminist theology" to serious scrutiny. With his well informed Biblical rooting together with guidance, support and illuminations from the teachings of the Church Fathers, Magisterial Documents and reflections from contemporary systematic theologians Francis critic, transforms and complements even secular feminists. He, in fact, asserts the validity of among the questions raised by the feminists more so on the dehumanization of women and discrimination of the girl child. As he does this, he remarkably affirms, but with qualification, their validity in theologizing from the point of view of women as an authentic new way of theologizing.

The above will help our study not to dismiss feminist theologies - not even those propagated by extreme feminists - *en masse* simply because some aspects are not comfortable with our thinking or are strange to the kind of theology we are familiar

⁷ F. Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the light of Christian Tradition* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994).

with. It challenges us to honestly examine even exaggerated radical modes of feminist theologies even if they may be somehow incompatible with Christianity or even deviate from Akamba community's socio-religio-cultural world-view more so in relation to family and parenting. Yet there is a gap which our study endeavors to fill up namely: while the above monograph focuses so much on Western society and foreign families, our study accentuates African society more so the Akamba family in reference to the challenges single mothers encounter in raising their respective children and especially the boy child.

Leonardo Boff and **Clodovis Boff** co-authored a book titled *Introducing Liberation Theology*⁸ which will provide us with one of the theories that will guide the study i.e., the **theory of mediation**. The theory is of immense importance because it gives the three stages at which liberation theology is done, namely: Socio-analytical; Hermeneutical; and Practical/Praxis.⁹ Nevertheless, this theory is not adequate for the study and will, therefore, be complimented with P.N. Wachege's two theories of different causes of single motherhood resulting in unique types of single mother categories each imbued with respective challenges and the theory of diverse modes of Feminism bringing about different approaches to Christian women liberation theology.

Patrick N. Wachege's book titled *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows*¹⁰ gives deep insights into the understanding, definition and nature of single motherhood. This will be highly enriching in the study in this regard. The study

⁸ L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987).

⁹ Ibid., p.24

¹⁰ P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003).

will equally gain from the book's illuminations into different categories of single motherhood and diverse causes of the same. To his credit, Wachege identifies thirty one categories of single motherhood and twenty four causes of single motherhood.¹¹ Above all, we will also gain from this monograph two crucial theories which, with some others, will guide the study. These theories by Wachege are: **Theory of different causes of single motherhood resulting in unique types of single motherhood categories** each imbued with respective challenges,¹² and the **theory of diverse modes of Feminism bringing about different approaches to Christian women liberation theology.**¹³ The gap the study will fill up here is that while Wachege tackles single motherhood and their respective challenges broadly though scientifically, the study will focus on single mothers in a particular locality i.e. Mwala District in Machakos County and specific issue i.e. challenges in parenting the boy child.

Elizabeth S. Fiorrenza's book titled *Wisdom Ways*¹⁴ not only enriches our study with the awareness of diverse forms of feminism.¹⁵ It will also provide our study with different types of theoretical perspectives and their impact in view of sourcing from the Bible from the point of view of women. One of the shortcomings in this work is that Fiorrenza does not elaborate the pluriformity of feminism. Neither does the author indicate their impact with regard to Christian women liberation theology as our

¹¹ Ibid., pp.71-124.

¹² Ibid., p. 64.

¹³ Ibid, pp.80-83.

¹⁴ E. S. Fiorrenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001).

¹⁵ Ibid., p.61ff.

study will do borrowing from Wachege's contribution above as we focus on Christian Complementary Feminism as among our tools.

Teresia M. Hinga's article namely, "*Women Liberation in and through the Bible: the Debate and the Quest for a New Feminist Hermeneutics*"¹⁶ brings to awareness that the Bible has been used to foster oppression in the society. The author is elaborate that the same Bible is misused into legitimizing oppressive actions such as colonialism, racism and sexism resulting in serious social political and gender implications.¹⁷ The author further reiterates that the victims of the negative impact of the Bible owing to the distortions, who happen to be mainly women, have emerged to document how the Bible has acted oppressively to enhance their exploitation and oppression in the society. Something to be happy about is that some women have arisen to the reality of their ability to use the very weapon advanced against them. The author is of the opinion that women are using inspirations from the Bible as a means of emancipating themselves from oppression and asserting themselves towards realizing their potentialities.

The author appreciates there has emerged in recent years a search for a new more relevant Biblical hermeneutic- a feminist approach towards Bible interpretation. This is an approach which is finding expression in theologies of liberation and feminist movements geared towards creating hope to women and challenging oppressive situations and structures of injustice. This work will enrich our study with regard to understanding the Bible passages from the point of view of women. The article does

¹⁶ T. M. Hinga, "*Women Liberation in and Through the Bible: The Debate and the Quest for a New Feminist Hermeneutics*" in L. Namwera (Ed.), *African Christian Studies* (Nairobi: C.H.I.E.A. Publications, 1990).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.34.

not, however, focus on the issue of the challenges single mothers encounter in parenting the boy child as ours does.

Patrick N. Wachege's book titled *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective*¹⁸ assists this study in overcoming the above gap in Hinga's work. From this monograph, we learn that: "women oppression and exploitation is a distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity."¹⁹ Our study enriches itself also in understanding how men exploit women especially on the issue of parenting creating the awareness that : "Men exploit women when they abuse and misuse them as their tools for cheap labor, objects of their sexual gratifications and subsequent hedonism, things for self-aggrandizement and means for the promotion of their ego, self prestige and assertion of their virility and fecundity."²⁰Wachege goes on to explain that "men also exploit women when they arrogantly sideline them from vital human activities thereby excluding them from participating in the making of vital decisions."²¹The author further enlightens that men, furthermore, exploit women because they are of another sex and another gender taking advantage over them in the state, in society, in life and in the Church manipulating and taking advantage of their physical weakness.²²In all this, Wachege refers to women in general. Our study will complement his work by narrowing the focus to single mothers in Mwala District

¹⁸ P.N. Wachege *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.22.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.23.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Machakos County. The author, moreover, does not handle the issue of parenting as our study does for pragmatic purposes.

Wachege does not stop here. He does a credible painstaking reflection on how to liberate from each and every factor above as a way forward.²³ While our study will benefit a great deal from Wachege's mental acumen and academic giftedness in the above, we nevertheless notice a gap our study intends to attend to i.e., since the author's work covers a very wide spectrum thus being unable to give a comprehensive attention to diverse items, ours will have a narrow scope and will thus be more profound in the opted for subject namely, Akamba single mothers and with regard to the challenges of parenting the boy child..

Paulo Freire in his book titled *Education for Critical Consciousness*²⁴ points out the link between oppression and liberating effects of conscientization. The author argues that education creates critical consciousness among the oppressed resulting in empowering them in the fight for their liberty. As such, education helps so much in digging deep into the root causes of depersonalization resulting in transforming oneself and society for better. In his other book namely, *Pedagogy of the City*²⁵ he contends that public education must play a role in reducing the gap between the rich and the poor and that there should be given equal opportunities in education for both the rich and the poor.²⁶

²³ Ibid., pp.109-140.

²⁴ P. Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1998).

²⁵ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the City* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1993).

²⁶ Ibid., pp.9-10.

Furthermore, in another of his classical books titled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*²⁷ Freire attacks the “culture of silence” among the illiterate poor peasants and depicts their silence as deterrence to their achieving liberation. He sees the importance of education as a means of making the masses to deal creatively with the challenging reality around them thus serving as a means for liberating themselves and enabling them to participate in the historical process of their society.

These great ideas on transforming education are useful for the subject of our study. It will enrich our study in a big way more so in creating awareness that parents must embrace education as critical in handling parenting challenges creatively. However, Paulo Freire does not specifically handle the challenges faced by Akamba single mothers with regard to parenting especially the boy child despite the pedagogical contribution as our study does.

Karl Rahner, in his invaluable article titled “*The Position of Women in the New Situation in Which the Church Finds Herself*,”²⁸ enriches our study further. As one of the great scholars who took part in the Second Vatican Council – an Ecumenical Council which is rich in family affairs and parenting-, Rahner is quite explicit with regard to the invaluable of women, especially mothers, in the Church which is given the title “Our Mother the Church”. He provides our study with profound treatment of the critical role of women in evangelization and challenging obligation of duty of mothers in parenting in collaboration with the fathers. He underscores their indispensability in fruitful participation for the realization of the Church as a living

²⁷ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972).

²⁸ K. Rahner, “*The Position of Women in the New Situation in Which the Church Finds Herself*”, *Theological Investigations Vol.8*, Translated by David Bourke (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), pp. 75-93.

community of members relating as brothers and sisters. For him it is not just the Church of men/fathers. It is also the Church of women/mothers. He highlights the complementarities involved and healthy mutual contribution for the welfare of the family and the Church as the community of the communities.

The gap we note in this serious work is that it lacks the benefit of the perception of the **Church** viewed as the **Family of God**.²⁹ This image came through the Synod of the African Bishops³⁰ which we treat elsewhere and has impacted well especially in the realm of parents and parenting as real ministry. Another shortcoming which our study will strive to overcome is that Rahner does not specifically focus on single mothers and their existential challenges in parenting but focuses on women and mothers- complementing men and fathers- in general.

Pope John Paul 11, in his classic Apostolic Letter titled *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the dignity and vocation of women)³¹ enriches the study with crucial treatise on the exemplary roles of women /mother, the invaluableity of mothers in parenting, the high regard the Church accords to mothers perfectly represented by the role model Mother Mary of Nazareth who ended up being a widower single mother after the demise of Her husband Joseph³² thereby raising her boy-child Jesus single-handedly and all of us, as well as highlighting the indispensable complementarity of gender. The above reflections by Pope John Paul 11 have brought out the value and indispensability of

²⁹ Read more about this famous African title attributed to the Church in- P.N. Wachege, *CRS 561: Modern trends in Christianity* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), pp.64-78.

³⁰ Pope John Paul 11, *The Church in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul 11* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995).

³¹ Pope John Paul 11, "*Mulieris Dignitatem*" (*On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*), in LR English Edition, N.40 (1058)- 3 October, 1988.

³² Owing to the limitations imposed on our kind of study, we refer you to- P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows*, pp. 276-306.

parenthood, motherhood and the prominent role mothers play in parenting. This, as we saw, is most explicit in the *Mulieris dignitatem*. While the document is critical on secular foundation of feminism, this Apostolic Letter provides a Christian foundation exemplified by the Family of Nazareth- an aspect which appeals so much to the Akamba community. Moreover, the veneration of Mary of Nazareth with the attribute “Mother of the Church” and “Our Mother” honoring Her as a perfect model of a mother and being motherly in parenting excites our subject matter. Among other things, the document critic and corrects exaggerated feminisms which trigger aspects of feminist/women liberation theologies that are hostile to motherhood and boy-child cum girl-child harmonious living and socialization in general and family welfare in general. Perhaps that is why Jutta Burgraff came up with a related article titled-“*The Mother of the Church: A Correction of Feminist Theology Gone Astray.*”³³ The above conforms to the Akamba perception of motherhood and parenting as a blessing and not a *kiumo* (curse). The gap our study will fill up is that while Pope John Paul handles the issue generally and for universal consumption, our study addresses a particular concrete case.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This study utilizes the following threefold theories namely: **Oedipus Complex Theory** advanced by Sigmund Freud; **Christian Complementary Theory** propagated by both Elizabeth S. Fiorenza and P. N. Wachege; and Leonardo Boff’s and Clodovis Boof’s **Mediation Theory**.

³³ J. Burgraff, “*The Mother of the Church: A Correction of Feminist Theology Gone Astray,*” in *The Church and Women: A Compendium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

The research starts from the stand point that most African socio-cultural set-ups and throughout the world are Patriarchal. African culture is rich and is the starting point in the socialization of children, and that family values play a major role. Through socialization, children acquire a cultural content along with self-hood and personalization. The socialization process, therefore, plays a great role in molding the life of individuals in society and giving them gender identity. In this study, Akamba traditional family values will be among the major focus.

Martin and Stendler (1959) point out to the Oedipus complex and identification theory. According to Sigmund Freud the girl seeks to establish an object relationship with her father and the boy with his mother. "Oedipus complex" is the term used to this tendency in the boy. Children tend to spend the better part of their time with their mothers during their tender age. However the father plays a major role in giving identity to their children in Patriarchal societies. The male child in African culture is taught to be tough and not to behave like a girl who is seen to be the weaker sex. They then acquire cultural norms and values through imitation suggestion, identification and language. This theory will be utilized because mothers, and especially single mothers, may concentrate attention to their girls and this may make the boys to become withdrawn. The theory is relevant to this study because women as active participants in nurturing children should realize that they can bring a balanced approach to the debate on girl child.

The other theory that adds value to the study is feminism theory. In this regard, it has to be appreciated forthwith that there are numerous types of feminism each triggering

specific orientation into women liberation. We are indebted to Elizabeth S. Fiorenza³⁴ in identifying very interesting kinds of feminism. The following, among others, are the common kinds of diverse and diverging categories of feminism each with respective challenges namely: Complementary Feminism; Maternal feminism; Relationality feminism; Eco-feminism; Lesbian feminism; Post-Biblical feminism; Religious feminism; Marxist/Materialistic feminism; Third World feminism; Contextual feminism; Postcolonial feminism; and International feminism thanks to the four United Nations Conferences on women that took place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) together with the conference on population in Cairo (1994) that debated issues on women welfare, equality and women liberation among others.

Of the above modes, the category that we opt for in our subject matter is that of **Complementary Feminism** with the conviction that it adequately guides our study in this area of research. One has to note forthwith that since there is a secular perception of this category, we are quick to qualify our kind as that of “**Christian Complementary Feminism**”. This is distinctive from the others since it is informed, guided and guarded by Christian doctrine on the issue of family solidarity and welfare thus drawing inspiration and illumination from Jesus the Liberator *par excellence*.³⁵ Again this qualification is important since our study is Christian in intent.

³⁴ E.S Fiorenza, *The Wisdom Ways*, pp.60-64

³⁵ Owing to the limitations imposed on our study, we cannot dwell on this title attributed to the Founder of Christianity i.e., Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, for a comprehensive elaboration, we recommend that you read: L. Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology of Our Time* (London: SPCK, 1986); J. Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999).

E.S. Fiorenza explains it as a mode of feminism which promotes all the virtues of nurturing, preservation, growth, acceptance and pacifism developed through child care and mothering.³⁶ According to P.N. Wachege “Christian Complementary Feminism”-enlightened by Biblical texts like Genesis 1 and 2- is a mode of feminism which not only acknowledges the distinctive nature of women/mothers and men/fathers but also strongly creates the awareness that women with their femininity and men with their virility necessarily fulfill and essentially accomplish one another thereby being God’s co-creators with regard to establishing families and parenting as intended by the Creator in Genesis creation narrative – Gen 1-2³⁷. Our study chooses the latter as our working definition in this regard in the light of the former perception.

The third theory the study adopts is Mediation Theory. Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff give it in their co-authored book on Liberation Theology³⁸ as a methodological approach to liberation theology. According to this theory, there are four steps or moments in liberation approach namely: the moment of insertion; the moment of social analysis; moment of theological reflection; and lastly the moment of pastoral reflection. In the first step the researcher will go to the people to have experiential knowledge. Liberation theology is not from the top but from the lowest level where one acquires primary data by virtue of being on the ground. The researcher will apply this in finding out the challenges of Akamba single mothers in Mwala District Machakos County in reference to the boy child.

³⁶ E.S. Fiorenza, *The Wisdom Ways*, p. 60-64.

³⁷ P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man’s Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), pp.15, 21.

³⁸ L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987).

The moment of social analysis involves using different disciplines to analyze the situation. Here the researcher will use disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology and history to understand Akamba traditional family values in reference to single mothers and how they influence the socialization of the boy child and girl child. It will also be used in understanding their social setting and the aspects which influence their behavior.

Then there is the moment of theological reflection which the Boffs also referred to as the hermeneutic stage. This aspect assists the researcher in seeking to relate the above to the will of God as found in both the Bible and Christian Tradition implementing questions like: Is it the will of God that the boy child should be so side lined? What is the word of God instructing us concerning such a scenario? Aided by such Devine illuminations, what must we do to transform the situation as we get involved in assisting the single mothers in the given parenting challenges? From the above the study is enabled to involve the Bible and other Christian teachings to understand the challenges of single mothers in the socialization of the boy child in view of coming up with a more viable way forward in the final mediation.

This last stage is the moment of pastoral reflection an action. It is also referred to as the moment of praxis. It involves doing something to liberate or to help transform people. The researcher will propose a practical course of action in addressing the challenges faced by Akamba single mothers in reference to the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism. In other words, the study will manage to give the way forward as an invaluable contribution.

1.8 Research Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the study is that a serious investigation and elaboration of the challenges the Akamba single mothers encounter in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism, the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting assists such mothers a great deal in parenting especially the boy child more fruitfully. This will be realized through the following specific hypotheses:

1. Christian Complementary Feminism is among the crucial tools for investigating the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child;
2. Investigating the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County ensures family solidarity despite the stumbling blocks single mothers encounter in parenting the boy child;
3. A critical perusal of the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting provides a strong stance towards solving the problems single mother encounter in parenting the boy child;
4. There are invaluable implications and emerging recommendations that can be drawn from the study which are useful for assisting Akamba single mothers to productively confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child.

1.9 Methodology

1.9.1 Research Design

The study will utilize three types of research design namely: Explorative, descriptive and survey. Explorative design has been used in description of the research proposal outlining issues like the objectives of the study, literature review and investigating Akamba traditional family values.

The data collected will be analyzed using qualitative method thus bringing in the descriptive design aspect of methodology. This is by describing the Akamba traditional socio-cultural and family values. Descriptive design will also be used in suggesting ways of integrating Akamba traditional family values with Christian Complementary Feminism to address the challenges of single mothers in reference to the boy child. Survey design will be employed in the identification of the interview sample.

1.9.2 Sampling procedure

The study will consist of fifty respondents. They will be selected using random stratified sampling procedure. They will be divided into three categories: the first will consist of five old men and five old women (60 years of age and above). They will be interviewed in order to acquire historical background of Akamba socio-cultural and traditional family values. The purposeful sampling procedure will be used in selecting this category.

The second category will consist of 25 single mothers. These are single women with children; either young children, teenagers or grown up. This group is important in the study because they will give insight into the challenges faced by single mothers.

Questionnaires and in-depth interviews will be used for this category. The third category will consist of 10 boys and 5 girls between 18- 25 years whose parents are single mothers. They will give their opinion on the manner in which traditional culture has affected their socialization and upbringing. They will be selected at random and given questionnaires to fill.

1.9.3 Data collection methods

The fieldwork will be carried out within a period of one and half months. The researcher will utilize several data collection methods: oral-questionnaire, questionnaire and participatory- observation method will be employed. Further literature review will also be conducted on African traditional values, challenges facing Akamba Single mothers' also Complementary Feminism. The researcher will participate in Church activities such as women group meeting in order to observe and listen to Christian approach to single mothers and the socialization of their children. After such meetings some of the participants will be picked purposely for in-depth interviews.

1.9.4 Data Analysis, Interpretation and Presentation

The data collected from the field will be organized into groups in order to check whether it adequately responds to the questions raised by the objectives. The data will then be interpreted and presented by means of both qualitative and quantitative methods enabling the researcher to come up with recommendations and suggestion for further study.

1.10 Expected Outcome To The Study

The study will seek to establish the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to the boy child, and the manner in which Akamba traditional family values can be integrated with Christian Complementary Feminism to address these challenges fruitfully.

1.11 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

For a proper setting of the study, this Chapter has handled the following items namely: Chapter's introduction; Statements of the problem; Goal and objectives of the study; Justification of the study; Scope and limitations; Literature review; Conceptual framework; Research hypotheses; Methodology; Expected outcome to the study; and Concluding remarks. With this important background, one is equipped with a powerful springboard into core of the study. Nevertheless, to delve more fruitfully into this undertaking, it is indispensable that the issue of Christian Complementary Feminism, which is among the one of the essential tools guiding the study, is profoundly tackled in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIAN COMPLEMENTARY FEMINISM

2.1 Introduction

After the critical setting of the study in Chapter One, this Chapter focuses on: The Nature of Christian Complementary Feminism; Women/Mothers and Men/Fathers as Co-apostles - A Further Explanation of Christian Complementary Feminism; Related Inspirations from Karl Rahner; Wachege's Complementary Theory in the light of Geneses 1 and 2; Deeper Biblical and Theological foundation of Complementary Feminism by Francis Martin; and Chapter's Concluding Remarks

2.2 The Nature of Christian Complementary Feminism

It has to be appreciated that there are numerous types of feminism. We are indebted to Elizabeth S. Fiorenza¹⁹ in identifying very interesting kinds of feminism. The following, among others, are the common kinds of diverse and diverging categories of feminism each with respective challenges namely: Complementary Feminism; Maternal feminism; Relationality feminism; Eco-feminism; Lesbian feminism; Post-Biblical feminism; Religious feminism; Marxist/Materialistic feminism; Third World feminism; Contextual feminism; Postcolonial feminism; and International feminism thanks to the four United Nations Conferences on women that took place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) together with the conference on population in Cairo (1994) that debated issues on women welfare, equality and women liberation among others.

Of the above modes, the category that we opt for in our subject matter is that of **Complementary Feminism** with the conviction that it will adequately guide our

¹⁹ E.S Fiorenza, *The Wisdom Ways*, pp.60-64

study in this area of research. One has to note forthwith that since there is a secular perception of this category, we are quick to qualify our kind as that of “**Christian Complementary Feminism**”. This is distinctive from the others since it is informed, guided and guarded by Christian doctrine on the issue of family solidarity and welfare thus drawing inspiration and illumination from Jesus the Liberator *par excellence*.⁴⁰

E.S. Fiorenza explains it as a mode of feminism which promotes all the virtues of nurturing, preservation, growth, acceptance and pacifism developed through child care and mothering.⁴¹ According to P.N. Wachege “Christian Complementary Feminism”-enlightened by Biblical texts like Genesis 1 and 2- is a mode of feminism which not only acknowledges the distinctive nature of women/mothers and men/fathers but also strongly creates the awareness that women with their femininity and men with their virility necessarily fulfill and essentially accomplish one another thereby being God’s co-creators with regard to establishing families and parenting as intended by the Creator in Genesis creation narrative – Gen 1-2.⁴² Our study chooses the latter as our working definition in this regard in the light of the former perception.

⁴⁰ Owing to the limitations imposed on our study, we cannot dwell on this title attributed to the Founder of Christianity i.e., Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, for a comprehensive elaboration, we recommend that you read: L. Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology of Our Time* (London: SPCK, 1986); J. Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999).

⁴¹ E.S. Fiorenza, *The Wisdom Ways*, p. 61(?).

⁴² P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man’s Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), pp.15, 21.

2.3 Women/Mothers and Men/Fathers as Co-apostles: A Further Explanation of Christian Complementary Feminism

In the broad sense, women –especially mothers including single mothers–may be said to be “apostles” like their male counterparts. This is in the sense that thanks to the Christian

Sacraments of initiation namely, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, they are empowered to be common ministers of the Gospel particularly in their respective homes and families. No wonder Evangelist Luke, apart from what he has in common with the others on the sending of the twelve MEN Apostles (Lk 9:1ff; Mt 10: 1ff; Mk 3:13-19), this feminist Gospel adds something peculiar i.e., the sending of seventy two others and in pares mixing men and women for complementarity sake (Lk 10:1ff) for which it is also called the “universal Gospel” and in our case “Complementary Gospel”. As we make this assertion, we are indebted to Francis Martin’s fivefold qualities of an apostle⁴³ namely:

A vision of the risen Christ;

A commission from Christ;

Possession of apostolic gifts;

Ability to imitate Christ particularly in His suffering in love through which the power of God is made manifest;

Having apostolic activity accomplished ‘in power, in the Holy Spirit and in much conviction’ (1Thess. 1:5), and this undoubtedly includes signs and wonders and deeds of power.

⁴³ F. Martin, *The Feminist Question*, p.98-100.

2.4 Related Inspirations From Karl Rahner

Karl Rahner may be said to propagate a complement of gender in the economy of salvation. For him, it is not just the Church of men/fathers. Women/mothers too are a component of the Church:

“The Church’s life as a society is carried on in the lives of Her members through the most manifold system of interrelationships. For this reason, while it may be true that human nature as constituted by the distinction of the sexes may endure throughout as a metaphysical reality, still the actual modes in which this one nature is objectively realized in the concrete is stamped and conditioned by the special circumstances of history which correspond to this plurality of types and situations justifiably existing in the Church.”⁴⁴

Nevertheless, despite this affirmation “there is very little that can validly be asserted of the woman as a single and entirely homogeneous type with a definite concrete position in the Church capable of being investigated.”⁴⁵ What Rahner observes here is even worse for single mothers who happen to be followers and disciple of Jesus Christ.

When Rahner talks of “new situation of the Church in the world”⁴⁶ the proliferation of today’s peculiar/extra-ordinary mode of family-hood i.e., single motherhood (the subject this study opted for) in relation to the dwindling traditional/ordinary married motherhood comes to our minds. In this regard he observes that:

“In Her own personal life too, the Church must recognize without reserve the fact that women have equal value and equal rights with men. Contemporary theology has had much to say in general terms about the position and function of the layman as based upon the Baptism

⁴⁴ K. Rahner, *“The Position of Women in the New Situation in Which the Church Finds Herself”*, *Theological Investigations Vol.8*, Trans. David Bourke (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), p.75.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.75.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.81.

and Confirmation which he has received. And all this applies directly, and in equal degree to women as well as to men.⁴⁷

In his prudent critic of the exclusion of women – and in our case, more so the single mothers- in crucial Church ministries within the context of propagating the Gospel and owning the Good News in respective families, Rahner brings to awareness that:

“The more the world changes in terms of culture and social living, the more fresh tasks and fresh patterns of living emerge in the lives of individuals and of society, the more man and woman emerge amid these changes in the human environment as equal in capabilities and equal in rights to exploit these new potentialities and to ensure that they are actualized, the more the life of the Church too changes in proportion to these other changes in Her human situation. For the life of the Church must be projected and extended into all these new and different spheres of life in the world, and for this reason there is a proliferation in the Church of those tasks and opportunities which can be entrusted unreservedly to women just as much as to men, and which in fact must be entrusted to them.”⁴⁸

The bottom-line is that: “We have perforce to recognize the whole new complex range of tasks which can be performed equally well by either sex, and to which the differences between the sexes are wholly irrelevant. At the same time, however, in the concrete manner in which these tasks are performed, men and women will each bring their special qualities to bear, and this cannot be otherwise than beneficial in ensuring that in the execution of these tasks, to which the sex of the actual performer makes no difference, every aspect of them shall in fact be catered for.”⁴⁹ As such, the

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.81

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, pp.82-83.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.83.

complementarity involved here excites our study more so in the mutual enrichment of females and males.

Based on the above, "in Her preaching and in Her care of souls the Church must take into account the unmarried, independent and professional women no less than the mothers and the household."⁵⁰

Despite the Christian "absolute principle that the fulfillment of women's vocation as human beings and Christian is to be found first and foremost, and in normal cases, in partnership with her husband and in the exercise of married love and motherhood,"⁵¹ nevertheless, there are exceptions to this which may be termed extraordinary.

Here we have in mind single mothers and their task of parenting both genders. The Church is thus duty bound not to discriminate them if She has to take after the Shepherd *par excellence* who spelt out His universal ministry and mercy in, for instance, His Parables of the Prodigal Son/Daughter (Lk 15:11-32); The Pharisee and the Publican (Lk 18: 1-8); Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 30-37) and the Unjust Judge (Lk 18:1-8). Also in the miracle of the raising of the Son of the Widow of Naim (Lk 7:11-17), visit to Martha and Mary in Bethany (Lk 10:38-42) and the sending of the seventy disciples in pairs (Lk 10:1ff). He is the caring Savior and empowering Redeemer of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4: 5-30) also.

By virtue of their incorporation into the Church community through the ritual of Baptism and Eucharist and benefiting from the Sacrament of Confirmation, women/mothers are entitled to the status of common Priests and the roles that

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.83.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.83.

appertains to it. Consequently, "Such women should tell the Church what new forms of specialized pastoral activity, what new types of vocational group within the Christian community, and what new kinds of active mutual 'pastoral' help between women in this state are appropriate to them in their situation and to the times in which we live."⁵²This amounts to demanding from the Church a listening ear and Her obligation of enabling and preparing them to minister more so to themselves since, being on the ground, they are extremely rich in experiential knowledge in their kind of parenting.⁵³

In playing the above roles, women/parents should "be accorded the dignity, independence and responsibility due to them and necessary for them to discharge their functions properly."⁵⁴This need not be left to the short-sighted caprice of the individual parish Priest or chaplain whether there shall be such participation in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy."⁵⁵In this light, "the Church will have to develop new and better kinds of relationship between the clergy and women, such as are more appropriate to the times."⁵⁶The sad reality –more so subjected to the single mothers– is that "relics of patriarchal attitudes in the relationship between the Priests and women still survive, which belong to the past ages and do not derive essentially or necessarily from the spiritual authority of the Priest or Pastor and Confessor in relation to the individual Christian."⁵⁷

⁵² Ibid., p.84.

⁵³ This idea is profoundly elaborated in- P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows*, pp. 310ff.

⁵⁴ K. Rahner, op.cit. p. 85.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.85.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.85.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.85.

As K. Rahner points out, "in the new situation in history of the world and of society woman (*in our case single mother in particular*) is presented with fresh problems (*in our case parenting the boy child and somehow girl child*) to solve for the world. These are such as can be solved by woman herself; and in her own way, and not, in any direct or adequate sense, by directives issued by the authorities of the Church and in their preaching."⁵⁸ This is a call to the clergy not to lord it over women/mothers but to involve them as important partners in the growth and realization of the family of God.

It is also of immense importance, as Rahner educates, that:

"Both for her own sake and on behalf of those entrusted to her care woman must learn that faith is not a kind of folklore, not in any sense like the sort of heritage of local customs that are handed down from one generation to the next, and which woman's temperament and her readiness to find security in what she can take for granted make her particularly prone to opt for. But woman must learn that so far from this faith is in fact the exercise of the most elemental, radical and irreversible kind of decision."⁵⁹

The above illuminations from K. Rahner do add value to the perception and insights into Christian Complementary Feminism which guides our study. Let us now investigate the same from P.N. Wachege's related reflections.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.86.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.92.

2.5 Wachege's Complementary Theory in the light of Geneses 1 and 2 and Personality Psychology

Wachege's integrated complementarity between women/mothers and men/ fathers within the context of African Christian Women Liberation⁶⁰ was provoked by radical feminism which dichotomized women from men propagating that women affairs is the preserve of women only. It was triggered by this extreme mode of feminism, a mode of women liberation which is repugnant to Christianity, whose exponents tried to enforce dangerous categorization whereby men were condemned as evil oppressors/exploiters sinning against women and *ipso facto* disqualified from playing any role in women liberation. On the other hand, women were asserted as innocent oppressed ones sinned against by males and *ipso facto* pressured to split themselves completely from men – even have nothing to do with them in sex (lesbian feminism) or getting children cum parenting (thus opposed to maternal feminism) and in case one gets children, one is required to favor girl child and virtually ignore or undermine the boy child.

On the basis of the above extreme mentality and misinformed pseudo-doctrine of feminism, Wachege was confronted with the pertinent question: “How can a man endowed with maleness and virility – the very symbol of women oppression – write on and about women liberation?” It is in response to this challenge that he developed his kind of Complementary Theory in reference to the two genders which informs Complementary Feminism from another perspective. This is how he develops it:

⁶⁰ P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective*, pp.35ff.

First and foremost, Wachege acknowledges that women's experiential knowledge on women issues rightly places them above men in this regard but not at the exclusion of men. This is how he puts it:

“Yes, women liberation technically ought to emerge from women since it is they who genuinely have an experiential knowledge on oppression, exploitation, deprivation and un-freedom. They are the ones who actually are able to cry loudest for their freedom and accompanying liberty. Nevertheless, it is my contention that women liberation is not a confine of women. After all, even men can and do cry and they too have tears - real tears and not just crocodile tears.”⁶¹

With this setting, Wachege points out the essential integrality between the two genders while not negating the invaluable specificity of each:

“Among the fundamental reasons why women liberation is not exclusively peculiar to women is that, by our very essence, women and we men are Complementary beings. Distinctive but not dichotomized. We interrelate so intimately and so inevitably that we find each other in each other. Moreover, in our concrete historical existence we keep craving for mutual fulfillment and accomplishment in, for and with each other.”⁶²

He then gives the verification with a philosophical and psychological touch:

“Psychologically and existentially speaking, therefore, women are both men and women. Conversely, men are both women and men. Thus, the woman in me strongly haunts me to write on women liberation. This is so since without women authenticity the man I am is in shackles of un-freedom too. Consequently, that oneness and sameness and commonness and

⁶¹ Ibid., p.35.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 35-36.

togetherness transcending sexual barriers and gender issues is credential enough for me to actively and actually participate in this liberational task."⁶³

Wachege then goes on to assert that:

"This is a reality from which I cannot drift in the name of neutrality and peripheral insertion in women's affairs. The truth which cannot be compromised is that women's business is men's issue too and vice versa. Hence, my commitment and response to this endeavor concerning women exploitation cum oppression and the subsequent liberation in the ongoing process of remaking the world - a process of transforming oppressive structures and evil forces of domination, annihilating depersonalizing mentality thereby restoring human authenticity and genuine growth in freedom."⁶⁴

Wachege then creates the awareness that none of us, whatever the gender, is so good that one has nothing to correct or be corrected or so fulfilled that one does not need the other's support. This is owing to the reality of being sinners, being often in sinful state and living in an environment of sin and forces of evil though also imbued with God's grace.⁶⁵ This is how Wachege articulates it:

"The question as to whether men are liberated enough to actually and sincerely participate fully in the struggle for women liberation is a non issue. In as much and insofar as we are sinful and in a sinful milieu and situation, nobody is good enough or so adequately liberated to help liberate and accept the other unconditionally providing *agape* kind of love. Yet, we can team up in our condition of being both oppressors and oppressed in the painstaking duty of liberating and thus being liberated. With this understanding, in our proneness to sin (read

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.36.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.36.

⁶⁵ Read more about this in – P.N. Wachege, *Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Media Options, 2002), pp. 272ff.

to oppress and exploit) we need each other. We are, for that reason all responsible for restoring freedom for women, for our men, and for all."⁶⁶

Wachege's further elaboration with regard to Complementary Theory in the light of Geneses 1 and 2 and Personality Psychology sheds invaluable light to the Christian Complementary Feminism that guides our study. There is need, however, to complement the above with further explications by Francis Martin.

2.6 Deeper Biblical and Theological Foundation of Christian Complementary Feminism by Francis Martin

Francis Martin crowns the above with further very interesting Biblical setting highly useful in clarifying Christian Complementary Theory that is so crucial in our study.

The prolific issue of Biblical pairing with regard to women/mothers and men/fathers is a good pointer and, indeed, verification of Complementary Feminism with a Christian touch which is of great interest to our subject-matter.

As F. Martin brings to awareness: "It is interesting to observe how often in the Gospel (and Pre-Gospel?) Tradition Jesus' parables are presented as part of a male-female pair of stories. Some examples are the oppressed widow and the despised tax collector as model of prayers (Lk 18: 1-14); the farmer sowing mustard seed and the woman using leaven (Mt 13: 31-33; Lk 13: 18-21); the lost sheep and the lost coin (Lk 15: 3-10).⁶⁷ Such complementarity is not confined to Jesus' parables:

"The tendency to form male-female pairs is evident also in stories of healing. The only two healings at a distance recorded in the Gospels involve accounts of Jesus' care for a pagan officer of the occupation forces and a pagan woman in Matthew 8: 5-

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

⁶⁷ F. Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition* (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1994), p.102.

13 (par. Lk 7: 1-10) and Matthew 15: 21-28 (par. Mk 7: 24-30). Besides illustrating Jesus' care for those outside the pale of usual Jewish concern, Matthews paring is meant to teach us something about his abiding and equal concern for both women and men. Luke's regular practice of paring stories about men and women finds expression in the stories of the centurion's boy and the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7: 1-17); the Sabbath healings of the woman bowed over and the man with dropsy (Lk 13: 10-17; 14: 1-5).⁶⁸

It is also highly pedagogical to appreciate that:

“There are also stories that contrast men and women to the advantage of the figure of the woman. There is the contrast between the penitent woman and the Pharisee, Simon (Lk 7: 36-50), and the famous story of the woman who broke her jar of precious ointment and emptied it over Jesus while the disciples complained (Mt 26: 6-13; Mk 14: 3-9; Jn 12: 1-8). This woman is portrayed as an ideal disciple who pours out what is precious to her as she anoints Jesus' head in recognition of His messianic reality. In this she is not only contrasted with all the disciples in the story itself, but, particularly in the Markan redaction, she is ostensibly placed at the head of the passion narrative between the mention of the Jewish leaders who want to kill Jesus (Mk 14: 1-2) and Judas who betrays Him (14: 10-11). In addition, Mark places this nameless woman and the nameless centurion at the Cross (15: 39) as a female-male pair of models whose faith and open confession frame the account of the passion.”⁶⁹

Moreover, a critical perusal of the Gospels, more so through redaction criticism, discloses the vivid Complementary roles the members of the two genders played in community welfare and for the common good. One is able to notice that it is not only men like Peter and the sons of Zebedee (James and John) who played critical roles in

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.102.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.103.

the propagation of the Good News. Women too had invaluable Complementary undertakings that fulfilled those of men for a more fruitful service:

“All of the Gospels record the part played by women as the first witness to the resurrection. Again, the events of level one are described at the third level, that of Gospel composition, in ways that attribute an important role to women. All four Gospels recount that women were first to go to the tomb and find it empty, though their subsequent witness was not accepted by the male disciples (e.g., Lk 24: 22-24). John is careful to portray Mary Magdalene as the first to bear the apostolic witness, ‘I have seen the Lord’. The fact that the Gospels were redacted after the Pauline Letters were written indicates that the role played by the women continued to be important in the tradition...This aspect was very significant to the Church in Jerusalem, whose viewpoint seems to underlie this whole passage.”⁷⁰

Without losing sight of the triple historical levels of the Gospels i.e. the activity of Jesus, the interpretative transmission of His words and deeds in the post-resurrection tradition, both written and oral, and the actual composition of the Gospel⁷¹, it should further be taken into account that:

“The Gospel tradition’s use of vocabulary in describing aspects of Jesus’ public life is also significant. Thus, Mark describes women at the Cross in terms of redolent of discipleship when he says that they ‘had followed Him and ministered to Him’ (Mk 15: 41). The use of the term *minister* (*diekonou*) in Luke 8:3 probably conveys the same nuance, and this is also true of the story of the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8: 14-15; Mk 1:29-31; Lk 4: 38-39), whose concluding notice that she ‘ministered to them/Him (Mt)’ adds the notion of discipleship to the healing story.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 103-104.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.101.

⁷² Ibid., p. 103.

In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles- also referred to by other significant titles like “Book of Mission”, “Book of the Birth of the Church” and “Gospel of the Holy Spirit”-we get further gender inter-relationship pairing: “Thus there is healing of the man Aeneas and the woman Tabitha (9: 32-43); the conversion of Lydia and Philippian jailer (16 :13, 14-15, 25-34); the frequent mention of the couple Priscilla and Aquila...and the fact that in accounts of both conversion and persecution Luke mentions ‘men as well as women’ (5: 14; 8: 3-12; 9: 2; 22:4).”⁷³

Lydian, who was a woman of class, extended her generous service and care to Paul and his co-workers (Acts 16: 14-15, 40). Moreover:

“Luke mentions prominent women as well in Acts 17: 4-12, and probably means to imply that Damaris, who was converted along with Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus Court, and several others (note a man and woman are mentioned) was of some social standing. Second, Lydia was the head of a household. This can be seen in the fact that her conversion and that of her household are described in a manner typical of one in such a position (cf. Jn 4: 53; Acts 10: 11: 14; 16: 31; 18: 8; 1 Cor 1: 16). It is clear as well that her household became a meeting place for the ‘brothers’. This places her in the company of such women as Mary the mother of John Mark, at whose house at least some of the community at Jerusalem met (Acts 12: 12-17).”⁷⁴

Mind you Paul was not ashamed to attribute the term “co-workers” to Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16: 3-5) as he did to men like Titus (2 Cor 8: 23), timothy (1 Thss 3: 2) and Epaphroditus (Phil 2: 25).

St. Paul, who some radical feminists wrongfully accuse of being a male chauvinist whose Epistles are anti-women, was, on the contrary, pro-women and an exponent of

⁷³ *ibid.*, p.105.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p.105.

complementarity of gender.⁷⁵ He was a strong proponent of harmonious living and parenting among men/fathers and women/mothers. Among his justifications was by virtue of incorporation into the Family of God through the rights of passage namely, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (Gal 3: 38). By implication, members of both genders necessarily belong to an indispensable solidarity in family-hood. F. Martin further elaborates this Christian gender complementarity mainly in reference to Romans 16: 1-23. This is how he puts it:

“At least twenty-seven persons in Rome and eight in Corinth are named or referred to explicitly (‘his mother,’ ‘his sister’) in this ‘greeting card.’ Of the thirty-five people named, ten are women: three of these are probably married to the men mentioned with them. Paul uses a variety of terms to express something about many of those named: *beloved* (4 times); *relative or country-man/woman* (3times), *brother, sister* (1 time each), ‘the elect one in the Lord’ (1 time), ‘approved in Christ’ (1 time). He also describes some of them with expressions that denote a particular role in the work of the Gospel: *co-worker* (3 times), *one who labored* (3 times); in addition Andronicus and Junia are described as having ‘shared imprisonment’ and being ‘outstanding among the apostles,’ and Phoebe, as a *diakonos* and a *patroness*. Eight of those who are singled out are women. Some commentators wish to draw from the fact that Junia is called a ‘co-worker’ and that the verb *kopia* (labor) is applied to Mary, Rypaena, Tryphosa, and Persis, that these should be equated with other co-workers, such as Timothy and the leaders mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5: 12 and 1 Corinths 16: 16 to whom *kopia* is also applied.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ To appreciate how Paul is misjudged and unfairly labeled “male chauvinist”, read the book titled- N. Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.108.

2.7 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

This Chapter has focused on: The Nature of Christian Complementary Feminism; Women/Mothers and Men/Fathers as Co-apostles - A Further Explanation of Christian Complementary Feminism; Related Inspirations from Karl Rahner; Wachege's Christian Complementary Theory in the light of Geneses 1 and 2; Deeper Biblical and Theological foundation of Complementary Feminism by Francis Martin. With such a profound clarity of this crucial mode of feminism which is among the tools guiding our study, we are adequately equipped to delve into Chapter Three. This is the Chapter that tackles the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHALLENGES OF AKAMBA SINGLE MOTHERS IN REFERENCE TO PARENTING THE BOY CHILD IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN COMPLEMENTARY FEMINISM IN MWALA DISTRICT, MACHAKOS COUNTY

3.1 Introduction

With such a profound clarity of the crucial mode of feminism which Chapter Two has handled, namely Christian Complementary Feminism, which is among the tools guiding our study, we are adequately equipped to delve into Chapter Three. This is the Chapter that tackles the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting specifically the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County.

This Chapter mainly focuses on the Akamba traditional holistic approach to the family, single mothers, children of both gender and the challenges experienced by single mothers in parenting especially the boy child. The Chapter looks at the various rites of passage that a child goes through right from the time of birth to the time he or she departs to join the world of the spiritualized ones who are also part of the community. The Chapter also brings out the importance of the family as an institution, and the various inter-dependent relationships that govern human interactions within the community that enhance family solidarity. More specifically, the Chapter will follow the following thematic sequence: Akamba traditional understanding of the family; birth among the Akamba; initiation rite among the

Akamba; marriage rite among the Akamba; death rites among the Akamba: Akamba understanding and treatment of single mothers; Akamba understanding and parenting of the boy child and girl child; specific challenges Akamba single mother encounter in parenting the boy child; and Chapter's concluding remark.

3.2 Akamba Traditional Understanding Of The Family.

The family is the basic unit of the Akamba people. In traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunt, brother and sisters who may have their own children, and other immediate relatives.⁷⁷ As such the modern day definition of a family does not qualify in the Akamba traditional understanding of the institution. The family also includes the departed relatives, whom are referred to as the living dead. Though dead, they are considered by the living to be alive to the extent that though invisible they are interested and involved in the affairs of the living. It was and still is a common practice among the Akamba to name children after these departed members of the family. Some of the practices by people in the community are a clear reflection of this connectedness. For example when a person takes a glass of water to drink, some people pour a little amount to the ground before taking any sip, the explanation given to this behavior is that even the ancestor are thirsty and are in need of some drinking water.

The family also includes unborn members of the family, and therefore pregnant women are treated with a lot of respect for they are carrying a new life which is meant to ensure continuity of the community. However, physical birth is not enough because the child must undergo various rituals after birth in order to become a full

⁷⁷ J. S. Mbiti, *African religion and Philosophy*, p.106.

member of the community. These rites do not end after the birth of the child but rather continue up to death. The rites of passage are Birth, initiation, marriage and death.

3.3 Birth Among the Akamba

The birth of a child is a long journey which begins right from the time the mother learns that she is pregnant and the arrival of the new born brings great joy to any family and the community at large. Among the Akamba, a pregnant woman was expected to avoid various foods and also to avoid meat of animals killed with poisoned arrows. This served to ensure both the wellbeing of the mother and the unborn child. She was also exempted from tedious chores and other family members were expected to assist in the various duties to avoid putting her life and that of the unborn child at risk. The woman was also supposed to live in a separate house from her husband three months to the birth of the child.⁷⁸

The expectant woman was given special treatment in the community and also for her it brought a feeling of fulfillment for it is a sign of fertility and acceptance by the husband's family for she was able to bring continuity to the family and as such the community at large. A woman who stayed for a long time without conceiving after marriage was viewed with suspicion and if it took a long time the husband would be pressured by his family to get another wife who would beget him children. Hence polygamy was a common practice among the Akamba when such situations arose. In

⁷⁸ Ndunge Kioko 82yrs, 11/7/2012.

some cases if the woman was barren, then she married another woman “*Iweto*” who would bear children on her behalf and as such enable her lineage to live on.⁷⁹

The birth of a child took place in the woman’s house and it she was assisted by a midwife who is a specialist in this field. The placenta and umbilical cord are then disposed of by burying it within the homestead. On the third day after delivery the parents of the new born child slaughtered an animal and invited people to celebrate with them; which also happened to be the naming day. Women who have had children gather together and on looking at the baby decide the best name to be given, the name which is referred to as “*isyitwa ya Ngima*” (the name is referred to this because *ugali* was cooked during this occasion). The naming could be given depending on the prevailing circumstances at the time of birth or even after a living or departed family member. The naming ceremony is very significant because before it takes place the child is considered to belong to the spirits (*Kiimu*). On the fourth day, the father then hanged an iron necklace on the child’s neck, after which he/she is regarded as a full human being and as having lost contact with the spirit world.⁸⁰ The child then becomes a member of the community and is nurtured to become a responsible human being.

As a child grows he/she does not belong to the parents alone and hence the reason why a child could be punished by any member of the community if found in the wrong. The Akamba have a common saying that “*mwana notaula waku*”, meaning any child is just as your own.⁸¹ Children were trained to respect all members of the community and disrespect to any person was greatly shunned. The child was then

⁷⁹ Ngina Nziu 94yrs,21/7/2012.

⁸⁰ J.S. Mbiti *African Religion and Philosophy*,p120.

⁸¹ Mkulu Kimindu,71yrs,10/7/2012,Nzyimi Mulei,84yrs, 19/7/2012,Mutingili Kyalo,82yrs,10/7/2012.

taught and trained by the parents and other family members graduating from childhood to the next rite of passage which was initiation.

3.4 Initiation Rite Among the Akamba

This was a very important stage in the life of a child for it marks the beginning of adult life, and he/she was incorporated into the community. Initiation rites also played an important role in introducing the child to the world of responsibilities within the family as well as the community. Any person who was not initiated was considered a child and could not participate in adult activities including marriage. He/she was further looked down upon and despised by other members of the community.

Among the Akamba, children undergo initiation rites at the age between four to seven years of age. In the Akamba traditional society, boys underwent circumcision and clitoridectomy (this is not a common practice among the community today). The ceremony was carried out in the months of August to October when it dry and warm, for they considered that the wound would heal faster unlike during the cold and rainy season, when wounds take a long time to heal.

Although the operation is painful, children were encouraged to persevere and those who went through courageously without crying were praised by the community. There was celebration and dance and as the initiates are healing relatives visited them bringing various gifts. The cutting of the skin from the sex organs symbolized separation from childhood and it was the first stage of initiation. The initiate is born into a new state in which he/she is no longer ignorant but enters a stage of knowledge, activity and is allowed to reproduce for the continuity of the community. The

shedding of blood also acts as a bond between the living and the dead members of the family, who are considered to be symbolically living on the ground. The pain that initiates are encouraged to endure also prepares them for the challenges and difficulties that they are to be faced with in life.

The ceremonies that involve dancing and rejoicing also bring together the entire community enhancing their solidarity and togetherness. The second stage of initiation takes place at around the age of fifteen when the initiates are teenagers. This was considered to be the educational stage when the initiates are introduced to, their responsibilities and societal expectations. They were secluded from their families and the public for a period of four days to two weeks to undergo training. Corporate living was instilled in the young people during this seclusion for they are made to share huts and also responsibilities. After seclusion the initiates emerge as qualified men and women in the community who are able to establish families and take up adult roles.⁸²

Mbiti notes that a third stage of initiation took place among the men, when they were over forty years of age though very few underwent this ceremony. The author also points out that very little are known concerning the ceremony by those who have not participated in it, for it is so secret. After initiation rites then comes in the rite of marriage.

3.5 Marriage Rite Among the Akamba

Marriage is a very important rite of passage among the Akamba, which could only take place among people who have undergone the rites of initiation living and the departed. Marriage to the Akamba is a religious act that brought together and united all members of the family: the departed, the living and those yet to be born. It

⁸² J.S. Mbiti *African Religion and Philosophy*, p.126.

involved the unborn children because the main purpose of marriage is procreation to ensure continuity of the family lineage and the community at large. Marriage without children was considered to be incomplete and the couples were subjected to pressure from the community to reproduce.

Marriage and procreation are very important aspects of the Africans and Akamba people are no exception. The education given to initiates after the rite was to introduce the young people to matters of sex, marriage, procreation and family life. The Akamba considered marriage to be a phase in life which leads to continuity of the community by siring children. Marriage also unites the living and the dead because the living-dead are remembered by naming of children. It was therefore mandatory for one to get married and those who failed were considered to have deviated from the norm.

Bride-wealth was given as a token of appreciation to the family of the bride, and it is referred to as "*Ngasya*". However before the bride-wealth is paid there is a ceremony known as "*ntheo*" which involves slaughtering of a goat. The groom's family presents three goats after which one is slaughtered and shared by the two families involved. This shedding of blood is binding and once it is done the woman culturally belongs to her husband. Even if the two separated the woman would still be buried at her husband's place, and "*ntheo*" could be carried out for the same woman twice. This means that the ceremony is a binding one and it's greatly respected up to date. In the case that a woman who is married died before this ceremony, it is normally carried out before her burial at the husband's homestead, failure to which the woman's

family is entitled to bury her at their home irrespective of the number of years she has been in the marriage.

The blood that is shed during the ceremony is also a religious act, for it is considered to not only bind the two families but also to appease the departed members of the family and seek their blessings. A covenant is made between the two families and to endorse the relationship inner parts of the goat are shared by the members present.

This is a uniting factor that symbolizes acceptance and oneness. Relationships are very important among the Akamba and they are respected and upheld. It is therefore common to hear people explaining their relationship to each other through marriage.

Bride-wealth "*Ngasya*" is an important gift and it is given in form of cattle, goats or foodstuffs. It acts as a sign of appreciation to the bride's family for nurturing, raising her and accepting the groom's family to take her as a wife. This is not considered to be a form of payment because the worth of a person cannot be equated to material things. Among the Akamba, bride-wealth is not paid in full but it is done in bits because they believe that it is an ongoing process, a continuing relationship, and completing payment would spoil or mark the end of the relationship between the two families.

Marriage is only permissible to persons who have undergone the initiation rites. It is a taboo among the Akamba for any individual to enter into marriage or even reproduce before initiation. During this ceremony children are introduced to marital affairs because they are considered to have become adults who are able to manage their own affairs. The boys are taught what mostly concerns men; like looking after cattle, how to behave towards one's in-laws, working hard to acquire wealth, part of which would

be used to pay dowry to the bride's family. They are also trained on being responsible family heads.

The girls are taught the value of morality, hard work, household chores, how to take care of their husbands and also matters concerning sex in marriage. It is interesting to note that traditionally, any woman who was found to be a virgin upon marriage was returned to her parents with an axe stick that had no hole put in a "*Kyondo*", for it was a sign that she was not prepared for marriage. Once she arrived at her parents homestead, they understood what it meant and the father had to look for someone to deflower her, her mother then trained her on sex matters before returning her to her husband.⁸³ However this was a common occurrence because most of the girls were trained by their grandmothers and aunties on such matters before marriage. This in itself seems to be a contradiction because pregnancy out of wedlock was a taboo, which brought great shame to the girl's family.

Marriage is a rite that was not an individual affair as is common today. There were different methods of choosing a marriage partner. Often the choice was made by the boy's parents whereas at times young men could choose but the parents had the final say. When parents made the choice it was mainly in order to enhance friendship with the other family or at other times due to the girl's good behavior. Young men were advised against marrying from certain families, either because such a family was considered to be cursed or simply because the girls from such a home had divorced/separated from their husbands. Marriage is not allowed between close relatives or members of the same clan. However the "*Atangwa*" and "*Aombe*" clans allow their members to marry as long as they are not closely related by blood. All the

⁸³ Mukulu 71 yrs, Ndunge 94 yrs, 19/7/2012.

other Akamba clans to date do not allow intermarriage between clan members whosoever.

Polygamy was a common practice among the Akamba. However one was only allowed to marry the number of wives that he was able to provide for. Bride wealth also acted as deterrence and mostly the rich could afford to marry more than one wife. The husband had to be a responsible head of his family and also be able to solve disputes arising from his large family. Children were also considered to be a sign of wealth and as a source of labor for tilling the land. Single motherhood was a taboo and girls at times girls who got children out of wedlock were married off as second wives or even third at a lower bride price. The families of such girls pushed them into polygamous marriages to avoid embarrassment and being despised by other members of the community, because such girls could not be married by their age mates, even when at times they were responsible for the pregnancy.

In cases where the first wife was unable to beget children or gave birth to girl children only, then the husband would take up another wife. This is because marriage without children was considered to be incomplete and that girls were not considered to be equal with boys. It was assumed that girls would be married off and there would be no one to continue the family lineage. The wives in polygamous marriages assisted each other in household chores, nursing children and even tilling the land. Their children grew up as brother and sisters and quarrels and fighting were not common for they lived harmoniously.

Marriage and procreation are essential among the Akamba. After marriage then come the death rites.

3.6 Death Rites Among the Akamba

Death is an inevitable rite of passage in all African communities. The death of an individual brings pain, loss, mourning and it concerns the whole community. The Akamba believe that although death is inevitable, it does not just happen, and there must be a cause. The people would then try to find the cause of death even when its cause is natural like old age or sickness. Medicine men are called upon to assist in preparing for burial rites. The Akamba would refer to death as one having left us (*nututiie*). This shows that one has departed to a different place not really dying completely. He/she is considered to have joined those who died earlier, rather the ancestors.

The grave is dug near the cattle shed and the deceased person is laid to rest facing the direction of the sunset. After burial, men keep vigil over the grave for several days to avoid witches from interfering with the remains. In case a person had reached the marriage age and had not married, cleansing rituals had to be conducted before the body was laid to rest. This was to ensure that the curse of young men remaining as bachelors would not befall the family even in future generations. This showed that an individual had died without fulfilling his obligation of ensuring continuity of the family: such people were not considered fondly as being part of the living-dead. This is because they had not been responsible members of the community, having failed to meet societal expectation.

After death, then one joins the spirit world and does not completely cease to be a member of the community.

3.7 Akamba Understanding and Treatment of Single Mothers.

Single motherhood phenomenon was a rear occurrence among the Akamba people, and although it was a taboo and shunned, it still existed in the community. However, every effort was made to ensure that it did not become a common practice. Girls were trained on the importance of being responsible and morally upright to avoid bringing shame and embarrassment to their families.⁸⁴

Life is considered to be sacred and as such should be preserved. Hence when a girl got pregnant out of the wedlock, she was not chased away from home, rather she was questioned by her mother concerning the person responsible for the pregnancy. Her father then approached the boy's family to verify the information. In some cases the boy's family would then force him to take responsibility for his action by taking the girl in as his wife, and upon delivery, marriage rites would be performed.

However in cases where the boy refused to take responsibility or the girl could not disclose the paternity of the unborn child, then she was taken care by her own family until she delivered. The child naming ceremony was not as elaborate as that of a married mother's child rather it was low keyed with little celebration if any. This is because the girl has brought shame and disgrace to her family and therefore there was nothing to celebrate.

In some cases the girl's family would then marry her off to a married man and expect a low bride wealth in return. This was a way of avoiding single motherhood which was a taboo in the community. Single mother were considered to be girls of loose morals and their mothers suffered in the community for failing in their nurturing and

⁸⁴ Get more insights into this from- P.N. Wachege, Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows, pp. 168-171.

mentoring role. This is because, if children were good and respectful, the mother was praised, but if they were badly behaved and brought shame to the family she was blamed. Girls who continued begetting children in their parents' home without getting married were referred to as *Yiemo*. This was a term meant to deter other girls from such irresponsible behavior.

Single mothers due to pregnancies out of wedlock were discriminated upon and could not participate freely in the various activities in the community. They were considered to be outcasts for they had deviated from the norm. Their peers avoided them for fear that they would have a negative influence on them. However their children remained part of the community although they were looked down upon. In the case that such a mother got married, she would carry her child/children to her husband's home. Even in cases of separation or divorce the mother would not leave the children with their father, rather they would stay with her at her parents' home. Although divorcees were despised, scorned and mocked for disappointing the community, divorced/separated single mothers occurred among the Akamba. Some women would quit their matrimonial homes due to problems such as brutality from the husband, laziness, drunkard-ness or practices such as witchcraft. But even in this situations divorce or separation was not encouraged because upon completion of marriage rites, the woman had become part of her husband's family.

Dispute resolutions were carried out by the two families to arbitrate between husband and wife, and hence family breakdowns were not a common occurrence. However when it happened and the woman choose divorce or separation, she was shunned by the community. She was referred to as "*Mwinzioka*"(a woman who has been unable

to stay at her matrimonial home). She was discriminated and looked down upon even by her own family for she was a disgrace. Such a woman brought her children to her parents' home which was a burden to the entire family.

The divorced woman's family would then be forced to assist her in raising the children. The boys would be mentored by their maternal uncles and grandfather to become responsible members of the community. The girls were mentored by their mother, grandmother, and aunties and trained on female roles and responsibilities. This was not done without discrimination and ill feelings because such children were seen to pose a threat to the inheritance of their uncles, in a patriarchal system where girls were not allowed to inherit land or property. This fear and uncertainty at times led to antagonism between siblings, and at times the divorced/separated woman was mistreated by her own brothers.

Widowed single motherhood was also a category among the Akamba. These women were accepted in the community and treated with sympathy because it was not their own making. The late husband's family had the responsibility of protecting her and providing for their brothers children. In some cases such women were inherited by a brother to the deceased or even a close relative. Such a man was to provide for the family needs and also assisting in parenting of the children.

Widowed single mothers were encouraged to remain in their late husband's home and they were not allowed to remarry for it would interfere with the continuity of the family lineage. Although such women were faced with challenges, they got assistance from their in-laws. The boy child was nurtured by the paternal uncles and grandfather, while the girl was taught by her mother, aunties and grandmother. These

children were not shunned or discriminated upon by the society; rather they were embraced and assisted whenever the need arose. Their existence brought hope and a sense of wellbeing to their father's family.

Maweto Single mothers were also part of the Akamba community and were as a result of woman to woman marriage. In cases where a married woman was unable to bear children, in agreement with her husband she would take up another woman who would bear children on her behalf. In most cases she would marry a single mother for she had already proved her fertility and ability to sire. These children bore her husband's name as their surname and were considered to be part of the family.

Maweto were also married by a woman who only begot daughters and was unable to beget a boy child. The *iweto* was then supposed to bear sons for the woman and assist her in continuing the family lineage. In the case that she too begot daughter only, then another *iweto* was married with the hope that she would beget sons. This shows the seriousness with which continuity of the family lineage was given among the Akamba.

The woman who married an *Iweto* became her "husband" and paid bride wealth to her family. However it is important to note that this was not a lesbian relationship and the *iweto* begot children with men. In some cases the "husband" would choose the man with whom the *iweto* begot children with while at other times she was free to choose the man. In some cases the woman would even allow her husband to sire children with the *iweto* on her behalf. This kind of single motherhood was acceptable among the Akamba and the woman was not seen to be immoral, because she was actually considered to be "married".

This type of single motherhood also helped in continuation of the family and it was considered to be an important part of the community.

Voluntary single motherhood was unheard of among the Akamba. This is because it was a taboo for an individual who was mature to remain unmarried. All girls were encouraged to get married and the girl's parents emphasized to them the importance of marriage. During initiation girls were taught their roles in marriage including how to take care of one's husband and children. Each girl looked forward to the marriage rite and was taught the societal expectations. Therefore single motherhood was not a common occurrence among the Akamba, however when it occurred it was tolerated due to the sanctity the people attached to life and children were an important part of the community.

3.8 Akamba Understanding and Parenting of The boy child and Girl child

Children are an important part of the community among the Akamba. The birth of a child brings joy and celebration not only to the parents but Also to the extended family and as such the community as a whole. Kinship plays a significant role and once a child is born he/she belongs to the entire community. Children are considered to be a blessing, a sign of fertility and continuity of the community.

Both the boy and girl child are an important part of the community, and the more children one had the wealthy he was considered to be. This is because many children would provide the much needed labor in farming and it leading to high productivity.

Girls were seen as assets who would get married and bring wealth to the family.

However the boy child was preferred by the community because they ensured continuity of the family lineage and woman who begot sons was highly regarded and

praised. Boys were seen to be a sign of security and providers in the home. They would also marry and ensure the expansion of the family and keep the family name alive. It was then necessary for each woman to at least have a son who would ensure that her name was preserved.

The quest for a boy child then led some women to result to *maweto* marriages, for they assisted in begetting the boy children. This happened in cases where the woman was barren or even had begotten daughters only. The children born by the “*iweto*” would bear the surname of the husband of the woman to which she was married; they were considered to be a part of that family and were not discriminated upon.

The roles of each individual in the family were formulated according to the Akamba norms and values and therefore role expectations were Complementary. Boys and girls played different roles and they were nurtured, trained and taught the societal expectations. The boy child was taught the value of hard work, being a responsible family head, his role as a protector of the family and the community as a whole as well as the importance of relationships. The boys then spend time with the father and grandfather from an early age, being taught riddles and proverbs which were meant to impart wisdom and values. They were also taught the art of making bores and arrows and how to use them as protectors of the community. Laziness was greatly discouraged and boys who hated work were reprimanded.

The boy was therefore an important person in the family for the more boys an homestead had the more secure it was. Young men were also trained on matters pertaining decision making in the family, because men were supposed to be decision

makers and arbitrators when disputes arose. The Akamba trained the boy child on adult roles and responsibilities from a young age.

The girl child was trained on female roles and responsibilities in preparation for her role as a mother and wife. The mother, grandmother and aunties acted as her teachers and assisted her in learning household chores, such as fetching water, collecting firewood, taking care of younger children and even assisting with farming. These were the roles that a girl was expected to play within the family. The girls were taught how to live a morally upright life and to avoid irresponsible behavior that could lead to premarital pregnancies.

3.9 Specific Challenges Akamba Single Mother Encounter in Parenting The boy child

Single mother households are a phenomenon which exists in every African community. The Akamba are no exception and this kind of household is part of the community. One has to appreciate the specific challenges the Akamba single mothers are confronted with in parenting especially the boy child as already done earlier.

3.10 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

With the rather comprehensive clarity of the crucial mode of feminism which Chapter Two handled, namely Christian Complementary Feminism, which is among the tools guiding our study, we were adequately equipped to delve into Chapter Three. This is the Chapter that has tackled the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting specifically the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County.

This Chapter mainly focused on the Akamba traditional holistic approach to the family, single mothers, children of both gender and the challenges experienced by single mothers in parenting especially the boy child. The Chapter looked at the various rites of passage that a child goes through right from the time of birth to the time he or she departs to join the world of the spiritualized ones who are also part of the community. The Chapter also brought out the importance of the family as an institution, and the various inter-dependent relationships that govern human interactions within the community that enhance family solidarity. More specifically, the Chapter will followed the following thematic sequence: Akamba traditional understanding of the family; birth among the Akamba; initiation rite among the Akamba; marriage rite among the Akamba; death rites among the Akamba; Akamba understanding and treatment of single mothers; Akamba understanding and parenting of the boy child and girl child; specific challenges Akamba single mother encounter in parenting the boy child; and Chapter's concluding remark. For the purpose of drawing out the parallels and differences the above Akamba related family values have with the Christian Doctrine in view of coming up with a more fruitful way forward in assisting Akamba single mothers to effect- fully confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child. the study turns to a more theological Chapter. This is the Chapter that investigates the Christian Doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND THEOLOGIANS' REFLECTIONS ON AND ABOUT FAMILY AND PARENTING

4.1 Introduction

After the tedious effort in investigating and analyzing the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County, this Chapter identifies and elaborates the Christian Doctrines and Theologians' reflections on and about Family and Parenting. To accomplish the task, the Chapter handles the following items namely: Vatican Council 11 Instructions; Synod of Bishops from Africa; Related instructions derived from the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church; Related reflections by theologians: Pope John Paul 11, Rodger Charles and Drostan Maclarem; and Chapter's concluding remarks. It does this with the finality of confronting them with the above Akamba values through the process of Inculturation with the goal of providing more meaningful way forward in view of the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County in the next Chapters.

4.2 Vatican Council 11 Instructions

The Second greatest Christian Ecumenical Council namely Vatican Council 11 (1962- 1965) sheds light here and there which is useful for our study. This is more so in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern Word i.e., *Gaudium et*

spes.⁸⁴ This pastoral Constitution indirectly supports our endeavor in the study. From its counsel, we draw out the issue of being actively concerned with the new questions, emerging worries and, indeed, contemporary family and parenting problems – in our case that of the challenges single mothers encounter in parenting especially the boy child. The instruction reads:

“The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of men 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. For theirs is a community composed of men, of men who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.”⁸⁶

These days, we witness not just married family aspect of homes and single mothers’ family aspect of homes. There is also the growing tension between raising both the boy child and girl child. This emerging conflict becomes even more serious in the case of single mothers mode of family-hood.

While some types of feminism, for instance Complementary Feminism, contribute towards family harmony despite being faced with the above challenges, others like radical feminism and lesbian feminism are real impediments and, indeed, obstacles to genuine family dynamic union. The latter stumbling blocks that result in family discord more so in the way they over-stress one gender and completely undermine the other. Instead of pointing out the healthy distinction between mothers and fathers,

⁸⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, no1 in A. Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council Documents New Revised Edition* (Northport, New York: Constello Publishing Company, 1975).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.930-904.

girl-child and boy-child, they aggressively propagate unacceptable division and split that is a grave danger to what the family ought to be. Mind you the family is the very core of society. If we destroy the family, we are done! If we seriously undermine the boy-child, we ruin the future of the family as intended by God.

Vatican Council II spells out the essential instructions on the above. This is how the Council puts it:

“The intimate partnership of life and the love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by Him with its proper laws: it is rooted in the contract of its partners...for God Himself is the author of marriage and has endowed it with various ends in view: all of these have a very important bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of every member of the family, on the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family and of the whole human race.”⁸⁷

The Council is explicit that: “By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory.”⁸⁸ As such, children, whatever their gender, have an inalienable right to be nurtured and properly parented. Indeed, “inspired by the example and family prayer of their parents, children, and in fact everyone living under the family roof, will more easily set out upon the path of a truly human training, of salvation, and holiness.”⁸⁹ On their part, and in their humble ways, daughters and sons are also duty bound to reciprocate the love of their mothers and fathers. As the Council puts it, “Children as living members of the family contribute in their own way to the sanctification of their parents. With sentiments of gratitude,

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.950.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.950.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.951.

affection and trust, they will repay their parents for the benefits given to them and will come to their assistance as devoted children in times of hardship and in the loneliness of old age.”⁹⁰

Despite the Council’s omission of other categories of single parenthood, nevertheless, the Council instructs that “widowhood, accepted courageously as a continuation of the calling to marriage, will be honored by all. Families will generously share their spiritual treasures with other families. The Christian family springs from marriage, which is an image and a sharing in the partnership of love between Christ and the Church; it will show forth to all men Christ’s presence in the world and the authentic nature of the Church by the love and generous fruitfulness of the spouses, by their unity and fidelity, and by the loving way in which all members of the family cooperate with each other.”⁹¹

In connection with the above teachings, the Council is more profound in instructing on mutual self-giving and complementarity in love. This is how it puts it: “The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection.”⁹²

Furthermore, according to the Church teaching on the above subject the finality of marriage is not just children (i.e., boys and girls) as the union’s fruits imbued with parenting cum education, the goal is also complementarity, mutual support and selfless contribution towards the welfare of the society.⁹³

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.951.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.951-952.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.952.

⁹³ GS, No.50.

4.3 Synod of Bishops from Africa

In the Synod of Bishops from Africa⁹⁴ more light is shed to our subject. We are reminded that in the Christian revelation, it is not a question of either mother or father, either girl-child or boy-child. The doctrine is that of both mothers and fathers, both girl-child and boy-child. All these form an integral institution under the umbrella of the Family of God (an image of the Church that emerged from the above African Synod).

To propagate this kind of healthy all inclusive harmonious family and family-hood is the gist of this study – the ongoing intended way forward/contribution. This is in the light of Akamba family values and, more so, Christian instructions in and through the Church. Here the Church is understood as “the place where personhood is fully realized since it joins heaven and earth and portrays the immortality that gives a person his or her ultimate meaning.”⁹⁵

The above also, in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism, assist the study to contribute in the growth of a blended family of girl-child and boy-child within the framework of all inclusive parenting more so with regard to single mothers.

In this light, the study dispels the darkness of dominating and dominated gender as well as enhanced and endangered sex. Instead, the study is aided to contribute in the realization and maturity of complementarity of the double distinctive gender. Moreover, the study gets a stronger base towards contributing to a reasonable healthy inter-relationship between two parents’ families and single mothers’ families in the common struggle of creating a proper disposition towards an inclusive parenting in

⁹⁴ Synod of Bishops.

⁹⁵ F. Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition*, p. xvii.

reference to both girl-child and boy-child within the above framework of the Church viewed as the Family of God. It has to be appreciated that: “The reality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is *remembered*, in the Biblical sense of the term, when it is correctly understood, communally experienced, sacramentally celebrated, and personally assimilated.”⁹⁶

Furthermore, from the above instructions emanating from the African Synod of Bishops helps in creating more awareness that the kind of family intended by the Savior and Redeemer is His whole non-segregated Body with each member equally important and not to be undermined – all playing their respective roles for the welfare of the family and the common-good of all. It is a Family guided and inspired by the Our Father Prayer as taught by Jesus Christ Himself (Mt 6:7ff; Lk 11: 2ff) whereby we are all brothers and sisters irrespective of our gender or matrimonial status.

4.4 Related Instructions Derived from the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church

To enrich the issue in this Chapter it is wise that we draw further important data on the Christian doctrine from CCC.⁹⁷

This authoritative resourceful document instructs that the solidarity intended in a family-set up and socialization and parenting is of immense importance. Indeed, “a man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.93.

⁹⁷ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994).

obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated.”⁹⁸

It has to be noted forthwith that, in the Christian teaching, marriage is one of the seven Sacraments in the Church. The other six are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Orders. It is instituted by God (CCC no 1603) and it is analogically likened to the covenant between Christ and the Church (CCC nos. 1617, 1661).

The relationships imbued in a family “bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members’ respect for one another. The family is a privileged community called to achieve a sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children’s upbringing”(CCC no. 2206). No gender then should be undermined or discriminated against. As such, “the family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor.” (CCC no. 2208). By implication, the family should reconsider the apparent neglect today’s boy-child without neglecting the girl-child in the process. It has to be admitted, however, that “there are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other families and, in a subsidiary way, society, to provide for their needs”(CCC. No. 2208) since “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (Jas 1:27).

Parents have to realize that: “A child is not something owed to one, but a gift...A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged ‘right to

⁹⁸ CCC, no 2202, pp.515-516.

a child' would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right 'to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents,' and 'the right to be respected as a person' from the moment of his conception."(CCC no. 2378). In case of sterility, it is commendable to adopt: "The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil...They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others."(CCC no. 2379). This gives credit particularly the mothers who acquire motherhood status through adoptive single motherhood. But there is a serious problem even here that needs to be taken with the seriousness it deserves i.e., many such women choose to adopt girl-child and very few opt for boy-child.

Both parents and children are required to contribute to the harmonious living in the family. It has to be realized that "filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns relationships between brothers and sisters. Respect towards parents fills the home with light and warmth" (CCC no. 2219). On their side "parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law"(CCC no. 2222). Such a teaching also implies that this obligation of duty has to be accomplished irrespective of the gender of the children bearing in mind that:

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education of in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound

judgment and self-mastery – the precondition of all true freedom...Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them“(CCC no.2223).

Furthermore, according to the Church teaching on the above subject the finality of marriage is not just children (i.e., boys and girls) as the union’s fruits imbued with parenting cum education. The goal is also complementarity, mutual support and selfless contribution towards the welfare of the society. This is how the Council puts it:

“Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children. Indeed children are the supreme gift of marriage and greatly contribute to the good of the parents themselves...Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life and to educate their children: they should realize that they are thereby cooperating with the love of God the Creator and are, in a certain sense, its interpreters. This involves the fulfillment of their role with a sense of human and Christian responsibility and formation of correct judgments through docile respect for God and common reflection and effort; it also involves a consideration of their own good and the good of their children already born or yet to come, an ability to read the signs of the times and their own situation on the material and spiritual level, and, finally, an estimation of the good of the family, of society, and of the Church.”⁹⁹

Viewing the family as the focal point in pedagogy, the Council has this to say:

“The family is, in a sense, a school for human enrichment. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, the married couple must practice an affectionate sharing of

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, GS. No.50, pp. 953-954.

thought and common deliberation as well as eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing. The active presence of the father is very important for their training: the mother, too, has a central role in the home, for the children, especially the younger children, depend on her considerably. The education of children should be such that when they grow up they will be able to follow their vocation, including a religious vocation, and choose their state of life with full consciousness of responsibility; and if they marry they should be capable of setting up a family in favorable moral, social, and economic circumstances. It is the duty of the parents and teachers to guide young people with prudent advice in the establishment of a family; their interest should make young people listen to them eagerly; and they should beware of exercising any undue influence, directly or indirectly, to force them into marriage or compel them in their choice of partner."¹⁰⁰

It is also instructive of the Council that:

"The family is the place where different generations come together and help one another to grow wiser and harmonize the rights of the individuals with other demands of social life; as such it constitutes the basis of society. Everyone, therefore, who exercises an influence in the community and in social groups, should devote himself effectively to the welfare of marriage and the family."¹⁰¹

The Council, furthermore, does well in reminding the Church and the society in general of their obligation of duty to get fully involved in ensuring the welfare of families in our contemporary situation in life and modern challenges. This is how it puts it:

"Christians, making full use of the times in which we live and carefully distinguishing the everlasting from changeable, should actively strive to promote the values of marriage and the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., GS no. 52, p.956.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., GS no.52, p.956.

family; it can be done by the witness of their own lives and by concerted action along with all men of good will; in this way they will overcome obstacles and make provision for the requirements and the advantages of family life arising at the present day. To this end the Christian instincts of the faithful, the right moral conscience of man, and the wisdom and skills of persons versed in sacred sciences will have much to contribute."¹⁰²

4.5 Related reflections by Theologians: Pope John Paul 11, Rodger Charles and Drostan Maclarem

Among the Christian theologians with valid investigations and reflections which add value to the study are Pope John Paul 11, Rodger Charles and Drostan Maclarem.

Christianity is emphatic on the invaluableity of motherhood. This comes out more clearly in **Pope John Paul 11** provides a monumental Letter on the dignity and vocation of women.¹⁰³ One of the striking passages in this regard is the one articulated in these words: "The dignity of every human being and the vocation corresponding to that dignity find their definitive measures in union with God. Mary the woman of the Bible, is the most complete expression of this dignity and vocation. For no human being, male or female, created in the image of God, can in any way attain fulfillment apart from this image and likeness."¹⁰⁴ This qualities of being human, are exemplified by Mother Mary of Nazareth who after the demise of Her husband Joseph entered into widowed single motherhood category making Her have an experiential knowledge of parenting and raising Her boy-child Jesus. After the death of Joseph.

¹⁰² Ibid., GS no.52, pp. 956-957.

¹⁰³ Pope John Paul 11, "*Mulieris Dignitatem*"(On the Dignity and Vocation of Women), in LR English Edition, N.40 (1058)- 3 October, 1988.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.2.

Mary single handedly managed to handle her children Jesus and we Her universal children effectively thus showing the power of a single mother. No wonder Pope John Paul asserts: "It is commonly thought that women are more capable than men of paying attention to another person, and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man -even with all his sharing in parenthood – always remains 'outside' the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to learn his own fatherhood from the mother."¹⁰⁵ This is a pointer to the fact that it is the prerogative of the mothers to instill harmonious living in a family no matter what gender one belongs to.

In view of the above, John Paul II is emphatic that "The Church gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine genius which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; She gives thanks for all the charisms which the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the people of God, for all the victories which She owes to their faith, hope and charity: She gives for all the fruits of feminine holiness."¹⁰⁶ He goes on to instruct as follows:

"Therefore the Church gives thanks to each and every woman: for mothers, for sisters, for wives, for women consecrated to God in virginity, for women dedicated to the many human beings...; for women who watch over human persons in the family, which is the fundamental sign of the of the human community; for women who work professionally, and who at times are burdened by a great social responsibility for 'perfect' women and for 'weak' women-for all women as they have come forth from the heart of God in all the beauty and richness of their femininity; as they have been embraced by His eternal love; as together with men, they are pilgrims on this earth, which is the temporal 'homeland' of all people and is transformed

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.13.

sometimes into a 'valley of tears'; as they assume together with men a common responsibility for the destiny of humanity according to daily necessities and according to that definitive destiny which the human family has in God Himself, in the bosom of the ineffable Trinity."¹⁰⁷

To crown the above, John Paul II accentuates the complementarity of gender as follows: "In the sphere of what is 'human'-of what is humanly personal 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are distinct, yet at the same time they complete and explain each other. This is also present in the great analogy of the 'Bride' in the Letter to the Ephesians. In the Church every human being-male and female-is the 'Bride', in that he or she accepts the gift of the love of Christ the Redeemer, and seeks to respond to it with the gift of his or her own person."¹⁰⁸

The above reflections by Pope John Paul II has brought out the value and indispensability of parenthood, motherhood and the prominent role mothers play in parenting. This, as we saw, is most explicit in the *Mulieris dignitatem*. While the document is critical on secular foundation of feminism, this Apostolic Letter provides a Christian foundation exemplified by the Family of Nazareth- an aspect which appeals so much to the Akamba community. Moreover, the veneration of Mary of Nazareth with the attribute "Mother of the Church" and "Our Mother" presenting Her as a perfect model of a mother and being motherly in parenting excites our subject matter. Among other things, the document critic and corrects exaggerated feminisms which trigger aspects of feminist/women liberation theologies that are hostile to motherhood and boy-child cum girl-child harmonious living and socialization in general and family welfare in general. Perhaps that is why Jutta Burgraff came up

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.9.

with a related article titled-“The Mother of the Church: A Correction of Feminist Theology Gone Astray.”¹⁰⁹The above conforms to the Akamba perception of motherhood and parenting as a blessing and not a *kiumo* (curse).

Rodger Charles and Drostan Maclarem examine and reflect on the social teaching of Vatican Council 11,¹¹⁰ which is of great value to the study, as follows: The Christian teaching on and about marriage, complementarity of the consorts (i.e. couples) is indispensably a major concern in Christianity. Indeed:

“The Christian understanding of marriage is that God instituted it to be the loving, lifelong partnership of one man and one woman in a total community of life so that of their love new life should come to be and be fostered to maturity. It is, therefore, a union between equals based on the equal personal dignity of man and woman. It is also, of its nature, an institution in which the law of man in society has an interest because it is in the children born of a stable and loving marriage relationship that the hope of the future of that society lies.”¹¹¹

This is an ideal the followers and disciples of Jesus are called upon to strive to achieve.

From the Christian teaching, marriage within the context of family, as willed by God “is the lasting love of one man for one woman which not only produces the physical act of procreation at a particular moment in time in that relationship, but also enables the child or children which may be born of the union, to be reared in the conditions which will best equip them, in their turn, to be useful members of society and fully developed human beings.”¹¹² One is also made aware that:

¹⁰⁹ J. Burgraff, “*The Mother of the Church: A Correction of Feminist Theology Gone Astray*,” in *The Church and Women: A Compendium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

¹¹⁰ R. Charles and D. Maclaren, *The Social Teaching of Vatican 11* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.115.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.116.

“Marriage is, of its nature, based on a personal pledge made by the partners to each other. But this personal attestation has a social dimension because it is from their love and in their love that the most basic of human societies, the family, is founded. These two aspects of marriage, 1) marriage as a personal attestation of the love of two individuals for one another, and 2) marriage as the basic human society, are inextricably linked and can in no way be separated.”¹¹³

Jesus Christ was very serious in His teaching on marriage, family and parenting: “His whole life and teaching reflected His love and respect for the Sacrament, and by example He showed an appreciation of its values. Though He never let His obligations to His parents interfere with His duty to fulfill His mission as Son of God, His love and respect for them is evident. His subjection to them in the hidden years at Nazareth being one of the greatest mysteries of His life on earth. His choice of marriage feast of Cana as the occasion of His first miracle indicates that, as a man of His time and His people, He was capable of entering into the joy of and happiness of the young couple. And throughout the New Testament His love and respect for children is touchingly apparent.”¹¹⁴ Moreover: “Though aware of the dangers that family ties could bring-especially the tendency to put the love of one’s own kind before God-these were aberrations He warned against, not defects of the institution in itself as God designed it.”¹¹⁵ Among the Biblical texts that confirm the issue are: Mk 5: 30-43; Mt. 19: 3ff; and Mt 18: 2ff.

A further instruction is that: “The Church’s understanding of marriage is theological, spiritual, sacramental-the theology of marriage which is based on Genesis and was

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.117.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.121.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

confirmed by Christ.”¹¹⁶In addition to this, it has to be understood that: “The essence of marriage , according to divine law, is fully understood and accepted personal commitment to an exclusive and lasting relationship based on mutual love and openness to new life; it follows that a marriage which lacks one or more of these characteristics in the beginning cannot be called marriage.”¹¹⁷

Despite the above instructions, the challenges we face today more so regarding wives, mothers and parenting are real:

“The debate on the place of woman in society is one of that is bound to grow as society changes and job opportunities for women increase. Yet it would be foolish to deny that influences which encourage many women to take up some form of occupation outside the home often have very little to do with the desire for fulfillment and a very great deal of to do with sheer economic necessity...Parents, at the same time, have the duty to resist an excessive materialism...”¹¹⁸

It is important to know that “like all social institutions, the family is conditioned by the needs and influences which are present in society at a particular time, and sociological and historical research is indeed teaching us a very great deal about such conditioning and its effects.”¹¹⁹ All these and what we elaborated previously confirm the validity and usefulness of the kind of task our study opted for.

4.6 Chapter’s Concluding Remarks

After the tedious effort in investigating and analyzing the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County in the previous

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 123.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.124.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.161.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.163.

Chapter, this Chapter identified and elaborated the Christian Doctrines and Theologians' reflections on and about Family and Parenting. To accomplish the task, the Chapter handled the following items namely: Vatican Council II Instructions; Synod of Bishops from Africa; Related instructions derived from the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church; Related reflections by theologians: Pope John Paul II, Rodger Charles and Drostan Maclarem; and Chapter's concluding remarks. It did this with the finality of confronting them with the above Akamba values through the process of Inculturation with the goal of providing more meaningful way forward in view of the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County in the next Chapters.

On the basis of the foregoing, we now endeavor to Inculturate the Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood using Akamba Religio-Cultural Values through Christian Complementary Feminism for Single Mothers fruitful the boy child parenting in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

INCULTURATING THE CHURCH DOCTRINE ON FAMILY, PARENTING AND MOTHERHOOD USING AKAMBA RELIGIO-CULTURAL VALUES THROUGH CHRISTIAN COMPLEMENTARY FEMINISM FOR SINGLE MOTHERS FRUITFUL PARENTING OF THE BOY CHILD

5.1 Introduction

On the basis of the above Chapter (Four), the study now endeavors to actually Inculturate the Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood using Akamba Religio-Cultural Values through Christian Complementary Feminism for Single Mothers which we examined in Chapter Three for a more fruitful boy- child parenting without ignoring the girl-child. The Chapter will handle this focusing on the following items namely: Explaining the nature of Inculturation, Identifying Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood; Identifying Akamba Religio-Cultural Values on Family, Parenting and Motherhood; Chapter's concluding remarks.

5.2 Explaining the nature of Inculturation

To tackle the issue in this Chapter, it is of immense importance that we first of all explain what Inculturation means. This is crucial since as indicated, Inculturation is the orientation the study opted for- though not ignoring liberation perspective. In fact, Inculturation pragmatically includes liberation. That is why we merge the two in our study but laying more emphasis on Inculturation. With these observations we now explain what Inculturation means.

It has to be noted forthwith that "Inculturation is one of the main approaches in ACT. It is a fundamental orientation employed by many prominent African Christian

theologians of international repute.”¹²⁰ This approach has such a close affinity with liberation approach such that the two are inter-twinned. For specificity’s sake, the study benefits from the following definitions for which we are indebted to P.N. Wachege¹²¹

According to J. M. Waliggo:

“Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and His message of salvation evermore understood by people of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and His Good News are even dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavor to make Christianity truly ‘feel at home’ in the cultures of each people.”

For Aylward Shorter:

“Inculturation is the ongoing dialogue between faith and cultures...It is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures.”

The Pontifical Council for Culture defines the term as follows:

“Inculturation can be defined as the effort by the Church to bring the message of Christ into a particular socio-cultural setting, while calling upon the latter to grow in accordance with all its own values, provided these are reconcilable with the Gospel”.

As for Laurenti Magesa:

“Inculturation is understood to be the process whereby the faith already embodied in one culture encounters another culture. In this encounter, the faith becomes part and parcel of this new culture. It fuses with the new culture and simultaneously transforms it into a novel religious-cultural reality.”

Pedro Arrupe gives even a more comprehensive definition in these words:

“Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds

¹²⁰ P.N. Wachege, *CRS 560: African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), p.112.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.112-114.

expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation'."

These and other such definitions "amounts to an authentic process of confronting Christianity/Gospel/Good News with our African cultures for mutual enrichment-with Christianity polishing, purifying and elevating our cultures for more fruitfulness."¹²²

As Wachege observes, the term Inculturation has related terms and their explanations. This is how he articulates it: "The concept 'Inculturation' is quite problematic. Different intellectuals give diverse concepts which normally have a lot in common. As we read different monographs, articles...and lecture notes on Inculturation theology, we encounter scholars who prefer to substitute the term 'Inculturation' with diverse terms.

Among the terms, we identify the ones below as more outstanding:

1. **INDIGENIZATION:** implying the localization and promotion of local Church personnel.
2. **CONTEXTUALIZATION:** theologizing within a particular context or situation in life.
3. **INCARNATION:** pointing at the concretization of Christianity among us in our pluriformity of respective God-given cultures. In other words, it implies taking the monumental Incarnation phenomenon of Jesus of Nazareth as our perfect model in realizing and actualizing Christianity in every milieu, every single culture and all times and changing generations. It is figuratively speaking-if we can use a materialistic conception-putting flesh on Christian message making it thoroughly concrete so that we may not just understand it but also hear it, smell it, touch it, taste it, chew it...and, indeed, digest and LIVE it in order to be of transforming salvific value to us.

¹²² P.N. Wachege, *ibid.* p. 114.

4. REFORMULATION: understanding and interpreting the Christian doctrine in the thought-forms, mentality and language that is more comprehensible.
5. ADAPTATION: connoting a kind of intelligent copying. It has to do with owning the message creatively. The main concern here is not just Christianizing the indigenous cultural values and elements. It has to do with the Africanisation of Christianity too- hence the mutual enrichment between the two namely, African items and Christianity- with Christianity as the point of reference that takes the priority.
6. INTERCULTURATION: implying a vital exchange between and among the cultures. It is an essential dialogue between cultures in doing and living theology as an after-effect of our world becoming a global village and, indeed, the essence of Christianity as both missionary and cultural. As such, the inter-relatedness, the inter-dependence and mutuality of cultures in the continuous endeavor of Inculturation is demanded."¹²³

Our study opts for the term "Inculturation" while appreciating the values of the above other related terms. The rationale behind this is that "the term INCULTURATION contains and expresses best and most coherently our contemporary African trend of understanding, presenting and concretely interpreting Christianity in accordance with our African people's aspirations, needs, thought-forms and mentality. We find it more explicit in our approach and effort of confronting the Gospel with our African culture(s) for mutual enrichment, fruitfulness -and correction cum elevation on the side of our cultures."¹²⁴

Having elaborated the nature of Inculturation in relation to the study, we are now in a position to document the similarities and differences between the Church Doctrine on family, parenting and motherhood treated in Chapter Four and the Akamba religio-cultural values on family, parenting and motherhood in the realm of the Challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism which we handled in Chapter Three. To avoid making the study too voluminous, we will itemize the main issues on the

¹²³ *ibid.*, pp.114-115.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p.115.

former and then do the same with the latter. In this way, the reader will easily notice the parallels and differences between the two as well as the mutual enrichment.

5.3 Identifying Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood

From Chapter Four, the following main issues are drawn on the Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood showing the differences and similarities with the Akamba religio-cultural values on family, parenting and motherhood:

The pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* indirectly supports our endeavor in the study. From its counsel, we are made to know that the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of men 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. For theirs is a community composed of men, of men who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all men;

These days, we witness not just married family aspect of homes and single mothers' family aspect of homes. There is also the growing tension between raising both the boy child and girl child. This emerging conflict becomes even more serious in the case of single mothers mode of family-hood:

While some types of feminism, for instance Complementary Feminism, contribute towards family harmony despite being faced with the above challenges, others like radical feminism and lesbian feminism are real impediments and, indeed, obstacles to genuine family dynamic union. The latter stumbling blocks that result in family

discord more so in the way they over-stress one gender and completely undermine the other;

Vatican Council II spells out that the intimate partnership of life and the love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by Him with its proper laws: it is rooted in the contract of its partners...for God Himself is the author of marriage and has endowed it with various ends in view: all of these have a very important bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of every member of the family, on the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family and of the whole human race;

The Council also instructs that by its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory. As such, children, whatever their gender, have an inalienable right to be nurtured and properly parented;

The Council also reminds us that children as living members of the family contribute in their own way to the sanctification of their parents. With sentiments of gratitude, affection and trust, they will repay their parents for the benefits given to them and will come to their assistance as devoted children in times of hardship and in the loneliness of old age:

Despite the Council's omission of other categories of single parenthood, nevertheless, the Council instructs that "widowhood, accepted courageously as a continuation of the calling to marriage, will be honored by all. Families will generously share their spiritual treasures with other families. The Christian family springs from marriage, which is an image and a sharing in the partnership of love between Christ and the Church: it will show forth to all men Christ's presence in the world and the authentic nature of the Church by the love and generous fruitfulness of the spouses, by their unity and fidelity, and by the loving way in which all members of the family cooperate with each other;"¹²⁵

In connection with the above teachings, the Council is more profound in instructing on mutual self-giving and complementarity in love. This is how it puts it: "The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection;"¹²⁶

Furthermore, according to the Church teaching on the above subject the finality of marriage is not just children (i.e., boys and girls) as the union's fruits imbued with parenting cum education. the goal is also complementarity, mutual support and selfless contribution towards the welfare of the society;¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, pp.951-952.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p.952.

¹²⁷ GS. No.50.

In the Synod of Bishops from Africa¹²⁸ more light is shed to our subject. We are reminded that in the Christian revelation, it is not a question of either mother or father, either girl-child or boy-child. The doctrine is that of both mothers and fathers, both girl-child and boy-child. All these form an integral institution under the umbrella of the Family of God (an image of the Church that emerged from the above African Synod);

The above also, in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism, assist the study to contribute in the growth of a blended family of girl-child and boy-child within the framework of all inclusive parenting more so with regard to single mothers.

In this light, the study dispels the darkness of dominating and dominated gender as well as enhanced and endangered sex. Instead, the study is aided to contribute in the realization and maturity of complementarity of the double distinctive gender;

Moreover, the study gets a stronger base towards contributing to a reasonable healthy inter-relationship between two parents' families and single mothers' families in the common struggle of creating a proper disposition towards an inclusive parenting in reference to both girl-child and boy-child within the above framework of the Church viewed as the Family of God. It has to be appreciated that: "The reality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is *remembered*, in the Biblical sense of the term. when it is correctly understood, communally experienced, sacramentally celebrated, and personally assimilated;"¹²⁹

Furthermore, from the above instructions emanating from the African Synod of Bishops helps in creating more awareness that the kind of family intended by the

¹²⁸ Synod of Bishops.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.93.

Savior and Redeemer is His whole non-segregated Body with each member equally important and not to be undermined – all playing their respective roles for the welfare of the family and the common-good of all. It is a Family guided and inspired by the Our Father Prayer as taught by Jesus Christ Himself (Mt 6:7ff; Lk 11: 2ff) whereby we are all brothers and sisters irrespective of our gender or matrimonial status within a marriage of one man one woman;

From CCC,¹³⁰ which is an authoritative resourceful document, we are instructed that the solidarity intended in a family-set up and socialization and parenting is of immense importance. Indeed, “a man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated;”¹³¹

It was noted that, in the Christian teaching, marriage is one of the seven Sacraments in the Church. The other six are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Orders. It is instituted by God (CCC no 1603) and it is analogically likened to the covenant between Christ and the Church (CCC nos. 1617, 1661).

The relationships imbued in a family “bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members’ respect for one another. The family is a privileged community called to achieve a sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the

¹³⁰ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994).

¹³¹ CCC, no. 2202, pp.515-516.

children's upbringing"(CCC no. 2206). No gender then should be undermined or discriminated against;

Also indicated is that parents have to realize that: "A child is not something owed to one, but a gift...A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged 'right to a child' would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right 'to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents,' and 'the right to be respected as a person' from the moment of his conception."(CCC no. 2378). In case of sterility, it is commendable to adopt: "The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil...They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others."(CCC no. 2379);

This gives credit particularly to the mothers who acquire motherhood status through adoptive single motherhood. But there is a serious problem even here that needs to be taken with the seriousness it deserves i.e., many such women choose to adopt girl-child and very few opt for boy-child.

Both parents and children are required to contribute to the harmonious living in the family. It has to be realized that "filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns relationships between brothers and sisters. Respect towards parents fills the home with light and warmth" (CCC no. 2219).

Such a teaching also implies that this obligation of duty has to be accomplished irrespective of the gender of the children bearing in mind that: "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this

responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education of in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment and self-mastery – the precondition of all true freedom...Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their fno.2223);

Furthermore, according to the Church teaching on the above subject the finality of marriage is not just children (i.e., boys and girls) as the union's fruits imbued with parenting cum education. The goal is also complementarity, mutual support and selfless contribution towards the welfare of the society;

Viewing the family as the focal point in pedagogy, the Council has this to say:

“The family is, in a sense, a school for human enrichment. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, the married couple must practice an affectionate sharing of thought and common deliberation as well as eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing. The active presence of the father is very important for their training: the mother, too, has a central role in the home, for the children, especially the younger children, depend on her considerably. The education of children should be such that when they grow up they will be able to follow their vocation, including a religious vocation, and choose their state of life with full consciousness of responsibility; and if they marry they should be capable of setting up a family in favorable moral, social, and economic circumstances. It is the duty of the parents and teachers to guide young people with prudent advice in the establishment of a family; their interest should make young people listen to them

eagerly; and they should beware of exercising any undue influence, directly or indirectly, to force them into marriage or compel them in their choice of partner;”¹³²

The Council, furthermore, does well in reminding the Church and the society in general of their obligation of duty to get fully involved in ensuring the welfare of families in our contemporary situation in life and modern challenges.”¹³³

Pope John Paul 11 provides a monumental Letter on the dignity and vocation of women.¹³⁴ We saw that one of the striking passages in this regard is the one articulated in these words: “The dignity of every human being and the vocation corresponding to that dignity find their definitive measures in union with God. Mary the woman of the Bible, is the most complete expression of this dignity and vocation. For no human being, male or female, created in the image of God, can in any way attain fulfillment apart from this image and likeness;”¹³⁵

This qualities of being human, are exemplified by Mother Mary of Nazareth who after the demise of Her husband Joseph entered into widowed single motherhood category making Her have an experiential knowledge of parenting and raising Her boy-child Jesus. After the death of Joseph, Mary single handedly managed to handle her children Jesus and we Her universal children effectively thus showing the power of a single mother; Pope John Paul asserts: “It is commonly thought that women are more capable than men of paying attention to another person, and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man -even with all his sharing in

¹³² Ibid., GS no. 52, p.956.

¹³³ Ibid., GS no.52, pp. 956-957.

¹³⁴ Pope John Paul 11, “*Mulieris Dignitatem*”(On the Dignity and Vocation of Women), in LR English Edition, N.40 (1058)- 3 October, 1988.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.2.

parenthood – always remains ‘outside’ the process of pregnancy and the baby’s birth; in many ways he has to learn his own fatherhood from the mother.”¹³⁶ This is a pointer to the fact that it is the prerogative of the mothers to instill harmonious living in a family no matter what gender one belongs to;

In view of the above, John Paul II is emphatic that “The Church gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine genius which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; She gives thanks for all the charisms which the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the people of God, for all the victories which She owes to their faith, hope and charity: She gives for all the fruits of feminine holiness;”¹³⁷

To crown the above, it was noted that John Paul II accentuates the complementarity of gender as follows: “In the sphere of what is ‘human’-of what is humanly personal ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ are distinct, yet at the same time they complete and explain each other. This is also present in the great analogy of the ‘Bride’ in the Letter to the Ephesians. In the Church every human being-male and female-is the ‘Bride’, in that he or she accepts the gift of the love of Christ the Redeemer, and seeks to respond to it with the gift of his or her own person;”¹³⁸

The above reflections by Pope John Paul II has brought out the value and indispensability of parenthood, motherhood and the prominent role mothers play in parenting. This, as we saw, is most explicit in the *Mulieris dignitatem*. While the document is critical on secular foundation of feminism, this Apostolic Letter provides

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.8.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.13.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.9.

a Christian foundation exemplified by the Family of Nazareth- an aspect which appeals so much to the Akamba community;

Rodger Charles and Drostan Maclarem highlighted the social teaching of Vatican Council 11,¹³⁹ which is of great value to the study, as follows: The Christian teaching on and about marriage, complementarity of the consorts (i.e. couples) is indispensably a major concern in Christianity. Indeed: “The Christian understanding of marriage is that God instituted it to be the loving, lifelong partnership of one man and one woman in a total community of life so that of their love new life should come to be and be fostered to maturity. It is, therefore, a union between equals based on the equal personal dignity of man and woman. It is also, of its nature, an institution in which the law of man in society has an interest because it is in the children born of a stable and loving marriage relationship that the hope of the future of that society lies.”¹⁴⁰ This is an ideal the followers and disciples of Jesus are called upon to strive to achieve;

From the Christian teaching, marriage within the context of family, as willed by God “is the lasting love of one man for one woman which not only produces the physical act of procreation at a particular moment in time in that relationship, but also enables the child or children which may be born of the union, to be reared in the conditions which will best equip them, in their turn, to be useful members of society and fully developed human beings;”¹⁴¹

We were also aware that: “Marriage is, of its nature, based on a personal pledge made by the partners to each other. But this personal attestation has a social dimension

¹³⁹ R. Charles and D. Maclaren, *The Social Teaching of Vatican 11* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.115.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.116.

because it is from their love and in their love that the most basic of human societies, the family, is founded. These two aspects of marriage, 1) marriage as a personal attestation of the love of two individuals for one another, and 2) marriage as the basic human society, are inextricably linked and can in no way be separated;”¹⁴²

It was made explicit that Jesus Christ was very serious in His teaching on marriage, family and parenting: “His whole life and teaching reflected His love and respect for the Sacrament, and by example He showed an appreciation of its values. Though He never let His obligations to His parents interfere with His duty to fulfill His mission as Son of God, His love and respect for them is evident, His subjection to them in the hidden years at Nazareth being one of the greatest mysteries of His life on earth. His choice of marriage feast of Cana as the occasion of His first miracle indicates that, as a man of His time and His people, He was capable of entering into the joy of and happiness of the young couple. And throughout the New Testament His love and respect for children is touchingly apparent;”¹⁴³

A further instruction is that: “The Church’s understanding of marriage is theological, spiritual, sacramental—the theology of marriage which is based on Genesis and was confirmed by Christ.”¹⁴⁴In addition to this, it has to be understood that: “The essence of marriage, according to divine law, is fully understood and accepted personal commitment to an exclusive and lasting relationship based on mutual love and openness to new life; it follows that a marriage which lacks one or more of these characteristics, in the beginning cannot be called marriage;”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ibid., p.117.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.121.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.124.

Despite the above instructions, it was pointed out that the challenges we face today more so regarding wives, mothers and parenting are real: “The debate on the place of woman in society is one of that is bound to grow as society changes and job opportunities for women increase. Yet it would be foolish to deny that influences which encourage many women to take up some form of occupation outside the home often have very little to do with the desire for fulfillment and a very great deal of to do with sheer economic necessity...Parents, at the same time, have the duty to resist an excessive materialism...;”¹⁴⁶

In addition to the above, awareness was created that it is important to know that “like all social institutions, the family is conditioned by the needs and influences which are present in society at a particular time, and sociological and historical research is indeed teaching us a very great deal about such conditioning and its effects.”¹⁴⁷ All these and what we elaborated previously, confirm the validity and usefulness of the kind of task our study opted for. Let us now itemize the Akamba Religio-Cultural Values on Family, Parenting and Motherhood identified in the previous Chapter as the study’s step in showing the divergences and convergences with the above and the mutual complementarity involved.

5.4 Identifying Akamba Religio-Cultural Values on Family, Parenting and Motherhood

From Chapter Three, the following main issues are drawn on the Akamba religio-cultural values on family, parenting and motherhood showing the differences and similarities with the Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood – geared

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.161.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.163.

towards assisting the Akamba single mothers to fruitfully confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child:

As observed in the previous Chapter, in the Akamba community both gender, i.e. the boy child and girl child, undergo initiation rites. As boys go through the rites, they are introduced and socialized into masculine affairs and how to relate in friendship, respect and love with girls. Girls too are subjected to the same but from the feminine perspective. The members of the two genders are pedagogically socialized into issues of puberty, sacrality, communality and how to inter-relate with the opposite sex in friendship, respect, love and complementarity.

In these the traditional Akamba do not discriminate between the boy child or girl child, married mothers' children or single mothers' children. Their main concern, as explained previously, is to support growth into manhood for the boy child and maturing into womanhood for the girl child in an integrated parenting of both.

Children of both sexes are helped and encouraged to share what their specific gender allows and are actually psyched to dance together, eat together, "sleep together" and make genuine merriment in unison as brothers and sisters of the same vibrant community thereby solidifying their mutual respect, support for one another and realization of their respective families in the future for the continuity of the community as potential parents.

As we saw in the previous Chapter, rites of passage are meant for both the boy child and the girl child for ritual upward mobility within the community. Each stage demands not just more rights but also heavier responsibilities. It is also a pointer to a higher degree of caring for one another.

Another very important idea that emerged from the anthropological Chapter is that initiating boys and girls brings about a bond between the two sexes which they guard well as age-mates. Such Akamba traditional age-units do not tolerate any discrimination of one as a boy child or as a girl child. The reason for this is that both initiates enjoy their respective yet inter-related existentially acquired privileges. With such inter-related age-set complementarity, the traditional Akamba prepared the members of the two genders as potential parents in their adulthood.

It was also explained that the Akamba rites of passage subjected to the boy child and girl

child - the future family establishers as parents of boys and girls - gradually transform the members of the two genders to responsible non-discriminating parents.

In addition to the above, it was pointed out that participatory conviviality like that of dancing together and pedagogy on life values irrespective of one's gender or whether one is from both parents' families or single mothers' families instills mutual respect, privileges, support towards actualizing one's potentials and moral uprightness in an atmosphere where one feels loved, wanted, important and spontaneously supported for self fulfillment.

Another insight the Chapter enriches us with is that respective sponsors, in collaboration with the parents, imparted values towards children indiscriminately. In this way, they ensured that no child is sidelined because of one's gender. Failure to be thus impartial is a sure of inviting a curse for violating the taboo of not being properly involved or neglect of participating as one should towards the realization of family solidarity.

The anthropological Chapter also informs that customary instruction by the elders, parents and sponsors on healthy sexual interaction, corresponding duties for the common good not only wiped out discrimination of sexes. The practice also eliminated sexual deviations on the side of the boy child and girl child which are detrimental to marriage, parenthood and proper parenting more explicit in polygamous marriages.

Thanks to Akamba traditional commitment to polygamy, which is incompatible to the type of marriage propagated by Christianity, single motherhood is minimized and the challenges of parenting especially the boy child single handedly very much curtailed. Such traditional precautions like polygamy, which is still not accepted by Christianity

which is conservative with the doctrine of one man one woman in marriage/monogamy, are useful in assisting single mothers with regard to parenting especially the boy child.

Another vital thing that came out is that the Akamba practice of involving resourceful adult male and female sponsors and ethnic educators like sage philosophers in attending equally to both the boy child and girl child more so in pubertal rites is extremely beneficial. It is very useful particularly in preparing both initiatically as males and females towards adulthood as potential fathers and mothers in respective families with the empowerment of integrally parenting children of both genders.

Furthermore, another crucial item that stands out from the anthropological Chapter is that the traditional Akamba have well established social, cultural, existential and religious practices and teachings into which both the boy child and girl child are theoretically and practically educated into step by step- even in proper sexual intercourse affairs- towards a successful marriage, establishing healthy families as well as properly effective parenting of both the boy child and girl child. They are spontaneously given beneficial advices, challenging test ordeals to prove themselves in case of difficulties and calamities. They are pedagogically socialized with mature personality values to help them stand up in life and living as grown up men with virility accomplishing what is expected of them as heads of the families and mature women asserting their femininity and being proud of being mothers of the boy child, girl child and motherly to their husbands- both appreciating their complementarity knowing very well the indispensability of inter-relating harmoniously supporting one another to realize growth in maturity, love and beingness as necessary partners journeying on towards ancestral yonder life with the highest more accomplished oneness.

The above is a summary of some of the issues drawn from Chapter Three on the Akamba Religio-Cultural Values on Family, Parenting and Motherhood. Observing them side by side with the Christian teachings itemized earlier, one is able, by oneself, to find out the similarities and differences between the two. One is, furthermore able to notice the mutual enrichment that stands out which should help a great deal in assisting particularly the Akamba single mothers more so in Mwala District Machakos County in parenting especially the endangered the boy child.

5.5 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

On the basis of Chapter Three and Chapter Four, this Chapter has made an effort in actually Inculturating the Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood using Akamba Religio-Cultural Values through Christian Complementary Feminism for Single Mothers fruitful the boy child parenting. The Chapter has handled this by focusing on the following items namely: Explaining the nature of Inculturation, Identifying Church Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Motherhood; Identifying Akamba Religio-Cultural Values on Family, Parenting and Motherhood. All these, together with what we investigated in the previous Chapters empower us to draw out invaluable consequences of the Study in Chapter Six which will, logically, be the concluding Chapter imbued with emerging brief reflections, recommendations and general conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

On the basis of Chapter Five, together with what we investigated in the previous Chapters we are now empowered, and indeed enabled, to draw out invaluable summary and consequences of the Study in this Chapter Six. It will thus follow the following sequence: Spiritual Implications of the Study; Catechetical Implications of the Study; Pastoral implications; and Chapter's Conclusion. These will be of great importance in assisting the Akamba single mothers in Mwala District Machakos County in parenting and, more so, in fruitfully handling the numerous challenges they face in parenting the boy child.

6.2 Spiritual Implications of the Study

The study is imbued with various aspects that are good for enhancing one's spirituality. Our effort in inculcating Akamba family values and the accompanying rituals in the light of the teachings of the Church and related reflections by renowned Christian theologians will go a long way in supporting the Akamba single mothers in their call to parent even the boy child better despite the numerous challenges such mothers face in this regard. They will be enabled to be better parents although they have the burden of having a double-pronged role i.e. being both mothers and fathers of not just girl child but also the boy child. With such an enabling from our study, such Akamba mothers will better understand that:

“Christian spirituality is the cultivation of a style of life consistent with the presence of the Spirit of the Risen Christ within us and with our status as members of the Body of Christ. Christian

spirituality has to do with our way of being Christian, in response to the call of God, issued through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality, therefore, is Trinitarian, Christological, Ecclesial, and Pneumatological. It is rooted in the life of the triune God, focused on Jesus Christ, situated in the Church, and ever responsive to the Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁸

The study will also help them to know that: "Spirituality is also visionary, Sacramental, relational, and transformational...visionary in that it involves a new way of seeing reality and of seeing through things to their spiritual core...To be spiritually Christian is to live always in relation with others: with our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ and in the human community at large."¹⁴⁹ They will, moreover, be well disposed to own Vatican II's teaching that:

"This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is maintained by the spiritual helps common to all the faithful, chiefly by active participation in the liturgy. Laypeople should make such a use of these helps that, while meeting their human obligations in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate their union with Christ from their ordinary life; but through the very performance of their tasks, which are God's will for them, actually promote the growth of their union with Him. This is a path along which the laypeople must advance, fervently, joyfully, overcoming difficulties with prudent patient efforts. Family cares should not be foreign to their spirituality, nor any other temporal interest."¹⁵⁰

Furthermore, the study has encouraged the Akamba single mothers to thank God for the gift of Akamba family and parenting values which, in the light of Christianity and through Christian Complementary Feminism will assist them a great deal in facing the

¹⁴⁸ R. McBrien, *Catholicism, Study Edition*, pp. 1057-1058.

¹⁴⁹ R. McBrien, *Catholicism, Study Edition*, p.1058.

¹⁵⁰ A. Flannery, *Vatican II Council: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, New Revised Ed.* (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 769-770.

parental difficulties they are faced with influencing them to be exemplary mothers playing a vital role in the Church viewed as the Family of God. This crucial liberated transformation will radically enhance their spirituality as mothers, not just to their children, but to other families within the philosophy of Akamba traditional cum religio perception of family community relationality.

6.3 Catechetical Implications of the Study

Catechetical Implications of the Study have a close affinity with the above spiritual implications. The study will go a long way in not only supporting the Akamba single mothers in their the boy child parenting ordeal. It will also assist the Church Pastors and Priests in transforming their approach in their pastoral care to the Akamba single mothers and their children -particularly the boy child- for a more beneficial propagation of the Good News particularly in the indispensable area of family apostolate.

With the awareness that “the name *catechesis* was given to the totality of the Church’s efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they may have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ,”¹⁵¹ they will be better psyched to play their parenting role knowing that as they do so they are playing an important part in evangelization.

In this way, such single mothers will not only deepen their understanding of family. They will also help their respective families to grow in faith in all despite the challenges they encounter since, as the Church instructs: “Catechesis is the *education in the faith* of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian

¹⁵¹ CCC, no 4., p.30.

doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.”¹⁵²

Moreover, thanks to the study, such mothers will appreciate better that: “While not being identified with them, catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church’s pastoral mission which have a catechetical aspect, that prepares for catechesis, or spring from it. They are: the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching to arouse faith; examination of the reasons for belief; experience of Christian living; celebration of the Sacraments; integration into the ecclesial community; and apostolic and missionary witness.”¹⁵³ Equipped with such understanding will empower these mothers to catechize, not just their own but also others mothers’ the boy children and girl children indiscriminately.

Furthermore, our study will provide the pastoral agents, i.e. the Pastors and Priests, with better means of transforming their catechesis in a manner that touches the Akamba single mothers in parenting the boy child and the girl child too which minimizes the numerous challenges they face in our contemporary society.

6.4 Pastoral Implications of the study

What has been documented on both Spiritual Implications of the Study and Catechetical Implications of the Study have a close affinity with the Pastoral Implications of the study. This is so because the three realms are essentially related. They are inter-related. They thus shed light to each other as intertwined entities. On the basis of the above, both the single mothers and the ordained ministers of the Church are made to

¹⁵² CCC, no 5, p.30

¹⁵³ CCC, no. 6, p. 30.

revisit their pastoral approach with regard to the issue of parenting the boy child- but not, as earlier explained, at the expense of the girl child. Our study will assist in bringing about a new more fruitful as well as appropriate pastoral approach on the above ministry. This is a call to the clergy not to lord it over women/mothers but to involve them as important partners in the growth and realization of the family of God.

It is also of immense importance to take into account the reflections we explicated earlier by Karl Rahner on education that: "Both for her own sake and on behalf of those entrusted to her care woman must learn that faith is not a kind of folklore, not in any sense like the sort of heritage of local customs that are handed down from one generation to the next, and which woman's temperament and her readiness to find security in what she can take for granted make her particularly prone to opt for. But woman must learn that so far from this faith is in fact the exercise of the most elemental, radical and irreversible kind of decision."¹⁵⁴

Another thing is that as the anthropological Chapter clarified, both the boy child and the girl child undergo integrated though distinctive upbringing and socialization. They do so, as explained, through well organized Complementary initiation rituals. These are properly organized rites that help the children of both genders to appreciate their distinctiveness and to be proud of the fact that they complement one another and that, without the other one is not fulfilled. Such a personal yet communal relationality is something that can be of great help, not just with regard to single mothers being assisted in parenting the boy child. It is of great help to all in playing their part towards realizing the gist of the Church viewed as the Family of God which caters for the welfare of all in

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.92.

their respective challenges. We suggest that a better implementation of this would be at Parish level prior to extending the apostolate to a larger geographical locality. Why the study proposes such an approach is that: “The ecclesial community, while always having a universal dimension, finds its most immediate and visible expression in the Parish. It is there that the Church is seen locally. In a sense it is the Church living in the midst of the homes of Her sons and daughters. It is necessary that in light of the faith all rediscover the true meaning of the Parish, that is, the place where the very ‘mystery’ of the Church is present and at work, even if at times it is lacking persons and means, even if at other times it might be scattered over vast territories or almost not to be found in crowded and chaotic modern sections of cities. The Parish is... ‘the Family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit’, ‘a familial and welcoming home’...founded on a theological reality, because it is a Eucharistic community...a community properly suited for celebrating the Eucharist, the living source for its up building and the Sacramental bond of its being in full communion with the whole Church.”¹⁵⁵

To the credit of the study, one gets a more fruitful contribution in the three-pronged areas namely: pastoral, catechetical and spiritual which will hopefully go a long way in assisting the Akamba single mothers in Mwala District Machakos County to confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child in particular and the girl child in general. Also, as earlier elaborated, the beneficiaries of the study are not a confine of the above. Other parents from other regions will also benefit since, to our understanding, such challenges are not confined to those in the above locality. In this way, it may rightly be affirmed that the study we undertook adds value to the world of knowledge and has

¹⁵⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Vacation and Mission of the Lay Faithful: Apostolic Exhortation “Christifideles Laici”* (Nairobi: St Paul Communications-Africa, 1988), pp. 70f.

also made its contribution towards the realization of an integrated Complementary Family of God irrespective of parental status or gender of the child(ren).

6.5 Chapter's Conclusion

Those are the summary of the study as well as the spiritual, catechetical and spiritual implications of the study. The conviction is that they are of great help with regard to the issue of integral parenting and the welfare of single mothers in parenting particularly the boy child.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This last Chapter handles the recommendations drawn from the previous Chapters. It also provides the conclusion to the study.

7.2 Emerging Recommendations

The following are among the recommendations draw from the study:

1. That over-emphasis on girl child and undermining the boy child has caused a serious problem in parenting- more so among the single mothers.
2. That while endeavoring to correct this partial approach to parenting, care should be taken not to be swallowed up in the other extreme of accentuating on the boy child at the expense of the girl child.
3. That Christian Complementary Feminism should be taken with the seriousness it deserves since, as the study has explicated, it provides one of the best means for investigating the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child with the finality of contributing to the solution.
4. That investigating the challenges of Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in the light of Christian Complementary Feminism in Mwala District, Machakos County ensures family solidarity despite the stumbling blocks single mothers encounter in parenting the boy child.

5. That a critical perusal of the Christian doctrine and theologians' reflections on and about family and parenting provides a strong stance towards solving the problems single mother encounter in parenting the boy child.
6. That there are invaluable implications that can be drawn from the study which are useful for assisting Akamba single mothers to productively confront the challenges they encounter in parenting the boy child namely: Spiritual; Catechetical; and Pastoral.
7. That, as the study brought to awareness, proxy- fatherhood should be encouraged and single mothers be persuaded to prudently invite such males to fill up fatherliness gap.
8. That the Roman Catholic Church's phenomenon of Small Christian Communities where diverse neighboring families naturally assemble and interact with deep inter-family relationship should be encouraged so that the parents of both gender may understand better and support one another.
9. That an understanding implementation of complementary feminism and theory of diverse causes of single motherhood triggering respective difficulties assist in the realization of the ideal Family of God where all are at home and none is discriminated against. In this way, the study will have managed to create awareness of having families within a Family thus going a long way in solving the challenges single mothers encounter in parenting and socializing particularly the boy child in the contemporary society.

These are some of the recommendations that are drawn from the study which will play a great part in assisting not just the Akamba single mothers but others as well

in fruitfully handling the challenges of parenting particularly the boy child in our in today's society.

7.3 Conclusion

The analysis and investigations the study has made in contrasting the Akamba traditional perception of family, holistic parenting devoid of gender discrimination, communality, integrated relationality ensuring a healthy family solidarity with the teaching of Christianity and renowned theologians' related reflections is of immense importance. Among the most important, as explicated in the study, are the many areas in which the Akamba values have in common with Christianity in view of authentic all embracing parenting.

This, as the study explicated, came out well by utilizing Christian complementary feminism. It is also as a result of the theories the study employed like that of L. Boff's mediation theory.

What should then come to the mind of the reader is that the above Akamba family values- perfected by Christian related teachings- when critically taken with the seriousness they deserve- can go a long way in assisting the Akamba single mothers in overcoming the demanding difficulties they face in rearing and socializing specifically the boy child in our kind of contemporary situation of life and living. This is a situation whereby the boy child is virtually undermined through exaggerated accentuation on girl child.

The above integrated approach to parenting will guide and guard from shifting to the other extreme namely, over-emphasizing the boy child at the expense of the girl child.

Such a responsibility requires a lot of prudence more so on the side of the single mothers since, unlike the married ones who have explicit fathers to provide the equilibrium in

parenting, the single mothers are both the fathers and the mothers- and they happen to be women NOT men. Hence the indispensability of enriching themselves with the positive Akamba family values which are, in some areas, corrected and elevated by the Christian teaching and theologians' genuine related reflections. This will help them maintain an authentic family solidarity despite their singleness.

Moreover, our study's outcome is not for the benefit of Akamba single mothers only in a more fruitful parenting the boy child in particular. The above are values imbued in other ethnic groups which such groups should dig deep into for such benefits taking our study as their humble model.

The bottom-line is that, as a result of our study's findings, such cultural valuable elements are henceforth to be humbly accepted as God-given. They are good when investigated properly especially through Christian Complementary Feminism imbued with the related Christian Doctrines and theologians genuine reflections in fruitfully handling the challenges of not just the Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child in Mwala District in Machakos County but also to the others belonging to other ethnic communities coming from other regions. The conviction is that all these amount to monumental contribution with regard to the subject and the fundamental issues the study opted for. The foregoing verifies that the goal the study set has been adequately achieved. Based on our study, we recommend a further related study from the point of view of the single fathers as they are confronted by the contemporary challenges in parenting the boy child.

It has to be reiterated that the aforementioned will be of great importance in assisting the Akamba single mothers in Mwala District Machakos Counter in parenting and, more so, in fruitfully handling the numerous challenges they face in parenting the boy child. As the study comes to an end, it would not be farfetched to affirm that the study sheds light into further related aspects of research. One of the areas of research is that of investigating the role of proxy fatherhood as propagated in Akamba and other communities for the welfare of boy child. Another areas of deeper research which may be said to be triggered by our study is that of researching on the Christian communities as communities within a Community whereby the common good of all- including boy child and girl child- is realized and gender complementarity implemented as people journey on towards the ancestral more complete family in the eschaton..

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APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SINGLE MOTHERS

1. What is your name
2. How old are you
3. What is your highest level of education? No schooling ____, Primary
____, Secondary ____, Tertiary _____
4. How many children do you have, Boys _____, Girls _____
5. What group of single mothers do you belong. Single by choice ____, Single by
separation/divorce ____, Single by being widowed ____, single by pre-marital
pregnancy ____, other (please state) _____
6. Which Religion do you practice? Christianity ____, Islam _____
7. If Christian, which denomination? Roman Catholic ____, Protestant _____
8. What is your experience in bringing up children as a single mother? _____
Please explain.....

9. Are there any differences in raising the boy and the girl? YES ____, NO ____. If yes please

explain.....

.....

10. What are the challenges of raising a boy? Please explain

.....

.....

.....

11. Do your child/children ask the identity of their father? Yes ____, No ____

12. How do you explain to the boy the absence of a father in his life?

.....

.....

13. How do you fill in the gap of a father figure in the boy's life? Please explain...

.....

.....

.....

14. What are the challenges of bringing up a boy as a Christian Single mother?

.....

.....

15. How do you overcome these challenges?

.....

.....

16. How do you treat you child at the different stages

a) Pre-puberty (0-12

years).....
.....
.....

b) Puberty (3-18

years).....
.....
.....

c) Pre-adult (19yrs-24

years).....
.....
.....
.....

d) Adult (25 years and above)

17. At what age did your son get circumcise?

18. Who took your son for circumcision?

19. Where was it done?

20. Did the child get any training or education on matters of adulthood after circumcision? Please explain.....

.....

21. During adolescent when the boy is experiencing identity crisis how do you handle this challenge?

.....

.....

.....

22. Do you teach your child Christian family values? YES ____, NO ____.

If Yes when do you begin?.....

.....

23. How do members of the community view and treat you as a single mother?

.....

.....

24. How does the Church view and treat you as a single mother?.....

.....

.....

25. Do you get any help from the Church in addressing your challenges?

.....

.....

26. Do you have any responsibilities in Church? _____

If yes which ones?.....

If No, Why?

27. Does your Son have any responsibilities in the Church? _____. If Yes which ones

If No, Why.....

.....

28. Do you have a male mentor for your son? _____. If yes what are the qualities?

.....

.....

29. Are other members of your family are involved in the upbringing your children?

Yes ___, No ___

If Yes, Who and how?

.....

30. How do you exercise your authority as the Head of the home? In terms of

a) Punishment and reward.....

.....

b) Decision making

c) Provision of family needs.....

.....

31. At what age do you allow the boy to take up his responsibilities in terms of decision making? __

Please explain.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX THREE

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR ELDERS

1. What is your name?

2. How old are you?

3. What is your highest level of education? No schooling___, Primary___, Secondary___,
Tertiary___

4. Which religion do you practice? Christianity___, Islam___

If Christianity which denomination? Roman Catholic___, Protestant___

5. How many children do you have ____, Boys ____, Girls___.

6. What is the importance of a family in the Akamba traditional society?

.....

.....

7. What is the importance of children in the society?

.....

.....

.....

8. What is the role of the father in the bringing up children?

.....

.....

.....

9. What is the role of the Mother in bringing up children?

.....

.....

.....

10. What is the role of a boy in the family and community?

.....

.....

11. What is the role of the girl in the family and community?

.....

.....

12. What is the role of other family members of the family in raising children?

.....

.....

.....

13. What does it mean to have a family in the Akamba Traditional Society?

.....
.....

14. What education was the boy child taught and by whom?

.....
.....
.....

15. When and where was it done?

.....
.....
.....

16. What are the societal expectations in terms of roles and responsibilities for the boy child?

.....
.....

17. What is the function of a mother in the life of a child?

.....
.....

18. What is the role of a mother in religious rituals among the Akamba?

.....
.....

19. How is a lady who gets pregnant out of wedlock treated in the Akamba traditional society?

.....
.....

20. How is the child of a Single mother treated in/by the community?

.....
.....
.....

21. When a woman is widowed who takes over the role of the father in the life of the children?

.....
.....
.....

22. When a woman divorced/separated with the husband what happened to the children?

.....
.....

23. In the case of a single mother, who takes up the place of a father in raising children?

.....
.....

24. Was the boy and girl child treated equally in terms of importance?

.....
.....

25. What happened in situations where a married woman begot girls only?

.....

.....
.....
26. What happened in the case that a woman was barren?

.....
.....
27. What is the role and function of Maweto among the Akamba?

.....
.....
28. What happened in cases where the *maweto* begot girls only?

APPENDIX FOUR

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE BOY CHILD OF SINGLE MOTHERS

1. What is your name?

.....

2. How old are you?

.....

3. How many are you in your family ____, Boys ____, Girls ____.

4. What level of education are you in/or have you achieved?

Primary __. Secondary __, Tertiary __, None __.

5. What is the role of a father in the family?

.....
.....
6. What is the role of a mother in a family?

.....
.....
7. In what group of single mothers does your mother belong? Single by choice ____, Single by separation/divorce ____, Single by being widowed ____, single by pre-marital pregnancy ____

8. Who is your role model and why?

.....
.....
9. At what age did you undergo circumcision?

10. Who took you for the rite and where was it done?

11. Where you taught the importance of circumcision and was any education given to you on adult responsibilities?

.....

.....

12. Do you go to Church? YES ___, NO ___. If yes which denomination? Roman Catholic ___, Protestant ___.

13. Do you have any responsibilities in the Church? ___. If yes which ones?

.....

14. Which Church activities do you participate?

.....

.....

15. Do you experience any challenges as a child to a single mother? ___. Please explain.....

.....

.....

16. How do you relate with your mother?

.....

.....

17. Who educates/educated you on male roles and responsibilities?

.....

.....

.....

18. Who provides for your basic needs? I.e. Education, food, clothes?

.....

.....

.....

19. Do you experience any problem with your identity as the child of a single mother?

.....

.....
.....
20. How do your grandparents, uncles and aunties treat you?

.....
.....
.....

21. How do the Church members, pastor/Priest treat you?

.....
.....
.....

22. Do you experience any kind of discrimination: within the Church or community?

Please explain?

.....

23. Who do you share your problems with as a young man?

.....
.....

APPENDIX FIVE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH LEADERS, PASTORS/PRIEST

1. What is your name?

.....

2. How old are you?.....

3. What is your position in the Church?.....

4. According to your Church doctrines and teachings who make up a family?

.....
.....

5. What is the importance of children in a family?

.....
.....

6. What is the role of a Father?

.....
.....
7. What is the role of a Mother?

.....
.....

8. What is the role of the Church in relation to families?

.....
.....

9. Please name the different types of Single mothers?

.....
.....

10. Do you have any Single mothers among your Church members?

.....
.....
.....

11. How does the Church view and treat single mothers?

.....
.....

12. Do you have any groups for single mothers in the Church?

.....
.....
.....

13. What responsibilities do single mothers have in the Church?

.....
.....

14. What activities do they participate in within the Church?

.....

15. Are single mothers faced with any challenges? _____. Please Explain

.....
.....

16. What role does the Church play in assisting single mothers?

.....

.....

.....

17. Does the Church assist single mothers in the upbringing of their children?

.....Please Explain.....

.....

.....

.....

18. Are the boys of single mothers faced with any challenge? ____. Please explain

.....

.....

.....

19. How do you help the boy child of single mothers in addressing their challenges?

.....

.....

.....

20. Do you have any role models for the boy child of single mothers in the Church?

Explain.....
.....
.....
.....

21. Does the boy child of a single mother experience any identity crisis? _____. Please

explain.....
.....
.....

22. Is the boy child of a single mother allowed to have a responsibility or play any role within the Church? Please explain.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....