

**A STUDY OF AGĪKŪYŪ FAMILY SET-UP AND ROMAN CATHOLIC
“FAMILY OF GOD” CHURCH IMAGE TOWARDS ADEQUATE
PARENTING IN KARŪRĪ CATHOLIC PARISH, KĪAMBU COUNTY USING
INCULTURATION APPROACH**

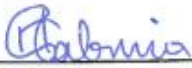
**BY
FLORIDA G. RŪGENDO**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN
RELIGIOUS STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

JULY, 2020

DECLARATION

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

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This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents Cllr. Muruja Kaburia and Sabina Kaburia for their love and support that empowered me to aim high. I also dedicate the work to my dear husband Rũgendo Kamakia for sacrificing his priorities and making effort to support this academic task.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACT:	African Christian Theology
AF:	<i>Africae Terrarum</i>
AG:	<i>Ad Gentes</i>
AIU:	African International University
AL:	<i>Amoris Laetitia</i>
AMECEA:	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa
CA:	<i>Catesimus Annus</i>
CCC:	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCL:	Code of Canon Law
CD:	<i>Christus Dominus</i>
CHIEA:	Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa
CL:	<i>Christifideles Laici</i>
CMA:	Catholic Men Association
CT:	<i>Catechesis Tradendae</i>
CUEA:	Catholic University of East Africa
CWA:	Catholic Women Association
EA:	<i>Ecclesia in Africa</i>
EG:	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
EN:	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
FC:	<i>Familiaris Consortio</i>
GE:	<i>Gravissimum Educationis</i>
GS:	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
HV:	<i>Humanae Vitae</i>
IL:	<i>Instrumentum Laboris</i>
JKML:	Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library
LF:	<i>Lumen Fidei</i>
LG:	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
LS:	<i>Laudato Si</i>
NACADA:	National Authority for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse
NACOSTI:	National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
OT:	<i>Optatam Totius</i>
PAN:	Parenting in Africa Network

RCC: Roman Catholic Church
RH: *Redemptor Hominis*
RM: *Redemptoris Missio*
SCC: Small Christian Community

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

African Christian Theology: A systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and concrete authentic interpretation of the Christian Gospel in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality of the Africans (Wachege: 1992: 42).

Agĩkũyũ: They are an agrarian, matrilineal later patrilineal, large Bantu people sometimes manifesting Maasai elements with a remarkable, vitalistic-dynamic-sacral-communal-relational anthropocentric world view, belonging to both *mariika* (age-groups and generations) and the full nine *mĩhĩrĩga* (clans) named after the full nine daughters of their originating Ancestors namely: Gĩkũyũ, their forefather whom they are named after; and his wife Mũmbi, their mother to whose *nyũmba* (household) they belong- both being their fore-parents mysteriously created and endowed with properties from *Kĩrĩnyaga* (Mt. Kenya) by *Mwene-Nyaga*, the One and only *Ngai* (God) whom they pay supreme homage to and adore (Wachege, 2020:45).

Children: Young persons especially between infancy and puberty (Merram-webster Dictionary, 2019). This study categorized children as young people between ages 0 to 13 years.

Church: The community of those who have committed themselves to the Person and cause of Jesus Christ and who bear witness to it as hope for all men and women; essentially linked to the Redeemer and Savior, the Church is not isolated, self-satisfied religious association, but a community which forms a comprehensive community with others (Küng, 1995:112).

Community: Is a group of persons living out their lives in the spirit of cooperation and solidarity sharing a common life (Mbiti, 1970).

Encyclical: A papal document treating of matters related to the general welfare of the Church, sent by Pope to the Bishops. The document is used especially in modern times to express the mind of the Pope to the people. They may contain pronouncements on faith and morals that are *de facto* infallible because they express the ordinary teaching of the Church (Modern Catholic Dictionary, 1981:529).

Exhortation: A communication intended to urge or prepare the recipients to take some action (Webster Dictionary, 2013).

Extended Family: A group of family members that are in charge of preparing young members for living in the world today, as well as helping them to maintain the family and the overall welfare of its members (Martin, 1980:105).

Family of God Image: It is a Church model that came from the Synod of African Bishops as Africans' contribution to the universal Church since it suites well with African social, religious and cultural perspectives (John Paul II, 1995:47-48). The study adapted this Church model since it is relevant as a basis for incarnating Christian life and the Christian message in the Agĩkũyũ socio-cultural context as far as adequate parenting is concerned.

Family Set-up: Refers to the network of family members and their familial positions such as mother, father, son, daughter, grandmother, grandfather, uncles and aunts, cousins and other kin. It can be nuclear or extended (Georgas, 2003:105).

Family and Parenting Values: The principles that promote the sound functioning of the family, strengthens the fabric of society and are the basis for how children grow, are taught and supported in the family and give children the structure and boundaries in which to function and thrive (Weisner, 2002).

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 (Arrupe, 1990). The study adopted this approach to mean intengration of authentic Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into Roman Catholic Church doctrine and theologians' reflections on family and parenting.

Modernization: Modernization is a major feature of the contemporary society. It has a political, economic, cultural and religious impact on individuals, families and nations (Mensah & Ammisah, 2016). The conceptualization of modernization for this study is in line with the school of thought that sees the problems the traditional values, culture and norms are confronted with.

Parenting: A practice with three major goals of ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults and transmitting cultural values. (Encyclopedia of Psychology, 223).

Small Christian Communities: Groups of Christians who, at the level of family or in a similarly restricted setting, come together for prayer, Scripture reading, catechesis, and discussion on human and ecclesial problems with a view to a common commitment. These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, as instrument of formation and evangelization (Healey & Hinton, 2005:3-15).

Social Media: Are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks (Wikipedia, 2017).

Synod: An assembly of ecclesiastic, gathered under ecclesiastical authority to discuss and decide on matters pertaining to doctrine, discipline or liturgy under their jurisdiction (Modern Catholic Dictionary, 2000:529).

Youth: Youth is a person who is aged between 18 and 35 years (The Kenya Constitution 2010: Article 260). This study refers to youth as persons aged between 14 to 35 years.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image towards adequate parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambu County using inculturation approach. Deficient parenting and impoverishment of moral values in the youth are trending topics today while the dwindling contribution of the larger family to parenting has been linked to the falling moral standards. Accordingly, there is an outcry and demand for an urgent response to the declining level of morality among the youth. The main aim of the study is to integrate Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in view of transmitting moral values in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. The study is guided by five specific objectives namely: To examine the role of Agĩkũyũ family set-up in transmitting family and parenting values; To determine the manner of transmitting moral values; to scrutinize RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting with regard to teaching moral values; to examine the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image and inculturation approach with regard to transmitting moral values; and to integrate Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in view of transmitting moral values. The descriptive case study design is adapted. Questionnaire and interview techniques are used to gather primary data while desk review of literature is carried out to collect secondary data contained in relevant anthropological materials concerning the Agĩkũyũ’s opted for realm and ecclesial documents. The data is analyzed using qualitative tools to address each objective. Three complementary theories guide the study. The Erikson’s psycho-social theory helps in constructing the categories of respondents on which data is sourced while the mediation theory gives three major mediations which are: Socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and the practical mediation, which the researcher engages in investigating the subject matter. The redaction criticism theory aids the study source scientifically and systematically from the relevant Biblical texts to inspire adequate parenting. The findings reveal that the Agĩkũyũ family set-up is still essential for transmitting family and parenting values even though the community’s uniting and bonding characteristics, and the extended family that supported adequate parenting no longer function as intended. Another issue drawn is that the kind of parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish lacks a unified, orderly and proven way of teaching children at different stages of growth where needs differ. Among the recommendations is that parents should make a determined adjustment and create time to teach their children while being mindful of the values and virtues taught at different stages of a child’s growth. The conviction is that such a way forward is long overdue and the bottom line is that a more relevant pastoral approach within the context of new evangelization is critical. The main claim of the study is that transmitting family and parenting values for holistic development of children and youth will be difficult because of the dwindling family involvement and the lack of an elaborate manner of parenting. As the study spells out, the transmission of moral values and the liberation of the youth should be inspired both by Agĩkũyũ insights on family and parenting values and ecclesial pedagogy on genuine holistic parenting actualized through inculturation approach.

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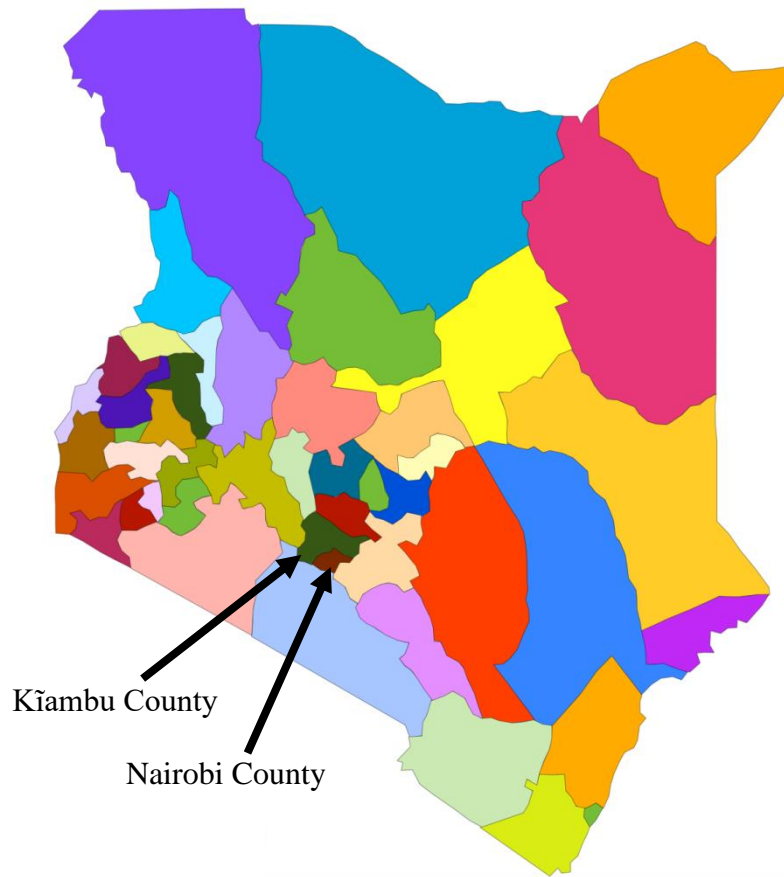
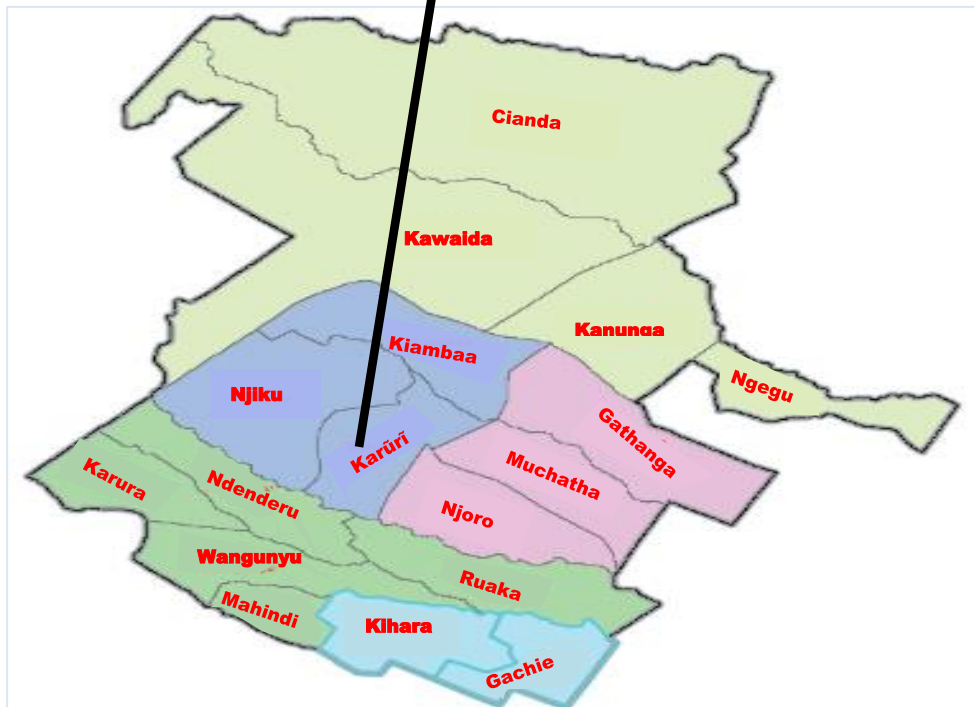
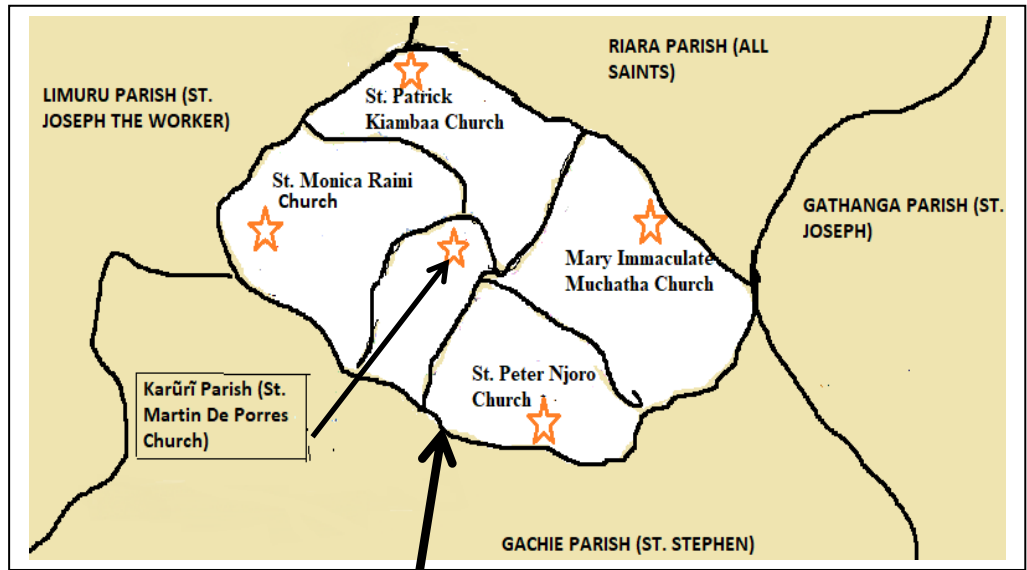


Figure 1: Map of Kenya showing Kĩambu County in relation to Nairobi County.
Source: Google Maps, 2019.



Figure 2: Map showing Kĩambaa Sub-county (where Karūrĩ Catholic Parish is located) and neighbouring sub-counties.

Source: Google Maps, 2019.



Legend



Karūrī Catholic Parish Outstations



Neighbouring Parishes

Figure 3: Map showing the five outstations in Karūrī Catholic Parish and the neighbouring Catholic parishes.

Source: Karūrī Catholic Parish, 2019.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the purpose of the study which investigated the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image towards adequate parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambu Country. It expounds the study’s background followed by the statement of the problem, highlights the research questions and the objectives. It continues to discuss the justification of the study followed by scope and limitations. Finally, the chapter highlights the reviewed literature, theoretical framework applied, research hypotheses, and research methodology used. As such it is crucial in providing the setting of the study.

1.1.1 Background of the Study

Africans value the family unit as the original primary domestic group into which children are born and brought up, and learn to become productive members of their society. A family is where everyone is at home and experiences warmth, and encounters the first school of social virtues. There are crucial aspects that characterize an African family in particular its inclusiveness in relation to inculcating moral values into children and youth.¹ In this context, Kenyatta describes the traditional Agĩkũyũ family set-up in which children were adequately parented to become responsible people, and in particular he shows how the strong social system of participation was vital in parenting children and youth.²

The family set-up was a good example of a stable outfit that relied on the strength of the kinship system that played a central role in ensuring that family and parenting values were pursued by all. The kinship network included the family unit itself (*mũciĩ*), extended family group (*nyũmba*), the sub-clan (*mbarĩ*) and the clan (*mũhĩrĩga*).³ Through these links children and youth were educated in a cooperative manner, ensuring the family’s immense and rich knowledge was passed to them. In return, they

¹ C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1- Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation*, (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), pp. 9ff.

² J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), pp. 1-13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

were expected to maintain the moral values taught to them.⁴ Today, scholars like Bansikiza note that there is tangible evidence suggesting deterioration of youth moral values, and an outcry for a response to restore the moral standard.⁵ Therefore an investigation was worthwhile from a viewpoint of transmitting moral values to children and youth in accordance with the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values.

Magesa observes that in the African worldview the family environment and the instructions that take place in it are considered vital so that the life of the family and community may continue without end in a healthy manner.⁶ Over time though, the contemporary Agĩkũyũ community has experienced profound social changes which have interfered with the elaborate structures and practices through which children are exposed to moral values.⁷ Ndung'u explains that this started happening on the backdrop of Christianization and westernization of the Agĩkũyũ community, which worked against the traditional institutions.⁸ The consequence has been a gradual decline in morality, leading to widespread irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour among the youth as witnessed in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, which is fast becoming a semi-urban environment.⁹ Ojukwu and Esimone lament that urbanization not only disorganizes kinship ties but also offers new values and lifestyles which are in contrast with the Agĩkũyũ culture.¹⁰

Ime and Unwanabong underscores the need for members of the family and society, most importantly the children and youth, to imbibe moral values that will enhance their character development and position them to become positively oriented to take up their

⁴ H. M. Wawerũ, *The Bible and African Culture-mapping Transactional Inroads* (Limuru: Zapf Chancery Publishers Africa, 2011), p. 17.

⁵ C. Bansikiza, *Restoring Moral Formation in Africa* (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2001), pp. 50-51.

⁶ L. Magesa, *African Religion - The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa, 1997), p. 77.

⁷ M. P. Moila, *Challenging Issues in African Christianity* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre, 2002), p. 4.

⁸ N. Ndung'u, "Towards the Recovery of African Identity," in M. N. Getui and Obeng, E. (Eds.), *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays* (Nairobi: Acton, 1999), p. 258.

⁹ National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), *Kenya National Adolescents and Youth Survey (NAYS)* (Nairobi: NCPD, 2017), p. 4.

¹⁰ E. V. Ojukwu and C. C. Esimone, "Inculcating Morals in Adolescents Through the Igbo Folk Music", Presented at the WEI International Academic Conference, New Orleans, USA, 2014.

future roles.¹¹ Unfailingly, the Agĩkũyũ inculcated moral values into children and youth to cultivate behavior that was acceptable and ensured harmony within the family and society. The parenting task was carried out by parents, the extended family members, and the larger community. The criticality of the parenting task in the Agĩkũyũ community is implicit in the Agĩkũyũ proverb, *njũgũma njega yumaga ikũũriro* (a good club is obtained from its source), referring to the appropriate training the children should receive from an early age, and this is valid for both the traditional and contemporary family set-up.¹²

As children progress from one stage of growth to another, the values they learn not only cushion them from being vulnerable to negative influences but also equip them to confront vices.¹³ According to Erikson, if the kind of parenting a child receives takes into account the specific crisis which occur at different but interrelated stages of the child's life, then the child's physical, moral, emotional, and intellectual development will be good.¹⁴ Parenting that offers moral clarity gives the children a better foundation for successful acquisition of the necessary social skills. When children fail to learn the necessary skills, they are vulnerable to learn inappropriate behaviours from those they interact with.¹⁵ According to Peschke and Getui, the Church too as God's family, just like the Agĩkũyũ family set-up, has the responsibility of ensuring that children and youth receive adequate moral education.¹⁶ In both the African family and the Church family, children learn the values of obedience, honesty, respect, hard work, discipline and fear of God among others. Such values sustain dialogue, trust, warmth and solidarity between family members, and protect the common good.¹⁷

¹¹ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6(2014), pp. 40-44.

¹² H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 26, 87.

¹³ M. Bostrom, "The 21st Century Teen: Public Perception and Teen Reality," (2001), http://frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF/youth_public_perceptions.pdf

¹⁴ D. Davis and A. Clifton, "Psychosocial Theory: Erikson," (1995), <http://ww3.haverford.edu/psychology/ddavis/p109g/erikson.stages.html>

¹⁵ A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), pp. 3ff.

¹⁶ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, pp. 242-250; M. N. Getui, "The Family, the Church and the Development of Youth," in J. N. K. Mũgambi (Ed), *The Church in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), p. 73.

¹⁷ A. R. Ndiaye, "Church as Family or Family as Church?" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

The Church's proclamation on the family drawing from Christian revelation finds its foundation on the life and preaching of Jesus, who lived and grew up under care and instructions of his parents in Nazareth (Lk 1). Biblical perspectives such as in Proverbs 22:6, "train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" emphasizes the role of parenting in a child's life. Both the Scripture and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) doctrine and social teachings recognize the importance of the family set-up and kinship relationships in adequate parenting of children and youth, to the extent of likening the African extended family to Church as "Family of God."¹⁸ The Roman Catholic "Family of God" Church image fits well with the African social, cultural and religious perspectives and also, like in a physical family, emphasizes care for others. It is relevant as a basis for incarnating Christian life and the Christian message in the Agĩkũyũ socio-cultural context as far as adequate parenting is concerned.

Plainly, as regards parenting, the Agĩkũyũ society and RCC emphasize on preparing children for life as productive adults. The family and the Church therefore have the responsibility of ensuring that children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish and elsewhere are well handled in their entire development with the aim of transmitting moral values to them. Adequate parenting thus becomes a crucial aspect to be considered right from a child's early developmental stages in raising morally upright individuals. As such, a study was necessary to investigate at erudition level how the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and the Roman Catholic "Family of God" Church image could contribute to adequate parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, using inculturation approach.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The perception of the African traditional family is inclusive and well disposed towards raising morally upright individuals. The family set-up functions to ensure that children grow up in the proper manner as different individuals bring their uniqueness to parenting, which complements the parents' effort in equipping children and youth with values that enhance their character development.¹⁹ In the traditional Agĩkũyũ society,

¹⁸ The Church image is explicated in John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), no. 63.

¹⁹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), pp. 67-88.

the family wabgjs a stable and ideal place in which the father and mother complemented each other in the parenting task; this is the environment envisaged in the Constitution of Kenya 2010, when it states that a child has a right to the care of parents.²⁰ Yet, according to various studies, the participation and contribution of the family set-up to parenting in the contemporary Agĩkũyũ society continues to dwindle despite the fact that the community appreciates its potency for raising morally upright individuals.²¹ Few studies determine how the family set-up contributes to adequate parenting in the contemporary Agĩkũyũ society.

Some surveys revealed that the parenting in Kĩambu County was not producing morally upright youth. In this respect, the Kĩambu County government raised a concern about youth impoverished in moral values.²² Additionally, a survey by the National Council for Population and Development on adolescents and youth in the same county also confirmed that the youth were involved in criminal activities such as theft and sexual based violence among other vices.²³ This raised the question of how the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values are transmitted to children and youth in the County.

Bansikiza claims that there is tangible evidence suggesting changes in the realm of moral values in the family members particularly the youth as reflected in their inappropriate behaviour.²⁴ A study by Moila links this to changes in the manner of transmitting moral values.²⁵ Both studies also link the falling moral standards in the family with the diminished involvement of some family members in parenting, with Bansikiza's study revealing that there is an outcry for an urgent response to this declining level of morality among the youth. However, these studies fail to show how moral values can be inculcated into children and youth by the contemporary Agĩkũyũ

²⁰ National Council for Law Reporting, *The Constitution of Kenya*, Article 53(e), (2010).

²¹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), pp. 39-52.

²² County Government of Kĩambu, "Annual Development Plan 2013/17," p. 26.

²³ National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), *Kenya National Adolescents and Youth Survey* (NAYS) (Nairobi: NCPD, 2017), p. 4.

²⁴ C. Bansikiza, *Restoring Moral Formation in Africa* (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2001), pp. 50-51.

²⁵ M. P. Moila, *Challenging Issues in African Christianity* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre, 2002), p. 4; N. Ndung'u, "Towards the Recovery of African Identity," in M. N. Getui and Obeng, E. (Eds.), *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays* (Nairobi: Acton, 1999), p. 258.

family set-up, a gap the study filled. Commonly, the foundational virtues such as trust and competence that need to develop in children and youth hardly receive attention among researchers. Further, studies on parenting focus on moral values that children should be taught or inadequate parenting and fail to integrate the values into the Gospel message for more adequate parenting.

The lacuna in parenting was occurring in an area dominated by influential mainstream religious institutions such as the RCC which is renowned for Her powerful instructions on and about family and parenting, and community wellbeing to the extent of attributing to the Church the title “Family of God.”²⁶ A concern here is whether the “Family of God” Church model has failed in ministering to the fathers and mothers in their parenting endeavour as well as the youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish. Though the Parish had made effort to inculturate other aspects of Church life like liturgy and Gospel music for enhanced worship, the integration of Agīkūyū family and parenting values into the Gospel message for the purpose of equipping the parents to adequately teach moral values to the children and youth remained largely omitted. There was therefore a valid need to investigate the Agīkūyū family set-up and Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image through the inculturation process towards adequate parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the role of Agīkūyū family set-up in transmitting family and parenting values?
2. How are moral values transmitted in Karūrī Catholic Parish?
3. What important teachings on family and parenting are contained in RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections with regard to teaching moral values?
4. Are the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image and inculturation approach useful for transmitting moral values?
5. Is the integration of the Agīkūyū family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting necessary for transmitting moral values in Karūrī Catholic Parish?

²⁶ A. Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1987), pp. 9-102.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main goal of the study was to investigate the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambu County using inculturation approach. The following specific objectives guided the study.

1. To examine the role of Agĩkũyũ family set-up in transmitting family and parenting values;
2. To determine the manner of transmitting moral values in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish;
3. To scrutinize RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting with regard to teaching moral values;
4. To examine the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image and inculturation approach with regard to transmitting moral values; and
5. To integrate Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in view of transmitting moral values in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

1.4 Justification of the Study

Ethno-religious studies create awareness that Africans in general pick and accentuate family issues differently from the Western and Eastern communities.²⁷ Agĩkũyũ ethnic group was chosen since it would have been superfluous to handle every African community on parenting issues. It was also chosen as a model for other African ethnic groups with the intention of triggering interest among researchers to undertake related works in reference to other ethnic groups thus complementing our study. The choice of Agĩkũyũ family set-up was also informed by Moila, Ndung’u and other scholars who observed that the traditional Agĩkũyũ family set-up that contained elaborate parenting structures and practices had changed thereby interfering with the manner in which parenting and particularly the teaching of moral values is done.²⁸ Kinoti notes that this

²⁷ C. Kaswiza, *“Traditional Solidarity Among the Nyamwezi and Maasai in the Light of Christian Solidarity: An Anthropological and Theological Approach”* (Published PhD Thesis, Louvain: Universite Catholique De Louvain, 1971); J. B. K. Karega, *Theology and Literature: Religion in Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1988).

²⁸ M. P. Moila, *Challenging Issues in African Christianity* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre, 2002), p. 4; N. Ndung’u, “Towards the Recovery of African Identity,” in M. N. Getui and

caused a lack of a solid moral foundation of family and parenting values in the Agĩkũyũ society.²⁹

The early missionary work and Western education had negative consequences on the Agĩkũyũ traditional family and parenting values. Kenyatta had hinted to such a scenario as early as 1938.³⁰ Kĩambu County, where the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish is situated, was one of the first regions in Agĩkũyũland to be influenced by Christianity and Western education, thanks to its proximity to the city of Nairobi. The Kĩambu County Government's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 refers to the youth in the county as a group that has thrown away morality, and at the same time classifies them as a vulnerable group that needs help.³¹ The government perceives the youth's impoverishment in moral values as a disaster that needs to be dealt with immediately, hence justifying this study, which investigated how moral values are transmitted to children and youth. All the aspects of Agĩkũyũ culture are represented throughout Agĩkũyũland therefore justifying the selection of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.³²

The "Family of God" Church image was opted for though other Church models exist. The study was justified on this for three main reasons: first, the "Family of God" Church model came from the Synod of African Bishops as Africans' contribution to the universal Church; secondly, the model suites well with the African socio-cultural and religious perspectives; thirdly, and emerging from these two justifications, it is more inclusive thus paving way for better dialogue with people belonging to other faith affiliations and even non-believers.³³ The rationale was that "family" image is more inclusive and it fits well with ecumenism which is in vogue in our contemporary society. On the basis of this, inculturation approach was employed since it roots the

Obeng, E. (Eds.), *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays* (Nairobi: Acton, 1999), p. 258.

²⁹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), pp. 39-52.

³⁰ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 75.

³¹ County Government of Kĩambu, "Annual Development Plan 2013/17," p. 26.

³² J. N. Mbugua, *A Study to Formulate a Model for Agĩkũyũ Christian Funeral Rites that Would Integrate Relevant Cultural, Scriptural and Practical Norms*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, South African Theological Seminary, Bryanston, 2014), p. 24.

³³ The Church image is explicated in John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), no. 63.

Christian message in the African culture and in our case, the Agĩkũyũ traditional culture.

This study contributes to the existing empirical knowledge on family set-up and “Family of God” Church image, and is of particular importance because it provides knowledge on a more adequate parenting from a new perspective; that of handling the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values within the framework of inculturation. It is hoped that this knowledge will be utilized to effectively inculcate moral values into children and youth, who are confronted with numerous existential problematic factors in the contemporary society.

Beyond the transmission of moral values such as obedience, honesty, hard work, discipline, respect humility and fear of God to children and youth, which is commonly researched and discussed by several previous studies, there are foundational virtues such as trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, fidelity and love which need to be developed in children and youth through proper guidance, but are not receiving attention by parents and researchers. The importance of these virtues explicated in Erikson’s psychosocial theory of development is that they provide a good foundation for the learning of existential and moral values by children and youth. In this sense, parenting stands to gain by adopting approaches that take into account these virtues.

The findings of the study will be useful to the government agencies, Church, professionals and the Agĩkũyũ community. The government, through the appropriate agencies and like-minded bodies may design suitable policies in an attempt to address the problem of deficient parenting. The knowledge gained will guide the pastoral team re-design programs to incline to a more profound moral formation of family members, taking into consideration their different needs. Similarly, the findings will provoke and facilitate discussions among professionals on how to develop effective family and parenting programs. Accepting that inadequate parenting occurs in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish will prompt the community to double their effort of setting appropriate structures for transmitting moral values.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study investigated the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth using inculturation approach.

Karũrĩ Catholic Parish was a locality of interest to base the research because of its uniqueness manifested not only in its historical attachment but also its semi-urban environment. The dense population in the Parish includes youth of between 14-35 years who constitute about forty percent of the total population of the area.³⁴ The Kĩambu County Pstrategic Plan 2013-2017 notes that the youth are engaged in unacceptable behavior which may be partly responsible for the low transition of children to secondary school level. It is the prayer of the County government that like-minded institutions will initiate interventions to empower and engage the youth as a way of contributing to their welfare.³⁵

The area is well covered by internet connectivity and other technologies. This allows the residents good access to mainstream and social media. Apart from facilitating business, such technology brings with it new cultures and has a downside, the increase in cases of cyber-crime and anti-social behavior especially among the youth- a food for thought for stakeholders. Furthermore, on the social level, more possibilities are opened for evangelism and pastoral work as the new technology can be used as a tool for spreading the Gospel message and also attracting young membership to the Church.

Karũrĩ was a meeting place for some renowned Agĩkũyũ chiefs like Karũrĩ *wa* Gakure and Kinyanjui *wa* Gathirimu who met during the pre-colonial times to deliberate on the religious matters of the community among other issues.³⁶ The area derives its name from one of the chiefs, Karũrĩ *wa* Gakure, who was instrumental for the entry of the Gospel in central Kenya by receiving the first Consolata Missionaries. In May 1916, Chief Karũrĩ was baptized and solemnized his matrimony in Church presided by Fr. Perlo, in a great ceremony attended by Consolata Missionaries and even non-believers.

³⁴ County Government of Kĩambu, “Annual Development Plan 2013/17,” p. 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Read more at <https://www.consolata.org/new/index.php/mission/finestra/item/1167-paramount-cri-wa-gakurechief-Karũrĩ>

Chief Karūrī's family was therefore a good example of an early domestic Church that embraced Christian values to live as a "Family of God." These activities had an impact in the growth of the area which is now a suburb of Nairobi city and, in the process, the extended family system has weakened in a Parish that is making effort to live as "Family of God."³⁷ Besides common knowledge has it that the flourishing of proscribed groups of youth like *Mungiki*, rendering parenting disturbing may be said to be unparalleled in the area.

The study encountered a few methodological limitations but the quality of the work was not compromised. The views received were limited to Karūrī Catholic Parish even though the problem under study permeates the entire Agĩkũyũ ethnic community and others in Kenya, and the world. Another limitation was that some elder informants initially expected to be paid for the vital information they provided on the role of Agĩkũyũ family set-up in parenting. They regarded themselves as the custodians of knowledge few people have and therefore deserved to be recognized. Fortunately, the informants considered their participation in the study as a contribution to the welfare of the community and eventually did not withhold information.

Moreover, the study may suffer from pre-conceived notion because each group in the study was not bound to report negative outcomes associated with the failure to deliver on their job. This was unavoidable due to the nature of the study. In this respect, some Church leaders were reluctant to release some information for fear of exposing their own weaknesses and by extension that of the Church. The researcher however assured them that the information given for the purpose of the study will be treated with utmost confidentiality and this has been maintained.

1.6 Literature Review

This section highlights relevant literature that was reviewed on the subject of the study and identifies both the enriching values necessary for our study and the knowledge gaps in the literature that the study aimed to fill. The thematically categorized literature review focuses on: The Agĩkũyũ family set-up, parenting, moral values, discipline and

³⁷ L.W. Kahindi, *Christian Response to the Phenomenon of Single-Parenthood in Nairobi* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University, 2018), p. 12.

maintaining moral values, child development stages, RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections on family and parenting, and ends with inculturation approach and RCC "Family of God" Church image.

1.6.1 The Agĩkũyũ Family Set-up

In his book titled *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1*, Nyamiti enriches this study with the understanding of crucial aspects that characterize the African family.³⁸ He explains that the family consists of the horizontal dimension that comprises of the living members and secondly, the vertical aspect made up of the dead or ancestors and those yet to be born. Mbiti echoes related ideas when he states that the memories of the deceased are always with the living and the departed watch over the affairs of their earthly families and are the roots on which the living stand, while the unborn children are the buds in the loins assuring the survival of the family.³⁹ Leakey further says that for the Agĩkũyũ, belief in ancestral and departed spirits was the fundamental basis of life.⁴⁰ Further, the Agĩkũyũ community operates on a kinship system which serves as the basis of production, jurisprudence and rituals as well as the basis for responsibilities among family members especially in relation to inculcating moral values into children and youth.

In this context the study is enriched with anthropological literature on Agĩkũyũ society by Kenyatta in which he explains that the Agĩkũyũ kinship system is composed of the family group (*mũcĩĩ*), the greater or extended family group (*nyũmba*) which is made up of several homesteads connected patrilineally through natural increase to eventually become a sub-clan (*mbarĩ*). Finally, everybody in the Agĩkũyũ community is a member of a clan (*mũhĩrĩga*).⁴¹ The family group (*mũcĩĩ*) is made up of a man, his wife or wives and children, and as Leakey says, is the most important social group for the individual, the most fundamental basis of social organization and the center for teaching social

³⁸ C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Volume 1 – Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1995), p. 9ff.

³⁹ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 107.

⁴⁰ L. S. B. Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903 Volume I* (London: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 16-17.

⁴¹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 1.

virtues to children.⁴² A later study touching on this social organization by Wachege found that the family group (*mūciī*) described by Kenyatta had largely remained the same.⁴³ The arrangement of the Kinship system is in itself a reminder to the individual that they belong to the *mūhīrīga* which is a uniting factor as much as they belong to the family.⁴⁴ The *Mūhīrīga* also played a major role in conflict resolution and discipline on issues not resolved in the lower structures.

Mbiti observed that the kinship system was the center of the African life controlling the social relationships in a given community and it governed and regulated customs and influenced the thinking, behaviour towards one another and the whole life of individuals, and bound together the entire life of the community.⁴⁵ These works deal more with the ontological aspect of the Agĩkũyũ family structure in which the children and youth were nurtured and morally educated several decades ago. Thus the authors did not have the opportunity to scrutinize the contemporary family set-up and in a particular location such as Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. Their works also did not focus on how specific moral values were inculcated into children like this study did.

The foregoing paragraphs reveal that the kinship system operates within a community setting. This is clear when we consider Wachege's assertion that the Agĩkũyũ were communal and relational with kinship ties uniting every individual to a supportive family and this was the norm.⁴⁶ McMillan and Chavis describe this sense of community as where everyone felt at home, valued and loved and where individuals had trust that their needs will be met.⁴⁷ For this reason and the feeling that one will be seen to be selfish, individuals were not interested in acting alone.⁴⁸ They were eager to be invited to help another and freely did so. In other words, the community mutual help was

⁴² L. S. B. Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903* Volume 1, p. 1.

⁴³ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 10.

⁴⁴ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 21.

⁴⁵ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 107.

⁴⁶ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 11.

⁴⁷ D. W. McMillan and D. M. Chavis, "Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory," *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14 (1986), pp. 6-23.

⁴⁸ J. G. Healey and D. Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1996), p. 68.

regarded as an asset with regard to inculcating moral values into children and youth, an issue this study sought to be enlightened on by investigating the family set-up and the manner of parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

This interdependence is expressed by Mbiti when he says that the individual existed because the community existed, implying the community exists because of the individual.⁴⁹ Therefore the sense of community needs to be revived even as Pope John Paul II reminds Africans that, “African cultures have an acute sense of solidarity and community life,” that contribute to family and parenting values.⁵⁰ Cagnolo explains that a child was considered as belonging to the entire community, something which is threatened today by the western culture that has permeated into the Agĩkũyũ community.⁵¹

Mbiti still finds more merit in expounding the usefulness of the community and says, “...community is the custodian of the individual; hence he must go where the community goes.” The individual was obligated to go to the communal meeting place which was the nerve center for social, judicial, political and religious matters, and even games. Kanu puts it that the idea of community is a whole existence for an African and life has value only in the context of the close ties in the community. He quotes Achebe who noted that Africans come together “because it is good for kinsmen to do so.”⁵² This motivated the study to find out how these close ties may be restored in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish for the sake of transmitting family and parenting values.

Contrary to what Mbiti saw as an ideal, the role of the community and extended family has diminished as noted by other scholars and this motivated this study to find out the place of the extended family in transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. This is important since it is impossible to overlook the extended

⁴⁹ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 106.

⁵⁰ Second Extraordinary Synod, *The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of the World*.

⁵¹ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 73.

⁵² I. A. Kanu, “Kinship in African Philosophy and the Issue of Development,” *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 1, no. 9 (2014), pp. 1-6.

family when discussing fundamental issues regarding parenting as this is a community dimension which is rich in socio-moral identity, symbolism and sense of solidarity.⁵³

Touching on another aspect of the community, Areji and Anyaehie teaches that an individual is bound to respect and obey the judgment of the community no matter how harsh; the community does no wrong, it is supreme.⁵⁴ However, discipline itself was an art which required showing care by protecting the dignity of the wrongdoer and their age group.⁵⁵ For the punishment to achieve its intended purpose it must be acceptable to both the giver and the receiver and conform to the acceptable norm of the community.⁵⁶ As with most African societies, among them the Agĩkũyũ, the good usually receives community's approval while the bad is prohibited or detested because good actions build society while bad ones tear it down. In African societies most taboos, totems and prohibitions are designed to ensure morality is not violated and that proper relationship among spirits and human beings, between and among men and women, parents and children, and among kinsmen are maintained.⁵⁷ We learn from Cagnolo that in the Agĩkũyũ community, family life was well organized with defined duties, rights, and opportunities for the welfare of the respective individual and family. For example the father was the head of the family, the guarantor of the family bond and security.⁵⁸ These authors discuss discipline as it used to occur in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society with well-functioning social institutions in place.

Still on the African family, Bottignole guides that the all-embracing family and family life was at the center of the African culture and included the nuclear family, the extended family and the clan as well. He says that such a family has immense and rich

⁵³ S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), p. 124.

⁵⁴ A. C. Areji and M. C. Anyaehie, "Igbo Traditional Morality as a Panacea to Nigerian Security Crises," *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5 (2015), pp. 102-108.

⁵⁵ H. W. Kinoti, "Caring in the Family and Community," in Mwakabana, H. A. O., *Crises of Life in African Religion and Christianity* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2002), p. 31.

⁵⁶ E. W. Gachiri, *Gĩkũyũ Story-Telling as a Method of the Communication of Moral Values* (Published PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, 1996), p. 267.

⁵⁷ A. C. Areji and M. C. Anyaehie, "Igbo Traditional Morality as a Panacea to Nigerian Security Crises," *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5 (2015), pp. 102-108.

⁵⁸ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 18.

knowledge which benefits generations and is usually transmitted orally.⁵⁹ We also learn from *Laudato Si*, all relatives are valuable in inculcating moral values into a child and enriching his or her spiritual life.⁶⁰ This should be even more necessary where parents are engaged in paid labour or business like it is in most cases in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish. For example, the Synod of African Bishops noted that when grandparents are involved they are the link between generations and play the role of ensuring family continuity and stability, and by doing so maintain the Psycho-affective balance necessary for the transmission of customs and values.⁶¹ This is why maintaining the link between generations in a Christian family is made urgent for transmitting basic values to both boys and girls.⁶² Despite their rich contribution, the Bishops did not concretize their ideas in a specific community, a gap the study filled.

Kenyatta extends this discussion by spelling out the important people and events in moulding the character of children from an early age through every stage of growth. He explains that in the tribal education, the emphasis lay on a particular act of behaviour in a concrete situation, with most of the education being impacted within the sphere of personal relationships right from the very beginning facilitated by a definite and practical structure. The education of small children was carried through the medium of lullabies and stories on daily basis by both the mother and the nurse. When the child learnt how to speak, the mother took care to teach him or her correct manner of speech while at the same time passing important family information through songs.⁶³

In storytelling the Agĩkũyũ story teller hoped to entrench conformity by raising communalism feelings and playing down individualism which threatens the survival of all values promoted in the story. The story teller ensured total involvement during the

⁵⁹ S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), p. 124.

⁶⁰ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home, no. 5, p. 155.

⁶¹ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World: The Final Report of the Synod of Bishops to the Holy Father, Pope Francis* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2016), p. 21.

⁶² Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1965), no. 47.

⁶³ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 68.

learning process as it was more effective than cognitive, that's why it should be more of living and not just information.⁶⁴ From the folktales children obtained knowledge about human weaknesses, follies, faults and more.⁶⁵ Children were also taught through proverbs which actually made greater impact than ordinary words as they conveyed precise moral lessons, warnings and advice in condensed words. The study looked at the place of stories and songs in transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

Kenyatta continues to explain that afterwards, the education of the boy child after the stage of infancy was empowered by the father through practically involving him in the father's day-to-day activities. On the other hand, the mother took responsibility in teaching the daughter on managing and harmonizing the affairs of a homestead. Both boy and girl went through teaching on health and hygiene matters. This training continued until they reached the age of circumcision which was the most pronounced step in a child's education and which graduated the boy or girl to maturity status.⁶⁶

The Agĩkũyũ male and female youth were socialized and learned mainly through the rite of initiation where they were systematically educated on marriage and family life. The learning matured the individual and prepared him or her for societal duties and responsibilities.⁶⁷ Through the rite of initiation, societal laws and taboos, values cherished by the family and community were inculcated into both the girl and boy without any discrimination.⁶⁸ The bond formed between the initiates by virtue of being initiated together applied corrective measures to ensure that members exhibited integrity and good behaviour in society.⁶⁹

As it is today the long-held tradition of the rite of initiation has lost most of its significance in teaching family and moral values to initiates. This is on account of revolutionalization by community integration, religion, formal education and

⁶⁴ E. W. Gachiri, *Gĩkũyũ Story-Telling as a Method of the Communication of Moral Values* (Published PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, 1996), p. 282.

⁶⁵ N. Kipury, *Oral Literature of the Maasai* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶⁷ S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), p. 31.

⁶⁸ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 88.

⁶⁹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 22.

government policies. The national chairman of the Kikũyũ Council of Elders reported that the rite of passage has seen numerous changes and as a result conferred different meanings.⁷⁰ We observe that when Kenyatta studied the Agĩkũyũ family, the traditional family fibre especially the interaction among extended family members was still intact. With limited crucial contacts witnessed within the contemporary family today, children have access to fewer family sources to learn from and to positively influence their character. This study sought to examine how well behaved children are moulded through such a changed rite of passage.

Ndungu explains that the change in moral values started happening on the backdrop of Christianization and westernization of the Agĩkũyũ community which worked against the traditional institutions, an idea supported by Waweru who makes it explicit that the entrance of Christianity into the traditional society was a main contributor to changes in the African way of inculcating values into children.⁷¹ Waweru urges the Agĩkũyũ community to continue with what is good in their culture like telling stories and songs as a way of enhancing community socialization.⁷² However he does not show how this will happen within the changed Agĩkũyũ social structure. The study fills this gap by examining the manner of parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish where the family structure has changed as expounded by Zani.⁷³

According to Zani's study on the African family, the traditional family structure observed by Kenyatta in which the children grew up and were educated to be responsible people has reasonably changed over time, and the African family has been forced to readapt due to this social change as well as the present economic conditions. Zani explains: "Due to these adaptations, new features of the African family have emerged and merged with those that existed in the traditional setting."⁷⁴ The nuclear

⁷⁰ K. Gachuhi, "Modern Revolution on Traditional Circumcision Practices," (2017). <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001263371/Church-leaders-push-traditions-far-away-from-circumcision>.

⁷¹ N. Ndung'u, "Towards the Recovery of African Identity," in M. N. Getui and Obeng, E. (Eds.), *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays* (Nairobi: Acton, 1999), p. 258.

⁷² H. M. Wawerũ, *The Bible and African Culture-mapping Transactional Inroads* (Limuru: Zapf Chancery Publishers Africa, 2011), pp. 17-18, 26.

⁷³ P. Zani, "The Family in its African Socio-cultural Context," in P. Ryan (Ed.), *The Models of Church-as-Family: Meeting the African Challenge* (Nairobi: CUEA, 1999), p. 53.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

family composed of a husband, a wife and children has gained root in modern African society with the exclusion of extended family members and other relatives. Further, single-parent families have also emerged most of which are female-headed, a situation which has risen due to various factors such as single parenting by choice.⁷⁵

She observes that although the nuclear family continues to maintain relative contact with a wide range of relatives, the practice is no longer popular. Zani's contribution was invaluable as it explained the structure of the contemporary Agĩkũyũ family set-up which was vital to the study. Using this information, the study endeavours to understand how the changed family structure is affecting the way children and youth are parented in the contemporary Karũĩ Catholic Parish.

1.6.2 Parenting

The environment in which an individual is brought up affects his or her wellbeing and development.⁷⁶ Studies show communal and family environments provide an amicable climate for a child's positive development as different individuals bring their uniqueness to parenting.⁷⁷ Such an environment not only supports parenting but also strengthens the parents' capacity to inculcate values into their children. Parenting is a societal issue. Billen agrees and asserts that parenting occurs within an interdependent environment and in the context of a community.⁷⁸ Long supports this but goes ahead to talk about the various influences occurring in the community, family and individual levels that impact on the way children are educated.⁷⁹ The study was motivated to understand how the community and the extended family support parenting in Karũĩ Catholic Parish.

⁷⁵ Read more in P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-religio-philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003), pp. 130-150.

⁷⁶ J. Kaur, "Adolescents' Perception of Parenting as Related to Family Environment in Defence Officers Families in India," *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 5, no. 2(2014), pp. 93-110.

⁷⁷ H. A. Knauer, E. J. Ozer, W. Dow and L. C. H. Fernald, "Stimulating Parenting Practices in Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Mexican Communities," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15, no. 29(2018), pp. 1-16.

⁷⁸ R.M. Billen, *Interdependent Determinants of Parental Involvement Among Families of Children Receiving Early Intervention Services*, (Published PhD Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2015) p. 35.

⁷⁹ N. Long, "The Changing Nature of Parenting in America," *Pediatric Dentistry*, 26, no. 2(2004), pp. 121-124.

The child is born into the human family and progressively through education into the human community where he or she is supposed to mature and start giving back. In the Agĩkũyũ community, children spent most of their early years within the home environment. They learned language and behaviour without suppression of their developmental processes.⁸⁰ The presence and involvement of both parents at home raising their children in a complimentary manner was important. The father's presence conferred legitimacy and brought confidence in the children's lives. A child who perceives legitimacy may develop the confidence needed to face life and find it easy to make success out of their situation.⁸¹

Further, in the Agĩkũyũ home, the parents endeavoured to cultivate the right values in their children by ensuring the boy and girl shared in their parents' lives. According to Kenyatta, the sharing in life together and doing simple duties in imitation of the parents, and alongside the great interest of parents towards the children was largely responsible for creating strong bonds among the family members.⁸² These bonds acted as pillars for the success of the family and the foundation for children acquiring life skills. In particular, a strong bond was sustained by the presence of the father and his commitment to the family. Wachege and Rũgendo found that where any of the parents was lacking, the children desired "the contribution of the missing parent and were bound to compare their situation with their peers who had both parents."⁸³

Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio* (The family in the modern world) makes a call for both the father and mother to perform their God given responsibility working as a team. The parental love is a demonstration of God's love to children, "from whom every family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph 3:15).⁸⁴

⁸⁰ A. Diamond, "Executive Functions," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, (2013), pp. 135-168.

⁸¹ J. Lasse, K. Fite and A. P. Wadende, "Fatherhood in Kenyan Ethnic Communities: Implication for Child Development," *School Psychology International* 32, no. 1(2011), pp. 49-57.

⁸² J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 69.

⁸³ P. N. Wachege and F. G. Rũgendo, "Effects of Modernization on Youths' Morality: A Case of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kenya," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7, no. 12(2017), pp. 691-711.

⁸⁴ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1981), pp. 21-22.

Similarly, studies by Chang'ach and Ng'ang'a enlighten that the father's or mother's attention to each individual child affects them significantly.⁸⁵

Peschke agrees that the primary duty of parents which precedes all others is responsible assumption of parenthood for the sake of their sons and daughters. Parents must have reasonable hope that they will be able to rear and educate their off-springs in a way worth of a human being.⁸⁶ Although this study benefits from the contribution of Pope John II and Peschke, it finds the influence of the male and the female figure in parenting is not discussed. Further, a shortcoming is identified in the Pope's assumption of an ideal family situation, that of the presence of both parents. The study is thus inspired to find out the level of parent's engagement in performing their ordained roles in Karũri Catholic Parish irrespective of their marital status.

Peschke relates the crisis in the family today to the problems weakening the hold of the parents on the family. For instance, there is an increased evidence of weak authority of the parents over their children, increasing number of single parents, increasing non-marital unions and strong assertion of the independence of one or both spouses and increased tendencies of step-parents. On single parenting, a prolific writer on family matters, Wachege,⁸⁷ identifies more than thirty categories where children are brought up by single mothers today.

More writers expose further problems in the family. Hardenbrook notes there is an increased absence of the father which has a drastic negative effect on the children especially on sons. The lack of a father's role model damages the boy's confidence and self-esteem.⁸⁸ Hardenbrook has rightly christened the father's absence as "curse of our

⁸⁵ J. K. Chang'ach, "An Unfinished Agenda: Why is the Boy Child Endangered?" *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2, no. 4 (2012), pp. 181-188; J. Ng'ang'a, "CS Amina Nominated Co-Chair of Commonwealth Platform for Girls Education," *Kenya News Agency*, April 21, 2018, <http://kenyanewsagency.go.ke/en/?p=124329>

⁸⁶ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

⁸⁷ P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-religio-philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003), p. 150.

⁸⁸ W. Hardenbrook, "Where's Dad? A Call for Fathers with the Spirit of Elijah," in J. Piper and W. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 386.

day.” According to him, a prior study declared that “fatherless families... generate far more delinquency and personality disorders than do normal or motherless families.” Further, sociologists and psychologists can identify new type of disorder personality that perpetrates violent crimes by youth against other young people, a new shocking phenomenon.⁸⁹ Clearly, there should be a vision to recover parenting according to God’s purpose and root out any selfish and hurtful practices in communities.

Further, in the contemporary family set-up, children are exposed to limited role models. They are no longer exposed to a large network of relatives which may mean limited socialization process.⁹⁰ With such reduced exposure, children find a gap between themselves and their parents which hinders them from communicating delicate issues such as sexual matters. This raises the question of who should the youth turn to when faced with intimate issues. Is it the school, the Church or parents themselves; a question this study sought to answer. With this kind of scenario, the valuable instructions given by Pope John II on parenting children are severely constrained, and consequently the character formation of children is not adequately addressed.

Focusing on behaviour and character formation of children is becoming a matter of concern in Kenya today. There is evidence from prior studies carried out by scholars like Wachege and Rũgendo who investigated the increasing youth moral decadence and linked the problem to parenting issues.⁹¹ A study spearheaded by PAN asserts that the moral decadence among the youth in Nairobi and its environs including Karũrĩ Catholic Parish has become the norm and observed a connection to parenting.⁹² Our study made use of these important findings and at the same time drew from Christian sources in an effort to contribute to parenting of children and youth by investigating the manner of parenting in a specific case of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 387.

⁹⁰ P. Zani, “The Family in its African Socio-cultural Context,” in P. Ryan (Ed.), *The Models of Church- as-Family: Meeting the African Challenge* (Nairobi: CUEA, 1999), p. 53.

⁹¹ P. N. Wachege and F. G. Rũgendo, “The Parenting Environment in the Contemporary Agĩkũyũ Community of Kenya,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8, no. 8(2018), pp. 138–151.

⁹² Parenting in Africa Network, *Skilful Parenting and Moulding Behaviour at an Early Age- Bridging the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do* (Nairobi: ICS, 2013), p. 34.

The consequences of poor parenting noted above were not in isolation. An earlier study by Mũgambi on Christianity and African culture sheds more light. He laments that young people no longer seem to know how they ought to conduct themselves as individuals and members of society and unfortunately, just like the challenged youngsters, the parents themselves lack some essentials in the process of their own upbringing and education.⁹³ He therefore concludes that the parents themselves are challenged and have come to the realization that a gap exists in educating their children on morals. Mũgambi inspires this study to find out how the state of the parents in being both Africans and contemporary Christians affects parenting of children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

Re-stating the Pope's message on the role of parents, Frabutt et al. note that this role is not exclusive to parents but there are collaborators who teach and care for the children in their intellectual and spiritual formation. The Church and Church schools become second homes to the children where faith and values are reinforced through formal religious education and catechesis.⁹⁴ The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) gives invaluable instructions on the Christian family and heavily relies on Pauline teachings which show Jesus as the head of the family from where He summons and empowers the united family to action, to be light and salt of the world including to the children and youth.⁹⁵ Jesus clearly demonstrates His position as bridegroom, true vine, and head of the body as family symbolism. At home the child should learn social virtues of justice, charity, obedience, readiness for help, fairness, sincerity and diligence.⁹⁶ These observations on the role of the parent at home as the best source of moral values, although true, were evident when life in the families was not yet as disintegrated as it is now when parents do not have the luxury of time with their children. This made teaching moral values much easier then than it is now, hence the

⁹³ J. N. K. Mũgambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002), pp. 122-123.

⁹⁴ J. M. Frabutt, A. C. Holter, R. J. Nuzzi, H. Rocha and L. L. Cassel, "Pastors' Views of Parents and the Parental Role in Catholic Schools," (2010), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ914861.pdf>

⁹⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican: Holy See, 1992), no. 2207ff.

⁹⁶ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

motivation for the study to find out how adequate parenting can be carried out in today's families.

1.6.3 Moral Values

In a message to Africa, Pope John VI taught that some African traditional values are compatible with Christian values especially life seen as spiritual reality, respect for human dignity and the African sense of family and communal respect.⁹⁷ According to Ushe, the traditional African moral values gave the people distinct cultural personalities. In Africa, religion and morality are complementary and inseparable with a well-defined code.⁹⁸ In this context Ndiaye explains that these values are taught within the family relationships found at home where children learn the sense of the spiritual or fear of God, sense of community, kindness, respect for elders and others. The children should learn these family social values because they promote dialogue, warmth, care for one another, trust and safeguard the common good.⁹⁹ This study sought to find out how these important values are taught to the children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish and the challenges encountered.

The Agĩkũyũ community resisted the misuse of their values by the colonialists because they deemed the foreigners values to be incompatible with theirs.¹⁰⁰ They reasoned that tolerating such foreign values was detrimental to cohesion in the communal life although many years down the line, the same values have found their way into the community through modernization and technology and Karũrĩ Catholic Parish is not an exemption.¹⁰¹ It interested the study to find out how this effect promotes or hinders the transmission of moral values to children and youth.

⁹⁷ Pope John Paul VI, *The land of Africa: Africae Terrarum* (Nairobi, AMECEA Gaba, 1968), P. 8.

⁹⁸ M. U. Ushe, "Role of Traditional African Moral Values in the Development of Nigeria," *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 3, no. 2 (2011), pp. 1-13.

⁹⁹ A. R. Ndiaye, "Church as Family or Family as Church?" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

¹⁰⁰ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), pp. 82-83.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Kinoti's study on Gikũyũ traditional morality which was prompted by her concern about what people saw as a rapid decline in moral standards in Kenyan society concentrated on obtaining an explanation of what constituted Agĩkũyũ traditional morality.¹⁰² She studied five values that touched on all important areas of traditional life, which are honesty, generosity, justice, courage and temperance. She expounds that the Agĩkũyũ kinship system was based on and maintained by the principle of honesty because the relationship itself was of respect and honour.¹⁰³ Honesty was the basis of making mutually beneficial arrangements such as entrusting assets in custody of another person for security or other purposes.¹⁰⁴ Wachege similarly explains the basis for promoting an individual to elderhood was on how honest he was because honesty was a measure of one's integrity and moral standing.¹⁰⁵ These observations prompted this study to find out if the witnessed low moral standard among the youth in Karũĩ Catholic Parish was due to failure by parents to inculcate moral values into them.

Another Agĩkũyũ cultural value taught and expected to be demonstrated by all was kindness. A wider facet of this is the virtue of hospitality which is a vital aspect of the existence of the community, an extension of generosity and is described as a way of being an African by Gathogo.¹⁰⁶ Kindness was described by Feidhahn as "The state of being that includes the attributes of loving affection, sympathy, friendliness, patience, pleasantness, gentleness and goodness. A quality shown in the way a person speaks or acts. It is more volitional than emotional"¹⁰⁷ and requires self-discipline.

Cagnolo related the role of self-discipline in the development of a well behaved individual in the Agĩkũyũ society and observed that the traditional society worked with utmost sincerity to achieve it. Both boys and girls were taught, especially during the

¹⁰² H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 21.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁰⁵ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), pp. 17-29.

¹⁰⁶ J. M. Gathogo, "African Hospitality: Is it Compatible with the Ideal of Christ's Hospitality? Part 1," (2006), https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/churchman/120-02_145.pdf

¹⁰⁷ S. Feidhahn, "Kindness Challenge: Thirty Days to Improve our Relationships" (2015), <https://waterbrookmultnomah.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Kindness-Challenge.pdf>

initiation rite, how to exercise self-control regarding sexual matters. According to him, the parents and the community were keen to ensure irresponsible sexism, stealing and lying were not tolerated.¹⁰⁸ Getui contributes and asserts that the value of self-discipline should be inculcated into children by letting them interact with their peers, express themselves freely and initiate their own creativity but with guidance and making them follow laid down rules.¹⁰⁹

A discussion on self-discipline would not be complete without looking at hard work, which was inculcated into everyone without exception. The statement by Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite, as quoted by Ime et al., is true, even for the Agĩkũyũ; that the value of hard work was inculcated for economic reason and self-reliance.¹¹⁰ Hard work was the first measure of wealth in the African value system. Among other values keenly taught during the rite of passage was respect and especially for elders. Ime enlightens that showing respect to others is to acknowledge their worth or value.¹¹¹ Sexual discipline was also thoroughly inculcated during the initiation rite as noted earlier.

Like several other studies, Park explains that human sexuality in the Agĩkũyũ society was extremely controlled with checks and balances requiring high levels of self-discipline.¹¹² A topical study by Keeler on this issue shows both male and female youth are more interested in the topic of human sexuality than any other in their relationships.¹¹³ Yet a further re-evaluation was made by a study carried out by Yadera, Badane and Tura who note that despite this awareness, the parents are not keen to discuss the subject with their children, even though they are supposed to be the main

¹⁰⁸ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 74.

¹⁰⁹ M. N. Getui, "The Family, the Church and the Development of Youth," in J. N. K. Mũgambi (Eds), *The Church in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), pp. 71-84.

¹¹⁰ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² S. K. Park, *Spirituality of Kenyan Pastors: A Practical Theological Study of Kikuyu PCEA Pastors in Nairobi* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2008), p. 358.

¹¹³ R. Keeler, "Developmental Theory and Ministry to College Youth," *Fall*, 31, no. 2 (2002), pp. 186-193.

source of information on moral values and especially sexual education.¹¹⁴ The same study revealed the consensus among the youth was that parent's silence concerning education on sexual matters leaves them with patchy knowledge of the same.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, another research has shown that the young people are reluctant and shy to bring up the sexual subject with their parents for fear of rebuke or blame for appearing to be already engaged in bad behaviour. Where there is some communication on sexual matters, the parents want to dictate and monitor, characterized by vague warnings rather than creating an open environment in which the youth are freely asking and getting responses. This could be a pointer to lack of skills on the part of the parents on how to respond to sexual related questions raised by their youth, an issue pursued by this study.¹¹⁶

The gap left by parents may be filled by others such as the peers of the youth. Thus the children may obtain misleading information or may believe in damaging myths which make them vulnerable. Despite this mishandling of an important issue, as studies in developing countries suggest, there is potential in sexual education to positively impact knowledge, norms, attitudes and intentions even though sexual behaviour change might be slow. In this respect, Yadera et al. encourage the consideration of an open-ended participatory approach to sex education while Bastein thinks parents could benefit from programs focusing on improving their comfort level on this important life subject.¹¹⁷ Overall, the situation calls for urgent restoration of Agĩkũyũ morality which has continued to deteriorate under the sustained pressure of modernization.¹¹⁸ The consequence has been the loss of indigenous family values and ideals, and western cultures showcased as superior mainly through social media and television. This study proffers strategic choices towards teaching these moral values to children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

¹¹⁴ T. A. Yadeta, H. K. Bedane and A. K. Tura, "Factors Affecting Parent-Adolescent Discussion on Reproductive Health Issues in Harar, Eastern Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Study," *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, (2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2014/102579>.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.; S. Bastien, L. J. Kajula and W. W. Muhwezi, "A Review of Studies of Parent-child Communication About Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Reproductive Health*, 8, no. 25 (2011), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3192730/>.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ S. K. Park, *Spirituality of Kenyan Pastors: A Practical Theological Study of Kikuyu PCEA Pastors in Nairobi* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2008), p. 358.

Considering the extent to which modernization has negatively affected youth morality, an observation is made by Kitt that through generations, the trend in popular media and the public at large is to condemn the youth for lowering moral standards.¹¹⁹ His study on youth behaviour and reactions to it by parents and the community does not show exactly how moral values should be taught especially in a semi-urban environment like Karūrī Catholic Parish where the parent is largely unavailable and the youth are indifferent as discussed next.

The new culture among the male and female youth takes a different view of life; it favours a lifestyle of ease and leisure over hard work.¹²⁰ Further, the youth want to hold to values such as instant gratification and glamour which has a significant influential effect on them, since to them image is everything. The present youth culture is at a loss of objective values of reflection, experience and thought, and centered on passing novelty and outward appearances. It is indeed a society averse to being taught the past and with no sense of the future, preferring to live in seclusion even within the family, refusing to willingly partake in communal affairs thus progressively being alienated from moral and social dimensions of life.¹²¹ This culture entirely overlooks the conscious that Christianity and Agĩkũyũ tradition have a part to play even in the post-modern times where an individual has to sacrifice to support others. Clearly, the quite joy of Jesus sharing His love with others is no longer felt.¹²²

According to George, the youth's new culture is mainly as a result of the use of social media especially the new technologies whose features keep changing bringing about new social, ethical, moral and emotional implications.¹²³ The Pontifical Council for

¹¹⁹ J. Kitt, "Kids These Days: An Analysis of the Rhetoric Against Youth Across Five Generations," (2013), https://writingandrhretoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/files/kws2/KWS2_Kitt.pdf

¹²⁰ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

¹²¹ J. Kitt, "Kids These Days: An Analysis of the Rhetoric Against Youth Across Five Generations"; Synod of Bishops, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Lineamenta* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012), no. 6.

¹²² M. A. Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), p. 13.

¹²³ S. George, "Emerging Youth Cultures in the Era of Globalization: TechnoCulture and TerrorCulture," in R. Tiplady, *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalisation on Mission* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003), pp. 34-67.

Social Communications offered that this keeps the youth ahead of the parents.¹²⁴ However, the benefits of modernization and technology to the youth, community and Church now and in the future cannot be gainsaid.¹²⁵ Social media addresses the fundamental desires and needs of the youth such as empowering them on business¹²⁶ and information sharing.¹²⁷ Some researchers such as George even see a better future for evangelization through cyber spirituality which is noted to be in the increase due to its speed in providing information on life in general and spiritual guidance.¹²⁸ This insight should interest the Church in its evangelization work especially to and through the youth, since the new culture founded on the use of technology is readily accepted and learned as a new way of doing things which can take either material or spiritual form.¹²⁹ A further discussion on the effect of social media on Karūrī Catholic Parish youth is provided next.

As noted earlier, Bottgnole laments that modernization has made young people abandon the all-embracing family life as they follow western cultures.¹³⁰ Kinoti is categorical that these new cultures and behaviour are responsible for the increase in vices like teenage pregnancies, broken homes and youth crime within the Agĩkũyũ community.¹³¹ Notwithstanding, several scholars agree that the parents and the society should not give up but must ensure moral values are taught to youth as the future of the society depends

¹²⁴ Pontifical Council for Social Communications, "The Church and Internet," (2002), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/index.htm

¹²⁵ K. Sivi, *Kenya Youth Scenarios: Youth... the Key to Unlocking Kenya's Potential* (Nairobi: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2011), p. 42.

¹²⁶ P. Oriare, R. Okello-Orlale and W. Ugangu, *The Media We Want: The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study* (Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), pp. 1-63.

¹²⁷ Ibid.; Government of Kĩambu County, *Kĩambu County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017*, https://roggkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/CIDPs/Kĩambu-County-Integrated-Development-Plan_CIDP_2013-201.pdf

¹²⁸ S. George, "Emerging Youth Cultures in the Era of Globalization: TechnoCulture and TerrorCulture," in R. Tiplady, *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalisation on Mission* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003), pp. 34-67.

¹²⁹ K. Kang'ethe, *The Role of the Agĩkũyũ Religion and Culture in the Development of the Karing'a Religio-political Movement, 1900-1950 With Particular Reference to the Agĩkũyũ Concept of God and the Rite of Initiation* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1981), p. 43.

¹³⁰ Bottgnole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), p. 31.

¹³¹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), P. 15.

on them.¹³² Unfortunately, studies show that the long cherished Agĩkũyũ traditional institutions that were responsible for inculcating moral values into children and youth are no more and are without suitable replacement.¹³³ This could explain the contemporary youth's impoverishment in moral values. As such a study to urgently investigate at erudition level ways of liberating the challenged contemporary youth was necessary.

1.6.4 Discipline and Maintaining Moral Values

The African traditional morality was a system that enjoined individual responsibilities and also held the community responsible for the behaviour of each individual member; the bad conduct of an individual made a community suffer and therefore the whole community was obligated to control the conduct of its members.¹³⁴ According to Areji, the community moral values accentuate the authority and unquestionable supremacy of the community while the individual can reach the ideal state if he or she has the necessary personal virtues or moral principles. To ensure this was achieved, the community applied sanctions and taboos. This motivated the study to find out the place of discipline in maintaining moral values.

The role of sanctions in African traditional systems is indispensable and included ostracism, simple apology, doing some work to appease the wronged man's feelings and the gods who were believed to be the guardians of the systems. On another plane, the moral order was sustained by various institutional devices in the traditional society. These included secret societies, priestly cults and age grades.¹³⁵ Rob puts it that if one failed to put things right with the living and the departed and by bad luck passed on, they became a bad example and shame to their families.¹³⁶ Considering that the social structures have changed, Kinoti suggests that religious organizations as well as schools

¹³² G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ M. U. Ushe, "Role of Traditional African Moral Values in the Development of Nigeria," *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 3, no. 2 (2011), pp. 1-13.

¹³⁵ A. C. Areji and M. C. Anyaehie, "Igbo Traditional Morality as a Panacea to Nigerian Security Crises," *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5(2015), pp. 102-108.

¹³⁶ R. Naaman, *Investigation of Kipsigis Worldview Items Towards Understanding the Catholic Doctrine of Salvation Through Inculturation Approach: A Case of Kericho Sub-County* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2015), p. 168.

and parents should play a crucial role in teaching moral values.¹³⁷ Prompted by her recommendation, the study took a step to examine the role the Church was playing in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish even as the children grow according to the developmental stages expounded by Erikson.

1.6.5 Child Development Stages

Erikson explains that each developmental stage of a child has a specific crisis which when resolved should result in the acquisition of basic values which the child's ego can use to resolve the crisis in subsequent stages. A child develops a healthy personality and sense of self after he or she successfully completes each developmental stage.¹³⁸ The study finds a gap in that the Erikson's theory does not address how acquiring the virtues explicated in the theory such as hope and competence would be ensured in contexts where there are dynamic cultural and relational experiences, which interfere with the environment where the child is brought up. The study addressed the gap by recommending appropriate actions aimed at overcoming the challenges that interfere with adequate parenting in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.

The study used Erikson's theory on the basis that it describes the impact of social experiences across the lifespan of an individual especially during the early years till the young adulthood stage. The eight stages of the theory serve as a guide that holds across time and culture. The theory provides insights into the direction of a healthy life span and has also been defined as well equipped to resolve the crises of early adulthood that can be reached once the crisis of adolescence has been resolved.

Paediatricians have judged that when compared to the process of education in their early childhood, all the pedagogical processes before the sixth year are by far more decisive. It is in this early phase that the foundation for the entire person's later life is laid and it is for this reason that a child will need in his or her first months of relations, many hours of daily contact, tenderness, touch, and smiles, since the kind of early childhood one experiences decides the person's later state. They can end up being

¹³⁷ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 21.

¹³⁸ J. M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed, Erick H Erikson Extended Version* (New York: WW Norton and Company Inc., 1997), pp. 32- 82.

sociable, loving, cheerful or dejected, hard-worker, or someone who values life.¹³⁹ This interested the researcher to undertake this study to examine how the parenting in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish makes use of the Erikson’s theory valuable guide.

1.6.6 RCC Doctrine and Theologians’ Reflections on Family and Parenting

The Catholic Catechism states: “A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family.”¹⁴⁰ This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has obligations to recognize it. The husband, wife and their children are the normal reference point to evaluate different forms of family relationships.

An African theologian, Ndiaye, dwells on the African family and points out that the family members include not only the father, mother and their children but also relatives by marriage, aunties, uncles, grandparents and cousins. An examination of the African family therefore reveals multiple solidarities and relationships.¹⁴¹ This is supported by Wachege who stresses that the family is the African ideal of life and being. It is not only inclusive but complex cherishing solidarity and well inclined to genuine interpersonal bonds with others.¹⁴² The study looked into how the Agĩkũyũ family solidarity and relationships contribute to parenting in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.

The family carries a central importance to an individual and is the center of life¹⁴³ and this is emphasized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace when it highlights the family as the place where one learns love and faithfulness of God and the need to respond to them (1Sam 3:13). According to Murungi, the centrality of the family gives identity to its members who through mutually beneficial relationships gift each other

¹³⁹ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 2202.

¹⁴¹ A. R. Ndiaye, “Church as Family or Family as Church?” in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), pp. 157-158.

¹⁴² P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Inculturated into Agĩkũyũ Elderhood as Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): A Third Millennium Fountain of Hope, Joyful Love and Ethical Issues* (Kĩambu: Little Eden Publishers, 2020), p. 44ff.

¹⁴³ CA, no. 841.

for the welfare of the whole family.¹⁴⁴ Further, the children “develop their potentialities, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face their unique and individual destiny” in the family atmosphere created through the minimal giving of the spouses in the bond of matrimony.¹⁴⁵

Ndiaye sees the family in Africa as wealth, where anyone lacking this wealth can be said to be in worst misery and poverty that can exist. This is so because as he puts it “in a family there is always someone to rescue, welcome, and shelter you and be hospitable to you. It is a wealth worth sharing among members through solidarity.”¹⁴⁶ The wellbeing of every individual in the family and society at large is dependent on the healthy status produced by family. The Synod informs the study that in various cultures and by extension, that of the Agĩkũyũ, an individual’s sense of belonging and their relationships are key values which shape their identity.¹⁴⁷ The Christian family therefore has an urgent and serious task to preserve the link between generations for the purpose of transmitting the faith and basic values.¹⁴⁸ The study looked at how the “Family of God” Church model may promote adequate parenting in a particular case of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

Lumen Gentium loudly proclaims the parents as the primary educators of their children, being the “pastors” of the domestic Church, presenting to the children the virtues of the Kingdom of God.¹⁴⁹ The education role of the family brings an educative influence to bear on responsible parents, who not only set out to do their work but remain challenged to put forth their best if they have to achieve fully the noble and great aim of a happy family.¹⁵⁰ Parental responsibilities therefore act as an educative stimulus for the parents,

¹⁴⁴ D. J. Mũrũngi, *The Theological Anthropology of John Paul II as Source of Principles of Inculturation in the Family: The Ameru Case of Kenya* (New York: Bloomington, 2003), p. 1ff.

¹⁴⁵ CA, no. 841.

¹⁴⁶ A. R. Ndiaye, “Church as Family or Family as Church?” in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

¹⁴⁷ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, pp. 13-14; GS, no. 4.

¹⁴⁸ GS, no. 47.

¹⁴⁹ LG, no. 11.

¹⁵⁰ CCC, no. 544.

and in this way, the children become contributors to making their parents holy.¹⁵¹ In this respect, RCC refers to the family as a domestic Church and likewise it is a household of faith, since it passes the faith of the ancestors, cultivates the religious traditions for its members in an effort to translate its religious convictions into daily life.

The Church advocates for teaching values that will govern and guide conduct according to reason and faith. Such values make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. The cardinal virtues themselves are prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance.¹⁵² These are acquired by human effort and are earned when one does a good act. On the other hand, the Church teaches the law of God entrusted to it for the faithful as the way of life and truth.¹⁵³ The teachings are “set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life and spiritual worship.”¹⁵⁴ The Church believes that parents bear the greatest responsibility of teaching their children these values.¹⁵⁵ The study investigated the lived spirituality of the youth with respect to Christian moral teachings.

According to the Pontifical Council for the family, the right atmosphere for parenting is that which is full of love and reverence for God, and enables the posturing of holistic social development of children.¹⁵⁶ Such an environment is necessary for the formation of moral virtues in children and youth.¹⁵⁷ For instance, when the spirit of giving or sacrifice is present in the family, the children will grow up with the correct perspective regarding material goods, of simple and austere lifestyles, and convinced of the value of a person for who he is rather than what he has.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the Council explains that the parenting of a child needs to take into consideration the individualized needs of children at their different stages of development and provide the relevant education to meet these particular needs.¹⁵⁹ The study examined what the RCC doctrine on family

¹⁵¹ GS, no. 48.

¹⁵² Ibid., no. 1805.

¹⁵³ Ibid., no. 2037.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., no. 2041.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., no. 2223.

¹⁵⁶ Pope Paul VI, Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican: St. Paul Editions, 1965), no. 3.

¹⁵⁷ PCF, no. 48-49.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., no. 60.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., no. 77.

and parenting says and what the children are taught in order to address the deficiency that may contribute to impoverished moral values in the youth of Karūrī Catholic Parish.

1.6.7 Inculturation Approach and RCC “Family of God” Church Image

Arrupe defines inculturation as a process by which faith reaches the human person in his or her most profound experience in life. He argues that Christ has planted the seed of faith in every culture and that the Gospel becomes relevant to human experience through inculturation.¹⁶⁰ Magesa takes the idea further by strongly advocating inculturation of the Gospel of Jesus and evangelism in Africa. He shows proper inculturation as leading to an intensively Christianized community that would witness transformation of the different levels of its life, laws, customs, moral values and its worldview in the light of the Gospel message.¹⁶¹ The effort would be to make Christianity more meaningful to Africans and particularly to the young generation. Tamba holds the view that the process of inculturation aims at the liberation of a whole culture and its people with Gospel values through their transformation from all forms of evil, whether moral, political, economic or social.¹⁶² Shorter rightly observes that Christians want their faith and practice to root them in their own culture, give them security, identity and social harmony as well as a sense of purpose and direction.¹⁶³ All the three African Christian theologians did not indicate the source of inculturation, a gap Waliggo fills by describing the Bible as the primary source of inculturation.¹⁶⁴ The study is informed accordingly as it aims to inculturate the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values.

¹⁶⁰ P. Arrupe, “Catechesis and Inculturation,” *AFER*, 20, (1977), p. 32.

¹⁶¹ L. Magesa, *What is Not Sacred: African Spirituality* (Nairobi: Acton, 2014), pp. 186-189.

¹⁶² E. C. Tamba, *Inculturating the Gospel in Africa: From Adaptation to Inculturation* (Rome: Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoria, 1996), pp. 117-119.

¹⁶³ A. Shorter, *Christianity and African Imagination after African Synod – Resources for Inculturation* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1995), p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ J. M. Waliggo, “Making a Church that is Truly African,” in J. M. Waliggo et al., *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1986), pp. 20-25.

Nyamiti appreciates the above views but cautions that for the Africans to realize any benefits of inculturation, a careful scrutiny of the African socio-cultural reality as a basis for integration and transformation is required.¹⁶⁵ This will allow the understanding and presentation of the contemporary Christian faith in view of the desires and mindset of the African. As Nyamiti puts it, the Bible and Tradition take priority thereby purifying and correcting the African socio-cultural reality.¹⁶⁶ Arrupe enlightens that through inculturation the Gospel message comes in a particular cultural context and finds expression through the elements proper to that culture and becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture changing it and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation.¹⁶⁷ The Africans therefore stand to gain when their values are corrected and elevated by the Gospel message to a higher level of authentic living.

The Church desires the African to live this authentic life when She accommodates the integration of authentic African traditional values with the Gospel message while engaging different Church models, which assists in knowing the expectation and the nature of the Church more so in ministering. From Dulles's list of images, the study learns of the following attributes of the Church: Church as Institution; Church as Sacrament; Church as Mystical Communion; Church as Servant and Church as Herald.¹⁶⁸ Still Fuellenbach has made contribution to Dulles models by endorsing Church as "basic ecclesial communities" based on its relevance to the modern Church.¹⁶⁹ A contribution from Nyamiti, an African Christian theologian, provides a model that should express the mystery of the Church, that is, "Church as "Koinonia"-in Ancestor."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Volume 1 – Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1995), p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ P. Arrupe, *A Handbook of Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p. 35.

¹⁶⁸ A. Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1987), pp. 9-102.

¹⁶⁹ J. Fuellenbach, *Church: Community for the Kingdom* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 109.

¹⁷⁰ C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Volume 1 – Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1995), p. 7.

The above mentioned list of Church models does not include “Family of God” Church model, which was crucial for our kind of study. Accordingly, John Paul II’s Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Ecclesia in Africa* comes in to fill this lacuna.¹⁷¹ Not only did the Synod of African Bishops speak of inculturation, they also made use of it, capturing the Church as “Family of God” as the guiding thought for the spreading of the Gospel in Africa. The Synod fathers acknowledged the model as appropriate for Africa as it emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The Synod therefore recommended the development of an ecclesiology complementarily with other Church images and that of Church as “Family of God” adopting the cultural characteristics of the African family.

The concept of “Family of God” Church model developed alongside other Church models is based on theological and anthropological foundations, the anthropological aspect of it being analogous with the deep-rooted African extended family and its values. On the other hand, the theological aspect has its origin in the Holy Trinity, which is also a divine family. The Bishops enriched the study with the understanding that the African Churches are one big family of God where all the family values and riches can be experienced, thus justifying this study whose focus was not only on the Agĩkũyũ family set-up but also “Family of God” Church image.

Driven by the belief that the African family is the most effective agent of evangelization, the Bishops concluded that parishes and communities should divide themselves into small groups (SCCs) where the laity gather and deepen their faith through the sharing of the Gospel message together, sharing on parenting issues, as well as contributing in the life of the Church in other ways. Application of “Family of God” Church model makes life more interactive than in other models. By its nature therefore, this model challenges Africans to recognize that the social aspect of the Gospel is as important as the other aspects. In this context, anything that threatens the common good and the survival of the family such as inadequate parenting, youth’s low moral standards and poverty should be confronted in order to recover the precious and central position of the family in Africa. Doing so will lead to the recognition of the gift of existing in one “Family of God” where all children and youth are adequately parented.

¹⁷¹ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63, pp. 47-48.

Despite this great input from the Synod Fathers, they did not look at the Church as “Family of God” from the African extended family’s point of view, a lacuna that Kiriswa fills. Kiriswa views the African extended family as befitting “Family of God” title since the African family is more inclusive and in it there is a strong sense of belonging.¹⁷² Both the Synod and Kiriswa did not address how the “Family of God” Church image can be actualized to benefit the transmission of moral values to children and youth, a gap the study filled through the help of mediation theory, in a particular case of Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.

All the same the Bishops acknowledged the African family is struggling with economic and cultural difficulties as a result of the great changes confronting the contemporary society. This is sufficient reason why, being the first cell of the living ecclesial community, the Christian family needs to preserve its own essential values. These values promote the social aspect of the Gospel as recommended by the Bishops.¹⁷³

When the “Family of God” Church model is concretized in Church life in form of small Christian Communities (SCCs), it ceases to be just a notion or a theory that cannot affect lives of the faithful in a positive way. Chukwu agrees with the Bishops idea of creating SCCs, and provides further insight when he posits that the Church as “Family of God” implies the Church must truly be family in operation and structure.¹⁷⁴ Pope John Paul VI sees the need for SCCs as stemming from the desire of the faithful to live the Church’s life more intensely from a desire and quest for a more human dimension. The larger ecclesial communities can only offer this with difficulty and especially in urban and semi-urban areas like Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.¹⁷⁵

Saurt argues that from a theological viewpoint, the catechesis gives parents and family member’s insights into their lives in a way that will help them bring meaning to existence. The Scripture contained there-in “point to the God-life in the family” and insight into their intimate relationship with God. The family is among the most

¹⁷² B. Kiriswa, “African model of the Church as Family: Implications on Ministry and Leadership,” *African Ecclesiological Review*, 43, no. 3 (2001), pp. 99-108.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁷⁴ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 95.

¹⁷⁵ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 58.

referenced in the Scripture with many images referring to it. To know the family, there is no other definite place to begin other than the Scripture. Through Scripture we know of God's ideal family and the kind of life we should have with Him.¹⁷⁶ The above discussions are very important for the study. However, the study found a gap to understand how the "Family of God" Church model implied in the SCCs was contributing to adequate parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

To achieve its objectives and test the hypotheses, the study was guided by three theories. These are: Erikson's psychosocial theory; Boff and Boff mediation theory, and redaction criticism theory propagated by Kasemann, Conzelmann, Fuchs and Marxsen.

The Erikson's psychosocial theory which profusely benefited this study focuses on predictable stages of human development that include the entire life span of an individual from infancy to old age. It outlines the stages as infancy (birth to 18 months), early childhood (2 to 3 years), pre-school (3 to 5 years), school age (6 to 11 years), adolescence (12 to 18 years), young adulthood (19 to 40 years), middle adulthood (41 to 65 years) and maturity (66 to death). The teachings in each stage produce a strength which is necessary as the individual moves to the subsequent stage. Therefore the right handling at each stage is necessary to bring the individual to maturity.¹⁷⁷

The researcher used the theory's framework albeit with some slight modification on age brackets to guide data collection and analysis. From this theory, the study derives a basis for assessing the Agīkūyū system of education in bringing up morally upright individuals. It was also useful for analyzing the manner of transmitting moral values in Karūrī Catholic Parish. The theory, though useful to the study, did not provide the guide on how first hand data could practically be gathered on the ground and analysed. This gap was filled by the mediation theory that was chosen due to the practical applicability

¹⁷⁶ C. G. Suart, *Nurturing Faith within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame, Australia, 2007), p. 31.

¹⁷⁷ J. M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed, Erick H Erikson Extended Version* (New York: WW Norton and Company Inc., 1997), pp. 32-37, pp. 66-82.

of its methodology and also for its emphasis on improving and impacting communities through the Gospel message.

The mediation theory propagated by Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, and articulated in their book titled *Introducing Liberation Theology*, gives three major mediations for a worthwhile involvement in Christian liberation theologies. The mediations are: Socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and the practical mediation also referred to as praxis.¹⁷⁸

The social-analytical mediation operates in the realm of the social setting of the oppressed and for this case, the Agĩkũyũ family set-up which was examined and the findings discussed in chapter two. The social-analytical mediation involved the researcher going to the field where she inserted herself appropriately in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community thereby gaining first-hand experience of the situation on the ground. The researcher captured the relevant data on issues of interest to the study such as the composition of the family, the manner of teaching moral values, challenges to adequate parenting, where and how the youth get information on moral values and the contribution of the RCC in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish towards moral education of children and youth.

This takes the study to the second mediation which is the hermeneutical mediation that operates in the theological realm. This involved scrutinizing the RCC teachings and theologians' reflections on family and parenting concerning teaching of moral values (chapter four). It also involved an exercise that related the findings in the first mediation to the Will of God in the Bible and Tradition. The researcher asked questions like: What does Jesus say about the source of moral values for children and youth? What does the Word of God teach on parenting? This was done in view of the final mediation, practical mediation.

¹⁷⁸ L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987), pp. 24-39.

The third mediation is the practical mediation also referred to as the moment of pastoral action or “Praxis.” It is the final stage in liberation theology and is about action and involvement. Once the real situation has been understood and a decision made, then something is done about it. The end-point of liberation theology is eventually about action, and for this study it is the praxis of inculturation, the experiential stage. The Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values were integrated into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in view of transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish (chapter six) which was the main goal of the study. This was with a focus of making the RCC teachings on family and parenting more meaningful and fruitful to Karũrĩ Catholic Parish families and is accomplished by the faithful themselves. The practical outcome of the study was outlined by way of invaluable recommendations (chapter seven). Although the mediation theory was vital in guiding the actual conduct of the study, it did not equip the researcher with the critical know-how of sourcing from the Bible and Christian Tradition in a scholarly way for the wellbeing of the challenged families. This gap was filled by redaction criticism theory.

The redaction criticism theory is propagated by Kasemann, Conzelmann, Fuchs and Marxsen, and expounded by Collins in his book, *Introduction to New Testament*. The theory presupposes that Bible authors were not only compilers but were also creative writers who came out with their messages to fit a particular audience and their needs in life.¹⁷⁹ The writers of scriptures were influenced by factors like individual giftedness, the beneficiaries of their respective documents, creativity, emphases, peculiar preferential purpose, approach, and contribution. They thus formulated the message to adapt such varied cultures. The theory enabled the researcher to source scientifically and systematically from the Bible and Christian Tradition, which empowered her to correct or reinforce some issues in the social setting she was writing to, namely, Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

The study also consulted Biblical commentaries and lexicons which are: The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and the Modern Catholic Dictionary. The aim was to make God’s Word more fully

¹⁷⁹ R. F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp.196-229

communicated effectively and understood. They helped to properly interpret the Word so as to actualize the meaning of the text in today's context in order to forge integration between life and faith and engender commitment to personal and community transformation, even through the parenting endeavour in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.¹⁸⁰

1.8 Research Hypotheses

The main study hypothesis was that through proper inculturation, the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and the Roman Catholic "Family of God" Church image contribute towards transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambu County.

The specific hypotheses were:

1. The Agĩkũyũ family set-up is crucial in transmitting family and parenting values;
2. Karūrĩ Catholic Parish has a manner of transmitting moral values to children and youth;
3. RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections contain important teachings on family and parenting with regard to teaching moral values;
4. The Roman Catholic "Family of God" Church image and inculturation approach are useful for transmitting moral values; and
5. Integration of Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections on family and parenting is necessary for transmitting moral values in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.

1.9 Research Methodology

This section deals with the description and discussion of the research methodology in the following order; research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, selection of research assistants, sensitization of respondents, data collection methods, data analysis, pilot study and, reliability and validity. The section also discusses ethical considerations and finally the chapter's concluding remarks but first the research design is discussed.

¹⁸⁰ A. J. Meenan, "Biblical Hermeneutics in an African Context," *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies*, 1, no. 2 (2014), pp. 268-273.

1.9.1 Research Design

According to Cooper and Schindler, a research design is the blueprint that guides the study while collecting, measuring and analyzing data.¹⁸¹ The descriptive case study design was adopted, employing a survey method of data collection. This design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to describe things the way they are in their existing condition or state.¹⁸² Yin explains that the case study is a common research strategy that arises out of the desire to understand multifaceted social phenomena such as parenting.¹⁸³ In this respect, he defines a case study as “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when it involves social experiences,”¹⁸⁴ and is based on a particular contextual situation.¹⁸⁵ The need to have an in-depth understanding and description of the role of Agĩkũyũ family set-up and Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image in adequate parenting formed the basis for the selection of the case study strategy.

The selection of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish in Kĩambũ County allowed an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon. The Parish consists of five outstations namely: Karũrĩ (St. Martin De Porres), Kiambaa (St. Patrick), Muchatha (Immaculate Heart of Mary), Laini (St. Monica) and Njoro (St. Peters). The location of the outstations is well illustrated in figure 3, all of which were covered by the study.

1.9.2 Study Population

The study population was 4,370 comprising of the men, women and youth of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambũ County as per the Parish register of persons.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ D. R. Cooper and P. S. Schendler, *Business Research Methods* (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2014), p. 152.

¹⁸² O. Mũgenda and A. Mũgenda, *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi: Acts Press, 1999), p. 160.

¹⁸³ R. K. Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods, 2th Ed.* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 3.

¹⁸⁴ J. C. Lacono, A. Brown and C. Holtham, “The Use of the Case Study Method in Theory Testing: The Example of Steel eMarketplaces,” *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 9, no. 1 (2011), pp. 57-65.

¹⁸⁵ H. Ridder, “Review Work: Case Study Research Design and Methods (4th Ed.) by Robert K. Yin,” *German Journal of Research in Human Resource Management*, 26, no. 1 (2011), pp. 93-95.

¹⁸⁶ Karũrĩ Catholic Parish Registry, *Church Register of Persons*, 2016.

1.9.2.1 Population Stratification

According to Erikson's psycho-social development theory, a child's parenting needs vary according to age and the family structure responds accordingly.¹⁸⁷ Further, the manner of teaching children should be different at various age levels.¹⁸⁸ Research also shows that men, women and youth perceive parenting differently.¹⁸⁹ Thus, these groups may hold different positions or have different information on the manner of parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish and as such each needed to be fairly represented in the sample. Recognizing the above, the first strategy was to slightly modify the developmental stages as expounded by Erikson's theory, to reflect the elements on which data was to be collected and this informed the stratification of the population into three categories of men, women and youth. The Parish register had 960 men, 1,860 women, and 1,550 youth.

1.9.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

1.9.3.1 Sample Size

The Cochran's formula is widely used and is also recommended by Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend for a study like this.¹⁹⁰ However, according to Bryman, in a qualitative research, the meaning of the words is the most important thing and not the numerical strength of the informants.¹⁹¹ The researcher should merely demonstrate that there are enough respondents with the right knowledge to explain the phenomenon under study. Using the formula, a sample size of 353 for a confidence level of 95% and precision level of 5% was calculated. The sample was increased to 365 to accommodate 12 more respondents for in-depth study on the subject matter.

¹⁸⁷ E. H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crises* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1968), p. 43.

¹⁸⁸ J. M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed, Erick H Erikson Extended Version* (New York: WW Norton and Company Inc., 1997), pp. 32-37, 66-82.

¹⁸⁹ Save the Children Sweden, *Perception of Children on Parenting Practices* (Kathmandu: Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia, 2008), p. 1-55., <https://www.crin.org/en/docs/Perceptionpractices.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ Fisher, A. A., J. E. Laing, J. E. Stoeckel and J. W. Townsend, *Handbook for Family Planning Operations Research Design 2nd Ed.* (New York: Population Council, 1998), p. 45.

¹⁹¹ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (4th Ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 36.

The formula was as follows:

$$n_f = \frac{n}{1 + \left(\frac{n}{N}\right)} = 353$$

Where:

n_f = the desired sample size (when the population is less than 10,000).

n = the desired sample size (when the population is more than 10,000) = 384.

N = the estimate of the population size (4,370).

Computing the sample size this way is also supported by Krejcie and Morgan's standard table for determining sample size from a given population.¹⁹²

1.9.3.2 Sampling Technique

To ensure the sample was representative, a proportionate number of respondents were selected from the population according to the stratification. One hundred fifty (150) mothers, seventy-eight (78) fathers and one hundred and twenty-five (125) youth were selected. The nature of the information sought required the parent respondents to have children between 0-35 years of age. Since the Church did not keep this data, the researcher used the snowballing method to select the parent respondents to ensure the relevancy of the data collected.

Snowballing method is used where it is difficult to know the respondents in advance. Its use required the researcher to identify a small number of respondents who met the criteria necessary to obtain the required information. These initial respondents were then used as informants to identify others who met the criteria.¹⁹³ Therefore the task of the researcher was to identify the key informants representing each group with the required characteristics and allow them to independently identify other respondents. The youth sample was selected using simple random sampling method but first the group was divided into male and female. Simple random sampling was done using

¹⁹² R. Krejcie and D. W. Morgan, "Determining Sample Size from Research activities," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, (1970), p. 608.

¹⁹³ L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007), p. 116.

random number tables which ensured each respondent got an equal chance of being selected.

A total of 12 respondents were selected for in-depth study purposively. They included 4 elders who were specially handpicked because they had information on Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values across several generations. The sample also included 6 Church leaders and 2 social workers. Both deal with many family and parenting issues on daily basis. Purposive sampling technique is the most commonly used in qualitative studies. The technique allowed the researcher to select the most productive sample to answer the research question as it ensured that the selected respondents were those with the most relevant information on the phenomenon of the study.¹⁹⁴ Colaizzi selected 12 respondents purposively in a descriptive phenomenology study like this one while Marshall felt that the saturation point had been reached at 15 interviews and any further interview would not yield different information than he already had.¹⁹⁵ The sample of the study was stratified as follows:-

Study Sample

Category	Mothers	Fathers	Youth Female	Youth Male	Special groups			Total
					Community Elders	Church Leaders	Social workers	
Parents	150	78						228
Youth			73	52				125
Special groups					4	6	2	12
Total	150	78	73	52	4	6	2	365

1.9.4 Selection of Research Assistants

The researcher was the main agent for the purpose of data collection. However, two research assistants were engaged and were instrumental in the distribution and collection of questionnaires, recording interview proceedings and data entry. The

¹⁹⁴ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (4th Ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 418.

¹⁹⁵ P. F. Colaizzi, "Psychological Research as the Phenomenologist Views It," in R. Vaile and M. King (Eds.), *Existential Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 48-71; M. N. Marshall, "Sampling for Qualitative Research," *Family Practice*, 13, 6(1996), pp. 522-525.

assistants were sensitized on the objectives of the research, instructed on how to take notes during interviews, and how to distribute and collect the questionnaires.

One of the selected research assistants was from the area of study. This was important because even though most of the people in the area speak English, some would feel more at ease expressing themselves in their local language and knowing they were dealing with their own. It was also important to have a team member familiar with the geographical location. These were important qualities to be able to administrate and deal with issues relating to questionnaires and interviews.

1.9.5 Sensitizing Respondents

The Parish catechists and the priest in-charge were instrumental in helping access the respondents for data collection. First, the researcher had to seek consent from the priest in-charge. The priest informed all the men, women and youth leaders of the intended research and requested for assistance to be accorded to the researcher. This significantly made it easy for the researcher to operate within the study area.

Further, the men, women and youth leaders introduced the researcher to their respective members and even invited the researcher to address them on the purpose of the study and the kind of assistance those who wished to participate were expected to give. They were explained the aim and objectives of the research including the researcher's biography. The filling of the questionnaires was also discussed and the researcher assured them that the data collected will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of the study. The informants were allowed to freely front questions which were immediately answered before the questionnaires were distributed to them.

1.9.6 Data Collection Methods

The study used a multi-strategy approach called triangulation to address the weakness of using one data collection method, and also because collecting data using several methods in a study of a social phenomenon like this one allows the data and the findings to be cross-checked. Both primary and secondary data were collected. The secondary data was collected through desk review of monographs, published journal articles, academic dissertations, books, RCC encyclicals, apostolic exhortations and other documents. Data sources included the Jomo Kentatta Memorial Library (JKML),

Catholic University of Eastern Africa library (CUEA), Hekima University College library, African International University library (AIU), Little Eden Home library, Internet and virtual libraries. The primary data was collected through the administration of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The data collection methods are discussed separately in the next sections.

1.9.6.1 Questionnaires

Primary data was collected using questionnaires tailored to satisfy the specific objectives. A questionnaire was developed for the youth and another one for the parents. The questions were closed-ended as well as open-ended. The youth's questionnaire had sections which sought to capture data on interaction with parents, youth and social media, challenges that confront parenting, personal experience and youth's spiritual life. The parent's questionnaire sought to obtain data on interaction with parents, challenges that confront parenting and parent's spiritual life.

The use of two questionnaires was necessary since in some cases the study needed to capture different data from each group. A pilot study carried out before the actual distribution of the questionnaires established that potential respondents had ability to read and write. Through the pilot study, the questionnaires were polished until they were found appropriate and convenient. The major strength of the questionnaire survey method is its capability to measure a wide variety of un-observable data and it is suitable for collecting data on a large population that is not possible to observe directly.¹⁹⁶ Further, the method is cost-effective in terms of effort, time and cost compared to other data collection methods. At times though, the method has some disadvantages such as none-response bias.

1.9.6.2 In-depth Interviews

The guided in-depth interview technique was used to gather data from the elders, Church leaders and social workers because it permitted the researcher freedom of exploring open-ended or semi-structured questions. The researcher and one assistant visited the individual interviewees in their work or home environments in accordance

¹⁹⁶ L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007), pp. 206-207.

with a mutually agreed plan. The researcher administered the interview herself and made notes while the assistant's sole task was to record the proceedings using a note book. The involvement of the assistant was important because during the interviewer's active listening and interactions with the interviewee, perceptions may work to selectively filter, distorting the meanings and therefore introducing bias. The researcher and the assistant cross checked their notes immediately after each interview.

Twelve persons were interviewed in this manner. Four elders, two men and two women were interviewed at their homesteads; six Church leaders were interviewed at their work places. They included two priests, two catechists and two patrons in-charge of the youth affairs. Finally, two social workers in-charge of children affairs were interviewed at their offices. It was important to include male and female respondents in the interviews to minimize the overall effect of any bias introduced by gender orientation.

Follow-up questions were asked to clarify issues or probe a question further. The use of semi-structured questions served as a prompt to prod more questions and made it easier for the researcher and the assistant to script the interviews. It also helped in getting more information from the non-verbal interaction with the interviewee. All in all, the interviewees were eager to provide information and were friendly. No hostile situations were encountered. Although interviews are more expensive, they allow flexibility for probing questions and clarification by either the researcher or the interviewee.¹⁹⁷

1.9.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis was guided by the research questions, objectives and hypotheses as recommended and articulated by Bryman. First, the researcher read and re-read the data collected and proceeded to edit, code, classify and tabulate it using Microsoft Excel software. Secondly, the initial thematic framework identified and developed from emerging data was refined during subsequent stages, followed by indexing or coding stage in which the thematic framework was applied to the data using textual or numerical codes to identify specific portions of data corresponding to the different

¹⁹⁷ H. Alshenqeeti, "Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review," *English Linguistics Research*, 3, no. 1 (2014), pp. 39-45; O. Mũgenda and A. Mũgenda, *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi: Acts Press, 1999), p. 84.

themes. The data was then mapped and interpreted by searching for patterns, meanings, and explanations before being integrated with secondary data to enrich the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The themes were used as sections or sub-sections of the chapters while the findings were presented through description in the relevant chapters.¹⁹⁸

1.9.8 Pilot Study

The researcher carried out a pilot study at the St. Martins De Porres Church in Karũrĩ. The questionnaires were distributed to the youth and parents after mass. This followed a request by the Priest in charge for willing respondents to stay behind and assist the researcher and her assistants in the exercise. The respondents were taken through the questionnaires and given sufficient time to fill them. During the exercise the researcher took the opportunity to observe the extent to which the potential respondents found the questions clear and time taken to fill the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected immediately and later analysed. The results obtained were useful in improving the quality of the final questionnaire. Through the exercise it was discovered that the questions for the youth and those of the parents were not harmonized while other questions were misunderstood by the respondents because they were not clear. The issues were addressed by revising the questionnaires accordingly. In the final tabulation, the pilot results were ignored. Mugenda and Mugenda assert that the purpose of a pilot study is to prove the reliability and validity of the research tools.¹⁹⁹

1.9.9 Reliability and Validity

To ensure constancy of results, the questionnaire for each group contained similar questions and was tested for validity and reliability. The questionnaires were reviewed by the supervisors and colleagues and eventually pre-tested through the pilot study involving potential respondents as discussed earlier, which enabled the researcher to revise the wording, harmonize the questions, and ensure completeness, correct errors and ambiguity. It was important to ask similar questions to not only get different

¹⁹⁸ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (4th Ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 393.

¹⁹⁹ O. Mũgenda and A. Mũgenda, *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi: Acts Press, 1999), p. 79.

viewpoints in the same area but also to improve on reliability of the data as comparison is made easier.

1.9.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured ethical principles were followed. First she obtained a research permit from NACOSTI to allow her involvement in this work in the area of study. Secondly, the consent of the Parish leadership was obtained well before the researcher contacted the respondents. Thirdly, no respondent was forced to participate in the research. The researcher ensured that those who took part in completing the questionnaire or participated in the interviews were expressly informed of their rights. Every interview session started by assuring the interviewees of their right to decline to take part in the study or not and the right to stop at any time during the interview. Only those who were willing to fill the questionnaire were requested to complete them. Fourthly, the anonymity of the respondents was ensured by not requiring them to disclose their names while the researcher gave assurance that the data sought for was to be used only for the purpose of the study and would be kept confidential. Lastly, the research team ensured that the data collection exercise did not interfere with the Church activities and the informant's time schedule without mutual agreement.

In relation to the use of the data and the value to the community, a few respondents requested to be given a copy of the final Thesis. Throughout this study the researcher has given full credit to all the sources used for both primary and secondary data.

1.10 Chapters Concluding Remarks

This has been the study's first chapter and has laid the foundation for launching deeper into the study. The background has briefly described the family set-up that supported adequate parenting in the Agĩkũyũ traditional society and gave the motivation for the study. It has been shown that this vital structure has changed, negatively affecting the transmission of family and parenting values to children and youth. Just like the Agĩkũyũ family set-up, the "Family of God" Church image is important in transmitting family and parenting values. The problem statement brings out the gaps of the study which triggered the main question which this study sought to answer through one main and five specific objectives. The choice of Agĩkũyũ community is also justified while the scope is defined.

A detailed review of past studies and relevant theories is done and gaps supporting the need for this study brought out. Five testable hypotheses are constructed for the purpose of helping the study answer the research questions. Finally, the methodology describes in detail the adopted descriptive case study design, the population, sample selection techniques, the data collection methods, data analysis and the researcher's effort to ensure reliability and validity as well as the ethical issues considered. The next chapter deliberates on the Agikūyū family set-up and its role in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF AGĪKŪYŪ FAMILY SET-UP IN TRANSMITTING FAMILY AND PARENTING VALUES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter endeavors to examine the traditional Agĭkŭyŭ family set-up and its role in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth. The chapter explains the setting in which adequate parenting of children took place and the community's family and parenting values that were traditionally upheld and transmitted within the family through generations by parents, the extended family and the larger community. It consists of sections that record and discuss the origin of the Agĭkŭyŭ, Agĭkŭyŭ social organization, the concept of Agĭkŭyŭ family, the Agĭkŭyŭ system of education, role differentiation and chapter's concluding remarks. The findings delineated in this chapter unfailingly lay a foundation for a subsequent dialogue with the RCC teachings on family and parenting discussed in chapter four.

2.2 Origin of the Agĭkŭyŭ

In order to examine the aspects of the Agĭkŭyŭ family set-up that were crucial in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth, it is important to first understand the origin of the Agĭkŭyŭ family. The Agĭkŭyŭ did not possess any documented history in the pre-colonial era and as Mŭriŭki explains, in such a case of scarce written sources or non-existence of the same, oral literature is relied on.²⁰⁰ According to the popular tradition, the Agĭkŭyŭ are an agrarian Bantu people whose origin is their ancestral parents namely Gĭkŭyŭ and his wife Mŭmbi, and both are creations of *Ngai* (God). Their homestead was at a spot filled with *mĭkŭyŭ* (sycamore fig trees) right in the center of the Agĭkŭyŭ country. It is believed that the name "Gĭkŭyŭ" was derived from the name *Mŭkŭyŭ* (sycamore fig tree). It thus follows that the literal meaning of a *mugĭkŭyŭ* or a Gĭkŭyŭ person is "person of the sycamore fig tree."²⁰¹ Gĭkŭyŭ and his wife Mŭmbi with their nine daughters together with their husbands formed the first Agĭkŭyŭ family set-up which has continued to grow into the

²⁰⁰ G. Mŭriŭki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 2.

²⁰¹ S. Kibicho, *The Kikuyu Conception of God, its Continuity into the Christian Era and the Christian it Raises for the Christian Ideal of Revelation*, (Published PhD Thesis, Vanderbilt University, Tennessee, 1972), p. 8.

current Agĩkũyũ ethnic group.²⁰² The study now turns to the Agĩkũyũ social organization that contained important structures crucial for passing down family and parenting values from one generation to another.

2.3 Agĩkũyũ Social Organisation

Central to the social life of the Agĩkũyũ was the family or *mũcii* which lived within the homestead, the smallest group in the social organization comprising of a man, his wife (or wives) and their children. A group of families sharing the same male ancestral lineage formed *mbarĩ* or *nyũmba* (family group).²⁰³ As *mbarĩ* numbers increased, it became impossible for it to hold together as a group that would still refer to one another as father, mother, brother, uncle, aunt or grandparent.²⁰⁴ As a result, the blood relations identity disappeared between a group that was once closely united, and *mũhĩrĩga* (clan) identity become the new bond.

The clan served to knit together distant relatives and was a facilitator for rendering mutual support in all matters of importance especially in ensuring that the youth was adequately parented.²⁰⁵ During clan meetings, elders brought along with them young male clan members with the intention of giving them the opportunity to observe and learn how to maintain harmony in their respective *mbarĩ* and *mũhĩrĩga*, and also to show them how to follow the correct line of their ancestors by maintaining the right values including family and parenting values.²⁰⁶ During these interactions, the young men also learnt responsibility and leadership skills necessary for conducting the affairs of their family groups, and ultimately the community affairs. They learned patiently as they waited for their turn for leadership. All members of homesteads living in an *itũũra* (village), irrespective of their clan, shared in the common village life thereby supporting the value of communal life. Each member took part in communal activities of which the upbringing of the village children in the right manner was central. Another important aspect of the Agĩkũyũ social organization was the *riika* (age group). The *riika*

²⁰² Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰³ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 1; G. Mũriũki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 4.

²⁰⁴ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 1.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

was important for educating the youth on good conduct when transitioning to adulthood.

According to the interviewed elders, these structures of the Agĩkũyũ social organization have not changed but the level of functionality of some has reduced.²⁰⁷ The *mũhĩrĩga* is to some extent still relevant since some families involve it in activities such as marriage ceremonies. For instance, during a wedding ceremony, the representative elder of the *mũhĩrĩga* from the side of the bridegroom welcomes the bride into her new extended family, and home of their kin. He also gives words of advice to the newlyweds drawing from his wealth of experience as an elder.²⁰⁸ The interviewed elders claim that unlike in the past, the *mũhĩrĩga* is not used much at the present time as a means to safeguard or teach family and parenting values to young men.

The *mbarĩ* is still recognized (mentioned in public domain) but has lost most of its functions. The *mbarĩ* council itself is not in place because some of its functions as they were in the traditional society have been transferred to other organs. For instance, land ownership is now mostly under individual holding rather than the *mbarĩ*. Besides, the members of a particular *mbarĩ* no longer live entirely within the same neighbourhood due to social-economic changes. The elders revealed that only a few parents and willing elders in possession of the relevant knowledge can educate youth about *mbarĩ*.

Irrespective of their *mũhĩrĩga* or *mbarĩ*, boys and girls went through the initiation rite and automatically became members of a *riika* (age group), a lifelong identity. The *riika* or the age group system was a factor for solidifying and uniting the whole community in all activities. Male or female youth belonging to the same age group had a very strong bond of brotherhood among them, and observed that the conduct of each member was in line with the community's standard.²⁰⁹ From one generation to another, the social organisation was kept in a stable state through the activities of various age groups acting harmoniously in taking care of the social, religious, political and economic life of the community.²¹⁰ Being a *riika* carried the same connotation as belonging to a family, thus promoting the unity necessary for safeguarding family and parenting values.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Elder, 2016.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Elder, 2016.

²⁰⁹ Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morally*, p. 22.

²¹⁰ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ*, p. 2.

After initiation, the young men took up leadership roles such as defence and maintaining law and order at family and community levels. It was them who brought in wealth especially after raiding their neighbours. They were successful in achieving these assigned roles because, as Ime explains, the first assignment of the youth before any other was to be morally disposed rightly as an empowerment to develop themselves first and then develop their society.²¹¹ Another contributor to their moral success was the relatively uniform well organized social activities they participated in together in the community and the support of the elders who were grounded well in morality.²¹²

The youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish pursue their career and interests individually and some of the activities they are involved in are not sometimes common or uniformly controlled. The elder respondents explained that the communal initiation rite conducted by the Christian Men Association (CMA) in the Parish has the advantage of bonding the youth as a family, and this bond is necessary in transmitting the family and parenting values in a common manner, though it serves only a fraction of the male youth population. The study now proceeds to discuss the concept of the Agĩkũyũ family.

2.4 The Concept of Agĩkũyũ Family

It is necessary to understand the concept of the family in Agĩkũyũ worldview in order to appreciate the way children were parented within the family. The traditional Agĩkũyũ family was an inclusive one composed of the parents, their sons and daughters, grandparents, uncles, aunts, in-laws, the unborn children and the departed family members.²¹³ Nyamiti concurs and explains that this composition is important to the Africans since full life is understood and interpreted based on the five items namely; vitality, anthropocentrism, sacrality, communality and dynamism, which all revolve around the family. From a moral point of view, the family unit consisting of the living and the departed was most important to the individual. Similarly, the family is not only

²¹¹ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

²¹² Read more on the role of elders in P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), pp. 31-38.

²¹³ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 107.

understood by the African as the earthly one, but extends to include the Trinitarian family.²¹⁴

Majority of respondents describe the family as comprising the father, mother and children; that is the nuclear family. Few respondents believed the family to be the father figure. They explained that this should be so because among the Agĩkũyũ, when defining who a family member is, the father's lineage or name is the one considered. A small group of respondents considered the grandparents as part of the family. Generally, most of the respondents recognized the extended family as important in socializing children in the contemporary Agĩkũyũ family set-up. This is despite the study finding that its contribution has reduced and in some cases is almost non-existent.

The nature of the Agĩkũyũ family system is patriarchal, that is, headed by the father.²¹⁵ He is the highest authority in protecting and guiding the family and is the overseer of family property. The father is still regarded the higher authority within the families of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish though the respondents' observed that several fathers have absconded their rightful position and the father's responsibility. This is likely to negatively affect the children, especially the boy child, who represents the next generation of fathers, by hindering the transmission of family and parenting values to him. Further, this denies the sons and daughters the love, care and teaching of both parents.

In the traditional Agĩkũyũ society, all the family members had an attachment of relation to each other such that the links between them enabled everyone to be taken care of. In this regard, the Agĩkũyũ custom required every woman to be under the protection of a man.²¹⁶ This meant that every child had both parents. Widows were protected, and continued to play their nurturing role under a proper family environment. This arrangement ensured stability of families and by extension adequate parenting.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Volume 4: Christ's Ancestral Mediation Through the Church Understood as God's Family: An Essay on African Ecclesiology* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2010), p. 326.

²¹⁵ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 6.

²¹⁶ P. N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), p. 67.

²¹⁷ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ*, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 119.

Incidentally, some parent respondents indicated that they shoulder the responsibility of parenting their sons and daughters as single parents.

The family is the basis of social organization and gives the individual an identity. It is the first center of moral, social and religious education. Certain behaviour was observed by a family unit, a behaviour that was strictly observed to keep the family in harmony, and ensured the right environment for teaching moral values to children and youth. The rules governing behaviour were referred to as *mītugo ya mūcii* and followed a particular pattern.²¹⁸ The Agĩkũyũ considered the family as the primary domestic group into which a child was born, nurtured, taught, and supported to become a productive adult member of society.²¹⁹ In the family, the parents played the crucial role of being the first educators of their children.

2.4.1 Parents within the Agĩkũyũ Family

As it was the case in many African communities, the Agĩkũyũ parents were highly regarded and respected. They brought forth life and continued to nurture the children, whom they brought to maturity. Parents were honoured in view of their esteemed role as parents, and by status of seniority. They were immediate persons as human agents for maintaining the vital link between God and the ancestors on one hand, and the family on the other. A Gĩkũyũ saying that shows the high regard for the position of the parent goes “*Mūciari ni ngai ya keeri,*” meaning a parent’s role is that of deputizing God in a child’s social, moral and religious education. One way this education was impacted was by making the boy and girl share in the lives of their parents. According to Kenyatta, the sharing in life together and doing simple duties in imitation of the parents, alongside the great interest of parents towards the children, was largely responsible for creating the strong bonds crucial for passing family and parenting values.²²⁰ The father’s committed service ensured the strong bond was sustained for the success of the family. Success was also realized because some parental duties and responsibilities were differentiated and specifically assigned to the father or mother. It

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

²¹⁹ F. R. Elliotts, *The Family: Change or Continuity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), p. 60.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 69.

is everywhere the case that there are characteristic tasks, manners and responsibilities primarily associated with women or with men.”²²¹

Within the family set-up, women are generally associated with a domestic orientation while men are associated primarily with extra-domestic and other activities. The respondents indicated that although parenting remains the responsibility for both parents, some duties of the father and mother have somehow intertwined out of necessity. However, there are still traditional norms associated with parenting like the expectation that the mother would take more responsibility in the nurturing and training of young children. When parents beget children, the understanding is that they both make a commitment to nurture and instil moral values in them.²²² However, the study found out that where children were under a single parent, the youth concerned indicated that they missed the contribution of the missing parent. They are bound to compare their situation with that of their peers who have both parents. Some youth spoke of “missing fathers love...missing basic needs...missing proper care.”²²³ The child’s right to parental care by both parents is entrenched in the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which provides that every child has a right to equal parental care and protection from the mother and father.²²⁴

The parents have a solemn obligation to be foremost their offspring educators, with the family being viewed as the first school for social virtues that every society treasures and needs. The parents’ role can be described as irreplaceable and inalienable and not capable of being usurped. The virtues they teach within the family become the foundation blocks for good character and future success in life, and is a way of according children and youth their dignity and right. In return, a high expectation is placed on them including upholding the same family and parenting values they receive.²²⁵

²²¹ M. Z. Rosaldo, *Women, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 18.

²²² Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, *Equality, “The Norwegian Government’s Gender Equality Action Plan,”* (2014), https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/bld/action_plan_2014.pdf

²²³ Interview with youth respondents, 2016.

²²⁴ National Council for Law Reporting, *The Constitution of Kenya, Article 53(e)*, (2010), p. 37.

²²⁵ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250

Eliot acknowledges that many things affect boys and girls differently. These include cultural, developmental, biological and educational factors. The African culture recognizes this and therefore the nature of socialization emphasizes different skills for boys and girls and provides each gender different opportunities to develop their abilities.²²⁶ Apparently from the study findings, the youth indicated that on several occasions, their parents had not used their position to play their parenting role well. Indeed, most parent respondents agree and state that they are hard pressed on time although they try their best to teach their children. Enough time is needed to address the child's needs and give him or her appropriate teaching on moral values and help them grow according to their gender task specificity.

Most of the youth respondents believe the parent should be the best source and teacher of moral values, followed by school, Church, relatives and peers in that order. The study found that failure of parents to communicate adequately to the youth on moral issues creates a room for them to learn from teachers, peers and media, in that order. Worthy of note is that only a small percentage of the youth regard peers as a source of moral values. This should be an encouragement in that the youth are conscious of their surroundings and the dangers their morality faces. In agreement with the youth's view and in relation to sex education, the parents confess the role is best played by someone else. The study now proceeds to highlight the roles of individual members of the family in adequate parenting beginning with the father.

2.4.1.1 The Father

Cagnolo explains that the father's role as the head of the family was to offer constant guidance in almost all the matters of decision making pertaining to his household, provide the family with land for farming, or on which to construct huts and granaries, and protect the family from outside interference. His leadership at home created an authoritative atmosphere though he was a loving affectionate figure who, in the evenings, as the family sat around the traditional fire while dinner cooked, held a child between his knees still having a merry conversation with his wife.²²⁷ This bond of love

²²⁶ L. Eliot, "The Truth about Boys and Girls," (2010), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/42836385_The_Truth_about_Boys_and_Girls

²²⁷ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 51.

that linked a man to his wife and children was one that would not be disturbed by any form of calamity.

Leakey narrates how the father shared his meat in an effort to express this form of compassion which was considered a strong pillar for family bond and relationships. He sums the atmosphere at home when he writes “although from every animal that was slaughtered (in ordinary family feast or meal) certain joints belonged to the children, others belonged to the women, and yet others to the men, it was seldom that a father did not give bits of his own portion to his children and wife.”²²⁸ He ensured that everyone was well fed before retiring to bed.²²⁹ Growing up in such an environment impacted in the children virtues of love, sharing, care, confidence, respect and humility. A man who ably managed his family was highly esteemed and attained eldership status which carried with it certain privileges and responsibilities.

The father was respected and obeyed by all members of his family group. For instance it was good etiquette for children to talk to the father in a gentle and polite tone.²³⁰ However, as a requirement of the custom, it was expected that the parents reciprocate to the compliments or good gestures that their children showed to them.²³¹ Sadly, the youth informants claimed that some of the very people in the family set-up they should rely on and look up to especially the fathers are also morally challenged. This would be an interesting subject to pursue in a study. The study therefore argues from an African Christian perspective for the moral regeneration of the youth by encouraging them to adopt the African spirit of pursuing positive values.

Kenyatta explains that in being a good role model, parents helped their children to develop self-initiative and ability to make decisions.²³² As Kinoti explicates, in the Agĩkũyũ traditional society, through admonition and example every parent assisted their children in acquiring habits and attitudes of maturity.²³³ For instance, as the

²²⁸ Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903 Volume III* (London, New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 1.

²²⁹ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 51.

²³⁰ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 6.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), p. 3ff.

²³³ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 64.

children matured, the father taught his son the skill of differentiating large herds of cattle by their horn sizes or colour, techniques for preparing land, boundaries and family genealogy which assisted the boys to develop competence and self-esteem.²³⁴

The study found that some fathers within the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish are, for one reason or another, besieged by absenteeism from their families which curtails their compassionate participation in the life of their children. Paradoxically, those still playing the role of heading their families are more of breadwinners than teachers of moral values or mentors of their children. The information obtained from the respondents show that the lack of the father's participation epitomed in play and sharing of meals robs the children of his love that is the basis of their emotional development. Some of the youth respondents indicated that they miss the fatherly love as well as the bonding while sharing meals together as a family. Sadly, it is not only in the home where men are absent, they have also showed less enthusiasm in joining Church fellowships such as the Small Christian Communities (SCCs). Given such a scenario, it is not surprising when many of the male youth respondents indicate that it is mostly their mothers who normally assist them with issues like school homework. They wished that they could have fathers as committed role models to guide them along the path of moral formation.²³⁵ This should be worrying considering that the father is responsible for the male child's masculine training and intelligent character development.²³⁶

As mentioned earlier, the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish community acknowledges the father's continuous loss of his leadership position in the home. The elders therefore reasoned that empowering the life of the boy child will liberate the fathers' future role in the family. For this reason, the men in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish have started a program to inculcate moral values into the male youth within the initiation period. According to Park, such a program should be designed to also equip the fathers on how mentor their young men.²³⁷ Nevertheless, the effort of teaching moral values to children and youth

²³⁴ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 70.

²³⁵ Youth Respondents, 2016.

²³⁶ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), pp. 67-69.

²³⁷ S. K. Park, *"Spirituality of Kenyan Pastors: A Practical Theological Study of Kikuyu PCEA Pastors in Nairobi"* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2008), p. 64.

will require mutual sacrifice by both the father and mother for the common welfare of the family.

2.4.1.2 The Mother

A discussion of the concept of Agĩkũyũ family will not be complete without addressing the title of the mother. The name of any woman who attained the motherhood status became sacred and was referred to as “mother of so and so.” The term mother (*maitũ*) was desired by every woman in society since it was an honourable title. The special position of a mother made many people (even today) loathe their mother’s name being used in an indecent way. A mother was highly respected by all members of the community including her own children. The children honoured her due to the fact that she was the one very close to them, who trained them on some aspects of life, nursed them, fed them and ensured they were clothed. Her praise went even higher if it turned out she was hospitable to visitors and kind to needy neighbours.²³⁸ Her children learnt the same values vicariously.

The traditional Agĩkũyũ mother’s passionate care and good feeding helped the baby develop the virtue of hope as strength to confront future challenges. When the child grew and started learning how to speak, the mother took great care in directing the child to develop the right manner of speech. She provided a good role model for her daughters. The girls, in imitation of their mother, ground corn, weaved grass baskets and cooked imaginary dishes. This prepared them to be well disposed to the management and harmonization of the affairs of a homestead.²³⁹

The mother understood her place in the family and society perfectly well. She was the mediator between the father and the children in case the father’s intervention was required.²⁴⁰ Her mediation role was confirmed by the study when most youth respondents indicated that they were mostly comfortable dealing with the mother while a few claimed to be comfortable dealing with both parents. The mother was the more

²³⁸ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 6-7.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70; A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), p. 3ff.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

willing, accessible and enthusiastic to assist the children with their needs within the family.

In the traditional Agĩkũyũ society, although great respect was accorded women, and more so for their role as nurturers and educators, they were not allowed to hold any public leadership positions even in representing their family groups. Unlike then, the woman's role in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish today has evolved to include occupying family, Church and public leadership positions. Further, the respondents claim the women appear to be more active in Church activities than men. A good example, as pointed out by respondents, is the case of participating in the activities of SCCs where it is mostly women who are involved. The study further revealed that a significant number of women in the Parish are in paid employment unlike in the past. Similarly, contemporary trends show that a significant number of bread winners are women.²⁴¹ Today's women prefer to work because of its creative development and social features.²⁴² Though this is good for the family's financial welfare, it also robs the mothers time and opportunity to interact and transmit family and parenting values to their children.

Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman who not only gives life to her children but also nurtures and teaches them successfully to maturity. In their parenting role, mothers are advised by Piper and Grudem not to work for reward but regard it as their God-ordained responsibility. In that case then they should parent selflessly.²⁴³ A good mother is not selfish; motherhood demands a lot though the rewards come much late in life. The bringing forth and nurturing of a child is an awesome opportunity to "link hand and heart to the creator in preparing the next generation."²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ J. Filipovic, "The Rise of 'Breadwinner Moms' is Less a Win for Equality Than it Looks," (2013), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/06/breadwinner-moms-equality>

²⁴² U. Swadźba, "The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Value System," (2011), http://conference.osu.eu/globalization/publ2011/332-337_Swadzba.pdf

²⁴³ J. Piper and W. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 376.

²⁴⁴ D. Patterson, "The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective," in J. Piper and W. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 376.

2.4.2 The Children

To the Agĩkũyũ family, having children was good and their quality mattered as well. The parents took responsibility of their education right from an early age and made sure they instilled into the children *ũtaari wa mũcii* which involved teaching family and clan traditions.²⁴⁵ The children who behaved according to the approved tribal law of conduct enabled their parents to be celebrated; otherwise they received strong criticism instead. Such parents were considered to have neglected the important task of preparing their children to become worthy members of the community.²⁴⁶ Solomon in his wisdom said it well; “a wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother” (Prov 10:1). The kind of person the child grows up to be is no doubt a matter of concern to the parents. This may explain why in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society a lot of effort, time and other necessities were engaged in training a child and the results were evident.²⁴⁷

In the traditional Agĩkũyũ community, children were regarded highly. They took a central place in the family for several reasons; firstly, they gave their parents a prestigious social status. The birth of a boy child ensured there was someone to defend the community and also an heir to the family property. The girl promised a source of future wealth through bride price.²⁴⁸ Secondly, the birth of a child brought stability in the marriage relationship and in some cases prevented divorce. Thirdly, the children also served as economic assets by giving a helping hand in duties like agriculture, herding and household chores. The aging parents were confident that their children would provide them necessary support and care they needed at old age.²⁴⁹ In living such participatory lives, the boys and girls developed values of hard work, obedience, self-discipline and responsibility.

²⁴⁵ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 68.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²⁴⁷ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), pp. 74–83.

²⁴⁸ J. N. K. Mũgambi, *African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity* (Nairobi: Longman, 1987), p. 96.

²⁴⁹ M. N. Getui, “The Family, the Church and the Development of Youth,” in J. N. K. Mũgambi (Eds), *The Church in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), p. 72.

Evidence suggests that in many traditional environments, expectations were placed on what a boy or a girl could and should do and say. For example the Agĩkũyũ culture had restrictive gender norms and roles; girls were generally expected to engage in activities to do with nourishing the family and household chores while the boys engaged in outside activities such as defence of the family and hunting.²⁵⁰ Some of these practices and beliefs hold true even today in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. This reminds the youth that the future and destiny of the society lies with them.²⁵¹

Generally, the parent respondents paint a picture of themselves as people who are concerned and want to be the best teachers for their children, but restrained by time and other challenges. The majority of the mothers who took part in the study claim that they monitor the care and growth of their young children. This is partly demonstrated when they encourage their children to be involved in positive activities like sports and group plays while they make effort to monitor. Generally, parents are concerned about what type of friends their youth keep, despite not regularly keeping an eye on the relationships. Notwithstanding the failures noted earlier on the part of the parents, the observable tenacity with which some of them strive to provide for their children implies that still the value placed on a child is high.

Eliot observes that boys and girls are different in many aspects. The Agĩkũyũ culture recognized this and therefore the nature of socialization they received emphasized different skills for each and provided opportunities to develop their abilities accordingly. Notwithstanding, the data collected from the parent respondents shows that boys and girls generally do not always receive teachings and skills to develop their unique abilities as men or women, and thus preserving the family and parenting values.²⁵² The youth respondents collaborated this finding. While boys and girls have their individual rights, it is the duty of parents to still educate them of the reality that some roles in the home are best performed by men and others by women.

²⁵⁰ Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, *Equality*, "The Norwegian Government's Gender Equality Action Plan," (2014), https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/bld/action_plan_2014.pdf

²⁵¹ Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM), *Church in Africa, Today and Tomorrow* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1984), p. 248.

²⁵² L. Eliot, "The Truth about Boys and Girls," (2010), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/42836385_The_Truth_about_Boys_and_Girls

2.4.2.1 Boys

According to Cagnolo, the Agĩkũyũ boys engaged in leisure activities of hunting partridges, guinea fowls and birds using arrows and wicker cages. At home they occasionally held a roasted banana feast where each boy requested the parent for consent to cut a banana bunch. These activities encouraged the spirit of togetherness and sharing and sharpened skills to be used later in life.²⁵³ Other activities for the boys included sport such as wrestling, running and jumping. Now and then they were led by their fathers in building, herding and garden work. Through all this work and play the boy developed well physically and got acquitted with skills and practices such as hard work and self-discipline, which are values necessary for the well-being of the family and the perpetuation of community life.²⁵⁴

The male youth respondents indicated that the activities they get involved in include Church youth groups, home chores, play with other boys, football, cycling, debates, hockey, seminars, shamba work, sharing with the poor, talent shows and prayer retreats. In a sense, except for a few activities, the boys in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish are doing similar things for leisure as it was with their predecessors save for a different environment with different opportunities. Kenyatta says that the little boys imitated the big boys as models in running and wrestling and whoever came out the winner was marked for leadership.

According to the elders interviewed, generally the youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish do not portray the image of disciplined young men who are able to demonstrate certain skills demanding masculine competences for taking appropriate responsibility in the family. The study shows that some male youth engage in activities that are beyond their means like fathering children outside wedlock without considering the consequences. This behaviour could point to the reality of growing up without good role modelling of a father figure. As a matter of fact, just like the girls, they are more comfortable dealing with the mother as reported earlier.

²⁵³ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 75.

²⁵⁴ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 71.

Elliot posits that the boys' nature is not well understood in the contemporary society with many theories giving plausible rationales for the boy's unbecoming behaviour. She argues that much debate about boys does not benefit the boy or girl and can only serve to distract attention. What is required is a discussion on the practical ways to help the boy to succeed in life. The society needs to realize the many struggles boys go through are connected to larger social problems, and are not just a function of one gender. Boy's deficits should worry the parents because they "undermine their daughters' chances of finding suitable husbands."²⁵⁵

2.4.2.2 Girls

Today the girl's perception on moral values is different from that of the traditional Agĩkũyũ girl. The study shows that they party and sometimes consume alcohol without moderation. A strange happening among the girls today is narrated by the social workers who informed the study that where unmarried girls happen to bring forth babies, some commit them to children's' homes to avoid responsibility. A few cases of dumping babies have also been reported. This clearly demonstrates that the honoured motherhood status is not valued as it should.

The girls in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society spent their day working hard helping with house chores, caring for babies, fetching water, and gathering firewood in the field. This attracted admiration of peers and prospective husbands. The girl was obedient, disciplined and sound, never perturbed but spent her days working, laughing and singing. She took the command of her father and brother as her own claim and will since they were the sole arbitrators of the dowry to be received on her behalf.²⁵⁶ The study found that the girl in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish still participates in some activities similar to those of her predecessors, such as cooking, dancing, poetry, team work, games and playing with other girls. Different from the old days however, the girl engages in formal education, drama, catechesis and making cakes.

²⁵⁵ L. Eliot, "The Truth about Boys and Girls," (2010), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/42836385_The_Truth_about_Boys_and_Girls

²⁵⁶ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 113.

In the traditional society, the girls wore clothes for utilitarian reasons such as keeping warm and not to keep up with any fashion trend. The garment was common to all, in other words, one social group had a common dress, a common daily wear.²⁵⁷ Other than for utilitarian reasons, dressing today is considered good if it is fashionable or trendy. For this reason, some girls, as confirmed by the respondents, wear clothes that barely cover their bodies like bare-backs or minis, outfits that are not compatible with Christian teachings as Paul instructs (1 Tim 2:9). The contention lies in the interpretation of what is “decent” dressing, partly fuelled by a new attitude “my dress, my choice.” Even some of the girl respondents raise concern over improper dressing by their peers. It is worth noting that in the traditional days, the girl also received advice from aunties and grandmothers on appropriate dressing, sitting positions and other mannerisms, as values passed on to them. Likewise, the majority of parent respondents said they are keen to advice their children, and especially daughters, on the need to dress decently. However, some parents said that they do not interfere with their daughters’ freedom of dress choice.

The parent should experience greater joy if a child is successful both now and in future.²⁵⁸ The kind of person they grow up to become is determined by how well the parents inculcate values into them. After a certain age, both boys and girls would be anxious to be admitted into the ranks of youth, which is the class of *anake* (young men) and *airĩtu* (young women).²⁵⁹ This would happen only after their initiation, leaving behind boyhood or girlhood. Being in the youth class was to be privileged, a class with social responsibilities and a code of conduct.

2.4.3 The Youth

The Kenya Constitution 2010 defines a youth as a person who has attained the age of 18 years and has not attained 35 years.²⁶⁰ The Second Vatican Council refers to youth as “persons who are roughly 16 to 29 years old” but recommends the term to be adapted to suite local circumstances. The Council explains that the term “youth” refers not only

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

²⁵⁸ M. N. Getui, “The Family, the Church and the Development of Youth,” in J. N. K. Mũgambi (Eds), *The Church in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), p. 72.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

²⁶⁰ National Council for Law Reporting, *The Constitution of Kenya, Article 260*, (2010).

to persons but also to a stage of life that is not fixed, particularly in the present circumstances when adolescence starts early in children, and young adults postpone decisions in life. This study categorized youth as boys and girls aged between 14 and 35 years.

According to Ime, youth can be identified as a group of persons who portray particular characteristics such as; strong desire for upward mobility, tending to be idealistic because of the ideals instilled in them in form of moral values from their early age, eager to live their role model and often frustrated and anxious since this idealism and the realism is not the realism of everyday life.²⁶¹ They are excessively ambitious and very energetic beings who desire change in the shortest time. In many ways, they are regarded as the future leaders that no society can afford to ignore, and act as major determinants of how far the development and growth in their societies can go.²⁶² In the traditional African society, the youth were a vital, industrious and respected part of the community.

Among praiseworthy characteristics of Agĩkũyũ male youth was his commitment to be well-mannered according to the community's standards. This was necessary because of the responsibilities they carried especially as warriors and other duties within the community. In contrast, a big concern in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community is the high level of indulgence in alcohol consumption by the male youth.²⁶³ When asked why they think their peers are not morally right, some youth respondents said "because of their heavy drinking," "they are drunkards," "...drink too much due to lack of self-control." This is disturbing given that these are the future parents.

Today, the traditional roles of male youth have changed significantly but girls are still expected to carry out their traditional duties, as well as their modern ones such as

²⁶¹ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ P. N. Wachege and F. G. Rũgendo, "Factors Leading to Premature Deaths of Male Youths: A Case of Karũrĩ Village, Kĩambu County-Kenya," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22, no. 7(2017), pp. 64-74.

pursuing professional careers.²⁶⁴ Ishii reports that before 1970, the traditional Agĩkũyũ girl did not have high chances of receiving formal education. She was expected to be married off soon after circumcision. The society then did not think well of a girl who conceived out of wedlock, which made any pregnant girl to conceal her pregnancy lest parents noticed. The punishment for breaking a sexual norm was quite severe for unmarried girls before the single mothers phenomenon came along.²⁶⁵ This way the girls learnt the value of self-discipline.

Almost all the youth of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish have life goals of becoming important persons in society. They want to be surgeons, journalists, lawyers, accountants, businessmen and businesswomen, pilots, politicians, teachers, to serve in the army and so on. One youth responded, “I want to be a great person and someone to be looked upon by many and I have researched a lot on it”.²⁶⁶ Others aim to be rich when they are still young. This finding agrees with what Cagnolo observed, that apart from what the society expects of them, children harbour their own ambitions, though to realize them, they require the support of the parents.²⁶⁷ On average, the youth indicated that their parents are good providers towards their formal education, food and shelter but not in spiritual guidance and moral teaching, especially sex education. The respondents’ opinion is that the youth are largely ignorant, idle and do not often get involved in community affairs. Some youth said that the interaction with the extended family is one of the things they lack in their homes as they grow up.

2.4.4 The Extended Family

The extended family is supposed to be a key parenting resource in the Agĩkũyũ society. A definition of the extended family is provided by Martin as “a group of family members who are in charge of preparing young members for living in the world today, as well as helping them to maintain the family and the overall welfare of its

²⁶⁴ C. M. Ndungo, “The Image of Women in African Oral Literature: A Case Study of Gikuyu Oral Literature,” *Gender Issues Research Report Series*, 23, (2006), pp. 1-80.

²⁶⁵ Y. Ishii, “Birth Control and Reproduction in the Kikuyu Society: The Case from Murang’a District in Kenya,” *African Study Monographs*, 18, 3 & 4 (1997), pp. 191-201.

²⁶⁶ Youth Respondent, 2016.

²⁶⁷ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 81.

members.”²⁶⁸ Adinlofu did mention that the extended family provides for early care and training of children, helps the child develop sense of social responsibility and learn respect.²⁶⁹ The same is communicated by Degbey when he describes some responsibilities of the extended family “...teach social and moral norms, safeguard both material and spiritual customs and traditions, as well as providing a variety of role models along the way to adulthood,”²⁷⁰ with elders exercising a higher social control especially in relation to the youth.²⁷¹

Today, the extended family’s involvement in the lives of their kin is restricted owing to social change and economic conditions. Due to such changes and other reasons, an African family with new characteristics has gained root and is composed of a husband, wife and children.²⁷² The study found that in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish, although the nuclear family continues to maintain relative contact with a wide range of relatives, the relatives’ contribution in parenting their kin’s children is dwindling. However, extended family members who include grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins are still considered helpful in the upbringing of a child. This agrees with the African proverb “it takes a village to bring up a child,” meaning, the bringing up of a child requires a corporate effort, where everyone in the family participates.²⁷³ Most parent respondents qualify the grandparents, aunties and uncles as individuals with much to contribute especially to the moral development of the child. This is demonstrated in comments like “...they show affection and love...,” “...advise on life techniques,” “...the children are taught about their roots,” “...are more experienced on any topic and life” and “...uncles and aunties can be role models.” These findings agree with Zani, who says that the need to help each other prompts individuals to reach out to other family

²⁶⁸ E. P. Martin, *The Black Extended Family* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 105.

²⁶⁹ E. E. Adinlofu, “Modernity and the Extended Family System,” (2009), <https://www.nigerian.com/modernity-and-the-extended-family-system/>

²⁷⁰ J. L. Degbey, “Africa Family Structure,” (2012), <http://www.jicef.or.jp/wahec/ful217.htm>

²⁷¹ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 37.

²⁷² P. Zani, “The Family in its African Socio-cultural Context,” in P. Ryan (Ed.), *The Models of Church- as-Family: Meeting the African Challenge* (Nairobi: CUEA, 1999),” p. 53.

²⁷³ V. Makwinja-Morara, “It Takes the Whole Village to Bring up a Child: Discipline in Botswana Schools,” *Global Active Learning Summit*, Tokyo, Vol. 15, No. 1(2017), pp. 41-50.

members.²⁷⁴ Growing up with limited contacts to socialize them, children miss the chance to learn how to also participate in parenting their kin's children in future.

The parent respondents view the extended family members as having an advantage over them in some areas because, as some respondents put it, “the youth can afford to be open to them and discuss issues freely”. Zani observes that “...exposing children to a large network of aunts, uncles and grandparents with whom children could share intimate queries without feeling uncomfortable or shy” can be of much assistance in parenting today.²⁷⁵ Further, the grandparents and other family members who are older than the child’s parents, are more experienced in life issues and can give better guidance and share experiences on any topic. According to the parent respondents, a crucial contribution by the extended family and especially grandparents, uncles and aunts is to impart skills and knowledge relevant for sexual discipline.²⁷⁶

The youth respondents felt that relatives are kind, understanding, inspiring and encouraging. Besides, the grandmother entertains them with stories. This soft side of the relatives may provide an atmosphere that is favourable for inculcating family and parenting values to the children. Some of the comments from the youth are: “...they teach me how to be disciplined, are very supportive, inspiring and do not pretend,” and “...they encourage me to work hard, teach me how to dress well and respect my seniors”.

Response from the parents showed that generally the extended family members can assist children and youth to learn moral values, provide guidance and counselling, teach on family background and sense of belonging. Further they can instil responsibility and hardworking mentality, teach the Christian message, provide a forum for interaction and social growth, teach the grandchildren habits such as how to talk and cherish happiness, give hope and encouragement to the children and serve as role models. However, despite the boost parenting receives from extended family members, the

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁷⁶ S. Bastien, L. J. Kajula and W. W. Muhwezi, “A Review of Studies of Parent-child Communication About Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Reproductive Health*, 8, no. 25 (2011), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3192730/>

reality is that a lot has been lost because of the breakdown of family structure. This attack on the intergenerational ties in the family has greatly affected adequate parenting.

It is not only the soft side of the extended family members that elicits good feelings in the youth. The findings show that extended family members are viewed as more positive towards life than the youth's immediate family where life is mechanical, always serious with the parents issuing demands and tending to control deliberations. By indicating that the extended family members somewhat contribute towards teaching them moral values, the youth respondents reveal the level of engagement of the relatives in role modelling, and the changing structure of teaching moral values in the contemporary Karūrī Catholic Parish.

2.4.5 Sense of Community

The Agĩkũyũ social organization discussed created a succinct understanding of the sense of community life which presented a significant advantage to parenting of children and youth. Thus, true to this and other scholarly works like that of Wachege, this study has confirmed that the social organization has substantially remained the same but what has taken a big shift is the loss of its functionality, rendering structures such as *nyũmba*, *mbarĩ* or *mũhiriga* minimal in function.²⁷⁷ The community's uniting and bonding characteristics such as common lineage and origin, same religion, same basic social life and morality have over time slowly lost their originality, interpretation, meaning and purpose. According to Wachege, the communal element made the Agĩkũyũ people struggle together whenever a problem arose and felt attached to their ancestral land and decent.²⁷⁸ Such effort was extended to bringing up morally upright individuals. However, the study found that this family and parenting value of community life, which acted as glue to peoples' solidarity, has diminished.

The interviewed elders lament that most neighbours are not eager to extend a hand in parenting matters. In other words, they do not live the value of communal life. The elders and parents report that the neighbours are now more than before less bothered

²⁷⁷ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), pp. 14-15.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

with how the neighbourhood children behave. For instance, they indicated that when an adult encounters a child doing the wrong thing; the first thought is not of how to correct the child but of the reaction of the parents, because quite a number will not receive it positively. This makes the neighbour shy away from indulging in another person's affair without invitation, and regrettably, the parenting effort in Karūrī Catholic Parish community continues to be undermined. Similarly, some parents strongly feel that they may not trust neighbours to teach their children. One elder wondered "...before it was there...people do not receive it well these days..."²⁷⁹ At the end, the effort of inculcating moral values into children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish has mostly been left to the parents.

The children are denied the much needed association in an un-caring neighbourhood. Nevertheless, according to the elders' view, children still need to be given attention by all as pertains to their moral education. This should be so especially in light of the African sense, where children are considered blessings from God for the whole community. However, the study noted a few instances where some parent respondents were involved in one way or another in parenting children from other families by giving word of advice or through impromptu correction. This communal and extended family participation in bringing up a child conveys the African worldview that accentuates the teaching of family and parenting values expressed in family relationships, parental care, sharing, self-sacrificing, hospitality and concern for others. The study found that the Agīkūyū family inclusivity has more to benefit the child whenever members interact. Another aspect of the Agīkūyū family is religion which held each family together and gave cohesion that was essential for inculcating the fear of God and other values into children and youth.

2.4.6 Religious Life

Mbiti describes Africans as notoriously religious and the Agīkūyū are no exception.²⁸⁰ The Agīkūyū were monotheistic and conceived God as unique, almighty, great and perfect and full of vitality and nothing could match him. They attributed a name to God according to his deed. Two main beliefs in God stressed that God was the creator

²⁷⁹ Elder Respondent, 2016.

²⁸⁰ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 201.

(*Mũmbĩ*) of all things and ruler of creation.²⁸¹ This belief agrees with the Biblical account that describes God as the creator of all things, recorded in the book of Genesis. God as the giver of all things gave the Agĩkũyũ the gift of life and other gifts that were useful in sustaining and safeguarding life.²⁸²

Alongside the gift of life and that of livelihood, God gave certain rules of conduct to govern them and guarantee family and society's wellbeing. He was angered by those who were dishonest, disrespected parents, committed murder, behaved in any other wicked way, or contradicted laws communicated by prophets and seers. Kenyatta explains that God was supposed to carry out a general inspection of the society from time to time in order to release blessing or punishment accordingly.²⁸³ Disobeying God attracted chastisement of epidemic, famine or defeat at tribal wars with their enemy, the Maasai.

Religious teachings happened mostly during family meetings, which were considered more important to the members of a particular homestead than public worship. Individuals made sure to be present for family religious and social ceremonies as failure to do so would lead to dis-inheritance. Every morning the father of the home made prayers for God to grant his family peace and wellbeing.²⁸⁴ Thus, children grew up with the fear of God because religion was practiced right from the home and this laid a good foundation for teaching and learning moral values. As Kibicho explains, it was not only the family elder who prayed to God, other adults also did so on regular basis.²⁸⁵ Individuals had awareness that they were somehow accountable to God for their conduct.²⁸⁶ Out of their belief that it is God who maintains the creation, communal prayers in public assemblies were said, to request God to endow elders with wisdom, for the sake of peace and harmony, and the flocks and herds to increase, and for people

²⁸¹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 161.

²⁸² H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 28.

²⁸³ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 71.

²⁸⁴ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 29.

²⁸⁵ S. Kibicho, *The Kikuyu Conception of God, its Continuity into the Christian Era and the Christian it Raises for the Christian Ideal of Revelation* (Published PhD Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1972), p. 40.

²⁸⁶ H.W. Kinoti, *Africa Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morally*, p. 29.

to prosper and enjoy peace.²⁸⁷ Such practice and beliefs contributed significantly towards teaching moral values to children and youth.

The second main belief in God was that He was a God of justice. Believing in Him affected the people's moral outlook. In the first place God punished wickedness for the purpose of correction and deterrence. This punishment was a supernatural sanction of morality with the ultimate goal of peace and harmony. God's justice was viewed in terms of equity, fairness and uprightness. He encouraged initiative and personal effort.²⁸⁸ In a significant way, He was also viewed as the great elder (*Githuuri*), and therefore an example of genuine elders, who were the custodians of morality by means of their responsibilities as arbitrators and adjudicators.²⁸⁹ God kept to the right side and thus justice would always win whatever the obstacles, and this motivated people to be pursuers of justice.²⁹⁰ So the Agĩkũyũ judges would always serve justice in any genuine grievance and in this way justice, truthfulness and fear of God was central in the individual's moral life. The residents of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, both old and young claim they fear God though what seems to differ in comparison with the older society is how the fear of God influences the individual and the community in daily living.

Clearly, the findings show that the religious life of some youth is questionable and this may reveal a gap that has not been closed after transitioning from the Agĩkũyũ traditional religion to Christianity. Kinoti explains that with the teaching of the missionaries and other modernizing agents, religion stopped being a national concern and people's attitude to God changed. She notes that in Christianity, punishment for wrong-doing is perceived to be deferred to the distant future, not immediate and because the judgement day is a future event people lose concern of daily uprightness. After all, the judgement event is so remote that the day-to-day pressing business seems

²⁸⁷ Read more on the role of elders in P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), pp. 31-38.

²⁸⁸ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 30.

²⁸⁹ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder*, p. 47.

²⁹⁰ S. Kibicho, *The Kikuyu Conception of God, its Continuity into the Christian Era and the Christian it Raises for the Christian Ideal of Revelation* (Published PhD Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1972), p. 54.

to keep it far in the background.²⁹¹ Some of the youth respondents, though most are Christians, do not have the right perception of moral values as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Judging from the youth responses on their Church experience and the activities they engage in, some issues arose. One of them is the apparent space and environment the Church offers them for socializing and developing talent, which they feel is not enough and leaves them with a lot of time in their hands. Thus the youth respondents feel the Church leadership can create opportunities for more activities for them since such activities help them develop self-discipline. According to them, the Church has not fully utilized the resources or chances within Her means for the youth's cause. The parent respondents advise the Church to be careful how it handles the youth because this generation is "delicate." The Church should show them love and understanding so that She does not lose them. The youth on the other hand feel that more often than not, they are misunderstood, that is, the adults react to the youth concerns without taking time to understand their needs.

The parent respondents are in agreement that the family is the first place where children should learn moral values. Moreover, they also feel that the Church, being a part of the Karūrī Catholic Parish family, has a significant responsibility in parenting the children and youth. On the other hand, they reckon that the willingness of the youth to learn and act right is also required. Ultimately, the youth should be reminded, as one parent puts it: "It all starts with you, your family and then the Church," and he continues; "if we fail to address the small issues of indiscipline in our homes, then our community will bear the burden of immorality."²⁹² This leads the study to scrutinize the Agĩkũyũ system of education.

2.5 The Agĩkũyũ System of Education

The Agĩkũyũ had an informal system of education which prepared the children and youth to play their respective roles in the family and society as responsible men and women. This education relied on kinship ties and age grouping and helped individuals

²⁹¹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 55.

²⁹² Parent Respondent, 2016.

to develop a sense of community by appreciating their society's customs and values.²⁹³ Mostly, the system was participatory or utilitarian in which people learned through oral literature, imitation, work and play, ceremonies and initiations. This ensured that the children not only learnt but were also productive in the life of the family and that of the community.

The Agĩkũyũ valued the principle of communalism especially in bringing up children. The child was regarded as belonging to the community and therefore the community members had a stake in its upbringing. However, most of the child's education was the responsibility of the parents and occurred within the homestead, with the parents' effort supplemented by others especially the elders who scolded, advised, rewarded and punished the youth. The sense of community and its educational benefits are clearly challenged in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish where the neighbours are no longer their brothers' keepers in parenting matters.

Most of the learning the child received was aimed at the formation and growth of character principally through relationships with other persons and not just a mere accumulation of knowledge. While the education received served as a vehicle for preserving the cultural heritage, it also ensured holistic or multiple learning which included social, economic and practical aspects, enabling the individual to acquire a variety of skills. It aimed at ensuring that children acquired values of honesty, respect, kindness, obedience, humility and compassion that would position them to be judged as having the necessary skills, beliefs and habits to guarantee their commitment to society's ideals and acceptable behaviour. Just like in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society, the study found that the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community believes a good character is the essence and basic crucial element of the ethics and moral system necessary for the community's self-maintenance and continuation.²⁹⁴ The teaching children received, though informal, was pre-determined in an organised system over the life of the individual.

²⁹³ H. M. Wawerũ, *The Bible and African Culture-mapping Transactional Inroads* (Limuru: Zapf Chancery Publishers Africa, 2011), p. 76.

²⁹⁴ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 82-83.; Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/african-ethics/>

Kenyatta elaborates the stages of training an individual was subjected to from birth, with a specific teaching defined for every stage or age group. He demonstrates that one's character was formed firstly within the family circle, then within the local group and lastly within the tribal organization.²⁹⁵ The community was observant that the child was successfully moulded to acquire the expected behaviour for each stage of life. In a similar manner, Erikson described in detail, eight developmental stages through which a developing human should pass from infancy to late adulthood.²⁹⁶ In each stage the person confronts, and hopefully masters new challenges. According to Erikson, each stage of growth provides a crisis that must be resolved before moving to the next stage. Resolving the crisis successfully enables the child to confront challenges in future stages. The virtues learnt are explained in detail in chapter three. In the Agĩkũyũ society, the child's education therefore was tailored in relation to the social ladder that is, from infancy to adulthood, and success was marked by progressing from one stage to the next. The study found that this elaborate system of informal education is no longer in operation in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

The youth initiation rite in particular provided a specific physical setting in which specific instructions were offered to the initiates in a wide range of subjects. The rite was therefore an important structure for inculcating moral values into the youth who were taught and circumcised together. The rite acted as a gateway to participate in the community's governance with elders in line with the African adage "a child who washes his hands clean eats with the elders."²⁹⁷ The study found that this rite has undergone numerous changes and as a result it is no longer an effective means of inculcating moral values into the youth. According to the interviewed elders, the concern about the deteriorating moral life of the boy child within the community prompted them to revitalize some functions of the group initiation rite such as teaching of moral values. The Catholic Men Association (CMA) was mandated with the implementation of this idea. The researcher noted that there were no appropriate

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁹⁶ J. M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed, Erick H. Erikson Extended Version* (New York: WW Norton and Company Inc., 1998), p. 89.

²⁹⁷ C. Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1st Ed.) (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), p. 179.

initiatives put in place to impart moral values into girls, despite being morally challenged too.

The CMA has also revived the practice of giving an age-group name after the initiation ceremony, as a recalling of an important event that took place during the season of the initiation. For instance, the 2015 age-group was named *riika rĩa mbaara ya njohi* (the age group of war against alcoholism). This name should conscientize the youth concerning the negative consequences of alcohol consumption. In the earlier days, the youth were not allowed to take alcohol until after they were married. According to the interviewed elders, the age-group system was lastly operational in its original sense in 1965.

2.6 Role Differentiation

In the traditional Agikũyũ society, the delineation between the training of the boy and girl was quite clear, with the girl training under the mother's direct instructions, while that of the boy was shared between the mother and father during the early age. As social structures change, what and how the children are taught has tended to sideline the gender role differentiation.²⁹⁸ For instance, the role of nurturing was noted to be unpopular with some female youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish who tend to avoid caring for their children. Likewise, some male youth desire to escape the responsibility of a child sired out of wedlock. The study found that parenting roles are gradually moving away from their traditional form with both men and women associated with non-traditional gender roles. The example of a single parent who is raising a son or daughter on her own was noted among the respondents. The extended family has a lot to offer in this kind of situation, but in the present times in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, this resource is not always readily available.

²⁹⁸ P. Zani, "The Family in its African Socio-cultural Context," in P. Ryan (Ed.), *The Models of Church- as-Family: Meeting the African Challenge* (Nairobi: CUEA, 1999), p. 53.

The youth respondents indicated that they do not notice any difference in the parental treatment based on their gender. Research confirms that when parenting is gender sensitive, children develop and mature well to play their expected roles in society, and are in addition cushioned from negative behaviour consequences.²⁹⁹

Gender, being a creation of God imposes itself on humans and thus cannot be ignored in matters of parenting.³⁰⁰ First and foremost an individual is either male or female. The problem handled by the study concerns both males and females. Despite treating children in the same manner in many aspects, they need specific skills and opportunities to develop their feminine and masculine abilities. Some of the common activities that the study found between the males and females include formal schooling and participation in Church youth programs. Socializing children according to their biological and social characteristics as they grow up will bring out what they are good at especially in preserving the family and parenting values.³⁰¹ In this respect, the boys and the girls in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish need an appropriate and elaborate training that takes into account role differentiation.

Parenting encompasses issues like helping the child develop in various aspects such as social competence, understanding and expressing emotion, and having a sense of identity. Therefore, when both boys and girls are not adequately educated on sex matters as is happening in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, it is a further proof that adequate parenting is endangered. When children do not experience parenting that develops them to be responsible and morally upright individuals, only partial development will occur.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ R. L. Simons, L. G. Simons, C. H. Burt, H. Drummund, E. Stewart, G. H. Brody, F. X. Gibbons and C. Cutrona, "Supportive Parenting Moderates the Effect of Discrimination upon Anger, Hostile View of Relationships, and Violence Among African American Boys," *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 47, no. 4 (2006), pp. 373-389.

³⁰⁰ J. Piper and W. Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers," in J. Piper and W. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), pp. 60-94.

³⁰¹ L. Eliot, "The Truth about Boys and Girls," (2010), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/42836385_The_Truth_about_Boys_and_Girls

³⁰² Save the Children Sweden, *Perception of Children on Parenting Practices* (Kathmandu: Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia, 2008), pp. 1-55. <https://www.crin.org/en/docs/Perceptionpractices.pdf>

2.7 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

This chapter has endeavoured to explain the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and its role in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth. As the chapter unfolds, one is able to clearly see the vital role the various aspects of the traditional Agĩkũyũ family set-up played in adequately parenting children and youth. It brought out how the Agĩkũyũ informal system of education functioned in relation to the formation and growth of a child's character through family and community ties. It is revealed that the family set-up has undergone significant changes but the role of the parents is still regarded as decisive in inculcating moral values into children and youth. Important structures such as the extended family are underutilized today in bringing up children and the nuclear family has taken the center stage. As a result, in Karũĩ Catholic Parish, the process of maturing boys and girls does not follow a clearly defined structure.

In both the traditional and the contemporary Agĩkũyũ societies, adequate parenting remains the responsibility of both parents. It has been argued that the Karũĩ Catholic Parish parents generally are concerned that children and youth are not being parented adequately especially with regard to moral values but the parents are keen to teach them. In this respect, the mothers seem to contribute more towards passing moral values to their children than the fathers who are often absent from home. The study therefore asserts that evidently, the parents of Karũĩ Catholic Parish are not adequately parenting their children and blame it on lack of time and other challenges.

It has also been showed that unlike in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society, the social ladder of education in which children progressed from one stage of growth to the next with a specified training, is no longer functioning as intended, with the consequence that children and youth do not benefit from the teachings, links and relations between family and community members. Having explained the role of the family set-up in transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth, the study now moves to determine the manner of transmitting moral values in Karũĩ Catholic Parish.

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSMISSION OF MORAL VALUES IN KARŪRĪ CATHOLIC PARISH

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to determine the manner of transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish. It also brings out the moral values that children and youth need to imbibe in order to be well adjusted in life. The chapter consists of seven sections which are; methods of transmitting moral values to children, child development stages and virtues learned, the RCC parenting role in Karūrī Catholic Parish, social worker's observation on youth moral problem, challenges to parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish, youth and Church, and lastly the chapter's concluding remarks.

3.2 Methods of Transmitting Moral Values to Children

The effect of the social change noted in chapter two has not only affected the functioning of the social structures that helped to pass down family and parenting values, but also the manner in which moral values are transmitted to children and youth, thereby yielding somewhat different results from earlier days.³⁰³ The following sections discuss the methods of inculcating moral values into children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

3.2.1 Practical Training

One remarkable thing about the Agĩkũyũ method of learning was that the knowledge acquired was in relationship to a practical deed, and so knowledge was merged in activity and could always be called whenever the particular activity was required again. Similarly, behaviour was learned through doing things together and was therefore directed from the outset to social activities. Thus the education was in participating in the life of a community and this was mostly realized successfully. Therefore, in the Agĩkũyũ community, everything bore a moral and social reference. The ideal was rightly relating and behaving towards other people as opposed to the western philosophy of individualism.³⁰⁴

³⁰³ Interview with Elder, 2016.

³⁰⁴ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 82.

The study found that the youth do not appreciate some values. For instance, they do not see the connection between hard work and success. The study revealed that in some instances, parents and others responsible for transmitting moral values give instructions to children and youth but do not take time to explain the connection between what the child is asked to do and being moral. According to the elder respondents, this may explain why the youth seem not to use sound reasoning and proper judgement when confronted by some issues. When answering the question: In your view do you think the character of the youth show lack of moral values? One elder said "...they do not seem to differentiate which issues are more important than others," another elder said "...they appear strong physically but have no mind in them." According to the elders, the trouble with the present generation in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish is that skills and practices learnt are held mostly as personal property, this being the challenge of the economy which assumes ownership of knowledge as basis for enrichment, and thus not passed on to the next generation for education and continuity.

Formal education helps expose the children in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish to issues beyond the immediate community and this helps them to see things differently. The youth respondents view education as a defining factor for their future. They see it as a means for career development and therefore economic empowerment. However, a disadvantage in teaching only formal subjects is that traditional wisdom, religious beliefs, ideals, morals and warnings are lost never to benefit future generations, which is a contributor to the current youth moral problem in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.³⁰⁵ The parents have also abandoned teaching their children what good the tradition offered and instead entrusted their education to school and others. Even story telling is no longer a preferred means of communicating values into children.

3.2.1.1 Story-Telling, Song and Drama

The findings show that the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish parents are largely ignorant of the songs and stories that embody moral messages. So the children do not grow up listening intently to tales, riddles and proverbs that can shape their moral behaviour and attitudes at home. When done in a deliberate manner, storytelling makes use of the emotional

³⁰⁵ A. R. Ndiaye, "Church as Family or Family as Church?" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 83.

participation of the listener in the shaping of moral behaviour and attitudes, right from the early stages of growth. The songs sung to children by the Agĩkũyũ mother lay emphases on tribal values and moral messages.³⁰⁶ The stories instilled into the individual what was seen to be of value and treasured by the community, the beliefs people held about right or wrong and worth being held.³⁰⁷ One of the values communicated through folklores was discipline; it helped the individual to align with the community's expectations with regard to behaviour and conduct.

The study learnt from the youth respondents that song and dance positively affects their vitality, behavior and relationships. When they dance, it binds them together with Church; when they sing they too experience joy, and the letting go of their sorrows, and the joys find an outlet for their hopes and fears about the future. On the other hand, singing conveys certain truths or sentiments and when connected with a religious rite it expresses the faith not only in God, but gives them assurance and hope about the present and future. Thus when integrated into Christian worship, participation in Gospel music is not only a good way of keeping the youth from secular places where they could end up in self-destructive habits, but it also has potential for packaging the messages in a way easily understandable and applicable in their daily lives. In effect the music becomes 'practical' salvation, where through communication it can warn and educate the youth on dangers of earthly realities and aspects of life, such as substance abuse and crime, issues that reflect impoverishment of moral values.³⁰⁸ The youth respondents reported that they always look forward to lively praise and worship sessions. Despite the youth's taste of "cool" and attractive praise and worship, the Church in Karũĩ Catholic Parish has the responsibility of modeling youth's faith to maturity, by encouraging them to create their own styles and tunes to convey the Gospel lyrics according to the Will of God.

³⁰⁶ E. W. Gachiri, *Gĩkũyũ Story-Telling as a Method of the Communication of Moral Values* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, 1996), p. Xv.; C. M. Ndungo, "The Image of Women in African Oral Literature: A Case Study of Gikuyu Oral Literature," *Gender Issues Research Report Series*, 23, (2006), pp. 1-80; J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 71.

³⁰⁷ G. E. Idang, "African Culture and Values," *Unisa Press*, 16, no. 2 (2015), p. 97–111.

³⁰⁸ D. N. Kagema, "The Use of Gospel Hip-Hop Music as an Avenue of Evangelizing the Youth in Kenya Today: A Practical Approach," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3, no. 8 (2013), pp. 161 -169.

In the current times, the Church in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish should appreciate that theatre is key in edification, entertainment, and exaltation of the human spirit. The Church allows the children and youth to participate in drama. Drama in form of storytelling is not only seen as an evangelization tool for the youth, but also a way of allowing them to use their gifts to glorify God.³⁰⁹ It reflects human behavior through dance while acting has the ability to bring fresh insight to stories that are familiar. Expressing the need for youth to unwind, a parent respondent offered “...let the youth be allowed to do their dance in Church,...give children a chance to participate in Church, appreciate and advise them.” Drama is not only participatory but inclusive. However, the study found that not all youth participate in the drama. As children grow, the process of education continues, but the methods of transmitting moral values to them changes to accommodate their level of comprehension.³¹⁰ This was the case with the initiation rite which was regarded as an effective method of inculcating moral values into the youth as they transitioned to adulthood, and is discussed next.

3.2.1.2 The Initiation Rite and Age-grouping

The study found that the rite of initiation in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish is not entirely a communal affair where initiates are taught together as a group. Further, the secret and sacred issues of life learnt during the traditional rite are not often conferred, thus according to the interviewed elders, the childish behaviour is hardly corrected and the youth is not necessarily tasked to commit to a moral life or appropriate attitude. Further, the rite does not provide opportunity to learn some useful songs, dances, folktales, and handworks and orientation on men status roles. This is hindered by the casual manner in which the male youth are taught and the limited time available for the exercise.

In giving their suggestion on how the youth can be helped to learn moral values, the elders agreed that “the parents and the Church have to put a lot of effort to reverse the tide since the youth are surrounded by negative peers.” The revitalized initiation rite organized by the CMA is meant to recover some important aspects of Agĩkũyũ culture especially that of teaching moral values to the male youth. The elders refer to it as

³⁰⁹ L. L. Doyle, *Church Drama and Conservative Christianity: Developing a Drama Ministry at Broadway Church of Christ* (Published PhD Thesis, Texas Tech University, 2002).

³¹⁰ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 73.

guchokia ruui mukaro (redeeming the life of the male youth). The parents indicated that “though not all candidates go through the rite at the Parish, the boy child stands to gain much.” The training the initiates receive touches on various areas such as African traditional values, Christian integrity and leadership formation. The rite however covers a small group of boys compared to the number of those in need of such an encounter.

It is generally agreed even within the Agĩkũyũ council of elders that just like the rite of initiation, the related age-group concept has lost some key functions like that of social control and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.³¹¹ Unfortunately as stated by the interviewed elders, most contemporary youth are under no pressure from peers to behave in a moral way, neither do some feel obliged to always uphold some moral values like humility and self-discipline. Contrary to what was happening within the age-group, and as some youth respondents note, it is not uncommon today for peers to influence colleagues into doing morally wrong things. A common response was “...peers are not moral...provide bad examples...use bad language...have bad behaviour...dress indecently...abuse drugs...lack respect...” The changes that have happened with the rite of passage have lessened the emphasis on discipline such that the physical aspect of the rite is what mostly matters today.

3.2.1.3 Disciplining Errant Children

Many rules governing social behaviour and of ordinary honesty were inculcated into a child. Aided by these rules, systematic effort was put on training children and youth on character, social responsibility and behaviour. If any of the children misbehaved, the duty of disciplining him or her was not only a parent affair but of the entire community because a child was considered as belonging to the community.³¹² Cagnolo enlightens that in case a child misbehaved, he or she was disciplined by any mature person who happened to be conveniently near. Any child caught in the stealing act would bring trouble to the parents since they would be considered as directly responsible for the sin of their child.³¹³

³¹¹ Interview with Elder, 2016.

³¹² C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 73.

³¹³ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 70.

Disciplining the child is still accepted as right and necessary by Karūrī Catholic Parish community. One way of correction is where the parent deliberately and tactfully withdraws or temporarily suspends the favours given to or requested by the child. Other methods the parents use in disciplining include spanking, interrogation and dialogue. Spanking is used for the younger children while dialogue is employed where youth are involved. Using the rod is important for if the rod is spared the child is spoiled. The purpose of engaging dialogue is to have an open discussion that helps youth to become conscious of the need to be morally right. Dialogue compliments any other disciplinary method. Some parent respondents indicated that they try to make sure the child understands that being moral is not a matter of discussion but a must and the parent may be forced to take a commanding or authoritarian stand as far as effecting discipline in youth is concerned.

The strong and passionate authoritarian father-figure in the Agikūyū traditional family ensured there was discipline within the family. The responsibility of disciplining children was also undertaken by uncles and aunts who provided guidance on behaviour to the boy and girl respectively. There were numerous occasions where young men and women had to strictly be disciplined. For instance alcohol consumption by young people was regarded as a curse until they married and gave out goats for their children.³¹⁴ The father's word was obeyed without questioning. The study found that parents in Karūrī Catholic Parish have somewhat lost this disciplining authority as some have become objects of imitation by their children for wrong reasons like alcoholism.

Researchers suggest that consistent discipline makes adolescents more resilient to subscribing to values not in harmony with parental norms and values taught to them thus leading to positive adolescent adjustment. Higher levels of inconsistent discipline today are associated with more behaviour problems; they reinforce aggressive and non-compliant behaviour in children and adolescents.³¹⁵ The values taught by parents in Karūrī Catholic Parish are discussed next.

³¹⁴ Interview with Elder, 2016.

³¹⁵ D. H. Hoskins, "Consequences of Parenting on Adolescent Outcomes," *Societies*, 4, (2014), pp. 506–531.

3.2.2 Moral Values Taught in Karūrī Catholic Parish

The concept “value”, though often times used in terms of political or economic sense, the study confines it to its ethical, moral and religious use.³¹⁶ Moral values are considered as certainly acceptable, desirable, worthwhile, right, good, and cherished valuable qualities that work in developing a sound character. They are put into use on daily basis to improve people’s existence and are vital for defining the identity of a people, their cultural identity, individual view of morality, and moral consciousness.³¹⁷ Through their education system, the Agĩkũyũ children and youth were made aware that having moral values was a quality pursued by all.³¹⁸ The children, in the process of growing up realized that they had one thing to learn which sums up all the others, that is, “the manners and deportment proper to their station in the community.”³¹⁹ To do this they had to imbibe the set of moral values taught to them by their parents and community.

It is universally established that there is no group of people which can survive without a set of values that hold them together and guarantee their continued existence.³²⁰ Works by prior scholars like Ime, Kenyatta and Kinoti expound the scale of moral values that were taught to Agĩkũyũ children right from infancy, and the virtues instilled. Generally moral values are considered to include honesty or truthfulness, obedience, respect, patience, hard work, loyalty, tolerance and respect for human life and dignity of persons.³²¹ Kinoti categorized and studied moral values of honesty, generosity, justice, courage and temperance. The study sought the views of the respondents on some selected values and the findings are discussed in the next section.

³¹⁶ L. J. Teffo, “Remaking Africa through a Spiritual Regeneration,” in The Lutheran World Federation, *Crises of Life in African Religion and Christianity* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2002), p. 128.

³¹⁷ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 90.

³¹⁸ Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903 Volume III* (London, New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 1.

³¹⁹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 72.

³²⁰ U. A. Etuk, *Religion and Cultural Identity* (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2002), p. 22.

³²¹ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, “Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

3.2.2.1 Honesty and Obedience

Honesty implies being truthful, frank, direct or straight. It involves speaking what one believes without wavering no matter the circumstance. It is being aware of what constitutes right and proper in one's behaviour. One cannot be said to have moral standards or have integrity without being honest, a paramount quality which was pursued by all in the traditional society where children were taught to be honest right from the family level.³²² It was a Gĩkũyũ ideal and many rules of ordinary honesty were from time to time inculcated into a child and, in case of any naughty trickery causing trouble in the family, prompt discipline was taken on the child.³²³

All the youth respondents indicated that being honest is very important. However, this study found that the perception of honesty is changing among some of the Karũĩ Catholic Parish youth. This agrees with Ushe's study which found that the peoples' opinion on honesty has changed and as a consequence, they no longer give account of their stewardship.³²⁴ In the older society everyone was expected to follow moral principles without fail.

Moreover on honesty, a number of examples will suffice here. In the Agĩkũyũ traditional society, kinship was maintained by the principle of honesty because the relationship itself was of respect and honour. Honesty helped people to make mutually beneficial arrangements, for instance one could place his cattle in custody of another person for security reasons.³²⁵ No one could be trusted with public leadership without a reputation of being honest, and for this reason people protected their names from being tainted.³²⁶ Only a man beyond reproach could give out a sacrificial lamb to be slaughtered in praying for rains as expounded in the roles and powers of Agĩkũyũ

³²² J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 97.

³²³ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 73.

³²⁴ M. U. Ushe, "Role of Traditional African Moral Values in the Development of Nigeria," *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 3, no. 2 (2011), pp. 1-13.

³²⁵ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 59.

³²⁶ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6(2014), pp. 40-44.

elder.³²⁷ Still only those known for honesty could be trusted with roles like midwifery. To wrap up the examples, is the expectation that a mother would question where her children got some farm produce from which they had brought home to ensure they had not stolen. According to the elders interviewed, some of the programs put in place by RCC in Karũrĩ were as a response to what the Church saw as a challenged leadership in the homes due to lack of moral values.

Though the traditional Agĩkũyũ were not yet exposed to the Holy Bible, part of their behaviour agreed with Proverbs 22:1 which states: “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”³²⁸ The real motive for honesty was personal welfare. When someone considered his or her personal welfare they would feel restrained from lying, stealing, extortion, slander, immorality or such things. This behaviour was consistent even when a person was entrusted with a position of responsibility in the community. As mentioned earlier, the contemporary Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community is keen to ensure the child understands that being honest is not negotiable. The youth respond by asserting that in their view, the source of teaching honesty should be the parents, then Church, school, peers, relatives and media in that order.

The parent respondents describe several methods which they employ in inculcating the value of honesty into their children. The first approach is being honest on their part when interacting with the children, thus setting an example as first teachers. They encourage the child to likewise be forthright and not to keep secrets from them in all circumstances. Some parents, just as a test, entrust their child with money by sending him or her to the shop and not requesting back the cash balance immediately. The parent then asks the child to return the cash balance later. Where the parent suspects the child is not telling the truth or is hiding something, a variety of disciplining methods are used, among them interrogation and open discussion. The aim of doing all this is to make the child understand that being honest is not negotiable.

³²⁷ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 52.

³²⁸ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, “Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6(2014), pp. 40-44.

On the other hand, obedience is submission to the rightful authority. It is dutiful or submissive compliance. Human beings have been proved to be obedient in the presence of figures of legitimate authority.³²⁹ In the Agĩkũyũ society, children were expected to submit to their parents, elders or other authority. Obedience was defined in terms of respect, therefore, children were trained from early age to obey and respect their parents, elders and authority without questioning. For instance the Agĩkũyũ father was obeyed and respected unconditionally by all members of his family.

In an attempt to develop obedience in the child, some of the parent respondents claim they ensure character formation right from when the child is young and all along try to make sure their instructions are obeyed. They say this in the backdrop of a serious moral crisis among the youth in the area. According to the parent respondents, one way of disciplining disobedience is where the parent does not give a response immediately to a child's request. In some families, the subject of obedience is discussed during prayer time and Bible reading. Most youth think they learnt to be obedient from their parents, school, Church and relatives in that order. Most of them revealed they do not believe the media and peers have much to teach them about obedience. While youth agree on the importance of being obedient, a few felt that being obedient should not be highly rated.

The traditional Agĩkũyũ took obedience seriously because they made serious pledges to certain moral principles accompanied by experience of pain. Today, vows or promises even in Church are made within the context of modernity. Modernity renders things lukewarm making people insensitive to the morality that traditional Agĩkũyũ regarded proper, and as a consequence people do not honour promises or do not hate depravities like stealing, lying or disobeying parents. Just like in the case of honesty and obedience, the Agĩkũyũ valued showing kindness or hospitality, and respect to elders and other people.

³²⁹ Wikipedia, (2018).

3.2.2.2 Kindness and Respect

Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate as defined by Oxford Dictionary.³³⁰ One does not need to have a reason to be kind. It is simply the right way to treat people. The Agĩkũyũ valued kindness and generosity, even to visitors and abhorred individualism. Being kind was viewed as being mindful of the neighbours and the larger community members, as in the case where widows and orphans were adopted into families to ensure their wellbeing and the appropriate training of their children. A significant percentage of the parent respondents agreed that being kind should not be optional and added that it is at home where the child should first learn to be kind. The next paragraph explains the findings on the parent's view of their children's level of kindness.

The parent respondents indicated that some Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth are not keen on showing kindness. This is a big shift from their culture, and for several of them, they are not persuaded that kindness should be a universal virtue to uphold. The parents say that teaching this virtue requires them to be good role models in demonstrating kindness, be good to the friends of their children, and explain the benefits of being a kind person. It is at home where the parents in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish make sure the child is involved in acts of kindness as seen in assisting with house chores, which prepares the child to render service beyond the home environment as a productive adult.

Nevertheless, about a quarter of the youth respondents are not enthusiastic about being kind despite agreeing that kindness is a value one should have. It is surprising that out of this quarter some girl respondents believe kindness is of no importance at all. This may be a reflection of how individualistic the society has become.³³¹ The youth claim that they learn the virtue of kindness from parents, the Church, relatives, and the peers in that order. According to them, the school and the media have nothing to teach them on kindness. Other than being kind, the youth also need to be respectful for a harmonious family and community.

³³⁰ Oxford Learners Dictionary, <https://www.google.com/search?q=oxford+dictionary+definitions&oq=oxford+dictionary+definitions&aqs=chrome..69i57j35i39j69i60l3j0.8332j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#dobs=kindness>

³³¹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 59.

Ime et al. defines respect as the acceptance of the inherent worth and innate rights of the individual and collectivity.”³³² In the traditional society juniors respected their seniors whom they acknowledged as not only older but also wiser than them. Anyone or any group of people worth of respect was honoured and accorded dignity. Children were trained to unconditionally respect anybody who was older than them and this is the reason why Agĩkũyũ children would see their peer’s parents as their fathers or mothers. Children showed respect to their father by talking to him in a polite and gentle tone which was termed as good etiquette. It was considered disrespectful for children to address their father or mother by their own names unless the child would have been a rascal, which was not the case.³³³ The researcher observed that in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, the mention of the name father or mother unsettlingly refers to either of the biological parents. These titles of respect are no longer reserved for others like aunties, parents of the peers, and persons older than the youth. For the most part, the direct dealing with the parents, and the limited interaction with extended family members and larger community have partly led to the diminishing of this unconditional respect.

Some parents responded that teaching children to be respectful demands an explanation about the worth of other people because they are created by God in His own image and loves them. The study also learnt that children are taught to be respectful by being constantly reminded to say words like “sorry”, “thank you” and “excuse me”; to respect the parents’ friends; to address older people in the right manner, and to have regard for the weak and the poor in their midst. Learning through the life of the parent as example would be quite effective since children mostly learn by observation and remember more of what they see than what they hear.³³⁴ Another value the children learnt in the older society is hard work, which was recognized as the foundation for ensuring a comfortable life and resource mobilization and was associated with self-discipline.

³³² G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, “Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

³³³ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 6.

³³⁴ A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), p. 21.

3.2.2.3 Hard Work and Self-discipline

The Agĩkũyũ society and the Church both honour the value of hardwork and associate it with dignity, and therefore the parents strived to inculcate it into their children. In addition, the traditional society believed hard work reflected well the development of a person. It ensured no one entertained or supported laziness. In general, all community members were given education for occupational and economic self-reliance, and regarding particular families, equipped with specific skills such as medicine or craft.³³⁵ Sivi records that through work, the economic health of the community is promoted and laziness works for the reverse.

The traditional society inculcated the value of hard work right from when the children could practically imitate their parents' activities. This was possible because education given to the children and youth was functional in its approach, making it easy for them to live in conformity with the tradition of the community. For instance, the son worked alongside the father in the farm using a digging stick specifically made for him, learning practically through the life of the parent. The increasing idleness of the youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community, reported by the parent respondents, is evidently observed by an outsider. The youth explain that they are idle because they do not have much to do. Jobs are hard to come by and the situation is not expected to improve soon as national employment is growing only by about two percentages.³³⁶

Parent respondents say they expose their children to hard work by giving them responsibilities starting from an early age, allowing them to observe while the parent works, for instance in washing dishes, moving water or working in the shamba. In this way they learn through practical example. Some parents allow the child to initiate their own tasks like cooking a particular recipe but under their supervision. Sometimes as Christians, some families read the Scripture and pray together as a way of helping the children understand what God says about working hard, and at the same time seeking divine intervention for them through prayer.

³³⁵ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

³³⁶ K. Sivi, *Kenya Youth Scenarios: Youth.... the Key to Unlocking Kenya's Potential* (Nairobi: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2011), p. 23.

Unlike in the past, the researcher learnt that youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish have fewer opportunities like formal jobs to express their virtue of hard work, thus demanding creativity on their part in order to be busy or engaged. Responding to a question requiring the respondents to answer under category of; “very important”, “moderately important”, “neutral”, “low importance” and “not important”, a small percentage of youth respondents said working hard is not important. Their response is corroborated by Ime et al. who contend that the modern society has adopted the philosophy “the end justifies the means” where everyone wants to acquire wealth in the shortest time possible without putting in hard work.³³⁷ The youth of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish may not be an exception because some indicated that they want to become rich while still young. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council considered this philosophy as one of the difficulties facing the education of young people. The Council teaches that it is important for children to grow up with the correct attitude of freedom as far as material goods are concerned. This they can do by adopting a simple lifestyle of having the conviction “man is more precious for what he is than what he has.”³³⁸ The study results show that youth learn the virtue of hard work from parents, school, relatives, Church and peers in that order.

The traditional society also promoted the value of self-discipline and worked for it with utmost sincerity. Cagnolo enlightens that most of the self-discipline the youth exercised was taught during the rigorous rite of initiation. Particularly, stealing, lying, sexual immorality and single parenthood were not tolerated unlike what the study found to be happening in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.³³⁹ Any individual committing forbidden acts (taboo) such as rape or murder could not be accepted into the society before undergoing cleansing rituals.³⁴⁰ Further, any acts of indiscipline would attract God’s fury. The

³³⁷ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, “Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

³³⁸ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Guadium et Spes*, p. 35.

³³⁹ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 7.

³⁴⁰ J. N. Kabugi, *Catholic Women’s Participation in Empowerment and Liberation Activities: A Study of Small Christian Communities in Kenya* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 2004), p. 90.

yardstick for someone's worth was his or her discipline to keep morals and manners that the society treasured.³⁴¹

Some parent respondents indicated that they ensure self-discipline is taught to children from an early age. Others said they teach their children through example, for instance, by honouring promises made to the child. The parents also share some of their life experiences for the child to learn from. Still, a smaller group of parents said that they teach the youth self-discipline by having a one-on-one talk on how to conduct themselves especially when in a relationship with the opposite sex. The expectation is that the youth will behave in the right way always even when no one is watching.

A group of parents said they allow their children some freedom to express themselves freely and be creative. This would enable them to develop responsibility in handling freedom, for example, in developing reliability in oneself at the time of choosing right career. Absurdly though, some youth regard self-discipline as the least to worry about in their lives. They see it as best taught by parents then school, Church, peers, and relatives in that order. As mentioned earlier, the determination to pursue moral values had a basis in the religious beliefs.

3.2.2.4 Humility and Fear of God

Through the virtue of humility, inter-personal relationships stay healthy. A good example of showing humility is when an adult keeps his promise to a younger person. The parent respondents regarded it as humility when they cede some ground and listen to what a naughty child has to say. Similarly, humility is demonstrated when the parents give another chance to the child who keeps doing the wrong thing, for the sake of teaching him/her the need and place for words like "please", "sorry", or "thank you." By living the Christian faith, some parents manage to discuss and inculcate Christ-like virtues like humility into their children.

³⁴¹ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

Just like with obedience, a percentage of youth do not approve humility as important. This again should be worrying more so because some girls (and only girls) said humility is not important to them at all explaining that showing humility, in their view, was equivalent to being weak. Culturally, girls are expected to be humble. One even used the words ‘...it would allow people to walk over me...’. Humility is strength and not weakness; it was in the character of Jesus to be humble and should be so with Christians. Humility creates the right environment to develop respect and fear of God.

In the older Agĩkũyũ society, observing moral values was done out of awe of God who gave the community certain rules of conduct to govern them to ensure society’s wellbeing. Any misdeed like contradicting the moral laws of God or disrespecting parents attracted His wrath. Thus, religion held each family together, bound together the inhabitants of the various villages of a territorial unit and gave the cohesion essential to parent each other’s children. Communal prayers were held in public assemblies to request God for peace and prosperity.³⁴²

In Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, the fear of God is still seen as crucial in supporting character formation and is better instilled from formative years of a child. The parents take their young children to Church for Christian baptism and later confirmation. Through teaching of catechesis the children also receive Christian formation. As they grow, they continue to receive Church spiritual teachings and get involved in physical activities appropriate for their age. Further, some families do fellowship by reading the Bible and praying together with their children, like the domestic Church they should be. “I used to prepare and take them to Church at an early age”, a parent says. However, as children grow, they are allowed autonomy. Youth respondents rate fear of God as the most important value to have in their lives and they indicated they mostly learn religious matters from the Church.

The parents see the Church as a crucial link in parenting the youth. A keen analysis of the responses from the parents shows that they see the Church as one in the best position to mould the youth to be moral people. One parent respondent demonstrates this by cautioning “...the Church should be empathetic of today's children. If She is too harsh

³⁴² H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 43.

on them, She will lose them. She should be loving towards them as She moulds them.” A further call is made by another parent for the Church to “coordinate the parents and other key players to deliberate and monitor on what must be taught to the children”. Interestingly a parent explains “...the Church should play a major role in moral education of children because many parents have failed to resolve this issue...” A similar call and another indication of the importance of the Church when it comes to parenting children and youth, is seen when one parent responded “...institution (Church) to educate parents on regular basis, do house visits...” When the ministry of the Church to the youth is effective, the fear of God they develop from early age becomes a foundation for building on other values that matures them.

A worrying trend is emerging where humility and obedience are regarded by the youth as of less relevance than in the traditional society. Notwithstanding any particular position, as concerns being moral, some scholars like Kosemani as quoted by Ime et al. sums it, “the yard stick that measures a well parented man is his morals, manners, obedience to authority and respect for the customs, conventions, superstitions and laws of the land”.³⁴³

A point to note is that the youth rated school as the best teacher of the value of hard work and the Church as the best teacher on fear of God. Peer pressure appears to mostly affect the youth’s self-discipline and their fear of God. A percentage of youth respondents point out that some youth especially the non-Church-going peers as well as a few Church-going ones, do things which are not morally right such as substance abuse, lack respect, are disobedient, lazy, use profane words and dress indecently.

When an individual understands the principles of moral conduct and commits to behaving morally in his dealings with others he is said to manifest moral health.³⁴⁴ In this respect, the initial assignment concerning the youth is to be morally disposed rightly, short of which the entire society becomes dysfunctional due to futile leadership and may fail in its goal attainment. Enderbrock argues that no matter what other educational advantages a child may enjoy, if his attitudes and convictions with respect

³⁴³ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, “Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

to religion and morals have been ill-formed, he is on the high road to trouble. He may know next to nothing about God and His laws; what he does know will probably float on the surface of his mind, never penetrating deep enough to stir his will to control his desires and surging passions. Only harm to oneself and others can result.³⁴⁵

The study found that the Karūrī Catholic Parish community desires a morally disposed youth who is able to take his position and responsibility within society. Generally, the youth are convinced that the fear of God is the starting point of a moral life. In the next section, a discussion is provided on the virtues and the crisis in each stage of a child's growth that provides a good foundation and support for inculcating moral values into children and youth.

3.3 Child Developmental Stages and Virtues Learned

Through the ages, the Agikūyū tradition ensured children are exposed to the moral values discussed above as they grow up. Insights from the work of Kenyatta, Cagnolo and Kinoti show that raising morally upright children was a concerted effort done from different perspectives, physical, psychological, social and religious. Erikson asserts that in bringing up well balanced individuals, the manner of handling the children and youth in the various stages of growth before entering adulthood is very important. The theory's proposition is that the stages of growth of a child generate specific virtues and present some crisis which, if not resolved, will negatively affect the outcome of all handling of future stages of development including learning moral values. The theory is relevant to this study, specifically because the knowledge of the virtues and crisis in each stage is beneficial as parents will be able to appreciate and embrace each child with sensitivity in regard to readiness to progress to the next stage of growth. It is therefore important at this point to delve into the different growth stages articulated by Erikson, with the aim of showing how developing the desired level of maturity by a child at each stage may be achieved or hindered if certain strength is not developed or the crisis is not resolved.

³⁴⁵ M. N. Getui, "The Family, the Church and the Development of Youth," in J. N. K. Mūgambi (Eds), *The Church in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1998), p. 74.

This section aims to show that for appropriate parenting to occur, it is beneficial for those involved to be in the know of the level of growth the child is in and the corresponding strength or crisis in order to walk appropriately with the child towards his or her maturity through the teaching of moral values. The study now reviews the relevant stages of Erikson's psychosocial theory which expose the appropriate action that can help create strength or resolve crisis in the child. This is done alongside the teachings in both the traditional Agikūyū society and that done in Karūrī Catholic Parish, in similar stages of growth, as a way of assessing the effectiveness in the parents' manner of handling children from birth to young adulthood stage.

3.3.1 Education at Infancy Stage of Growth

According to Erickson, the first stage in a child's life is known as infancy and is the age between birth and 18 months. At this stage the child faces the concerns of basic trust versus mistrust³⁴⁶ and would not be aware of what is moral or immoral. The outcome of all handling in future stages of development is dependent on establishment of this basic trust or mistrust. At this stage, the essential social interaction of the infant is with the mother through which the child is able to learn both trust and mistrust but in the right proportion. Since infants are unable to meet their own needs, they rely on their primary care-givers who are their parents. The mother's love and care through breastfeeding and attention provides a positive influence. An infant that is well handled, nurtured and loved, will develop a trust and security, and in others a basic optimism and is able to successfully complete the infancy stage.

A sense of trust helps the child to accept limits and boundaries which is crucial for teaching moral values in later stages. If the infant needs are not met, it becomes mistrustful and insecure.³⁴⁷ "The basic strength or virtue of this stage is hope or the expectation that difficulties in life presenting whatever challenge they may, will eventually result in a positive outcome".³⁴⁸ The child is totally helpless and dependent

³⁴⁶ J. S. Fleming, "Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Stages," (2004), [https:// pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ab44/d6a2d3178e4e159108ab5333504d23cc9508.pdf](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ab44/d6a2d3178e4e159108ab5333504d23cc9508.pdf)

³⁴⁷ S. Ramkumar, "Erik Erikson's Theory of Development: A Teacher's Observations," *Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools*, 6, (2017). <http://journal.kfionline.org/issue-6/erik-eriksons-theory-of-development-a-teachers-observations>

³⁴⁸ J. S. Fleming, "Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Stages," (2004), [https:// pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ab44/d6a2d3178e4e159108ab5333504d23cc9508.pdf](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ab44/d6a2d3178e4e159108ab5333504d23cc9508.pdf)

on the parents and cannot directly be taught moral values. However, a sense of hope is needed to meet the problems presented at subsequent stages of development. For instance, the parent should strive to assure the infant that his needs will be consistently met. The antithesis of hope is a lack of hope and withdrawal.

We see a parallel to Erikson's description of tasks within this stage when Kenyatta speaks of the child's caregiver being the mother who attends and feeds the baby personally. Cagnolo compliments the Agĩkũyũ mother for her enthusiastic effort in caring for her children, whom he says stopped to suck when they were of age 6 to 7 years.³⁴⁹ Through such good feeding and care the baby developed hope as a strength in this stage and was therefore equipped to confront future challenges. Although majority of the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish mothers claim to take care of their infants personally, the fact that some of them leave for work every morning and come back home in the evening suggests that proper care of the baby may not be guaranteed implying that the development of the basic strength of hope is compromised; the child having not had time to cultivate a balance state of trust and mistrust.

The infant was taught through the medium of lullabies, where the mother and the nurse passed down to the young child on daily basis, the whole family and clan tradition. Kenyatta says the Agĩkũyũ history was passed in this way from one generation to another. At this stage the child was not aware of the training but because of the daily repetition it became easy to assimilate the teaching without straining.³⁵⁰ The kind of interaction that went on between the mother and child was much more than feeding the baby. The lullabies for example subtly introduced the baby to the environment in which he or she was growing.

Even though a good percentage of mother respondents claim they nurse their babies personally during the first two years, the impact of such an interaction could be questioned bearing in mind the many distractions that can interfere with it, such as the cell phone or television. This is also compounded by a lack of enough time and a clear

³⁴⁹ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 69.

³⁵⁰ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), pp. 67-68.

plan of when, how and what the mother ought to inculcate into the child. All these shortcomings negatively affect the development of the virtue of hope. The mother-child interaction lessens as the child moves to stage two in Erickson's scale.

3.3.2 Education at Early Childhood Stage of Growth

At stage two of the child's growth, which is ages 19 months to 3 years, the virtue is will and the crisis is autonomy versus shame. The toddlers are curious to explore the world around as they develop their first interests and are outgoing wanting to do things on their own. Providing opportunities to explore these interests and make independent decisions and at the same time receiving the parent's positive encouragement develops a sense of autonomy. When the toddler's decisions are ridiculed, he or she may experience shame and become doubtful in what his or her abilities are capable of, which inhibits self-expression, opinion, and sense of self. The opposite of shame and doubt is autonomy which produces self-reliance, independence of thought to acting for self. The parental encouragement, patience and reaction therefore plays an important role in shaping the child's experience and successful progression through this period, and the significance of this parental reaction concerns all aspects of the toddler exploration and discovery.³⁵¹

The tasks the child learns during this stage include feeding oneself, walking, talking as well as controlling bowel functions. Even as parents exercise patience with the child, at the same time they should establish rules or standards of proper behaviour. He or she should be made to absorb the meaning of the word "no" for this helps them to learn law and order though any excessive control by parents risk increased lack of sense of autonomy and shame on the part of the child, since such action can break the child's will.

Analogous to this stage, Kenyatta narrates how a child grew and begun learning how to speak, with the mother taking great care in directing the child in developing the right manner of speech. The mother was careful to identify what reaction the child gave to a particular song and in case of dislike, she was quick to embody the same message in a

³⁵¹ J. S. Fleming, "Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Stages," (2004), [https:// pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ab44/d6a2d3178e4e159108ab5333504d23cc9508.pdf](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ab44/d6a2d3178e4e159108ab5333504d23cc9508.pdf)

different song. In other words, the child's interest and independent decision were respected thus helping him/her to develop a sense of autonomy and virtue of "will" to become independent. Fleming says that "the sense of autonomy fostered in the child and modified as life progresses serves the preservation in economic and political life a sense of justice".³⁵² Correction was also practiced on the child to deter him or her from growing with the wrong idea or behaviour against the family or community's set standard. So the child grew up with a sense of right and wrong.³⁵³ A walking child qualified for an extended training in how to use his hands in various activities. At this point games were introduced by the parents. The children indulged freely into their kind of game and safety was ensured. In most of the games, the emphasis was to imitate their elders, illustrating the theory that "play is anticipatory of adult life"³⁵⁴ and as Bandura postulates in his social learning theory, children learn by imitation.³⁵⁵

Of interest is the study's finding that the contemporary parents in Karūrī Catholic Parish are largely unavailable for the child and according to the youth respondents, exhibit a degree of ignorance, negligence, and lack of skill in parenting their children. Many children keep themselves busy by playing with toys without the mother's active participation in directing them learn something useful through the play. Not spending enough time together with the child denies the parent the opportunity to patiently encourage the child in the right actions, and this goes to hinder the development of self-expression, opinion, and sense of self in the child. The parents also indicated that they lack proper training on parenting of children and youth today. These challenges experienced within Karūrī Catholic Parish community can act singly or together to significantly obstruct the development of the virtue of will in the child at this stage.

3.3.3 Education at Play Age Stage of Growth

The youngsters in this category of age 4 to 6 years face the challenge of initiative versus guilt and the virtue is purpose. According to Erickson, the main question asked in this stage is "how moral am I?" It is a stage to develop independence and courage. The child

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 69.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

³⁵⁵ A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), pp. 26-28.

is faced with the complexities of planning and developing a sense of judgement and purpose, and quite a bit of imagination. Further, he or she learns to define own boundaries while taking initiative which, as McDevitt and Ormrod showed, can be through encouragement by their parents.³⁵⁶ Being capable of taking initiative prepares the child towards leadership roles and achievement of goals and this initiative is built when they are allowed to express imagination. For instance, by playing with various natural objects, directing them in choosing an activity that they repeat as often as they want, engaging them in real life activities like house chores, and introducing stories and songs that stimulate their imagination. To ridicule or make fun of the child's imagination, and overt expectation leads to inhibiting the natural senses of initiative.³⁵⁷

The parent can help the child develop self-initiative and set goals by providing a model of themselves in self-control, which is relevant in setting goals, and also by helping through the decision-making.³⁵⁸ Accordingly, as Kinoti explicates, in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society, through admonition and example, every responsible parent assisted their children in acquiring habits and attitudes of maturity.³⁵⁹ Providing the child with achievable responsibility goes to promote a safe balance between initiative and guilt. Cramer, Flynn and LaFave describe two different outcomes that may occur when the child is not given responsibility, for example of cleaning his or her room. The two outcomes can be independence or dependability. The children should be made to know that not all the situations and activities they choose may be permitted by others. If the child accepts this, then a healthy balance of initiative and guilt can be achieved.³⁶⁰

The child begins to make decisions and execute them basically through play activities or practical training. For the Agĩkũyũ children, even in their games, the emphasis was to imitate their elders, illustrating that learning was also by imitation. Kenyatta enlightens that the little boys imitated the big boys as a model in running and wrestling

³⁵⁶ T. M. Devitt and J. E. Ormrod, *Child Development and Education* (1st Ed.) (United State: Courier Kendallville, 2002), p. 458-459.

³⁵⁷ S. Ramkumar, "Erik Erikson's Theory of Development: A Teacher's Observations," *Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools*, 6, (2017). <http://journal.kfionline.org/issue-6/erik-eriksons-theory-of-development-a-teachers-observations>

³⁵⁸ A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), p. 3ff.

³⁵⁹ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 64.

³⁶⁰ C. Cramer, B. Flynn and A. LaFave, "Erik Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development," <http://snycorva.cortland.edu/~ANDERSMD/ERIK/>

and whoever came out the winner was marked for leadership. They played games involving spears, bows and arrows and slings to learn marksmanship skills. The boys also played the game of husband by imitating their fathers by building small models of homesteads using nearest suitable material. Conversely, the girls, in imitation of their mothers, ground corn, weaved grass baskets and cooked imaginary dishes. This prepared them to be disposed to management and harmonization of the affairs of a homestead.³⁶¹ In this stage therefore the parents provided role models for their children to learn from and develop the virtue of purpose.

During this period, the parents should assist the child in gaining skills in economic and social development because the skills give responsibility and independence. The Agĩkũyũ achieved this by the father acquainting the boy on activities such as agriculture, hunting, woodcarving or medicine while the mother took part of the boy's education and the entire education of the girl which acquainted her on farming and handling farm produce.³⁶² Alongside the practical training, the child was acquainted with names and uses of different plants and roots. The Agĩkũyũ parents clearly provided the child with achievable responsibility that went on to promote a safe balance between initiative and guilt, which is necessary to develop purpose.

Another aspect of the parent helping the child to develop purpose and self-initiative in this stage is in teaching the child the skills to be responsible and independent. The child is taught how to have courage, self-discipline, be empathetic and obedient. Fitro proposes some ideas on how to encourage these values during a child's moral development. First, the parents should respect the child if they expect respect in return. The parents should remain firm regarding their expectations, but consider fairness since the child is a human being. This way the child will develop a positive self-concept. They should take the advantage they have of teaching moral values through discussion and example or illustration. In this way, the child can learn how to tolerate guilt, feelings of low self-esteem and self-confidence or self-efficacy. After taking an initiative to

³⁶¹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 70; A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), p. 3ff.

³⁶² J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 70.

accomplish a certain goal, the child comes to learn that after all this type of behaviour is acceptable. The child should be given the opportunity to discuss how to accept these feelings that accompany guilt.³⁶³

Echoing the main virtue of purpose in this stage, Karūrī Catholic Parish parents are generally concerned about the child's perspectives and opinion, and would love their children to be responsible, independent and have initiative. While they allow the children reasonable freedom to play with their friends, some parents expect an accounting of the events of the day. When children in this stage join formal school programs, a further limitation to their time for interaction with parents and practical learning at home is experienced. Parents who do not give responsibility obstruct independence and promote dependability in the child; no wonder several youth are lazy and idle. Another thing is that the parents are not always firm regarding their expectations of the children's behaviour; sometimes they procrastinate in punishing wrong deeds and not consistently rewarding good actions.

3.3.4 Education at School Age Stage of Growth

At this stage of growth, the child is in the age bracket 7 to 12 years and the virtue learned is competence while the crisis faced is industry versus inferiority. The child is now eager to learn and accomplish tasks that are more complex and their moral values form and also recognize cultural and individual differences and with little assistance can manage their personal needs.³⁶⁴ Sometimes the child may show disobedience as a way of expressing independence. For instance, the child may become rebellious or talk back to a parent. At this stage, allowing the child too little success develops a sense of inferiority or incompetence but balancing between industry and inferiority leads to competence. However, the child should not be allowed too much industry because children must be children. According to Brooks, nurturing of self-esteem and resilience in children by parents can be done in several ways. They include highlighting the strength or virtues in the child; allowing the child to contribute in problem solving;

³⁶³ J. K. Fittro, "Raising Moral Children," <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.365.1599&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

³⁶⁴ E. Allen and L. Marotz, *Developmental Profiles Pre-Birth through Twelve* (4th Ed.) (Albany, New York: Thomson Delmar Learning, 2003).

encouraging learning from mistakes without feeling defeated and creating a moment alone with the child. This makes him or her feel special.³⁶⁵

We learn from Kenyatta that as the children matured, boys were taught by their fathers and grandfathers and other male relatives such skills like to differentiate large herds of cattle by their horn size and/or colour, techniques for preparing land, boundaries and family genealogy. In differentiating the herd, the boys were allowed to repeat the exercise over and over again in case they made a mistake until they got it right.³⁶⁶ By allowing the boys to participate, competence was developed while responsibility, self-esteem and resilience were nurtured.

The parent respondents indicated that for this age-group one of the problems they experience is disobedience by their children. However, some parents do not seem to understand that this is just a passing stage and they need to help the child get through it as discussed by Erickson. Some parents treat any bumpy situation between them and their children in this stage by spanking or by one-to-one talk. This therefore is a difficult stage in parenting for both the parent and the child as the parents wish to retain control while the children wish to have freedom. Inculcating moral values into boys and girls at this stage needs patience, time, and the right knowledge of how to deal with them.

In Karūrĩ Catholic Parish, children within this stage receive little by way of practical training meant to enhance their life skills except for house chores. Most of the other activities they are involved in seem more for leisure. In this regard, the youth respondents indicated that the school scores most in training them on hard work and other aspects requiring competency while the Church is responsible for religious training and in offering entertainment facilities. One of the ways to successfully develop the virtue of competency is for the parent to spend time alone with the child because it builds self-esteem and also helps him or her utilize time productively.

³⁶⁵ R. Brooks and S. Goldstein, *Raising Resilient Children* (New York: McGraw- Hill, 2001).

³⁶⁶ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 70.

Due to what they see as limited activities to engage in, the youth lament that they have a lot of time on their hands which they utilize on social media. A mother wondered whether the Church can do something about the idleness, an indication that the parents are not engaging children in creative activities. This does not promote a balance between industry and inferiority. It may also be interpreted to mean that the parents no longer regard themselves wholly responsible for parenting their children. The good news is that most Karūrī Catholic Parish parents would like to keep a keen eye on what the child does and generally has the desire for the child to succeed.

In their leisure time, the Agĩkũyũ children participated in communal dances where they were expected to capture with their feet and bodily movements, the complicated rhythms learnt by watching and imitating their elders. The parent's keen interest was to observe how their sons or daughters conducted themselves in public and also watch and judge how much of the things taught to them were successfully absorbed. Thus the parent looked for competence demonstrated through the confidence in the child's actions and the manifestation of the right values. It was every parent's wish that their children behaved in accordance with the approved tribal law of conduct.³⁶⁷ Apparently today, what is regarded as the key measure of the child's success has focus on academic performance ignoring important aspects like moral credence.

In the traditional Agĩkũyũ community, the boys and girls in the process of growing up realized that they had one thing to learn which summed up all the others, that is, to live in accordance with the values of their community. Erickson observes that the child's moral values form in this stage. In Karūrī, the overall wish and hope of all respondents involved in the study is for every child to grow and become a morally upright person. What does not exist is a common practical method to make it happen, with each parent teaching his or her children and acquitting them to life issues according to how they judge as best. Not surprisingly, in similar situations and growth stages, the character and moral standing for children in Karūrī Catholic Parish was noted as inconsistent. According to Erickson, the school-age stage precedes the adolescence stage.

³⁶⁷ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 71.

3.3.5 Education at Adolescence Stage of Growth

Adolescence occurs between age 13 and 18 years and the virtue learnt is fidelity while the crisis is identity versus role confusion. The adolescents concern themselves with how they appear to others and spend time evaluating personal values, goals and beliefs in order to discover his or her self-identity. The child learns the roles to occupy as an adult and may experiment with their independence. Encouragement by those around them is important. Rebellion means one has established a negative identity or experiencing a feeling of unhappiness.

For the traditional Agĩkũyũ, this was the most important stage of educational advancement in the life of a child because it was during this stage when most boys and girls were expected to shed immaturity.³⁶⁸ The traditional society, in its endeavour to instil maturity in growing children, engaged two complimentary methods. The formal one entailed subjection of the child to stages of physical “cutting”. This served as a way of punctuating the child’s natural development with experience of pain. It was hoped the experience would impart maturity. Apart from subjection to pain, the second method that was considered an effective way of instilling maturity was through constant teaching. For instance, during circumcision youth received enormous information which had moral, social and religious implications.

The hardships experienced during the initiation process served to teach the initiates obedience to elders and further inculcated in them the spirit of hard work, perseverance and self-discipline in difficult situations. Ezenweke observed that the pronouncement of the youth as an adult boosted his or her morale to accept the adult role which normally demanded moving away from childish behaviour to being committed to responsible living that embraced moral values.³⁶⁹ Becoming an adult meant they had acquired a new identity, were mature and had qualities of reliability and trustworthiness, obedience and more so to parents, respect, diligence, generosity and modesty.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 89-105.

³⁶⁹ E. O. Ezenweke, “Rites of Passage and Sustainable Development in Traditional Africa: Reflections for Contemporary Society,” *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 8, no. 2 (2015), pp. 19-34.

³⁷⁰ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 64.

In Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, the process of maturing male and female youth no longer means going through the same exercise as was in the older Agĩkũyũ society. For example, the girl is no longer subjected to circumcision and its attendant training, and the initiation of the boy is more of the physical cut than a well organised method for inculcating moral values into him. This is what the Church is trying to address through the introduction of moral training during the new form of initiation rite, with a view to developing identity in the boys as opposed to identity crisis. This borrows from the old days when both boys and girls were taken through sessions of training before, during and after circumcision. The Church is yet to put in place a program for training girls, though the girls' participation would be in the teaching part only.

During this stage of growth, matters relating to rules and regulations governing sexual indulgence were imparted into the male and female youth through the platonic love and sex (*umbani na ngwiko*), a technique of restricted form of intimacy that was considered a foundation stone to build moral, physical and mentally sound people because it safeguarded them from nervous and psychic estrangement.³⁷¹ The initiates were therefore confident that out of their preparation they will successfully settle in a new identity, role, and fidelity as married people.

Results from the study show that majority of parent respondents do not educate their children about sex matters for several reasons. First, they regard the matter as sensitive and therefore needing to be taught by someone else. Secondly, they blame it on lack of the right language to express themselves. Surprisingly, many parents contend that the topic is not a taboo. On the other hand, the results from the youth indicate that the discussion between them and their parents on sex matters is almost a stalemate with slightly less than half of the youth themselves initiating any talk although not much is discussed. The father is noted as being largely passive when it comes to the subject. Yadera et al. found that where there is communication on sexual matters, the parents want to dictate and monitor, characterized by vague warnings rather than creating an

³⁷¹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), pp. 107-108.

open environment in which the youth are freely asking and getting responses.³⁷² Nevertheless, other studies have shown that youth are reluctant and shy to bring up the sex subject with their parents for fear of rebuke or blame for appearing to be already engaged in bad behaviour.³⁷³ The reason why education on sex matters seems to be challenged is because of the collapse of the traditional structure of education where extended family members were useful in training the youth on the subject.³⁷⁴

Education on sex matters is a key component when inculcating moral values into children. The mass media is awash with information that can mislead a young person especially if they have not been exposed by their parents to the truth concerning relationships and the human body. The problem is compounded by peers who the Karūri Catholic Parish youth indicated offer information on “moral” matters. Overall, the handling of youth in this stage appears to lack components of personal values, goals and beliefs that may guarantee self-identity or avoid role confusion. This stage of growth borders the crisis of intimacy versus isolation which the children face in the young adulthood stage discussed next.

3.3.6 Education at Young Adulthood Stage of Growth

The young adult (ages 19 to 35 years) should be prepared for the virtue of love and crisis of intimacy, close relationship at personal level and isolation, being separated from others or being alone. Balancing between intimacy and isolation makes love possible because knowing how to be alone makes it possible for one to love, handle real relationships and ready for commitment. The ego should also be prepared for rejection.³⁷⁵ Having resolved the crisis in the first stage of growth and developed hope as a strength to help confront future challenges, and having gone successfully through the subsequent stages, then a young person should be able to effectively create and settle in a stable relationship.

³⁷² T. A. Yadeta, H. K. Bedane and A. K. Tura, “Factors Affecting Parent-Adolescent Discussion on Reproductive Health Issues in Harar, Eastern Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Study,” *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, (2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2014/102579>

³⁷³ S. Bastien, L. J. Kajula and W. W. Muhwezi, “A Review of Studies of Parent-child Communication About Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Reproductive Health*, 8, no. 25 (2011), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3192730/>

³⁷⁴ Elder Respondent, 2016.

³⁷⁵ J. S. Fleming, “Erikson’s Psychosocial Developmental Stages,” <http://swppr.org/textbook/ch%209%20erikson.pdf>

The Agĩkũyũ regarded the young man in this stage of growth a proper man, full grown by virtue of circumcision. He was eligible to inherit property, could go ahead and marry, and establish his own homestead. He was not expected to err in any way in his new responsibility and in case he erred, because err is to human being, he was told “you have passed the period of childhood and you cannot behave like this; you are circumcised and you are a man to know right and wrong.”³⁷⁶ A circumcised girl was equally considered mature for marriage although this is not regarded as a convincing measure of maturity today. The study found that circumcision is still regarded as a means to graduate a boy to adulthood but whether the contemporary male youth behaves like an adult after the “cut” or not is in dispute, judging by their manner of behaviour that clearly depicts impoverishment in moral values.

Erickson informed this study on the significance of the virtues and crisis presented in the human developmental stages from infancy to young adulthood. The virtues and the crisis provide a rich foundation and support for inculcating moral values. It should be noted that at infancy stage, the child is totally helpless and dependent on the parents and cannot directly be taught moral values. The child’s appropriate development receives a boost when he or she is allowed to experience, in the early years, trust, autonomy, initiative and industry. In later years, the identity and intimacy developed at the adolescence and young adulthood stages become a more prevalent maturing experience in future as the person continues to mature. In the early stages, the child benefits immensely through the love and care given by the mother. As the child grows he or she may seem to struggle against the parents but what is actually observed are actions illustrating strength of will and willingness that need to be guided for a successful outcome in the particular stage.³⁷⁷

In discussing Erikson's stages of growth alongside those of the Agĩkũyũ, to a large extent, the study validates the Agĩkũyũ system of education as an effective system for inculcating moral values into children. The Agĩkũyũ system of informal learning can

³⁷⁶ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 75.

³⁷⁷ W. A. Steele, *A Theological Dialogue with and Evaluation of Erik H. Erikson’s Theory of Identity Development in Light of Pauline Baptismal Theology in Romans and Some Implications for Pastoral Care*, (Published PhD Thesis, Concordia Seminar, St. Louis, 2017).

be commended for being sensitive to the child's educational needs at different stages of life. However, the same may not be said concerning the parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish where the handling of children in each individual stage of growth was revealed as inadequate and the child therefore may miss out on the benefits in the growth process. Despite some criticism of Erikson's theory,³⁷⁸ it continues to attract recognition as a crucial model in understanding the developmental stages of an individual. In our case, the study views Erikson's theory as a fine idea providing valuable insight and caution to parents on the child's growth process, thus giving parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish a boost.

It is the study's argument therefore that the parents ought to be made aware of the importance of embracing parenting that allows the children to develop the virtues expounded by Erickson and to resolve the crisis in each stage. When this is the case, then the moral values taught to the children will find them in the right emotional disposition and temperaments as demonstrated in this section. Thus, developing the virtue and resolving the crisis in each stage of development is as important as ensuring children learn moral values. This aspect of parenting is the gem that was lost when the Agīkūyū traditional culture was side-lined. It will take the task of inculturation in chapter six to provide a way forward towards parenting of children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

3.4 The RCC Parenting Role in Karūrī Catholic Parish

The Roman Catholic Church in Karūrī makes a contribution in parenting of children and youth through several methods namely; the Christian initiation rites of Baptism and Confirmation, youth programs, and input by the different ecclesiastical groups. The Church has also created SCCs with the aim of actualizing the "Family of God" Church model thus bringing help closer to those in parenting difficulties.

3.4.1 Baptism and Confirmation

Baptism is the first initiation rite and the first of the seven Sacraments of the RCC. The event is a sacred mystery, a sacrament that communicates grace. It forms the basis of

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

whole Christian life, gives access to other sacraments and life in the Spirit.³⁷⁹ Baptism is seen as the washing of sinful man in the blood of the lamb and his rebirth into new life and into the Family of God, conferring on one the rights and duties of the body of Christ. The position that Baptism gives an individual places him properly on earth to carry out the Christian responsibility of witnessing Christ till God becomes all to all (1 Cor 15:28). Jesus gave His mandate to the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach the people to observe all the commands (Matt 28:20).

In Karūrī Catholic Parish, babies are taken through the baptism ritual but in the name of the parents and sponsors. It henceforth becomes the obligated duty of the Godparents to socialize the child in a Christian way to adulthood. In other words, they ensure the child grows to make it in the faith and grow in all the seven Sacraments. Through baptism, God bestows salvation through Church, thus empowering the Church, parents and sponsors with the responsibility of maturing the child to a place where he or she can affirm the saving grace and preserve it for him or herself. This starts the process of living Christian values under the watch of parents and sponsors who are responsible for teaching and correcting the child towards attaining maturity. In the Bible day, mothers brought their children to Jesus, who embraced and blessed them (Mk 10). He said that “the Kingdom of God is for such as these,” meaning Jesus had a special place in His heart for the little ones. Likewise the Church claims to have a special place for children.³⁸⁰

Children are confirmed after attaining the appropriate age, that is, several years after their baptism. At this time the youth can understand the implications of the Sacrament and can proclaim and defend the Gospel in accordance with the Sacrament’s mandate. The Church prepares them for confirmation through catechesis conducted at the Parish. They get acquainted with the knowledge of who God is, and His Commandments. Confirmation is equivalent to being born by the Spirit through faith in the Word thus giving full realization of salvation by Christ. It also completes baptism and during the confirmation ritual, the boy or girl should bring same gender sponsor, preferably the

³⁷⁹ Pope John Paul II, Catechism of the Catholic Church (Vatican: Holy See, 1992), no. 1213.

³⁸⁰ Priest Respondent, 2016.

Godparent at Baptism, who becomes an adviser in the young person's life.³⁸¹ The effect of confirmation is such that the Christian receives the power of confessing the faith boldly against the enemies of faith. It roots one more deeply in the divine sonship to cry "*Abba* Father" with Jesus. It entitles confirmed individuals to become full members of the Church with the Christian full rights. As confirmed Christians, the youth get to learn about the values a Christian should have.

3.4.2 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

According to one interviewed clergy, in their training, the youth in the childhood years (4-13) receive different formation and information in some areas, according to gender. This group has a male and a female facilitator for the purpose of modeling the father and mother figures. Among their teachings is the CCC of the Catholic faith and catechism for Confirmation to answer questions like who is God? What are the Commandments? What is baptism? They learn the values of kindness and generosity through acts of their voluntary contribution of donations towards helping poor children in other parishes. The other activity that they are involved in is worship through dance in the Church. They are also allowed a trip once per year to St. Mary Msongari to meet the Archbishop, an interaction that serves as an encouragement to them to continue living Christian values.

3.4.3 Talent Discovery and Empowerment

The information obtained by the study shows that the middle and senior youth participate in talent shows where they try to show their potential through games and music. Once in a while they take a trip to meet peers for prayer retreats or to engage in other activities such as animation. It is believed that as the youth participate in these activities they gain knowledge on how to lead a moral life, and is also a way of spending some time away from destructive things. Most activities are gender sensitive and take place only during school holidays. This means their involvement time is short but better than none. Additionally, the parents of eligible male youth may decide to enrol them for the CMA initiation program where besides the normal program, the youth are guided in making the right career choices. Overall, the teachings the youth receive lay emphasis on maturing the youth morally.

³⁸¹ Catechist Respondent, 2016.

The Church believes that the parents are occasionally empowered in their parenting endeavour through the involvement in their respective ecclesiastical movements such as CMA, Christian Women Association (CWA), Solidarity of St. Ann and Joachim, Legion of Mary, Pioneer Group and the Church choir. These groups occasionally meet for prayer and fellowship or other activities. The Church also believes that the parents' involvement in these groups creates commitment not only to the life of the Church but also to helping in parenting the children and youth in the Church family.

The CMA is a lay non-profit association whose membership comprises baptized and devoted male Christians of Roman Catholic faith. Their vision is “to enrich society by living Gospel values in the family, Church and community,” with a mission to “promote family institution through companionship, fatherhood...” The association's objectives, among others are, to promote the family to where everyone plays their rightful role emulating the Nazareth family.³⁸² However, this study notes that despite these efforts, the traditional role of man and woman in Karũĩ Catholic Parish has failed to address many family and parenting problems today.

The CWA in Karũĩ Catholic Parish is an association of lay Catholic women with the Church's mandate to empower the women spiritually, socially, morally for the purpose of evangelization of families and society at large.³⁸³ Through their activities they aim to promote core values of faith, teamwork, commitment, respect, humility, hard work and diligence. Its mission is “to empower women and mothers...spiritually in order to strengthen their faith, evangelize families and society at large.”³⁸⁴ This mission has to be worked out to bear any fruits. The other relevant group for this study is the SCC which is viewed as the Church in the grassroots where lay ministries can work towards helping those in need in their midst. The parents' commitment to these groups is interpreted to mean commitment to Church and to family responsibilities, or good parents in the realm of the “Family of God.”

³⁸² Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, *Catholic Men Association Handbook* (Makuyu: Don Bosco Press, 2016), p. 27.

³⁸³ Holy Family Basilica, “Women Catholic Association,” (2018), [http:// holyfamilybasilica.info/catholic-women-association-archdiocese-nairobi-profile/](http://holyfamilybasilica.info/catholic-women-association-archdiocese-nairobi-profile/)

³⁸⁴ CCL, no. 301, Sec 1, 2 and 3; no. 304, Sec 1 and 2.

3.4.4 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Karūrī Catholic Parish

An effort has been made by RCC to actualize the concept of “Family of God” Church model in the Karūrī Catholic Parish through the creation of SCCs with the target of having a new model of Church being a community of communities.³⁸⁵ There are a total of sixty five SCCs distributed within the Parish - twenty five of them in Immaculate Heart of Mary, Muchatha; fourteen in St. Martin De Porres, Karūrī; eighteen in St. Patricks, Kiambaa; five in St. Monicas, Raini; and three in St. Peters, Njoro. Majority of the youth respondents are aware of the existence of an SCC in their outstation.

Each parent in the study belongs to one SCC or another otherwise known as *mwaki* (fire) which in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society was a neighbourhood constituted of a group of villages. Within a *mwaki* people requested assistance with hot embers in order to re-light a fire that had gone out thus social togetherness was centered there. It was also a practice for people and especially children to sit around a fire and enjoy its warmth in the evenings as they listened as an elder told a story. Fire provides warmth and as the SCC members gather together they are not alone in dealing with the issues they face and especially that of runaway youth morality. This is like in an African family where there is warmth in relationships, that is, they work together in addressing the problems that confront them. The respondents were all in agreement that SCCs are important for fellowship, prayers, and for moral support. They also play another role of creating an environment where family and parenting issues can be shared. A quarter of the parent respondents indicated that their groups discuss family matters including issues related to youth morality.

The participants in the SCC do not always agree on issues. Further, some respondents indicated that the values of love, unity, care and warmth were not fully felt or expressed. This may be an indication that the Church’s commission to bring the family into evangelism is yet to be completed and the lay must be at the center of it. A participant thus summarized the expectation from SCC as “...something to strengthen people or create warmth among them...together they talk in one voice and do something

³⁸⁵ J. G. Healey, “Historical Development of Small Christian Communities/Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa,” (2012), <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent>

together...” SCCs are slowly coming to the realization that they should be the primary places and means for marriage and family catechesis, pastoral care, and, youth participation and empowerment. This should be a relief for parents in their parenting endeavour.

3.4.4.1 Marriage and Family Catechesis

According to the study findings, teachings on marriage and family life are few in the SCC. When it happens, it is conducted by the priest, catechist or the sister. Teachings on family life are based on the instructions of the Church towards an improved married life. However, for those who are interested in partaking of the sacrament of matrimony, their preparation in terms of instructions is done at the Parish. In the SCC, parents are reminded of their important role as the first teachers to their children at home. The issue of deficient parenting is common in mention as parents who took part in the study agree their youth are lost in vices like substance abuse and teaching them moral values is an uphill task. However, it is not many parents who seek help from the SCC outfit regarding their youth’s moral problem. Some fear being seen as failures in parenting their children while others do not trust that SCCs can offer assistance. Another thing that equips parents in SCC is the family catechesis that teaches them the faith of the Catholic Church. The challenge to these teachings could lie in the manner people are instructed or the non-compliance of the recipients.

3.4.4.2 Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is about evangelization and forming the Christian marriage because strong marriages are basis of proper parenting of children. Bible sharing and reflection is the centerpiece of all SCCs in formation. As domestic communities of faith, the members should enable and facilitate the practical expression of Gospel virtues of faith, hope and charity among people including the youth at the local level. Gospel message brought to the grass root level offers the possibility of the participation of all. This can be most effective and efficient where the people are faithful in their constant attendance, which is currently not the case in Karūrī Catholic Parish, and especially with the youth who need to have faith in being hopeful in an environment where many of their peers have thrown away morality. SCC members understand they have to conduct first evangelization for those that do not attend Church in their neighbourhoods, and re-

evangelize those that have fallen out of faith or who have grown cold in their faith including the challenged parents and youth.

3.4.4.3 Youth Participation and Empowerment in SCCs

There are no youth SCCs in existence in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish. The young people are supposed to sit together with the older ones in the same SCC. The situation is that youth hardly attend the SCCs. They can benefit more while in attendance by learning through the life experiences, testimonies, teachings and commitment of the adults. However, the respondents noted the frequent absenteeism of some members especially the fathers which can impact on the youth negatively especially the males. Some youth do not see the need for consistent Church attendance and constant prayer. Others imitate their parents who neither attend Church services nor SCCs while some are influenced out of SCC participation by peer pressure. Some youth say that participating in SCCs is boring and therefore choose something else to do with the time and space like hang out, or engage in social media. Those who are students have only the holiday periods to participate in the SCCs but still do not take advantage of it.

When the SCCs operate in earnest as domestic Churches, it will not be surprising to compare them to a field hospital that is called to treat needy families, challenged parents, those marginalized and on the periphery of society like the youth lost in moral decadence.³⁸⁶ It is therefore a key pastoral priority. As the members interact and become personally involved, they are thus closer and faithful to the “Family of God” Church image and the Agĩkũyũ communal values will be lived through the SCC. Once in a while when the SCC members meet, the host can share refreshments, reflecting the quality of the extended family which shared a meal in solidarity. This should also be seen as sharing in Holy Communion by the family of God. As Healey postulates, with time the sharing can extend to storytelling and other cultural activities and so on.³⁸⁷ In this way the youth can learn of the values they should uphold as both Agĩkũyũ and Christians.

³⁸⁶ R. M. Saldarriaga, “The African Bishop in the Pastoral Programme of Pope Francis,” in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 60.

³⁸⁷ J. G. Healey, “Small Christian Communities Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Eastern Africa,” *Human Dignity Journal*, 2, (2016), pp. 202-215.

In the SCCs in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, morality is being promoted in sharing of basic resources and responsibilities at family and community levels. With time, sharing reasonably in the decisions and responsibilities should continue to strengthen the community. This will encourage the community to think in terms of fostering solidarity and authentic interpretation of moral norms based on their culture and the Scripture they share and meditate on.

3.5 Social Worker's Observation on Youth Moral Problem

The social workers interviewed indicated that in the course of their duty, they deal with many cases arising from the behavioural problems of the youth. The problems mostly concern young children who are born out of wedlock, rejected, neglected or mishandled. The children are taken to any of the children homes within the county of Kĩambu.

The social workers generally describe the youth as knowing too much for their age and having been exposed to too much wrong information from several sources. They lament that the youth, unfortunately, experiment what they see or learn from these sources especially those relating to sexual matters. The social workers regard youth as dishonest because they hide information from parents on issues affecting them especially what happens while in school and are not obedient because they are partly rebellious. Lack of kindness is shown when youth do not want to associate with those they regard as lower to them in social status and are not respectful either because of the belief that they are equal to their seniors, and think disrespecting the elders is the urban way of living. Youth are not humble because they tend to act according to what they know without consulting, may not be described as industrious people because they base their success on fantasy and are not ready to embrace hard work. Lastly, not all youth are self-disciplined because they do not accept and/or own the consequences of their actions such as irresponsible sexual life which has consigned several innocent babies to children homes.

In the opinion of the social workers, the youth's attitude could be blamed on the western influence and neglect by parents. They note, just like their sons and daughters, the parents today are much engrossed in western culture to the extent they forget their very

own culture that safeguards morals. Further, the parents lack time, are ignorant, make wrong assumptions about the youth, and have weak relationships with their children. The consequence is a teenager lacking in morals. These sentiments are supported by the statistics at the social office which show that about eighty percentage of reported cases are associated with impoverishment in moral values.³⁸⁸ The social workers urge the parents to interact more with their children and advise them on day-to-day issues.

The unfortunate thing is that many parents, though aware of their children's involvement in bad habits like substance abuse, do not open up and seek help for fear of social stigma. This kind of behaviour is also exhibited when no good Samaritan volunteers to adopt any of the neglected children into their homes. Incidentally, neither does the social office sensitize the community on the same. The social worker's opinion is that other than parents, those who should contribute to the proper upbringing of responsible youth are relatives, teachers and the Church. Research shows that in the contemporary society, the transmitting of moral values has significantly been affected by modernization effects and other factors.

3.6 Challenges to Parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish

3.6.1 Modernization Effect

Society is never static but dynamic, changing from simple traditional outfit to a more complex modern one. Alongside the changing society, its values, activities and trends also change. The changes have been positive as well as negative, and in particular values have continued to change to suit the character of the changing society, marked by increased moral decadence now being witnessed in alarming proportions and more anxiety.³⁸⁹ The conceptualization of modernization for this study is in line with the school of thought that sees the problems the traditional values, culture and norms are confronted with.

³⁸⁸ Interview with social workers, (2017).

³⁸⁹ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

Scholars of history agree that modernization, as a major feature of modern society, has economic, cultural and even religious impact on individuals, families and nations. They however disagree on the nature and extent of this impact.³⁹⁰ The study findings show modernization has had a profound effect on the way moral values are inculcated into children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. When asked their views on what hinders the parents from teaching moral values to their children and from becoming good role models, majority of the parent respondents pointed at modernization features of urbanization, self-centeredness, internet and social media as the main culprits. It is intrusive therefore to note that most youth do not perceive modernization effect as having any reasonable negative outcome on the way moral values are passed to them. They put most blame on parents' lack of time for them and failure to be good role models. However, others indicated that to some extent, mass media, peer pressure, and children's disobedience are contributors to the moral decay. In fact, most youth consider modernization effect particularly the social media as a key source of information and crucial for their interactions. The study now turns to discuss the specific effects of modernization on teaching of moral values. This is discussed comprehensively from several perspectives.

3.6.1.1 Modernization Effect on Family Values

A common argument among researchers and theologians is that modernization effect produces pervasive social-cultural consequences, and affects how values are taught to and perceived especially by the youth. This may be what was in Kenyatta's mind when he wrote expressing the outcry of the Agĩkũyũ, that their society was no longer the same after the coming of westerners. All seemed to be confusion due to the experienced moral consequences of the rapid change that still remains a reality in the present day Agĩkũyũ society.³⁹¹ Probably as a consequence and as supported by the findings, some Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth seem not to have much respect for values the community revered.

³⁹⁰ J. V. Mensah and A. A. Amisah, "Effects of Modernization on the Socio-cultural Aspects of Families in Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District in Ghana," *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, IV, no. 4 (2016), pp. 820-841.

³⁹¹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 251.

In a world where societies are moving fast with developmental trends, there should be certain principles the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish families will want not only to genuinely focus on but also to strictly adhere to and family and parenting values are key among them. This study findings point to an increasingly declining standards in family and parenting values in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish giving way to situations like family members who for instance do not often sit together for even meals. There is conflict in the contemporary family orchestrated by new roles and opportunities boosted by modernization. Further, traditional norms and values are changing as seen in the role of mothers who are now bread winners, a position that belonged to men. This study interviewed an elder who observed that in the last ten years or so, the man has relinquished his position and authority to the woman thus denying the boy child a mentor.

It seems the precursor to what befell the man is the significant changes to cultural values such as the initiation rite which matured youth into men. The CMA, which is a Church based initiation program incorporates both Christian values as well as the good aspects of the traditional rite. According to the elder respondents, the importance of the new rite, was immediately confirmed in 2013 when the first initiation ceremony attracted some youth who had already been initiated using either the traditional method or otherwise. This is the case even today. The elder explained "...the Church training was offering much more than what they received during the original initiation" and observed that "...in some cases these boys were taken to the initiation rite by their mothers and sisters contrary to tradition...they now wear earrings and plait their hair because of the mother figure."

Modernization has not only made it possible for women to gain more power at home but has also pushed them to paid employment. Most Karūrĩ Catholic Parish women prefer to work because of its creative development and social features and the economic security it gives them.³⁹² Contemporary trends show that about forty percentage of

³⁹² U. Swadzba, "The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Value System," (2011), http://conference.osu.eu/globalization/publ2011/332-337_Swadzba.pdf

bread winners are women, a reality enabled by modernization.³⁹³ As these changes take place the study found that the Karūrī family cohesion is challenged to the core; there is a conflict as family members interact and learn new roles from several sources enhanced by modernization, and as individuals tend to be more self-centered than in earlier days especially in the pulse of sustained urbanization. All these and the accompanying financial and social pressures continue to have a profound effect on the manner of inculcating moral values into children and youth. Nevertheless, the reality is still moral standards ought to be adhered to as the prosperity of the society depends on its members being rightly disposed morally. Ime et al. concur with the same when they state that “prosperity connotes success, affluence and achievement, and for any society to enjoy these qualities her members, most importantly the youth, must imbibe right moral values that will dispose them to become positively oriented leaders of tomorrow.”³⁹⁴ Hence the youth need to learn moral values that will enhance their character development and position them for leadership in the changing environment.

Further, Ime et al. quote Bernard who says that “the reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself...” Fortunately, the present day youth including those of Karūrī Catholic Parish can become determinants of change and not victims by adhering to moral values in a rapidly changing world, thus becoming a light to the society,³⁹⁵ even in the face of the present self-centered urbanized society.³⁹⁶

3.6.1.2 Urbanization Effect and Self-centeredness

The modern society is characterised by urbanization which leads to exodus of people from their rural settings to the urban centers. In the urban areas, there is diversity of careers, people, religion, economic systems, better housing and lifestyles. Unfortunately, urbanization brings about erosion of the fundamental references to life, the undermining of the values for which people exert themselves and the deterioration

³⁹³ J. Filipovic, “The Rise of 'Breadwinner Moms' is Less a Win for Equality Than it Looks,” (2013), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/06/breadwinner-moms-equality>

³⁹⁴ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, “Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6(2014), pp. 40-44.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

of the very human ties they use to identify themselves. In the process, culture becomes extremely fluid and increasingly fluctuating leaving little space for the great tradition of life, including those of religion, and their task of objectively contributing to a sense of history and the identity of individuals.³⁹⁷ Karūrī Catholic Parish is no exception; it is fast turning into a semi-urban environment where many effects of modernization can be witnessed.

The youth in the Parish are therefore exposed to this urban environment associated with social changes which are not only technical in nature and material conditions but also in the sphere of ideas and values. It is mostly in the urban areas where they access unvetted modern technology through which they receive information that continues to influence their behaviour and views on moral values. Further, the urban setting has created a culture which has overshadowed the interpersonal relations of the family-centered society thus leading to the loss of the sense of community that exists in a consanguineous relationship. People are now more enthusiastic to embracing innovations to better their lives preferring it rather than emotional attachments with traditions.³⁹⁸ In addition, personal choices increase in the urban society, choices of pursuing education, choosing an occupation and adapting to the new lifestyles. The new lifestyles are in contrast with Kenyatta and Idang's insight that, to the traditional Agĩkũyũ, the ideal was rightly relating and behaving towards other people as opposed to the western philosophy of individualism.³⁹⁹

In this semi-urban environment where Karūrī Catholic Parish community is fast finding itself, the Agĩkũyũ cultural values continue to diminish under pressure from new technologies and new ways of passing information.⁴⁰⁰ This and the fact that the common traditional rural setting under which moral values were taught is fast fading

³⁹⁷ Synod of Bishops, *The New Evangelization, for the Transmission of Christian Faith, Limeamenta* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012), no. 26.

³⁹⁸ J. V. Mensah and A. A. Amisah, "Effects of Modernization on the Socio-cultural Aspects of Families in Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District in Ghana," *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, IV, no. 4 (2016), pp. 820-841.

³⁹⁹ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 251; G. E. Idang, "African Culture and Values," *Unisa Press*, 16, no. 2 (2015), pp. 97-111.

⁴⁰⁰ E. V. Ojukwu and C. C. Esimone, "Inculcating Morals in Adolescents Through the Igbo Folk Music", Presented at the WEI International Academic Conference, New Orleans, USA, 2014,

away, creates a youth who is less concerned with what the rest of the community does implying individualism is more pronounced than sense of communal living. The study therefore agrees with Ojukwu and Esimone when they lament that urbanization not only disorganizes kinship ties but also puts people with different cultural orientations together.⁴⁰¹

The Synod of Bishops warn that in the advent of urbanization, there is a temptation to superficiality and self-centeredness, arising from a “predominating hedonistic and consumer-oriented mentality and throw-away culture, a revelation of the cult of individualism.”⁴⁰² The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures and a blunted conscience. Pope Francis describes it as irresponsible individualism which is of postmodern and globalization era favouring a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships and distorts family bonds.⁴⁰³ The weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the place where parents pass on values to their children.

Mensah and Amissah make an observation that individualism is at play as African families, now embrace single parenting, a phenomenon identifiable with the western world, because people no longer communalize; no one wants to be the brother’s keeper.⁴⁰⁴ This phenomenon plays out because it is no longer a belief that bringing up a child is a communal affair. In addition, there is less emphasis on male and female role differentiation when teaching moral values unlike in the traditional times. McFeeters agrees with this finding and argues that in new cultures, people give priority to personal goals rather than shaping their behaviour primarily on the basis of in-group norms, and do not behave in a communal way.⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, the ultimate source of action, meaning and responsibility is for self-gratification than benefiting the group. Invariably, in the

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Synod of Bishops, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Lineamenta*.

⁴⁰³ Pope Francis, Encyclical on the Joy of the Gospel, *Evangelii Gaudium*, (2013), no. 61-67.

⁴⁰⁴ J. V. Mensah and A. A. Amissah, “Effects of Modernization on the Socio-cultural Aspects of Families in Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District in Ghana,” *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, IV, no. 4 (2016), pp. 820-841.

⁴⁰⁵ F. E. McFeeters, *The Effects of Individualism Vs Collectivism on Learner’s Recall, Transfer and Attitudes Toward Collaboration and Individualized Learning*, (Published PhD Thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2003), p. 10.

absence of the neighbours' watch as it often times is the case in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish, may encourage children to do whatever they like when their parents are away, as the neighbours will not interrupt them. Intervening will be seen as interfering with another person's business. This social change is side-lining a key African value, that of sense of community and has contributed in a major way in changing the youth behaviour pattern. Nowadays, social change is mostly associated with the internet and other social media.

3.6.1.3 Social Media Influence

Generally parent respondents note social media as posing the greatest challenge to parenting; a threat to maintaining those values necessary for survival of the community.⁴⁰⁶ It has interfered with the way things used to be and has fast become the forum for public life and social interaction among the youth significantly impacting on their values and attitude. Social media perpetuates social change without physical contact, with the internet and television allowing instantaneous exchange of information, ideas, interests and other forms of expression. It has also provided an array of fashions and an impression of easy blending of cultures which the youth borrow from.⁴⁰⁷ This is in relation to the nature of some mass media content which the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish youth seem to know compromises moral values and disrupts family time together.

The study found out that today social media tops the list of daily activities the youth of Karūrĩ Catholic Parish are engaged in with some engaging in it for as much as eight hours a day. Using modern electronic gadgets gifted by their parents, such as laptops and smart phones, they stay busy browsing, playing games, watching movies, listening to music, interacting with their friends through chatting and the like. This study found that more than half of the youth respondents highly rank social media of any kind as a key source of information on moral values, life, the economy, entertainment, and central in their peer to peer interactions.

⁴⁰⁶ G. N. Ime and D. U. Unwanabong, "Youth and Moral Values in a Changing Society," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, no. 6 (2014), pp. 40-44.

⁴⁰⁷ J. V. Mensah and A. A. Amisah, "Effects of Modernization on the Socio-cultural Aspects of Families in Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District in Ghana," *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, IV, no. 4 (2016), pp. 820-841.

The Synod of Bishops agree and add: “Social media also offers greater opportunities for knowledge exchange but the potentialities cannot hide the risk when this kind of culture is taken to an extreme.”⁴⁰⁸ The study found this to be true for the Karūrī Catholic Parish youth. Although the youth enjoy the benefits of social media, they are increasingly becoming vulnerable to negative modernization effects courtesy of the social media showcasing western cultures as superior. The adoption of these cultures leads to rapid and continued loss of rich Agīkūyū indigenous family and parenting values and ideals. Social media also allows them to engage in intoxicating and dangerous games, for instance the Blue Whale game that may lead to self-destruction.⁴⁰⁹ In addition, a lot of mass media content propagates negative behaviour such as violence particularly on video, film and television where the actors are portrayed as heroes. The children who are exposed to this kind of violence are known to exhibit violent tendencies in their lives.⁴¹⁰ Hence the parents feel that too much freedom in the use of technology appears to be spoiling the youth and worse, it shields them from the monitoring eye of their parents.

The parent and elder respondents agree that mass media also significantly influences the youth’s choices and desires. This finding agrees with a study by Yadav, Deodiya and Shukla which noted that the standards of morality, ethics, religion, and custom are being cut at the roots by the youth bent on doing what they feel or like.⁴¹¹ This is exemplified when we observe a wild revolution in lifestyles happening with the youth and their mode of dressing. In Karūrī Catholic Parish, it is not uncommon to see youth spotting deadlocks, in skin-tight trousers, micro-mini skirts, exposed busts and other similar outfits that confuse their identity. Half nudity is now synonymous with being fashionable and acceptable. Dressing craze has practically taken over mostly youthful women and has permeated even places of worship. As Tingsangai observes, what is disturbing here is the concept of freedom in the liberal sense because freedom does not

⁴⁰⁸ Synod of Bishops, *The New Evangelization, for the Transmission of Christian Faith, Limeamenta*, no. 27.

⁴⁰⁹ Wikipedia, (2017).

⁴¹⁰ C. A. Anderson, L. Berkowitz, E. Donnerstein, L. R. Huesmann, J. D. Johnson, D. Linz, N. M. Malamuth and E. Wartella, “The Influence of Media Violence on Youth,” *American Psychological Society*, 4, no. 3 (2003), pp. 81-110.

⁴¹¹ P. Yadav, S. Deodiya and A. Shukla, “Impact of Mass Media on Fashion Adoption of Adolescent Girls,” *International Journal of Applied Home Science*, 3, no. 1 & 2 (2016), pp. 31-35.

mean one can freely walk in the market place half naked. He goes on to posit that individual freedom should not bother or disturb others.⁴¹²

A further observation from the parent respondents is that the many hours the youth spend on social media is at the expense of valuable work or quality time with the rest of family members. Spending time with family members doing some valuable work is a good way of learning values communicated in such occasions. For instance, Ezenwekwe explains that most of the traditional activities like story telling that carried with it a moral message and values passed on from one generation to the next happened while family members sat together.⁴¹³

Another aspect of mass media the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish youth participate in is sexting, which involves sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images. Many of these images become distributed rapidly via cell phones or the Internet. It is saddening to think about the underage who innocently consume this type of information. This is also attested to by a shocking incident that happened in 2018 where eight teenagers were arrested in Nairobi's Michuki Park while taking nude photos of themselves for the purpose of sharing the same on social media. Those in the know reported that boys and girls customarily go to the park to engage in immoral behaviour. The government official responsible for moral policing blamed the youth's behaviour on the parents, society, religion and the media for failing the youth and thus the increased moral decadence among them. The official lamented, "...we have put priority on the physical infrastructure and neglected the moral infrastructure. We have built the hardware but the software is faulty and must be fixed first".⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² J. P. Tingsangai, "Changing Values of Today's Youth," *Nagaland Post*, (2014), <http://www.nagalandpost.com/PostMortem/PostMortemDetails.aspx?p=UE0xMDA0OTkx>

⁴¹³ E. O. Ezenweke, "Rites of Passage and Sustainable Development in Traditional Africa: Reflections for Contemporary Society," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 8, no. 2(2015), pp. 19-34.

⁴¹⁴ Mediamax, "Several Teenagers Arrested in Nairobi Engaging in Nude Photography," K24 April 14, 2018, <https://www.mwakilishi.com/article/lifestyle-news/2018-04-15/several-teenagers-arrested-in-nairobi-engaging-in-nude-photography>

However, even as mass media continues to contain non-essential issues premised on fashion and entertainment, the youth raise concern that the aired or printed content is not addressing their fundamental desires and needs such as content empowering them on business.⁴¹⁵ This is in contrast with literature from the Kĩambu County government which shows some youth are doing good work using media such as radio, short message services (SMS), WhatsApp and Facebook to discuss agricultural issues and share successes. *Mkulima* Young's Facebook is one such example.⁴¹⁶ The potential in using social media is demonstrated in the Kĩambu County's Integrated Development Plan (2013-2017) which encourages youth to embrace technology in business and agriculture, not only for casual information sharing but also to obtain market information and production technologies.⁴¹⁷ Where the use and access to ICTs has taken place, the host groups in Kĩambu County stand to be transformed as well as the status of the youth themselves.⁴¹⁸

The youth respondent's opinion, therefore, is that social media provides more information and answers (wrong or right) to issues confronting them more than the parents or any other source. More specifically, they feel the parents' contribution to inculcating moral values into them amounts to less than a third of what they know, though they pick out the parents as best positioned to educate them on the same. This is followed by the school then relatives who the youth claim offer them little help. Opposed to the stance of the youth, the parent respondents see social media as having brought more bad than good and mostly responsible for the youth's current wanting behaviour. They resent the fact that the child is able to access destructive information even in the confines of his or her room.

The parents describe the youth as lax, and more interested in pleasure and enjoyment, thanks to social media. According to them, the sum total of the use of social media is a

⁴¹⁵ P. Oriare, R. Okello-Orlale and W. Ugungu, *The Media We Want: The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study* (Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), pp. 1-63.

⁴¹⁶ K. R. G. Irungu, D. Mbugua and J. Muia, "Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Attract Youth into Profitable Agriculture in Kenya," *Journal East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal*, 81, no. 1 (2015), pp. 24-33.

⁴¹⁷ Government of Kĩambu County, "Kĩambu County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017".

⁴¹⁸ K. R. G. Irungu, D. Mbugua and J. Muia, "Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Attract Youth into Profitable Agriculture in Kenya," pp. 24-33.

fall in moral standards that has resulted in indiscipline, laziness, lack of dignity and enthusiasm for success without responsibility. Unfortunately, although most parent respondents in Karūrī Catholic Parish are aware that their children could be watching sexually explicit material from social media, they are unable to control. They dismissed the accusation that they are not confronting the sex subject because it is a taboo to do so. Social media therefore is becoming an alternative teacher by filling the gap in a big way especially because it is explicit in communicating and offers practical examples to issues.

Finally, some comments from the youth will demonstrate their feelings concerning the relationship between them and their parents especially regarding the use of social media. One youth summed it “...sometimes they are not at home, therefore they do not know what is happening...” Another simply reports “...my mother has never asked once since she trusts me...” A more revealing comment is “...they do not complain as they regard what they do as more important first...” These comments show a youth who appears juxtaposed between three words- that of social media, lack of useful activities to occupy them, and disobedience or ignorant. The parent respondents are worried that the youth’s behaviour pattern will continue to be negatively influenced if the way social media is used remains uninhibited. The next section discusses how the youth’s behaviour pattern is influenced by media celebrities and personalities.

3.6.1.4 Media Celebrities and Other Influential Personalities

Today the media constantly gives spotlight to actions of celebrities which have the effect of altering awareness and perception of reality. Social media provides western popular culture and celebrities who the youth learn from and imitate. The celebrities assume a god-like status in the eyes of the youth.⁴¹⁹ For instance, a study by Grohmann et al. shows an intensified worldwide use of sports celebrities in marketing advertisements since they seem to attract more youth to the product of focus.⁴²⁰ This influence of celebrities is viewed mostly as negative by the parent respondents.

⁴¹⁹ C. E. Uzuegbunam, “Between Media Celebrities and the Youth: Exploring the Impact of Emerging Celebrity Culture on the Lifestyle of Young Nigerians,” *Journal of African Studies*, 6, no. 2(2017), pp. 130-141.

⁴²⁰ M. Z. Grohmann, L. F. Battistel and D. L. Radons, “Sports Celebrities Influencing the Consumption of Young People in the Brazilian Context,” *African Journal of Business Management*, 7, no. 24 (2013), pp. 2352-2361.

Nevertheless, the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth see their media celebrities as good role models. This finding is surprising given that many youth respondents stated that they would role model their parents when they grow up. Maybe if the parents were keen on properly playing their parenting role, it would have been different.

The disturbing thing is that Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth continues to witness more presumed models including socialites and corrupt people being celebrated in social functions. This is to say that the youth, disturbingly, even within their immediate environment, are surrounded by a crowd of witnesses who have thrown morality away, but nevertheless making it in life. Notwithstanding the negative influence from these kinds of “heroes,” the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth can be a force if they decide to use the power within them positively because to be moral or immoral is a matter of choice. However, a key problem for parents is how to explain to the youth the difference between reality and deception in relation to the things they see or hear in social media? Thapthiang’s study found peer pressure to be more influential than celebrities in issues such as sexuality and substance abuse.⁴²¹

3.6.2 Peer Pressure

Parents in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish are faced with a serious task as far as the influence of peer pressure in upbringing children is concerned. The parent respondents complain that the youth are not keen observers of the counsel and guidance they receive as they prefer to copy their friends. The present youth’s radical crave for drugs, consumption of alcohol and night partying is also a disturbing issue to parents who hastily associate this behaviour with peer influence.⁴²² Understandably, the parents loathe peer pressure on their sons and daughters and feel that it is a direct cause of the indiscipline and irresponsibility of the youth, who also have adapted a know-it-all attitude. The present peer influence is in contrast to that of traditional days when peers worked to promote positive values in their colleagues. These findings support Bandura’s social learning theory of personality which proposes that behaviour is learned through a series of

⁴²¹ N. Thapthiang, *Thai Celebrity Culture and the Bangkok Teenage Audience* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2004), file:///C:/Users/User/AppData/Local/Temp/423411.pdf

⁴²² P. N. Wachege and F. G. Rũgendo, “Factors Leading to Premature Deaths of Male Youths: A Case of Karũrĩ Village, Kĩambu County-Kenya,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22, no. 7(2017), pp. 64-74.

learning experiences of observation, imitation, and modelling.⁴²³ Interestingly, the study noted that the Karūrī Catholic Parish youth themselves are disturbed by the negative influence from their peers.

A high number of youth respondents expressed concern that the threat of negative peer pressure from school mates and other social circles is real. The youth therefore make a rallying call for parents to create more time for them, relating with them, teaching them life skills as well as how to deal with the peer pressure. Peer pressure appears to mostly affect the youth's self-discipline and their fear for God. Research has shown that the rapport parents build with their children affects the quality of the youth's future peer and romantic relationships.⁴²⁴ Still to show youth are aware of the negative influence of peers, the Church-going youths indicated that they would want to keep a distance with the non Church-going peers because many do things that are inappropriate.

Thus, the parents' concern on peer pressure influence is understandable in view of the youth's comments on their peers and other issues like the recent incidents of students getting involved in group immoral acts or public advertisements for night parties dubbed "Project X" to take part in indecent activities. The invitation extended to youth provoked swift intervention by the authorities. Odumbe suggests that the existence of such events could be a pointer to the moral decadence among the youth in the country, most of whom have accepted such behaviour as normal.⁴²⁵ It is worth noting that for such parties there is normally an overbooking. The study found the youth of Karūrī Catholic Parish do attend dance parties held in urban centers for socializing and leisure. Intriguingly, the parent respondents think that the Church can give the youth more leeway on music and dance by conducting more music concerts and youth related activities to allow creativity and leisure. As discussed earlier, parents feel one way for the youth to unwind is to be given the opportunity to do more dancing in Church.

⁴²³ A. Bandura, *The Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1977), p. 3ff.

⁴²⁴ E. A. Carlson, L. A. Sroufe and B. Egeland, "The Construction of Experience: A Longitudinal Study of Representation and Behaviour," *Child Development*, 75 (2004), pp. 66–83; T. G. O'Connor and S. B. C. Scott, *Parenting and Outcomes for Children* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007), p. 16.

⁴²⁵ J. Odumbe, "Social Media and Moral Decay", *The Standard Newspaper* (March 8, 2016).

Peer pressure is not a new phenomenon as it has existed in all kinds of societies from generation to generation and affects individuals across all ages. It influences individuals in all social situations and becomes more problematic where there is less parental bonding with children emotionally or otherwise.⁴²⁶ The study found that there is little support for bonding with the child as far as emotional support is concerned because parents are engaged in work and therefore lack enough time or as in the case of the father, is absent without reason. In respect to parenting their children, some parents claim they constantly monitor the kind of friends the children associate with although they think the effort has not borne much fruit. Going by the above and other findings, the parents have to make some substantial adjustments in the way they operate as far as parenting is concerned in order to take back their authority necessary for bringing up morally upright individuals. This may include acquiring more parenting skills.

3.6.3 Lack of Parenting Skills and Guidance Techniques

A thought is advanced by Mugambi when he states that generation after generation of future parents continue to miss out on proper training thus creating a cycle of ignorant parents with little to pass to their children.⁴²⁷ This is intrusive given that the study observed a lack of consistency in instructing children in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. Revealing, Mugambi's observation is supported by no other than some youth respondents when they discern their parents as ignorant on how to relate with them and especially in understanding the youth's language. This may imply that parents need the right parenting skills for effectively and comfortably teaching the child through the developmental stages as exemplified by Erikson.

The parent respondents unsurprisingly show sincerity when they confess that they feel they lack some guidance and counselling techniques for effective parenting. This is collaborated by the youth who view the lack of formal education in some parents as contributing to the failure to comprehend the youth's perspective of life. From the study, there is ample evidence of a need and demand for equipping parents accordingly. It is important to point out here that while the traditional Agĩkũyũ society possessed

⁴²⁶ M. O. Esiri, "The Influence of Peer Pressure on Criminal Behaviour," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 21, 1(2016), pp. 8-14.

⁴²⁷ N. K. Mũgambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002), p. 121.

means of resolving such inadequacies in parenting encountered by today's parent, the respondents complain that the contemporary Karūrī Catholic Parish parents have limited avenues available for them to acquire the requisite parenting skills, guidance and counselling services. Lack of these techniques directly robs the child of the parent's quality input into their lives.

Most parents confirmed attending at least one parenting seminar which was meant to boost their parenting skills. However, in their view, the seminars did not have a strong impact as they did not address the practical ways parents should approach the task of parenting. After the training they realized that parenting is challenging and that no one is an expert. The lessons learnt included how to bring up godly children, how to live harmoniously as family members in one home, how to appreciate good behaviour of children with a reward of a gift or complimentary words, and the need to pray together as a family. The parents said that they had come to the realization that they need to put more effort and skill in parenting than they were doing, more so in creating an environment that promotes quality parent-child relationship and the right handling of children at different stages of life especially the adolescent stage.

Despite the disposition of the parent, the study findings show their willingness to carry out their parenting responsibility especially that of guiding their children. This was confirmed by the parents themselves when they indicated that they take every opportunity to correct their children and never give up. On their part, the youth collaborated this when most of them said that they occasionally get parental guidance despite the limited time the parents spend with them.

3.6.4 Lack of Quality Time with Children

One issue all respondents agree on is that lack of quality time for family members to share together is a key factor affecting the inculcation of moral values into children. The main competing demand on the parent's time is work commitment. In most families included in the study, both parents work outside the home with a small number working near home or from home. The trouble with this is that a formally employed mother will ordinarily have very little time for interacting with her child in feeding, playing, disciplining or imparting values in them in one way or another. Generally, it can be summed up that most families are seldom together and rarely experience the

value of say eating food together in a patterned way with regard to time, place and content.⁴²⁸

Most of the parent respondents especially the mothers are not happy with the fact that they do not have enough time to witness and participate in their children's growth. They point out that when they return from work they may engage in some chores and end up too exhausted to reasonably interact with the children. Similarly, the study findings show a number of fathers normally arrive home after the children have gone to sleep.⁴²⁹ Left alone, the children and especially youth have multiple other "teachers" including the mass media which seem to impact most on them, for instance teaching them to embrace freedom without accountability.

The parent respondents show that once in a while they look for time for their children even amidst tight schedules. This is collaborated when only a small percentage of the youth indicated that they never have any time with parents. The youth who reported they do not spend quality time with their parents support the idea that the parents do not know how best to utilize the limited time they sometimes have with them or what to teach them. This should be a worrying trend if the quest for a morally upright child is to be achieved. In this respect, a rallying call is made by most of the youth for parents to sacrifice more and be at home with them, relating to them, and teaching them life skills. As Gardner and Hatch comment, such positive acts are a way of encouraging children's interactions with parents and one another.⁴³⁰ The lack of quality time together partially contributes to the kind of relationship the parents have with their children.

⁴²⁸ C. Cagnolo, *The Agĩkũyũ: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore, New Edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics Publication, 2006), p. 51.; J. V. Mensah and A. A. Amisah, "Effects of Modernization on the Socio-cultural Aspects of Families in Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District in Ghana," *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, IV, no. 4(2016), pp. 820-841

⁴²⁹ C. G. Suart, *Nurturing Faith within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools*, (Published PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia, 2007), p. 187.

⁴³⁰ H. Gardner and T. Hatch, "Multiple Intelligences Go to School Educational Implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences," *Educational Researcher*, 1, no. 8(1989), pp. 4-10.

3.6.5 Parent-Child Relationship

The myriad social factors that affect the development of a child include the relationships within the family such as marital and sibling relationships, environmental factors such as neighbourhood happenings, family poverty and unemployment.⁴³¹ These together with the parenting challenges discussed in earlier sections combine to create a poor parent-child relationship which constraints the teaching of moral values as pointed out by some of the parent respondents who are the preferred first mentors of the child. This study found that most parents view the relationship between them and their children as good but this was refuted by most youth who indicated that they are more comfortable dealing with the mother while less than a quarter are comfortable dealing with both parents. Through the parenting seminars attended, Karūrī Catholic Parish parents learnt that when the relationship with their children is sincere and open, the children are encouraged to turn first to the parent whenever they have an issue disturbing them.

Parent-child relationships are also shaped by inappropriate behaviour of parents, disobedience of children and parents' desertion of their teaching duty leaving it to others players like school and Church. In addition, prior studies show that the unique abilities of the children, their temperaments and predispositions play a central role in forming and maintaining their relationships with the parents. Indeed, several studies show there are myriad ways in which children's characteristics shape the parenting they receive though, according to O'Connor and Scott, the studies fail to fully explain the various factors specifying the link and quality of parent-child relationship. Their study, however, corroborated prior literature that found out that poor quality parent-child relationship is associated with negative outcomes such as aggressive behaviour and delinquency in youth.⁴³²

⁴³¹ C. M. Super and S. Harkness, "The Developmental Niche: A Conceptualization at the Interface of Child and Culture," *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 9, (1986), pp. 545-569; NACADA, Summary Report of Morbidity and Mortality Caused by Alcohol Consumption in Various Parts of the Country (Nairobi: NACADA, 2014).

⁴³² H. E. Gross, D. S. Shaw, K. L. Moilanen, T. J. Dishion and M. N. Wilson, "Reciprocal Models of Child Behavior and Depressive Symptoms in Mothers and Fathers in a Sample of Children at Risk for Early Conduct Problems," *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22, no. 5 (2008), pp. 742-751; T. G. O'Connor and S. B. C. Scott, *Parenting and Outcomes for Children* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007), pp. 21-22.

3.7 Youth and Church

Youth informants reported they attend Church regularly for one reason or another. However, they said that sometimes Church can be boring when the order of activities sounds monotonous or when they feel that their concerns do not receive attention. A few of the RCC youth members noted that some of their friends visit evangelical Churches just to participate in their worship and prayers sessions which they deem livelier.⁴³³ Suart study carried out in Australia notes that within the home, prayer is central to the spiritual upbringing of children. The study found that praying together as a family is not always the case among the Karūrī Catholic Parish families. This is supported by Suart who found that there is a struggle in family prayer as members constantly keep “slipping up.”⁴³⁴

3.8 Chapter’s Concluding Remarks

This chapter has endeavoured to determine the manner of transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish and the factors that hinder it, and has drawn out and discussed the values that are transmitted in the family as the institution proper for moral formation of children. The chapter has revealed that Karūrī Catholic Parish does not follow the proven Agīkūyū traditional method of teaching children in accordance to their growth stages. It has also been shown that the moral values taught in the traditional Agīkūyū family are still considered important but some youth do not easily connect the values with good quality of life, hence the regard of some values as negotiable. The social workers also confirm that the youth are morally challenged.

The challenges confronting the teaching of moral values in Karūrī Catholic Parish have also been enumerated and explained, and have been shown to mainly relate to modernization especially the use of social media and peer pressure. Other challenges are; parents lack of parenting skills, parents lack of time with children and the nature of the parent-child relationship. It has been shown that the youth of Karūrī Catholic

⁴³³ C. Cook and P. Hughes, “Youth Spirituality: How Young People Change,” *Pointers*, 6, no. 3 (2006), <https://cra.org.au/youth-spirituality-how-young-people-change/>

⁴³⁴ C. G. Suart, *Nurturing Faith within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia, 2007), p. 141.

Parish feel their concerns are not addressed by the parents and Church alike. Further, the Church activities may sometimes appear insufficient to them.

The findings delineated in this chapter together with those in chapter two unfailingly lay a foundation for dialoguing later in chapter six with the RCC teachings on family and parenting through inculturation process towards transmitting of moral values to children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish. It is with such an understanding that the study now moves to the theological chapter in the context of the study's subject.

CHAPTER FOUR
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH DOCTRINE AND THEOLOGIANS’
REFLECTIONS ON FAMILY AND PARENTING

4.1 Introduction

The study has examined and documented the Agĩkũyũ family set-up and its role in transmitting family and parenting values in chapter two, and determined the manner of transmitting moral values in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish in chapter three. The current chapter examines the RCC teachings and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting. This is crucial in that it provides the means for the theological basis of dialoguing with Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values in the sixth chapter, through inculturation.

In reviewing the Roman Catholic Church doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting, attention is given to the doctrine and reflections relevant to the study subject bearing in mind that Scripture and Tradition are the two foundations of theology and Christian faith upon which every theological treatise must first begin and be grounded in. Whenever necessary, Scripture is used to support the doctrine of the Church and the work of theologians. The documents reviewed are discussed in a thematic manner sub-headed as; purpose of the family in God’s plan, the family in Church documents and theologians’ reflections, mission of the family, Christian moral virtues, Church teachings and theologians’ reflection’s on parenting, social media instructions, changes affecting parenting in the contemporary family and the chapter closes with a conclusion.

4.2 Purpose of the Family in God’s Plan

To gain a good understanding about the purpose of the family, we must first start at God’s creation story since the family is God’s idea and not of a human being. The primary purpose why God created the human being is for a relationship with Him; this relationship depends on people knowing who He is as revealed by Himself (John 17:3). The understanding is therefore that God's ultimate purpose for man and by extension the family in redemptive history is to create a people who dwell in His presence, glorifying Him through their lives and taking pleasure in Him eternally. The original design of the family can also be seen in our understanding of the Triune relationship.

This relationship is a model of unity that God wants to be replicated exactly on earth through human families who follow His ways; people who are morally upright. God's desire has never changed; it is still the same today.

Another aspect of God's plan for the family is a mission and calling for them to extend His kingdom through bearing godly offspring. In the light of God's Word, the creation of humanity in His image marks the beginning of the Gospel of the family.⁴³⁵ The Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) clearly reveal God is a Family with the Scripture showing that He has chosen humans to be part of His Family and wants them to be in communion with Him. Human beings are God's children through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:5), who is the way and the truth. The data collected from the respondents affirm that RCC teaches this truth in Karūrī Catholic Parish and the majority of families have been shaped by these teachings.

4.2.1 The Family in Sacred Scriptures

The Lord God said "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18); "the Lord God caused man to fall in a deep sleep, and while man slept, God took one of his ribs from which he made a woman for Adam" (Gen 2:21-22). From here we see the first commission of the man "therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). God instituted the primordial marriage between Adam and Eve as the solid foundation for the family and through it He gave mankind a means for procreation and a surety for continuity of their society.⁴³⁶ This call to parenthood is clear and explicit in Gen 1:28 when God blessed man and woman and said to them: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." God intended children to be born and brought up in the family, also regarded as the first Church, the ideal place for teaching values. The two central figures in the family, the father and mother, play a very central role in this task.⁴³⁷ The centrality of the role of the father and mother in

⁴³⁵ PCF, no. 1.

⁴³⁶ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 38.

⁴³⁷ This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23(1995), Salt Lake City, Utah, https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/34190/34190_000_WWC_26-FamProc.pdf

inculcating moral values into their children, as God intended, was confirmed by the parent respondents in the study as we shall see later in this chapter.

The book of Genesis provides an account of the OT family as a large unit headed by the father and a school for moral values and virtues for the children. Because of the solidarity among the family members, individuals were close and each depended on the family for support and protection. The OT family was also a religious unit for its members. It was within the family altar where worship to Yahweh was conducted, for instance, the celebration of the feast of the Passover (Ex 12: 13ff). This family practice has much resemblance with that of the traditional Agĩkũyũ community where the family gathered together for the father to say a daily prayer. However, these characteristics of the family are not witnessed today in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish because of the social changes that have taken place. Some fathers, as mentioned in chapter three, have abandoned their place in the family, and the family does not necessarily function as a united group while worshipping.

The parents in the Jewish family were the first educators of their children. They overall and practically transmitted traditions and the religious laws to their children (Deut 4:8). Just like in the Agĩkũyũ tradition, at home, the mother taught the children from infancy (Prov 1:8; 6:20). She taught the girl on domestic duties, preparing her to be a good wife and mother. On the other hand, the father taught his son on the religious laws and general education for life (Ex 10: 2; 13:8; Deut 4:8, 6). Every parent was to transmit this knowledge to the children and the rod was not spared on them for the sake of correction (Prov 13:24; 2 Sam 7:11). Therefore the roles of the father and mother were carried out in ways which honoured the unique worth of male and female personhood.⁴³⁸ Just like with the Holy Trinity, God has called man and woman to play different roles in their families.⁴³⁹ However, the fact that God called the name of Adam first after the fall shows that he bore the primary responsibility for actions in the garden.

⁴³⁸ J. Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible," in J. Piper and W. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 48.

⁴³⁹ PCF, no. 3.

Throughout the New Testament, we also see God’s plan for the vocation of the married couple and family to continue in communion of love and life despite their sins and limitations, for the eternal purpose of His children.⁴⁴⁰ Jesus does not contradict the OT arrangement on duties of the parents. The creator’s intention, that of creating a companion for man who is equal in dignity with him provides a NT understanding of parenthood in the Christian context (Gen 2:18-25).

4.2.2 Jesus and the Holy Family as Model

Scripture and Tradition give insight into the Trinity which is revealed in the features of a family.”⁴⁴¹ Jesus the son of God came into the world in a family of Nazareth to fulfil His earthly mission; that of restoring God’s covenant with mankind. The Holy family of Joseph and Mary demonstrated faithfulness, lived in love (Mt 19:4-6) and brought up Jesus just like any other child except that they let him please God in his ways. The family, which for a while lived in Africa, is the “prototype and example for all Christian families” including those of Karūrĩ Catholic Parish to emulate.⁴⁴² Jesus reconciled all things in Himself and in this way restored man to his original form (Mt 19:1-12, Mk 10:1-12, Eph 5:21-32). By doing so he empowered the man to hear God’s heart and enabled him to love his wife as Christ loves the Church (Eph 5:32) and wills that both teach their children moral values.⁴⁴³

In interacting with people in everyday life, Jesus healed family members (Lk 10:38) like the mother of Peter (Mt 8:14), responded to the cries of parents for their children as in the case of the widow of Nain whose son was brought back to life from death (Lk 7:11-17) and the deliverance of the Samaritan’s daughter from demon possession (Mk 5:41). Moreover, the life of Jesus unquestionably shows he lived a family life as constantly demonstrated in the way he shared meals with people, made friends quite easily, studied Scripture, the way he trusted and got betrayed. His life example

⁴⁴⁰ This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23 (1995), Salt Lake City, Utah, https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/34190/34190_000_WWC_26-FamProc.pdf

⁴⁴¹ John Paul II, Homily Apostolic Journey to the Dominican Republic, Mexico and the Bahamas (Puebla de Los Angeles: Parafox Major Seminary, 1979).

⁴⁴² John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, nos. 189-190.

⁴⁴³ Synod of Bishops, The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World, p. 34.

therefore, is a paradigm for the Church, the family and the youth. The study will now embark on examining the RCC teaching and selected theologians' reflections on family and parenting.

4.3 The Family in Church Documents and Theologians' Reflections

The RCC as a promoter of family life has a rich literature which this study finds useful to peruse as it delves into Church teachings on family and parenting. The Church teachings on family and parenting over the years are complimented by similar works of competent theologians which will be examined alongside.

The Catholic Church Catechism teaches: "A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family."⁴⁴⁴ This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has obligations to recognize it. The husband, wife and their children are the normal reference point to evaluate different forms of family relationships. The respondents in this study define the family in the same manner, that is, the nuclear members.

Another definition of the family is provided by Peschke who defines it as a community of parents and children. In its natural constitution lies; "needs and inclinations of the child, the affections and innate tendencies of the parents, and the ties of blood with all the implied bodily and spiritual affinities."⁴⁴⁵ An African theologian, A. R. Ndiaye, dwells on the African family and points out that the family members include not only the father and mother and their children, but relatives by marriage, aunties, uncles, grandparents and cousins. An examination of the African family, including that of Agĩkũyũ, therefore reveals multiple solidarities and relationships.⁴⁴⁶ This is supported by P. N. Wachege who asserts that the family is the African ideal of life and being. It

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., no. 2202.

⁴⁴⁵ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-243.

⁴⁴⁶ A. R. Ndiaye, "Church as Family or Family as Church?" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), pp. 157-158.

is not only inclusive but complex cherishing solidarity and well inclined to genuine interpersonal bonds with others.⁴⁴⁷

The Magisterium proposed by Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (the Pastoral Constitution of the Church) devotes an entire chapter to family and parenting issues.⁴⁴⁸ Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children.⁴⁴⁹ The Council expresses a high esteem for the family life in which spouses are called to be parents to their children. The Council's teaching puts plainly that for proper upbringing of children and youth, the existence of both parents is crucial even in the midst of distortions of marriage and modern changes which obscure its indispensable qualities of fidelity and fecundity.⁴⁵⁰ This teaching is applicable to the Karūrī Catholic Parish family. The respondents agree with the Council on the primary role of the parents in upbringing children but the study found the reverse is true about the parents' availability for the crucial task of parenting.

The Pontifical Council reaches out to the society to protect marriage and family from elements that prevent it from becoming a strong foundation for procreation and education.⁴⁵¹ Families, being an irreplaceable resource with regard to their children and society must be respected. Not only should they defend themselves and demand their rights but should also be defended by other institutions including the Church ecclesial associations. Families must be helped through catechesis aimed at tackling in a systematic and inclusive manner the real issues they face, making sure the issues are "subjected to the criterion of faith, and clarified by the Word of God interpreted in an ecclesial way, in fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church...to deepening the saving truth about man."⁴⁵² The RCC in Karūrī has programs that are meant to promote the institution of marriage and by extension the family to become a strong school for moral education.

⁴⁴⁷ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Inculturated into Agĩkũyũ Elderhood as Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): A Third Millennium Fountain of Hope, Joyful Love and Ethical Issues* (Kĩambu: Little Eden Publishers, 2020), p. 44ff.

⁴⁴⁸ GE, no. 47-52.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., no. 48, 50.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., no. 47.

⁴⁵¹ PCF, no. 9.

⁴⁵² Ibid., No. 45.

The Church values the family and is convinced that it needs to be evangelized to actualize the hope placed in it by man.⁴⁵³ Therefore, the Church, aware of the wellbeing of the society and for the Church's own good, perceives as urgent and compelling, the mission of proclaiming the family, in accordance with God's plan "ensuring their full vitality, and, human and Christian development", for the renewal of society and God's people.⁴⁵⁴

The works are arranged in a thematic order to guard against losing the focus on the core subject matter and to consolidate similar materials. The section examines the Church teachings based on the themes which include family as way of the Church, the family and contemporary changes, and youth in today's world.

4.3.1 Family as Way of the Church

Through the virtue of sacrament of matrimony, the Church and family become good for each other. The life of the Church actually benefits when families experience love.⁴⁵⁵ In his catechesis of human love and theology of the body, Pope Paul II devoted special attention to the family. In his letter to families, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortia*, he refers to the family as "way of the Church". He points out that: "In matrimony and in the family, a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up - married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity - through which human person is introduced into 'human family' and into "Family of God" which is the Church."⁴⁵⁶ As mentioned in chapter three, the Christian family in Karūrī Catholic Parish introduces children to Church programs quite early in life and as children grow they are allowed autonomy. In contrast, the traditional Agīkūyū family made it clear that matters of religion were not a choice.

The Synod Fathers recall that family is "the place of origin and the most effective means for humanizing and personalizing society" as, in a unique way, it contributes in building the society by guarding and inculcating virtues and values such as communality,

⁴⁵³ Ibid., no. 2.

⁴⁵⁴ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 3.

⁴⁵⁵ Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Lætitia* of the Holy Father Francis (Strathfield NSW: St. Pauls Publications Australia, 2016), no. 87, 88.

⁴⁵⁶ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 15.

respect, love, justice and dialogue that make it possible to have well behaved individuals.⁴⁵⁷

With the danger of society becoming more depersonalized day by day and as such inhuman, people result in escapism like substance abuse and aggression. The family comes in handy with its formidable energies to keep human beings conscious of their personal dignity, inspiring them with deep humility and re-integrating him within the society.⁴⁵⁸ Worthy of note is that the Synod of Bishops recognized the African family as the most effective agent of evangelization for the Church through a dialogue with its culture and values. The Synod wants to preserve these treasured values but due to many constant challenges including modernization, divisions and conflicts, authentic living through these values is difficult.⁴⁵⁹ Indeed, this study found that parenting of children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish is hampered by these challenges and that although the extended family is considered helpful in parenting, its help is rarely sought. The Agĩkũyũ family set-up in the Parish is no longer as it used to be. The Christians, having entitlement to the “Family of God” title, have a duty to be concerned and actively seek to be involved in solving family problems. Lay people are instructed to evangelize and serve God’s people through sharing in the prophetic, priestly and the kingly office of Christ.⁴⁶⁰ This is an attempt to act accordingly in Karūrī Catholic Parish through SCCs.

Families should share in spiritual riches with others and manifest the Lord’s presence and the true nature of the Church in all people. The family will prosper by working together in love, faithfulness, solidarity and its fruitfulness.⁴⁶¹ With the same spirit the family should extend faith, support and love to children and youth of other families as members of the same family of God. In this way, needy children’s barest necessities will be met. Orphans and abandoned children will be taken care of, enabling them find warmth and affection of a family and experience God’s loving fatherhood thus finding confidence in life. Moreover, parents lacking in parenting awareness will receive the much needed support towards parenting their children and youth. Today, with such

⁴⁵⁷ FC, no. 53.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., no. 43.

⁴⁵⁹ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*.

⁴⁶⁰ CCC, no. 873.

⁴⁶¹ FC, no. 50.

responsibilities and other challenges, the horizon of Christian parenthood is broadened. Jesus continues to be compassionate to people through obedient families.⁴⁶²

Christian families can offer teaching and counselling services to youth; can assist other parents towards responsible parenting, can open up their homes for fellowship, prayer and hospitality. This educates in an enormous and practical way, the charity, and fraternal joy for members of family of God, and to youth the value of kindness.⁴⁶³ Therefore the family is open to other families and society by its very nature and contributes to society the very experience of sharing and communion.⁴⁶⁴

The Pontifical Council notes that as the family contributes and participates in parenting and other activities in society, a reciprocal action must come from the society which should never fail. The government too must respect the family and therefore should not attempt to take away some of the functions the family can perform on its own or best. Instead, it must encourage as far as possible positive initiatives by the families. In this respect the government must facilitate the families to have the social, economic, educational and cultural assistance they need to confront their responsibilities especially that of parenting children and youth which was found wanting in Karūrī Catholic Parish.⁴⁶⁵

The Synod clarifies that there are several ecclesial communities, groups, movements with different purposes, characteristics, method and effectiveness, which the faithful can make use of in the pastoral care of the family. Such foster a sense of solidarity among the faithful, help form their consciousness according to Christian values, to motivate them to perform works of charity, become source of light to other families.⁴⁶⁶ This can be done if Christian families are actively involved in not only the ecclesial associations but also other God pleasing associations as well. The study now turns to changes that are confronting the wellbeing and functioning of the family especially in its effort to inculcate moral values into children and youth.

⁴⁶² Ibid., no. 41.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., no. 74.

⁴⁶⁴ FC, no. 44, 43.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., no. 45.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., no. 72.

4.3.2 The Family and Contemporary Changes

According to *Familiaris Consortio*, the contemporary family is beleaguered with rapid and profound changes that have had an effect on society and culture. The study observes that this has led to uncertainty in some families including those of Karūrī Catholic Parish, who are now bewildered and doubtful concerning their role in the meaning of family and community life.⁴⁶⁷ Some theologians like Ndiaye note that this has affected the God given task of parenting in a major way.⁴⁶⁸ Despite the obstacles, Pope Francis encourages the family in its assignment by referring to the principle that gives shape to families; the covenant of love and fidelity lived in the Holy family of Nazareth which enables families to better face the vices in life confronting them as they go about their duties such as that of parenting.⁴⁶⁹ Magesa is convinced that the flexibility of the Church is required now more than ever before in order to keep up with the changing circumstances though he advises the Church to firmly resist compromising African identity in Her response.⁴⁷⁰

The weakening of family bonds today does not benefit anyone at all. The changes witnessed derail the cultivation of moral values in children and youth. According to Pope Francis, this scenario is arising because of the many problems affecting the community, family, as well as marriages.⁴⁷¹ However, the situation should not dampen Christian family's spirit. The family has a call to reflect the beauty of the Holy Family in the ordinary reality of everyday life including parenting. Pope Francis recalls that this vocation is possible in spite of the fact that "there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems."⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., no. 1.

⁴⁶⁸ A. R. Ndiaye, "Church as Family or Family as Church?" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

⁴⁶⁹ AL, no. 66.

⁴⁷⁰ L. Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004).

⁴⁷¹ AL, no. 52.

⁴⁷² Ibid., no. 57.

Concerned about the children, even before their birth and the contribution to parenting by parents, Pope Paul II encourages people with complex family situations not to keep quiet but confidently come out and speak with their pastors or other Christians about their situation.⁴⁷³ He advises the Church not to turn away families who participate in Her life and are faced with problems even if they live in an imperfect manner.⁴⁷⁴ Their situation needs to be acknowledged. It is in this understanding that the pastoral care in Church needs to be inspired by seeing things, including parenting challenges and moral problems of the youth, through the eyes of Jesus Christ. This resonates well with the Agĩkũyũ family set-up where bonds in the family were crucial for bringing up morally upright individuals.

4.3.3 Youth in Today's World

The message to youth by Pope Paul VI at the closing of the Second Vatican Council meeting reads:

For it is you who are to receive the torch from the hands of your elders and to live in the world at the period of the most gigantic transformations ever realized in its history. It is you who receiving the best of the example of the teaching of your parents and your teachers, are to form the society of tomorrow. You will either save yourselves or you will perish with it. For four years the Church has been working to rejuvenate her image in order to respond better to the design of her Founder, the great Living One, Christ who is eternally young. At the term of this imposing re-examination of life, She now turns to you. It is for you, youth, especially for you that the Church now comes through her Council to rekindle your light, the light which illuminates the future, your future.⁴⁷⁵

Similarly, the words of Benedict XVI exhorted the youth to aim to better the world beyond what their elders have done and in the name of God the Father open their hearts enthusiastically, engage in service and fight against all forms of evil, which is possible if they imbibe moral values that build their character. They should refuse hatred and any acts of violence by remaining pure, sincere, respectful and generous, the virtues

⁴⁷³ Ibid., no. 312.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., no. 78.

⁴⁷⁵ The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Address of Pope Paul VI to Young Men and Women of The World, (1965), <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/g0y.htm#fe>

seen in the face of Jesus who was humble in his work. The youth will find a companion and friend in Him. The Church is with them with trust and love.⁴⁷⁶

The Council was particularly anxious that the youth will stand firm and keep faith and what gives meaning to it and not yield to “seductions of egoistic or hedonistic philosophies or to those of despair and annihilation” as are some elders today.⁴⁷⁷ Álvaro laments that the overall view presented today regarding the young people’s lack of faith or their indifference raises concern as it points to a failure on the part of the community, and as the study found, on the parents of Karūrī Catholic Parish too. He says that there is a need to retract where the youth’s moral problem started as we treat them with love and make an examination of our conscience as we allow ourselves to undertake a pastoral conversion.⁴⁷⁸

The Synod of Bishops suggests that youth be accorded engaging opportunities so that they can continue in the sphere of involvement and innovation witnessed in the community today. The Bishops say that whenever youth’s opportunities appear to diminish, they easily get fatigued in their will to desire, to plan and to dream. The big differences between those who are discouraged and the enterprising ones being the real opportunities accessible to each and how each develops in the family, the sense of meaning and relationships and values formed.⁴⁷⁹

These youth desire both young and adult role models who are credible, honest and consistent. The older generation can, however, undermine the youth by emphasizing on their weakness; disregarding the youth’s potential. Furthermore, as the study found, being aware of their own mistakes the parents may opt to as often occurs, prefer not to

⁴⁷⁶ R. E. Álvaro, “Young People and the New Evangelization,” *Journal of Lasallian Higher Education*, 4, no. 3(2013), <https://www.lasallian.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Resource-3-Young-and-Evangelization-Rodriguez.pdf>

⁴⁷⁷ The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Address of Pope Paul VI to Young Men and Women of The World, (1965), <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/g0y.htm#fe>

⁴⁷⁸ R. E. Álvaro, “Young People and the New Evangelization,” *Journal of Lasallian Higher Education*, 4, no. 3(2013), <https://www.lasallian.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Resource-3-Young-and-Evangelization-Rodriguez.pdf>

⁴⁷⁹ Synod of Bishops, Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, (1965), no. 2.

say anything or impose their own choices, and often have no clear idea how to help with the consequence of their children being morally unprepared to face life.⁴⁸⁰

The Synod notes that young people are cautious about those outside their circle of personal relationships and increasingly mistrust almost all institutions including the society, school and the Church. Although they would wish to see a Church more attentive to their social issues, they also realize this will not happen immediately. Nonetheless, the Church desires to meet, accompany and care for each one of the youth without exception and will not abandon them to exclusion and isolation which the world exposes them to.⁴⁸¹

The evangelization for the youth and their mentors entail calling them back to the Gospel and for their faith to encounter a personal experience with Christ which will lead to a community of disciples. This will even involve re-evangelization. Pope Paul II outlined well what New Evangelization is and to whom it is directed. In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate), he described those befitting new evangelization as the group of fallen Christians though they once received baptism, no longer practice the faith, or do not participate in the life of the Church or regard themselves members, and are far removed from the Gospel message.⁴⁸² Pope Francis clarifies the perception of this concept as a renewal of the Church's approach to evangelization today rather than evangelization again in order to adapt to the fast changing society.⁴⁸³

Jesus is the point of reference in all that is to do with the New Evangelization, and without him evangelization will experience little progress especially among today's youth. The way forward is to immerse into the youth's human experience in life, get to know their world, their needs, their anxieties, their desires, their hopes and discover God's presence as this is the only way the Gospel can truly touch each young person's

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., no. 3.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., no. 2.

⁴⁸² Pope Paul II, On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate, *Redemptoris Missio*, (1990), no. 33.

⁴⁸³ R. M. Saldarriaga, "The African Bishop in the Pastoral Programme of Pope Francis" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 60.

life. The mission being to have all saved, have abundance of life in Jesus Christ and rendering service to God. The Church is called to be more compassionate and closer to the youth as it renders service. Álvaro's narrative is that a community of faith is above all founded in persons who have the same experience and not on doctrinal or liturgical institutions.⁴⁸⁴

The youth need to know that God, through Jesus Christ, is close, affective, tender and devoted to the needy like them.⁴⁸⁵ Therefore, accompanying them requires going beyond a preconceived framework. It involves meeting them where they are, understanding and adapting to their times and pace of life and taking them seriously; something the youth want to see happening in the Karũĩ Catholic Parish community. This is to be done with the realization that in their daily lives, young people greatly desire to make sense of the reality in which they live, and utilize the message received in words and deeds to create a personal history.⁴⁸⁶ The study now turns to the mission of the family as described by the Church doctrine and theologians' reflections.

4.4 Mission of the Family

In the plan of God and Creator, the family finds its identity and mission; what it can do and should actually do. What the family is informs what role God has called it to perform. This role represents the dynamic and essential development of what the family is. The family anywhere in the world has three basic functions to perform for its members. Firstly, it is the basic economic community, secondly it is the primary educator and lastly it is the spiritual community for man. The education within the family is a determinant of the intellectual and moral development of an individual. Within the family circle, children and youth are able to receive the first knowledge and understanding of their environment. In it the virtues of charity and justice are learnt in a strong way because the family is held naturally by the bond of love and fairness. The responsibility of the parent is called here to serve by bringing up morally upright children through instilling the essential values of human life as well as the Gospel.

⁴⁸⁴ R. E, Álvaro. "Young People and the New Evangelization," *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 4, no. 3(2013), <http://axis.smumn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/87-417-1-PB.pdf>

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

The family also lays the foundation for other virtues that are much needed in the contemporary Karūri Catholic Parish community, such as readiness to help, sincerity, fairness, consideration and diligence.⁴⁸⁷ Education in the family occurs mutually between all the members such that each member has an active and passive part in it. Likewise, children educate one another as they learn to share the available resources and exist peacefully. The family therefore is “the school of the richest humanity” particularly for the moral and spiritual education on delicate matters like sexuality where psychological, physical and spiritual aspects are involved.⁴⁸⁸

Since the creation, families have played a key role in shaping the lives and behaviour of human beings in forming their values and outlook on life. Within the family, the sacred duty given to parents is to ensure their children develop to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live by admonishing them to observe the commandments of God. For this, the father and mother will be answerable before God for the discharge of these obligations.⁴⁸⁹ Children are a heritage from the Lord (Psalms 127:3). The next section discusses the family as a sanctuary of life as contained in RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections.

4.4.1 The Family as a Sanctuary of Life

The Holy Father calls the family to go back to the “beginning” of God’s creative act, “if it is to attain self-knowledge and self-realization in accordance with the inner truth not only of what it is but also of what it does in history.”⁴⁹⁰ Pope Paul II says the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, thus actualizing in history the original blessing of the creator of transmitting divine image from person to person.⁴⁹¹ This task has an inner principle and a final goal, which is love. Without love the family will not be able to live, grow and move to perfection as a community of persons that properly parents its children and youth. Love is the greatest of all commandments.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁷ CCC, No. 544.

⁴⁸⁸ PCF, no. 48-49.

⁴⁸⁹ This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23 (1995), Salt Lake City, Utah, https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/34190/34190_000_WWC_26-FamProc.pdf

⁴⁹⁰ CA, no. 841.

⁴⁹¹ FC, no. 28.

⁴⁹² FC, no. 14.

The family carries a central importance to an individual and is the center of life and this is emphasized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace when it highlights the family as the place where children and youth learn love and faithfulness of God and the need to respond to them (1Sam 3:13).⁴⁹³ According to Murungi, the centrality of the family gives identity to its members who through mutually beneficial relationships gift each other for the welfare of the whole family.⁴⁹⁴ Further, the children “develop their potentialities, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face their unique and individual destiny” in the family atmosphere created through the minimal giving of the spouses in the bond of matrimony.⁴⁹⁵ The Synod Fathers assert that “the moral criterion for the authenticity of conjugal and family relationships consists in fostering the dignity and vacation of the individual persons, who achieve their fullness by sincere self-giving.”⁴⁹⁶ It is within the family that children learn lessons of practical wisdom which is connected to their virtues (Prov 1: 8-9).

As a community and communion of persons, the family strives to welcome, respect and promote each of its members in his or her dignity as a person or an image of God.⁴⁹⁷ The family therefore is the first fundamental structure for human ecology which the person receives his first formative idea about “truth and goodness, and learns what it means to love and be loved and thus what it actually means to be a person” in the society.⁴⁹⁸

4.4.2 Importance of the Family for the Society

The family, being the first community of persons is considered a vital cell of the society, the first natural human society.⁴⁹⁹ It is in the family that human nature is experienced. Further, the family makes contributions which are unique and irreplaceable in fostering

⁴⁹³ CA, no. 841.

⁴⁹⁴ D. J. Mũrengi, *The Theological Anthropology of John Paul II as Source of Principles of Inculturation in the Family: The Ameru Case of Kenya* (New York: Bloomington, 2003), p. 1ff.

⁴⁹⁵ CA, no. 841.

⁴⁹⁶ GS, no. 24; see also FC, no. 22.

⁴⁹⁷ D. J. Mũrũngĩ, *The Theological Anthropology of John Paul II as a Source of Principles of Inculturation in the Family: The Case of The Ameru of Kenya* (New York: Bloomington, 2003), pp. 184-193.

⁴⁹⁸ CA, no. 841.

⁴⁹⁹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*; 213; See also John Paul II, Letter to Families, *Gratissimam Sane*, no. 875; CCC, no. 2206.

the good of society. For instance, “to visit orphans and widows in their affliction is religion pure and undefiled” (Jas 1:27). Through this show of kindness to others, children learn the value of generosity to the larger community. Similarly, the Children also learn from the life of Jesus particularly through the miracles where he showed compassion to the afflicted such as the Widow of Nain whose son was brought back to life (Lk 7:11-17).⁵⁰⁰

The study benefits from the Second Vatican Council’s important sentiment that building society on a family scale becomes the best guarantee for individuals and collectivism because in the family an individual is at the center of attention always, not as a means but as an end. It is plainly clear that good persons and the proper founding of society are connected with the “healthy stake of conjugal and family life.”⁵⁰¹ The individual in the society not only learns moral values from young age, but also gets impacted with spiritual heritage, cultural legacy of their community, social solidarity and responsibility from such a family.⁵⁰² Therefore, strong families in their communion and stable commitment produce strong people to serve the society. The Synod reaffirmed the position of the Church that the family is a gift of God to the society, the place where He reveals the power of his saving grace. Even in the present day, God still calls a man and woman to join in Holy matrimony and abides with them in their lives as a family and offers Himself to them as an indescribable gift.⁵⁰³

On the other hand, as one family cares for its young, old, poor and sick in the society, other families and the larger society are expected to contribute to this cause in case one family is overwhelmed (Prov 6:20). Christ reveals the life and vocation of the persons in society.⁵⁰⁴ The real-life situation, however, shows that the family and society at large is passing through difficult times that require Church guidance and compassion, and from this point of departure the Church needs to preach the Gospel of the family

⁵⁰⁰ R. Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).

⁵⁰¹ GS, no. 1067; CCC, no. 2210.

⁵⁰² CCC, no. 2224.

⁵⁰³ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, no. 13.

⁵⁰⁴ N. D. Tien, *The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam*, (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2006), p. 9; N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 245-292.

responding to specific needs.⁵⁰⁵ The Church as family is a mission to serve the society of the world.⁵⁰⁶

With regard to the Church being part of the society, families are likened to autonomous Churches with rich and genuine worship and catechesis connected to the universal Church.⁵⁰⁷ They benefit their local communities which, it should be the case, feel at home in their autonomous Churches akin to the SCCs in Karūrī Catholic Parish.⁵⁰⁸ The family benefits the community more when the Church attends to the whole flock without discrimination, being alert to the worries, anxieties and expectations of the families and generational differences.⁵⁰⁹ The Church's assistance to the family is manifested in ongoing renewal, unity in Church, prayers, inner conversion, genuine presence and concern for each family, all these guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, much work of prudent dialogue with the community and honest collaboration between the Church leadership and the Church membership is required.⁵¹⁰ This collaboration is wide when one considers that the Church relies on the knowledge of theologians, dedicated pastors and the contribution of the laity for teaching and applying Christian morality.⁵¹¹

4.5 Christian Moral Virtues

The CCC teaches that deep within a man's conscience "he discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey," a voice to do good and not evil. This moral conscience resides in the heart of the human being and it judges particular preferences or choices. When a prudent man listens to his conscience, he can hear God speaking. The CCC argues that conscience makes one recognize the moral quality of an action and therefore is able to take responsibility for the actions performed.⁵¹² However, the human nature is to reject authoritative teachings and prefer own

⁵⁰⁵ Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 31.

⁵⁰⁶ N. D. Tien, *The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam*, (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2006), p. 9; N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 245-292.

⁵⁰⁷ CCC, no. 831, 834-835.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 831, 833.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 683.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 820-821.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 2041.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, no. 1776-1778.

judgments tempted by sin.⁵¹³ The education for conscience is lifelong as the child learns human virtues from the earliest years and this must continue constantly with the grace of God, assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church, if freedom of the heart is to be guaranteed.⁵¹⁴

The Church defines the Human virtues as:

Firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. The virtuous man is he who freely practices the good.⁵¹⁵

The cardinal virtues themselves are prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance.⁵¹⁶ These are acquired by human effort and are earned when one does a good act. The Church regards respect as a cardinal virtue that conditions all other virtues but all are connected with one another.⁵¹⁷ In the man who respects his own dignity and has control, reason prevails over passion. On the other hand, the Church teaches the law of God entrusted to it for the faithful as the way of life and truth.⁵¹⁸ The teachings are “set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life” and spiritual worship.⁵¹⁹ Just like in the Agĩkũyũ family set-up, the Church believes that parents bear the greatest responsibility of teaching their children these values.⁵²⁰ The vocation of a Christian, including that of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth is first to follow Jesus and comes from God. The next section examines the RCC teachings and theologians’ reflections on parenting.

4.6 Church Teachings and Theologians’ Reflection’s on Parenting

Having scrutinized the RCC teachings as well as theologians’ reflections on family in the previous section now the study focuses on examining the RCC teaching and theologians’ reflections on parenting. Just like is the case in the preceding section, the information is arranged in thematic order.

⁵¹³ Ibid., no. 1781.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., no. 1784-1785.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., no. 1804.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., no. 1805.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., no. 1804.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., no. 2037.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., no. 2041.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., no. 2223.

4.6.1 Right Environment for Parenting

The right atmosphere for parenting is that which is full of love and reverence for God, and enables posturing of holistic social development of children.⁵²¹ Such an environment is necessary for the formation of moral virtues in youth.⁵²² For instance, when the practice of giving or sacrifice is present in the family, children will grow up with the correct perspective regarding material goods, of simple and austere life styles, and convinced of the value of a person than what he has.⁵²³

To achieve its objectives in responsible parenting, the family first needs to be a place of nourishing a culture of prayer where the presence of God the Father is felt, His Word and Spirit is accepted and felt, and faith grows. A family prayer is the object of life itself, a call for and intervention from God, their common Father.⁵²⁴ In this kind of atmosphere where the fatherhood of God is present and Christ's trust is built, teaching, understanding and living with love, teaching children and youth moral values from the Christian doctrine should be easy.⁵²⁵

4.6.2 The Task of Educating the Children

Lumen Gentium loudly proclaims parents as the primary educators of children,⁵²⁶ being 'pastors' of the domestic Church, presenting to children virtues of the Kingdom of God.⁵²⁷ The education role of the family brings an educative influence to bear on responsible parents, who not only set out to do their work but remain challenged to put forth their best if they have to achieve fully the noble and great aim of a happy family.⁵²⁸ Parental responsibilities therefore act as an educative stimulus for parents, and in this way, children become contributors to making their parents holy.⁵²⁹ This is why RCC refers to the family as a domestic Church and a household of faith, since it passes the faith of the ancestors and cultivates the religious traditions for its members in an effort

⁵²¹ Pope Paul VI, Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican: St. Paul Editions, 1965), no. 3.

⁵²² PFC, no. 48-49.

⁵²³ PCF, no. 60.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 62.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 63.

⁵²⁶ LG, no. 11.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 35.

⁵²⁸ CCC, no. 544.

⁵²⁹ GS, no. 48.

to translate its religious convictions into daily life. Through religious celebrations and traditions, the family is able to own its religious identity and belonging, and acceptance.

The parenting role is a decisive one that cannot be delegated by parents to others or usurped by another. Barely can anything compensate for the specific teaching of a father or mother.⁵³⁰ There is a natural division of labour that occurs as pertains to individual parent duties and rights, and also partly occurs due to the custom of their respective societies.⁵³¹ In supporting these sentiments, Peschke adds that the most excellent task of parents however is helping the child develop personality and be formed morally.⁵³² As the children do not always remain within the family circles, but interact with other people outside the family, the parents' obligation still continues in protecting them against any evils.⁵³³ As the children grow older, the parents give them prudent education on sex matters which fosters their ability to make responsible and independent decisions with freedom. The parents also offer advice regarding career choices without interfering with the child's right of choice and, following the parents' prudent advice, the child is guided to independently make choices such as that of a life partner. To train the human person in this manner and in view of their responsibilities in society, the training must be sensitive to the role to be played in the family and include religious, social and other virtues which all together are for a well ordered, happy life.⁵³⁴

If the child learns and practices prayers, common attendance of Sunday service, narratives of Scripture and the Christian rites from early childhood, such consciousness become deeply registered and remain in their entire life. Ndiaye explains that in the family relationships, children learn the sense of spiritual or fear of God, sense of society, kindness and respect for elders and others. The social values learnt in the family promote dialogue, warmth, care for one another, trust and safeguards common good.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁰ Pope Paul VI, Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, (1965).

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

⁵³³ LG, no. 11.

⁵³⁴ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

⁵³⁵ A. R. Ndiaye, "Church as Family or Family as Church?," in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

Pope John Paul encourages the parents to never give up on inculcating the essential values into their children even amid the problems of today that make difficult the work of educating children. Moltmann expresses the hope that whatever the calling, Christians should actively and creatively be involved in the mission of transforming lives with love, not only of children but also those of individuals, institutions and the society.⁵³⁶ It follows then that parents may only bring a child to life if they are convinced that they are able to rear and educate him/her in a manner worthy of a human being. The Pontifical Council for the Family advises the parents, where necessary, to accept help and encouragement from others as parenting is not exclusively for them.⁵³⁷

4.6.3 Family Member's Role in Parenting

Ndiaye sees the family in Africa as wealth, where anyone lacking this wealth can be said to be in worst misery and poverty that can exist. This is so because as he puts it, “in a family there is always someone to rescue, welcome, and shelter you and be hospitable to you. It is a wealth worth sharing among members through solidarity.”⁵³⁸ The wellbeing of every individual in the family and society at large is dependent on the healthy status produced by the family. The Synod of Bishops informs the study that in various cultures like that of the Agĩkũyũ, an individual's sense of belonging and their relationships are key values which shape their identity.⁵³⁹ The Christian family therefore has an urgent and serious task to preserve the link between generations for the purpose of transmitting the faith and basic values.⁵⁴⁰ The sections that follow discuss the contribution of some key individuals to parenting starting with the father.

4.6.3.1 The Father

The Synod of Bishops speaks of a man's role in the family as being decisive, particularly in reference to the protection of his wife and children. In the absence of a father, the family is gravely affected more so in the upbringing of their children and

⁵³⁶ J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 338.

⁵³⁷ PCF, no. 148.

⁵³⁸ A. R. Ndiaye, “Church as Family or Family as Church?” in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

⁵³⁹ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, pp. 13-14; GS, no. 4.

⁵⁴⁰ GS, no. 47.

their integration into society. His absence either physically or emotionally, like it is in several homes in Karūrī Catholic Parish, deprives the children of an appropriate model of paternal behaviour. The commonality of this today, was also discussed by the Synod who advise the fathers to carry out their duties out of love as God commanded it (Eph 5:38).

Man has is conferred with the duty of guarding life with the greatest care as human life and the transmitting of it has a bearing on the eternal destiny of man.⁵⁴¹ At the same time the man within the family communion is called upon to live his role and gift as a husband and father. He is called to develop an ultimate love that is strong and gentle, that of Christ to the Church (Eph 5:25). His absence therefore causes psychological and moral imbalance and difficulties in family relationships especially those with the children. This also happens in cases where superiority of male prerogatives that humiliates women and hinders development of healthy relations within the family exists.⁵⁴²

A father reveals and relives the fatherhood of God (Eph 3:15) through the development of all his family members in one accord, performing his task generously as he shares it with his wife, promoting the family's unity and stability, and by his own witnessing effectively leading the children to experience the living Christ and the Church.⁵⁴³ Boff posits that to a greater extent, an individual's relationship with God depends on the relationship with the father since a good role model of a father will inculcate fidelity, responsibility and honesty into the child.⁵⁴⁴ A good role model of a man is St. Joseph, a just man, who brought his family to safety from danger (Matt 2:14).

When family solidarity is enhanced, it follows that the welfare of the family and married life will experience a harmonious life otherwise the results will be family disintegration. The father's role however can no longer be guaranteed as the presence of the father-figure has minimized in today's society.⁵⁴⁵ As observed by the Synod and by this study,

⁵⁴¹ GS, no. 50.

⁵⁴² FC, no. 25.

⁵⁴³ GS, no. 52; FC, no. 25.

⁵⁴⁴ L. Boff, *The Lord's Prayer: The Prayer of Integral Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983), p. 35.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

the man in Karūrī Catholic Parish is increasingly losing sight of his role; that of teaching his children moral values, being a role model for the boy child and protecting his family from all sorts of violence and degradation.

The above notwithstanding, the men are commanded to carry out their duty with ease and must love their wives (Eph 5:28). In obeying such commands it becomes a radical devotion asked of man, that of dignity and love to his wife, following the example of Christ and must be witnessed in the Christian community itself.⁵⁴⁶ Recognizing the problems besieging the family and especially the fatherhood, the Council exhorted priests trained on family matters to nurture the vocation of husband and wife through the preaching of the Word and liturgical worship to save the dysfunctional family.⁵⁴⁷

4.6.3.2 The Mother

The primary duty of a mother is being a mother and this is expounded in different ways by different scholars. The synod looks at the role of a mother in life as crucial in society, family, and individual's life. "Every human person owes his or her life to her mother, and almost always owes most of what follows in life both human and spiritual formation to her."⁵⁴⁸ During the years when children are young, mothers usually attend to them, since this is the *de facto* situation.⁵⁴⁹ Generally thought, women take on most parenting responsibilities as confirmed by this study. In Karūrī Catholic Parish the mother is the one who is more available to support the children in all stages of growth. A well renowned theologian, Bacchiocchi, discusses the role women played in the OT and in the NT. According to him, women in fulfilling male roles as that of a father in the home as witnessed today has danger both theologically and practically.⁵⁵⁰

The status of women varies from place to place because of social cultural factors. Moreover, the new family trends and patterns have brought fundamental changes to the role of a mother and the way it is viewed. However, in whatever culture, the dignity of

⁵⁴⁶ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁴⁷ GS, no. 52.

⁵⁴⁸ Pope John Francis, *General Audience* (Vatican: Vatican Publishing House, 2015).

⁵⁴⁹ GS, no. 47.

⁵⁵⁰ S. Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A biblical study on the role of women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Biblical Perspectives, 2000).

women should always be promoted and defended and the gift of motherhood should be valued and not penalized.⁵⁵¹ According to RCC teachings, the equal dignity and responsibility of men and women fully justifies women's access to public functions and many other things.⁵⁵²

Today, the parenting role of the contemporary woman in society may be analyzed to some extent in the light of changes in education, political participation, economic and employment sector, and awareness of their rights. As work and family lives increasingly influence each other, much greater demands are placed on women as they try balancing work and parenting.⁵⁵³ According to Samman et al., the mother acts in the best interest of the child usually sacrificing her own individual needs. The mentality which honours women more for their work outside the home than for their work within the family must be overcome. The family also benefits from the wealth of experience of the elderly within it.

4.6.3.3 The Elderly

The grandparents are special and respected members of the family because they are the link between generations and are important in maintaining a psycho-affective balance in the family through the transmission of values and virtues, customs and tradition by which children and youth recognize their roots. In doing so, the elderly play an essential role in ensuring continuity, stability, and historic memory in families and society.”⁵⁵⁴ Ecclesiastes teaches: “Do not dismiss what the old people have to say; from them you will learn how to think and the art of the timely answer” (Eccl 8:9).

⁵⁵¹ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁵² FC, no. 23.

⁵⁵³ Samman, E., Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Bhatkal, T., Melamed, C., Stavropoulou, M., & Wallace, J. *Women's Work, Mothers, Children and the Global Childcare Crisis*. London: Overseas Development Institute, (2016). <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10333.pdf>

⁵⁵⁴ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 21.

For the Agĩkũyũ, their world intensely gravitated around the elders.⁵⁵⁵ The elders are very useful as they ensure the communal and family values are transmitted to each child at every stage of their development. They are also instrumental for upholding family solidarity and community welfare as well as counselling those who misbehave. The role of the elders also includes instilling hope to the restless. The deprived moral condition of the youth today is partly a consequence of the breakdown of societal fibre including that of not affirming the position of the elders which ensured young people were taught moral values.

Wachege enriches the study with an important revelation about the characteristics of Agĩkũyũ elders in his *Muthamaki* (Ideal Elder) Christology. He identifies and explains the elder's main roles as liberating messengers, reconcilers, guardians of religion and moral uprightness, leaders and rulers, family establishers and stabilizers, and promoters of healthy relation.⁵⁵⁶ They are also loved much by the children because of the stories and advice they give them; “grandchildren are the crown of the aged ...” (Prov 17:6). Other beneficial individuals to parenting are the extended family members.

4.6.3.4 The Extended Family

Beyond the nuclear family, all relations among relatives offer valuable assistance in the upbringing of children, transmitting values, protecting inter-generational ties and enriching spiritual life. The support from these connections is particularly necessary where the parents are in employment or are away from home. The CCC refers to family ties as an important resource in upbringing of children.⁵⁵⁷ The study found that in Karũĩ Catholic Parish however, these important relations are disintegrating fuelled by work mobility, individualism and urbanization among other factors.

The book of Genesis has several accounts of traditional extended families including those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Elkanah, which included the man, wife or wives, children, slaves, residents, and others (Ex 12: 13ff). This is collaborated by Colijn who

⁵⁵⁵ P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), pp. 70-73.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-38.

⁵⁵⁷ CCC, no. 2232.

noted that the ancient Hebrew family was composed of relatives beyond the immediate family and also slaves.⁵⁵⁸ In the last Century, children are brought up not only by the biological parents but also by grandparents together with uncles and aunts which is unlike what is happening today where a child may not have the benefit of a larger social network for socialization. Pope Francis suggests that the Church should transcend these changes and not demand any alterations as a prerequisite to preaching the Gospel unless where there are moral implications.⁵⁵⁹ A further expression of the role of the extended family is seen when God attaches himself to certain persons or family groups through which extended generations of family members are blessed.⁵⁶⁰

4.6.4 Service to Children and Youth

No country or people can have any future without the young generation who will have received from their parents a heritage of values, duties, and aspirations of their nation. Pope Paul II calls for care for the child right from conception, through its infancy and youth years.⁵⁶¹ Children should be of primary concern in the family and society and a priority in the Church's pastoral activity since they are a blessing from God.⁵⁶² Each and every family should have the distinctive characteristic of showing acceptance, love, educational, emotional and spiritual concern to each and every child that is born into their neighbourhood.⁵⁶³

In teaching children, parents are advised not to arbitrarily proceed in manner of acting but must be informed always by the divine law itself.⁵⁶⁴ They should fulfil their parenting task with the responsibility worth of human and Christian character, and docile reverence towards God and agreement in decision making thoughtfully taking into consideration their own welfare and that of their children. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council recognizes that the parents cannot alone guarantee ethical formation of their children unless those exercising influence on communities like the

⁵⁵⁸ B. B. Colijn, "Family in the Bible: A Brief Survey," *Ashland Theological Journal*, (2004), p. 73-84, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ashland_theological_journal/36-1_073.pdf

⁵⁵⁹ Pope Francis, *Amoris Leinitia*, p. 85.

⁵⁶⁰ D. P. Scaer, "The Christian Family in Today's Society," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 54, no. 2-3(1990), pp. 80-97.

⁵⁶¹ FC, no. 26.

⁵⁶² Gen 4:1.

⁵⁶³ FC, no. 25.

⁵⁶⁴ GS, no. 50.

Church and the many generations living in the community work successfully for the welfare of children and youth.⁵⁶⁵ Goldson and Munice note that a well behaved child is likely to be a product of this kind of environment while the restless youth who face challenges during their upbringing will engage in bad behaviour and may not have long lasting relationships.⁵⁶⁶

The Council Fathers advise parents that in the duty of educating their children they should lead the way by example and family prayer. This way they will lead the children and others gathered around the family hearth to find the path that leads to human maturity, salvation and holiness.⁵⁶⁷ In support, Suart notes that within the home, prayer is central to the upbringing of children spiritually, even though it may be a constant struggle.⁵⁶⁸ The complete formation of ethical children will not occur unless the children themselves are willing to listen, obey, respect and honour their parents.

4.6.5 Duties of Children to Parents

The Synod Fathers through *Gaudium et Spes*, counsel the children and youth as living members of the family to be keen to respond with gratitude, love and trust to the kindness of their parents. They need to stand with their parents in their old age which brings loneliness in the moments of their difficulty.⁵⁶⁹ According to St. Thomas, the parents are second to God in being their children's source of life, growth and education. Consequently, the child is obligated to love, reverence and have gratitude. As the parents embark on their teaching role, obedience is also required from the child.

Reverence for parents is by virtue of their being co-operators with God and the enormous responsibilities of parents towards the child. Honouring and reverencing parents is a commandment of the Decalogue that stresses the child's duty of honour or obedience towards their parent (Ex 20:12, Deut 5:16). This command is echoed again

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., no. 52.

⁵⁶⁶ B. Goldson and J. Muncie, "Youth Crime and Justice," (2006), [https:// www.researchgate.net/publication/42792899_Youth_Crime_and_Justice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/42792899_Youth_Crime_and_Justice)

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ C. G. Suart, *Nurturing Faith within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia, 2007), p. 40-141.

⁵⁶⁹ GS, no. 48.

in the New Testament in Eph 6:1-3 as the first commandment with a promise. Though reverence is in the inner spirit, its expression is through physical visible signs of honour. Parental respect (*Filio pietas*) derives from gratefulness towards the parents who have enabled them to grow up in grace and wisdom. This is respect that is demonstrated by obedience: “My Son, keep your father’s commandments and do not forsake your mother’s teaching” (Prov 6:20). A wise son obeys his father’s instructions. In obeying parents, God releases the blessing of wellbeing and long life to the child. On the other hand, disobedience to parents is taken as direct disobedience to God, which is sin.

Obedience of the children towards their parents is necessary for domestic order. The parents offer their unquestionable authority in helping the children acquire responsible freedom and by means of obedience, love, and respect towards the parents; the children offer their service of matchless contribution that leads to the creation of an authentic Christian and human family.⁵⁷⁰ This they should do throughout their lives.

4.6.6 Child’s Principal Stages of Development

According to The Pontifical Council for the family, the parenting needs to take into consideration the individualized needs of children and youth at different stages of development and provide the relevant education to meet these particular requirements.⁵⁷¹ These stages include innocence, puberty, adolescence and adulthood as discussed below.

4.6.6.1 Stage of Innocence

At ages five until puberty the children are getting rightly oriented towards the stages for catechism and preparation for sacrament by virtue of discovering the wonders of creation. They accept and see the need to dress and behave modestly. They learn from examples provided by adults and family experience. At this stage, the parents strive to encourage them to assume the spirit of collaboration, generosity, obedience, self-denial, self-reflection and self-inspired. The parents also teach what is wrong and right within a framework of objective standards. A child at the stage of innocence is not particularly interested in sexual matters and “must never be disturbed by unnecessary information

⁵⁷⁰ FC, no. 21.

⁵⁷¹ PCF, no. 77.

about sex.”⁵⁷² Their interest is in other aspects of life. Education in this stage lays a foundation for the children to acquire abilities necessary for self-control later in life.⁵⁷³ However, Peschke notes that paediatricians have judged that all the pedagogical processes before the sixth year are by far more decisive.⁵⁷⁴

4.6.6.2 Puberty Stage

Puberty stage corresponds to the initial stages of adolescence, a stage when parents should be very attentive to the child’s teaching. It is the stage of self-discovery of the inner-self, the time when love feelings are awakened and is also the age of deeper questioning, of searching, of mistrust of others and experiencing setbacks or disappointments.⁵⁷⁵

Without fear, anxiety, and other bothering concerns, the parent should guide the children as they progressively mature physically and psychologically, and through open and trusting dialogue confront their emotional concerns.⁵⁷⁶ Parents should take their respective positions regarding the education of boys and girls that would mature them to the stage of marriage, cautioning of the snares such as temptation to pre-marital sex that they may face in this stage. The parents should teach them how to identify, prepare and deal with the challenges. Through suitable and timely instructions within the confine of the home, the youth should learn the respect due to women and the right time for dealing with sexuality as it was in the traditional Agikūyū society and should be happening in Karūrī Catholic Parish. In this way, they should be equipped to engage in honourable courtship in readiness for marriage.⁵⁷⁷

Parents are advised that in dealing with youth at this stage, they should bear in mind that this is the stage when children are particularly vulnerable to emotional influences by their peers and the outside world. Genuine dialogue will help them in the way they live and in resisting negative outside influence that might compromise their Christian

⁵⁷² Ibid., no. 78-86.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., no. 78-86.

⁵⁷⁴ C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

⁵⁷⁵ PCF, no. 87.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., no. 88.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., no. 93.

faith.⁵⁷⁸ For the dialogue to be effective the parents should be sincere and create no false impression about any issue discussed.

4.6.6.3 Adolescence Stage

Adolescence stage “represents the period of self-projection and therefore the discovery of one's vocation.”⁵⁷⁹ Today, this period tends to be prolonged than in the past. The Pontifical Council reiterates the need for Christian parents to teach their children in such a way to be able to fully perform their roles “according to the vocation received from God” which is the culmination of the parents’ mission. The mission becomes especially important in this stage of a child’s life. This is a significant and decisive moment for the Christian to discern God’s call in the life of the youth.⁵⁸⁰ In deciding their personal vocation, it is not good for the youth to go alone; parental advice is relevant and sometimes is decisive, while seeking the support of a priest or other persons capable of helping them is necessary.⁵⁸¹

This is the stage where the young person enjoys more autonomy in his or her relationships with the members of the family and others outside it. Friendships especially with peers are crucial during this period. Parents should not take away this autonomy but when it is necessary they should be courageous to say “no” and at the same time be sensitive to the youth’s self-esteem. If the adolescence is not clear about anything, he or she will be confused and disturbed in their lives and hindered in the self-discovery process.⁵⁸² A particular concern of the parent should be to teach their children not to be swayed by the social trends that could stifle their appreciation for spiritual realities and to know that the adversary is always prowling seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8-10).⁵⁸³ It is important for the parents to provide their children an explanation whenever necessary of solid points of Christian morality such as the relationship between love and procreation, immorality, and abortion always striving to give their own examples of lived and attractive behaviour models that the children

⁵⁷⁸ PCF, no. 97.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., no. 98.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., no. 98.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., no. 99.

⁵⁸² Ibid., no. 107.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., no. 108.

should emulate.⁵⁸⁴ The Karūrī Catholic Parish parent will assist the child discover his/her identity by being available and accompanying them in their journey.

4.6.6.4 Towards Adulthood

Parenting does not end when the children move from adolescence stage to adulthood. The youth enter the work place where they encounter many different behaviour models. They therefore need consultations with parents as they journey towards adulthood and beyond.⁵⁸⁵ The parents' advice and example is necessary. To cultivate a sense of responsibility in the youth, an open confident dialogue should continue but it should respect their legitimate and necessary autonomy. To be rightly formed, it is imperative for them not to separate God's commandments from their relationships. They should not sever their relations with the Church and Her activities but should intensify it. As Christians they should learn to be committed in the social and cultural aspect of the Church and be keen to choose the right models of life and thought for their future.⁵⁸⁶

This requires the formation of conscience in the youth, to be enlightened about the truth and God's plan. Conscience "must not be confused with a vague subjective feeling or with personal opinion." Having conscience will prompt the children to do good or to avoid evil at the appropriate moment and make right choices. The Council affirms "Moral conscience, present at the heart of the person" which is "man's most secret core and sanctuary" bears witness to truth (1 Peter 3:16).⁵⁸⁷ Therefore the Church is cautious that the teaching children receive during the various rites are in line with Christian principles. Karūrī Catholic Church may not fully achieve the expected results in the different stages of growth due to how the children's programs are tailored.

4.6.7 Instructions on Sex Education

Sex education is a basic right and duty of parents and must be taught under the parents "attentive guidance whether at home or in educational centers chosen and controlled by them."⁵⁸⁸ The Council contends that there is a close link between the person's sexual

⁵⁸⁴ PCF, no. 102.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., no. 109.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., no. 110.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., no. 94-95.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., no. 113.

dimension and his or her moral and ethical values and therefore sex education must bring the child to an awareness and respect for moral values necessary to guarantee their responsible personal growth.⁵⁸⁹ However, parents are well placed more than anyone else to teach their children about sex as they live with them in an atmosphere of love; they uniquely know them in their unrepeatable identity.⁵⁹⁰

Dealing with adolescence questions, parents must make sure the positive moral dimension is always given attention and clearly explained and insisted on. Any defiant tendencies and attitudes will require great prudence and caution starting with a proper evaluation of the situation.⁵⁹¹ The parent is reminded that the Roman Catholic Church emphasizes the cardinal virtue of chastity which should be understood as “purity and temporary stewardship of a precious gift of love, in view of the self-giving realized in each person's specific vocation.”⁵⁹² The Pontifical Council for the Family thus asserts, "it is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to youth, above all in the heart of their own families..."⁵⁹³ The parents should not be discouraged by any situation but place their hope and faith in God and Jesus the redeemer. They should know that the Church is concerned and is always praying for them and their children so that in the exercise of the sovereignty given to them by God, whatever they do without offense they may find favour with the Lord.⁵⁹⁴

4.6.8 Extending Help to Parents

As discussed earlier, the Roman Catholic Church recognizes that the parents remain original and primary, irreplaceable and inalienable educators of their children. Other persons and entities including the Church institutions can only be helping them in this role hence their activities are subsidiary and subordinate in nature requiring the parents' approval and control. This is the right order of cooperation and collaboration in this

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., no. 43.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., no. 7.

⁵⁹¹ PCF, no. 68.2.

⁵⁹² Ibid., no. 4.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., no. 5.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., no. 7.

noble task. This implies that the first assistance from others must be given foremost to the parent and not the child.⁵⁹⁵

The Pontifical Council notes that some parents are lacking in parenting awareness and effort and therefore need support. Those who offer such help must be disposed and prepared to teach the parents and the children, and be consistent with the authentic moral doctrine of the Church.⁵⁹⁶ They must be mature persons in their own Christian state of life and moral reputation, be knowledgeable in details of moral issue and be sensitive to the roles and rights of the parents and family, and the needs of the children and youth.⁵⁹⁷ The central discussion in this section has focused on examining the RCC teaching and theologians' reflections on parenting. In this respect, the final report to Pope Francis by the Synod of Bishops acknowledges the existence of contemporary challenges which are affecting multiple aspects of life including parenting of children and youth.⁵⁹⁸ These are discussed in section 4.8 but first, the study briefly delves into the Church instructions on social media.

4.7 Social Media Instructions

The Catholic Church perceives all media as “gifts of God” meant to unite men in brotherhood, helping people to cooperate with God’s plan for man’s salvation. The advances in social media have not only made it possible to greatly enlarge and enrich men’s mind but also for the Church to propagate and consolidate the kingdom of God. However, the Pontifical Council makes it clear that the Church must avoid a merely censorious attitude towards social media.⁵⁹⁹

The Church has two aims as regards the social media. One is to root for and encourage its right growth and use for edifying the society in light of the general good and in the spirit of commonality. But as social media advances, “the dark side of human nature

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., no. 145.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., no. 146.

⁵⁹⁷ PCF, no. 146.

⁵⁹⁸ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 13.

⁵⁹⁹ PCSC, no. 1, 2.

marred by sin” is witnessed when vices like pornography and violence manifest, and when the youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish are caught up at the expense of their morals.⁶⁰⁰

The second aim relates to the communication within and by the Church.⁶⁰¹ The Church, being the bearer and custodian of Gods revelation must continue to communicate with humanity, ensuring His word is interpreted authentically.⁶⁰² The Church herself is “a *communio* (a communion) of persons and *Eucharistic* communities arising from and mirroring the communion of the Trinity; communication therefore is of the essence of the Church.” Modern media should help the Church in its evangelization work in new ways. This is so even when social media seems to be at odds with the Christian message. It can carry Scripture beyond all barriers and boundaries reaching a wide audience more than ever before.” The Council implores RCC not to be afraid to make use of social and other media to spread the Gospel all over the world.⁶⁰³

If the Church was to use the internet and other social media to communicate the Gospel message, it will be communicating to people formed by the social media culture. This requires the Church to carefully consider the uniqueness of the social media itself with a view to understanding it and tailoring the message for effectiveness especially with the youth who are way ahead with this new technology.⁶⁰⁴

Social media provides encouragement, inspiration and opportunities to Christians for worship at home or elsewhere. It serves as a means for evangelization and catechesis. It also offers some important benefits from a religious perspective which includes information on ideas, religious events and personalities. But the most peculiar benefit is that of immediate and fast access to Scripture and other religious resources placed in the social media by libraries, museums and Churches. Social media broadens the space for the Church to perform important services to both Catholics and non-Catholics alike by transmitting selected useful data. Further, this medium is relevant in many ways for Church programs and activities, both for new evangelization and re-evangelization,

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., no. 3.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., no. 4.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., no. 5.

catechesis, apologetics, governance and administration, the traditional missionary work *Ad gentes* and other kinds of education, news and information, pastoral counselling and spiritual direction.

The Holy See has used social media for many years and encourages Church related groups who have not yet started its use to do so at the earliest opportune time. This is important especially in spreading the Gospel message to the youth who are constantly on the move.⁶⁰⁵ Healey shows how social media has been used for promoting RCC activities such as online SCCs and SCCs Facebook pages for youth in a few parts of Africa.⁶⁰⁶ These new changes brought by social media and other factors affect the parenting effort in the family as supported by the findings of this study.

4.8 Changes Affecting Parenting in the Contemporary Family

Instrumentum Laboris candidly acknowledges the many challenges that the parents face in bringing up their children today which pose difficulty in accepting the Church's teachings.⁶⁰⁷ The challenges call for a determined attention and way forward despite the fact that there is blatant choice to ignore contemporary society's needs and mentality which becomes a problem to parenting in Christian and other families today.⁶⁰⁸ The Pontifical Council for the Family is worried of the general tendency of the culture where youth are encouraged to reflect upon and decide on moral issues "with the greatest degree of autonomy," giving them the idea that the source of morality is man hence they can create the moral code.⁶⁰⁹

Speaking of the present situation and circumstances, Pope Francis warns that the Church can no longer continue to be complacent and calls for a renewal of minds to fit the "signs of time" and abandon the attitude that seeks to retain the status quo even in the evangelization effort in the respective communities. This will take boldness and creativity in re-thinking goals, structures and methods of spreading the Gospel, drawing

⁶⁰⁵ PCF, no. 143.

⁶⁰⁶ J. G. Healey, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Domestic Church in the Context of African Ecclesiology" in A. E. Orobator (Eds.), *The Church We Want, Foundation, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 98.

⁶⁰⁷ IL, no. 15.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., no. 33.

⁶⁰⁹ PCF, no. 143.

from the power of working as a team involving the clergy and the community of Church as “Family of God.”⁶¹⁰ Fogliacco offers encouragement to the family of God by pointing to the Saviour’s suffering on the cross as the hope of victory that the distress should be viewed from, hence its invaluable significance in life and living as revealed by Jesus. It is from the cross of Jesus that the family of God will be liberated, giving hope to the children of God who are its members.⁶¹¹ The following sub-sections discuss the problems affecting parenting today as highlighted by Church doctrine and theologian’s reflections. These are; exposure to social media, sexual education, individualism and new ideology, and lived faith.

4.8.1 Exposure to Social Media

It is noticeable that in most families, abandoning or evading parenting responsibilities is common and is made easier once mass media, television and such are available at home.⁶¹² The youth are justified to use social media because it is more attractive and helps them put to use some free time they have. The duty for fathers and mothers and especially believers is to protect their children from the dangers of the social media by teaching them to practice self-control and restraint, and making personal sacrifices right from their hearts.⁶¹³ This should be the same particularly with the manner of speech and mode of dressing.

The discipline of decency and modesty in dress and speech is very vital for creating suitable atmosphere for growth in moral values. Children should learn to respect their own bodies and dignity of others. In this respect, the parents’ moderate, prudent and critical watchfulness will ascertain immoral attitudes and fashions that violate the moral integrity of the family mostly through the misuse of the mass media.⁶¹⁴ The need to ensure the children and youth are well guided has seen the Roman Catholic Church

⁶¹⁰ E. C. Tamba, *Inculturating the Gospel in Africa: From Adaptation to Inculturation* (Rome: Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoria, 1996), pp. 117-119; EG, no. p. 33.

⁶¹¹ N. Fogliacco, “The Family: An African Metepthor for Trinity and Church,” in C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 142-143.

⁶¹² PCF, no. 56.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, no. 58.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 56; C. Bansikiza, *Restoring Moral Formation in Africa* (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2001), pp. 50-51.

take a clear and fundamental approach to social media in particular the internet. Having guiding principles is important to ensure that children and youth are taught relevant subjects including sex education.

4.8.2 Sex Education

Of the many difficulties encountered by parents today one stands out: that of providing youth a sufficient preparation for adult life, in particular with regard to inculcating into them the true meaning of human sexuality. This is made even more difficult today because the structures that assisted the immediate family to do so are no more. In the earlier days, the general culture permitted this fundamental value to be taught not only by parents but also by close family members and the community. The children have therefore consistently been deprived positive guidance from the community while the parents are un-prepared to give answers to questions youth raise on sexuality.

What is observed today is an eclipse of the truth, which exerts pressure and reduces sex to something common place. The society and mass media are leading in providing information which at most times is “depersonalized, recreational and often pessimistic” and not paying particular attention to the needs at different stages of a child’s development. The provided information often lacks in basic values of life, human and family love and is full of distorted individualistic concept of freedom and ideology.⁶¹⁵

4.8.3 Individualism and New Ideology

The anthropological foundation of the family is a pillar that supports parenting of children. Despite this reality, the same foundation is threatened by individualism and consumerism that have had a profound effect on family relationships leading to a culture far divorced from the traditional one as this study found happening among the Agĩkũyũ of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.⁶¹⁶ The Synod of Bishops lament that there is the “principal tendency in anthropological changes in which individuals in their emotional life and life as a family receive increasingly less support from social structures than in

⁶¹⁵ PCF, no. 1.

⁶¹⁶ B. G. Nabwari and M. T. Katola, “Constraints and Prospects of Inculturation in Kenya,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4, no. 2(2014), pp. 282-29; EG, no. 89-90.

the past.”⁶¹⁷ They refer to this development as inflated individualism which gives the individual the idea that one can make oneself apart from others, and thus weakening family ties that are necessary for passing values to children and youth.⁶¹⁸ Coupled with this, as people endeavour to maintain a certain freedom and life-style, consumerism rears its head becoming another obstacle to maintaining healthy family relationships for raising morally upright individuals in an increasingly social media dominated environment.⁶¹⁹

Further, threat is posed by the “gender” ideology which refuses to accept the difference and reciprocity in nature of man and woman.⁶²⁰ According to Cho-Ping, ideology is a moral belief that deviates from an on-going culture, and in one way for this study, a deviation from the Agikūyū family set-up where different individuals should bring their uniqueness to parenting to complement the parents’ effort.⁶²¹ It is not un-common today to find single parenting by choice where the father’s contribution is consciously left out of the child’s life.

The Bishops note that this unfortunate trend of single-parent families and temporary marriages creates a situation where the children lack the appropriate role models, leading to families requiring the Church’s attention and pastoral care.⁶²² On the same matter, a prolific writer on family matters, Wachege, discusses more than thirty categories where children are brought up by single mothers.⁶²³ Going by the above and what has been discussed elsewhere in this chapter, a serious thought on the way forward is to explain the consequence of these issues to the youth. An emphasis needs to be

⁶¹⁷ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 13.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁹ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, pp. 14-15.

⁶²⁰ PCF, no. 15.

⁶²¹ P. C. Choi-Ping. *Ideology and Education: A Case Study of the Major Debates and Ideological Conflicts in the Development of Contemporary Chinese Education* (PhD Thesis, London: University of London, 1984).

⁶²² Synod of Bishops, *Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization: Preparatory Document Vatican City, Extraordinary General Assembly, (2013)*, <http://www.catholic-dbn.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Synod-of-Bishops.pdf>

⁶²³ Read more in P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-religio-philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003), pp. 130-151.

placed on the Word of God upon which the family finds a foundation.⁶²⁴ To such an end, the Christians must be awake to their “instinct of the faithful, prompted upright moral conscience and wisdom.”⁶²⁵ This will make much contribution to parenting especially at a time like today when such a “gender” ideology is in vogue.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis laments that some current Church programs promote ideologies separated from biological truths about male and female. According to him, such ideologies create an image that an individual can change over time. He cautions that attempt should not be made to put asunder aspects of reality that cannot be separated. This is best left to the Creator who formed man before he came into being. The Pope’s views stir a discussion among the laity especially because he suggests that the Church should accept and respect reality and treat people whose lives appear different from the ideal, as a gift from God needing protection.

4.8.4 Lived Faith

The Synod of Bishops acknowledges the decline of religion in some societies thereby reducing the witness and mission of the modern Christian family in the world.⁶²⁶ The Christian faith is still strong and alive and the Church should keep it so by staying focused on Her call of ensuring the practice of religion is Gospel oriented by providing guidance to families.

The Synod laments that today some parents are cautious where the subject of religion is concerned to avoid conflict. These parents feel insecure and do not pass on faith to their children but relegate this important task to religious institutions. This is an element of weakness which is witnessed particularly in young parents.⁶²⁷ Pope Francis stresses on the importance of transmission of faith. Parents are called, as St. Augustine once said “not only to bring children into the world but also to bring them to God so that through baptism they can be reborn as children of God and receive the gift of faith.”⁶²⁸

⁶²⁴ IL, no. 29.

⁶²⁵ GS, no. 52.

⁶²⁶ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 14.

⁶²⁷ IL, no. 135.

⁶²⁸ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Lumen Fidei* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), no. 43.

While reflecting on these reasons for the difficulty in accepting Church teaching, the Synod insisted that catechesis on marriage and family in the present times, should not be exclusively limited to preparing couples for marriage but a dynamic catechetical program is of necessity, one that is experiential in character and through personal testimony demonstrates the beauty of family according to the Gospel and Magisterium of the Church documents.⁶²⁹

4.9 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The RCC has a comprehensive teaching that touches on all aspects of family and parenting as documented in RCC doctrine and the selected theologians' reflections. The documents show that the Church places a lot of importance on the family and that God chose it as the primary unit to nurture life. This is well articulated through an analysis of the family in the sacred Scriptures. The teachings suggest that the family is the right environment for children and youth to learn in under the responsibility of their parents assisted by other family members. The review gave insight into the Christian virtues children are expected to learn as they grow through the different stages to maturity and the challenges affecting the learning of such virtues. The influence of social media on the teaching of moral values to children and youth was discussed.

The Church documents examined include the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pontifical Council for the Family, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Redemptoris Missio*, *Familiaris Consortio*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Instrumentum Laboris*, *Lineamenta*, *Ecclesia in Africa*, *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Mulieris Dignitatis*, and *Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*. Besides, several works of selected theologians are reviewed including those of Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II, Pope Paul VI, Latourelle, Nyamiti, Wachege, Murungi, Ndiaye, Dinh, Getui, Magesa, Mbiti, Saldarriaga, Álvaro, Suart, Boff, Foglicco Moltmann, Karanja and Bansikiza. The next chapter examines the Roman Catholic "Family of God" Church image and inculturation approach for transmitting moral values.

⁶²⁹ IL, no. 19.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC FAMILY OF GOD CHURCH IMAGE AND INCULTURATION APPROACH IN TRANSMITTING MORAL VALUES

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter scrutinized RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections on family and parenting with regard to teaching moral values. The results revealed that the RCC doctrine is rich in family and parenting values. The current chapter examines the theological and ecclesial understanding of "Family of God," ecclesiology of the Church as "Family of God" and strength of the Church as "Family of God." It further explores small Christian communities as the basic structure of the Church as the "Family of God." It moves on to discuss the definition and meaning of the term "inculturation," Vatican II's instructions on inculturation, post-conciliar Magisterial documents on inculturation, Pope John Paul II's instructions on inculturation, related insights on inculturation, hindrances to inculturation and chapter's concluding remarks.

5.2 Theological, Ecclesiological Understanding of "Family of God"

The notion of family as an image for the Church is not new to the history of ecclesiology since the metaphor of family has been used biblically, theologically and liturgically to describe the Church. Tradition and Scripture are the two foundations of theology and Christian faith and upon them every theological treatise must begin and be grounded in. The Bible is normally consulted for support of any proposed theological concept or for backing up a newly introduced Church practice. In the light of this, the study will consider the traditional and biblical bases of the family as an image of the Church which is important for transmitting moral values to children and youth.⁶³⁰ Further, for the study to comprehensively deal with its task of inculcating the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values with the RCC doctrine on family and parenting, understanding of Church as family is necessary. The study will now look into the Scriptural foundations of Church as family in the Old and New testaments.

⁶³⁰ N. D. Tien, *"The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam,"* (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, 2006), p. 9.

To establish the understanding of the “Family of God” as an ecclesiological image, the family metaphor will be discussed in terms of Israel being the family of God as demonstrated in the Old Testament and the family being a Christian community of believers or household of God in the New Testament. The two biblical metaphors for the relationship among the people of God and the relationship between God and His people are; the Church as household or family of God, and the Church as Israel. The understanding of the term “family” or “household” differs in the biblical era from the modern time, and it can be noted here that no word is found in the Scriptures which corresponds to the concept “family” in modern society. This is so because the word “family” or “household” in the English translation of the Greek and Jewish terminologies does not hold identical meaning to the original word in the Scripture.⁶³¹ In discussing the biblical concept of the “Family of God”, the study creates an understanding of the metaphor of the “Family of God” and as such provides a justification for its use. The word “family” or “household” is used interchangeably in the text.

5.2.1 Family of God in Old Testament

Metaphors of familial relationships between Israel and God appear severally in the Old Testament where God is described as the Father of Israel and all Israelite families as people of God (Gen 4:23; Jer 3:4-20; 31:1; Isa 42:4). It is necessary to note that metaphors associated with Israel as God’s family must be understood in the context of the Israelite family in the OT. Israel’s adoption to become God’s family is enabled by the covenant between God and Israel found in Amos 3:1-3. The concept of family in Israel was broader than that of the contemporary society like Karūrī Catholic Parish, since for the Israelite the family implies the meaning of a community and ancestral relationships and traditions. The word “family” when taken to mean household should be interpreted and understood in the Israelite context in this study.

Both the family structure and family values are vital for describing the Israelite family in order to have a complete image of the family as portrayed in the OT. The Israelite family had three structures namely: Tribe (*shevet*) which was primary, clan (*misphah*) which was an association of families, the extended family (*bayith*) which was a tertiary

⁶³¹ Ibid.; N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 245-292.

structure. These three divisions were social institutions based on the household or family relationships and formed Israel as a nation or a people in the social and political sense, or as a congregation assembly in the religious sense.⁶³²

The term *bayith* has two meanings, one in a narrow sense and the other in a broader sense. In its narrow sense, Chukwu explains that *bayith* could mean a nuclear family, that is, a man (*abh*), his wife (*ishsah*), his children including adopted ones, his dependent relatives, and his servants and guests. In a broader sense *bayith* denotes a tribe or the descendants of a person. In this sense the tribe or the descendants are often called “the house of” like ‘the house of David’ or ‘the house of Israel’.⁶³³ The term *bayith* also emphasizes Israel’s position as God’s people, with kinship and nation meaning the same thing.⁶³⁴ Further, the people of Israel descend from one common ancestor, Abraham, who gives them a Jewish identity and status of a chosen people, in other words kinship with God creates a shared bond.

The next group of family members was the dead because they were considered as still belonging to the family as ancestors (Judges 2:10; Gen 25; 8; 17; 49: 29-33; 1 Kings 14:13; 2 Kings 22:20). The unborn children were also considered part of family since they were among those to inherit the land promised by Yahweh (Gen 12:2, 13:14; 14-17; Ps 22:30-31). Other family members that were considered marginal were labourers, slaves, debtors, sojourners, orphans and Levites, who all formed the family of the master or head of the family (Ex 20:8-10; Deut 5:12-15; Judges 17-18). The Hebrew concept of family provides one of a commonly used analogy for the relationship between God and Israel. Hence, in several instances in the Hebrew Bible, the people of Israel are referred to as the house of Israel (*bet Yisra’el*) (2 Sam 12:18; Jer 11:10; Isa 18:14; Eze 2:3). Israel was referred to as the House of Israel by the prophets in the Old Testament, for instance Ezekiel used this mode of address mostly while referring to the Israelites.⁶³⁵

⁶³² N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 245-292.

⁶³³ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 113.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

This Israelite family structure remained throughout the historic era almost unchanged which was made possible through the covenant with God. The concept of the House of Israel gained impetus with the covenant which was mediated on Mount Sinai between the people of Israel and God. This is the covenant that pronounced the terms under which Israel assumed the position as “people of God” and gave Israel the identity of “God’s chosen people” and so became one united household under God, bound into unified political and religious community. The covenant also turned the House of Israel into a theocentric community. In confirming the Sinai covenant with Israel, God spoke the following words:

You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites (Ex 19:4-6).

Looking at *bayith* in the light of its meaning, one can conclude that the Jewish fabric of its family life was interwoven with their religious tradition. This is explained further by the fact that the Jewish festivals were family-oriented and instantaneously communal. This is how Chukwu explains it: “These festivals and religious ceremonies bound Jews both to their own families and to the larger community of fellow Jews with whom they shared such ethnic and familial ties” and therefore “the family became as it were, the conduit and principle place for the transmission of Judaism.”⁶³⁶

It is important to understand the two concepts of *bayith* and *mispaha*, in their usage in the NT, there is no clearly defined distinction. None of the terms represents something as limited or exclusive as the contemporary nuclear family which permeates throughout many communities in Africa including the Agĩkũyũ.⁶³⁷ The understanding of the family in the OT is more inclusive, that is, as shown before, it included those related by consanguinity, hired servants, sojourners, and others. Israel lived in a covenanted household pledging allegiance to their God, Jehovah, amidst competing deities. God revealed Himself to them as the God of their forefathers and patriarchs; Abraham, Isaac

⁶³⁶ J. M. G. Barclay, “The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and Early Christianity,” in H. Moxnes (Ed.), *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 66-80.

⁶³⁷ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 85.

and Jacob, and Israel addressed God as the God of their fathers (Ex 3:6) thus affirming their inter-relatedness and unity.

5.2.1.1 Structure and Functions of the Israelite Family

The Israelites had a hierarchical and patriarchal family structure in which the man headed the family. The two major functions of the Israelite family were to nurture and to educate. It was within the family that all its members, the young, elderly, widows and orphans were taken care of. The relationships between the family members were marked by undeniable love that could only have a motive from God. Children were also obligated to obey, respect, care and honour the parents as the fourth commandment required of them (Ex 20:12). The nurturing function extended to include care and charity to the poor who were received into the family. The family would at the appropriate season use their tithe collections to care for the foreigner, orphans and widows (Deut 14: 28-29; 26:12). Thus the nurturing responsibility was more than a social function. It was also a divine obligation commanded by God (Ex 20:22-23).

The other crucial function of the family was education of the children. The education was conducted by parents within the family. It highlighted the authority of parents over their children in playing the crucial role as educators of their children in general and in religious matters. Just like in Agikūyū tradition, the father communicated to his children the Israelite traditions such as the Passover (Ex 12:26), the law of Yahweh (Deut 6:7; 20-24) and this can be equated to the teaching of the catechesis at home. Through the Passover celebrations, Yahweh's commands, covenant and religious traditions were taught and passed on to the successive generations. Children also received training on social customs and skills on household tasks. All these would be passed on to the succeeding generation without fail (Prov 1:8; Ex 10:2; Deut 4:9).

The divine love for one another within the Israelite family should be the model of the Church members, as the "Family of God". God's attitude towards unfaithful Israel was not one of rejection but of forgiveness and the desire to re-establish the covenant between Him and the Israelite family.⁶³⁸ Therefore the metaphor Israel as "Family of

⁶³⁸ J. A. Dearman, "The Family in the Old Testament (1998)," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, 52, no. 2(1998), pp. 117–129.

God” is used not in its sociological form and meaning but in the theological one which is important. Thus the family structure is not the normative structure for the Church today, but its human experience is an illustration of God’s loving relationship with His people and reveals more about the nature of God.⁶³⁹ This family structure also has the relevance of describing the characteristics of the Church in the NT as a community in which care and love for all people is included.

5.2.2 Family of God in the New Testament

The above background on the Israelite family provides an understanding of the NT family because it continued the values of the OT family. The Gospel aims to re-define the family in moral and religious terms.⁶⁴⁰ In particular the Gospel according to St. Mark reveals that the family relations were relativized for the purpose of being a Jesus follower.⁶⁴¹ Jesus laid emphasis on family values such as honouring parents (Mt 15-4), love (Lk 7: 11-15) and faithfulness in marriage (Mk 10: 2-12). This demonstrates clearly that the Gospel teachings acknowledged, protected and tried to transform the natural family into a new family despite its social status and immense cultural barriers. The new family therefore relativizes the importance of family members who need to be developed in line with God’s plan and purpose. Jesus formed a new family with a community of disciples with Christian characteristics which are lasting and more universal. As explained by Luke, Jesus formed the new family on the foundation of faith, which is by listening and doing God’s Word. The new family members are brothers, sisters and children of God (Matt 23:8-12; 6:9). Continuing to describe this new family further, Tien says:

Mark’s community is one where people are to be the last of all and servants of all (Mk 9:36; 10:42-45), where children who often symbolize the powerless, are to be accepted (Mk 9:36; 10:13-16), where husbands and wives cannot treat each other as property to be discarded (Mk10:1-12), and where wealth and its subsequent division it brings about make it almost impossible to enter the Kingdom (Mk 10:17-27).⁶⁴²

⁶³⁹ N. D. Tien, *The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam* (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, 2006), p. 18.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁴¹ S. Guijarro, “The Family in Jesus Movement,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin A Journal of Bible and Theology*, 34, no. 3 (2004), pp. 114-115.

⁶⁴² N. D. Tien, *The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam* (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, 2006), p. 21.

In this new family Jesus requested his disciples to renounce titles of honour, such as Rabbi, Master or Father (Mtt 23:8-12). He criticizes self-seeking habits like authoritarian attitudes, or the temptation to seek ecclesial prestige. He showed His disciples in word and deeds what example to follow of His own model of servanthood. The patriarchal domination is not permissible in this new family but only fraternity, motherliness and childlikeness before the Father must be practiced in Christian family (Lk 22:27; MK 10:45; JN 13;1-3).⁶⁴³ The teaching of Jesus on the new Christian family set the standard for the Church to the extent that the early Church took in orphans, widows (Acts 6:1, 1 Tim 5:3; Jas 1:27) and also those that broke from their biological families for the sake of discipleship (Mtt 10:34-39; Mk 13:12-13; Lk 12:51-53), and in this way the Church was considered the disciples' true family.

The NT authors often used the term *oikos* (house) while addressing believers as family. In the NT Church, Christian theology was transmitted through the means of the images of God the Father, Jesus the son, children of God, sister and brother among others. These images did not only transmit theology but also became a means of constructing a Church with family characteristics. This shows the central role that the metaphor of "family" played in the understanding of the Church by the early Christians.⁶⁴⁴

In seeking to give a new orientation to the people of Israel, Jesus uses some familial terms. Mark records that Jesus' presence with his disciples can be likened to that of a bridegroom among his friends (Mk 2:19-30). The early Church used terms that do not directly designate "Family of God" but that had connotation of a family, for instance the term "body of Christ" which makes most appearances in Paul's writings. The NT describes body of Christ as people who are united in Christ through baptism (1Cor 6:15); the house of God may be described, as an image that comes close to the family of God, since 'House' has the meaning of a family line. The NT refers to the house of God as Christian community or Children of God. Christians call God *Abba* Father, and they are co-heirs with Jesus the Son of God and first born. In the book of Acts the term brothers or sisters in Christ is commonly used. From the above examples, it can be

⁶⁴³ Ibid., p. 23.

⁶⁴⁴ C. Mhagama, "The Church as Family of God: A Biblical Foundation?," in P. Ryan (Ed.), *The Model of the Church of "Church-as-Family": Meeting the African Challenge* (Nairobi: CUEA, 1999), p. 36-45.

concluded that because of their faith, members of the early Church regarded themselves as a new brotherhood and sisterhood.

Other than expressing itself as a family through the above described terms, the New Testament Church adopted a style of living which could be likened to the concept of family. Such styles include sharing meals, which was a symbol of solidarity. Jesus also shared meals with different people (Mk 2:13-17). This was a revolutionary act of the early Church because both Jew and Gentile shared a meal with only faith as the binding factor (Acts 11:19-30). The early Church also gathered in private residences which led to ‘house Churches’, examples being the house of Priscilla in Rome (Rm 16:5) and Aquila in Ephesus (1Cor 16:19). The “house Church” was founded on the household structure of the Jewish and Graeco-Roman societies. Whenever the Church members gathered in a family house fellowship they had an experience of being a new family, a family of Christ.⁶⁴⁵

The early Church shared everything in common. They sold their possessions and distributed to those in need (Acts 2:44-45). This sharing was geared towards creating solidarity in one family as it was the case of the Church in Macedonia which supplied Paul with goods for distribution to those in need elsewhere (2Cor 8-9). Overall then, it can be said that the words and actions of Jesus were directed towards formation of a new brotherhood and sisterhood with every believer in God and doer of His Will.⁶⁴⁶ All who do the Will of God will become sisters, brothers and mothers to Jesus (Mt 3:35).

The House Church referred to by Apostle Paul (1Cor 16:19) is a further guiding exemplar of a “Family of God.” In the Scripture (Col 3:17–25; Eph 6:1–9), the family is exhorted and urged to love each other, worship together, forgive each other and do tasks together in the name of Christ. In effect Paul’s writings in the NT have become the cornerstone of the domestic Church more so as they lay down how Christian families should live out their calling in Christ.⁶⁴⁷ The new Church family reveals the

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ C. G. Suart, *Nurturing Faith within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools* (Published PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia, 2007), p. 34.

relationships among the Church members and the Church characteristics, adopts the structure and spirit of Christian family and shows the universality of the Church since it encompasses all people including children and youth, and this should enable it to triumph over the negative features found in the human family.

Overall, the family or household of God and the Israelite family both have strong Biblical foundations that benefit the ecclesiological concept of the Church as “Family of God” in terms of understanding and implication. Both Israel and Church as God’s family metaphors lay emphases on relationships, stewardship and brotherhood which are modeled on God’s relationship with His people. Such positive values need to be applied to the “Family of God” Church model so that some shortcomings of the Israelite family and the house Church can be overcome to avoid problems when such values are applied uncritically to the modern day Church. In other words, the model of these institutions may provide direction in the implementation of the ecclesiological concept of Church as “Family of God” in the contemporary Church.

5.3 Ecclesiology of the Church as Family of God

The Exhortation EA (1995) commended the development of an ecclesiology of Church as “Family of God” alongside other Church images. In their message, the ecclesiological concept of Church as a family has its origin from Trinity, adopts the cultural characteristics of the African family and is expressed through SCCs and is directed to evangelization through the promotion of justice and peace.⁶⁴⁸

Church as “Family of God” is an ecclesial concept that is based on theological and anthropological foundations. The first ground for development of this concept is the anthropological aspect since it refers to the African extended family and its values. The African family has all through been one that is extended where close relationships exist between both its living and dead members. The family has deep roots in the African culture and is also the image of humanity as a whole.⁶⁴⁹ It is God who builds up His

⁶⁴⁸ EA, no. 59-62.

⁶⁴⁹ B. Kiriswa, “African model of the Church as Family: Implications on Ministry and Leadership,” *African Ecclesiological Review*, 43, no. 3(2001), pp. 99-108.

family and through evangelization humanity is invited to participate in the very life of the Trinity (1Cor 15:28).⁶⁵⁰

Coming to the theological foundation of the concept of Church as “Family of God,” the message of Bishops from Africa emphasized that this concept has its origin in the Holy Trinity, which is also a divine family or community. It follows therefore that the Church reflects the community or family of the Triune God. This strengthens the anthropological foundation of the concept of Church as “Family of God,” and from this Trinitarian foundation all implications of ecclesiological model of Church as “Family of God” are derived. Moreover, African Churches promote the ecclesiological model of the Church as family not only for the purpose of evangelism but also for the purpose of inculturation.

The Synod came to the conclusion that the SCCs should be way of being Church as family; that the parishes and communities should be divided into small groups where people will gather and share the Gospel message together, share their lives and ask together the question “what has Jesus Christ to say to our lives?” and in this way people can deepen their faith in Christ. In the SCCs the faithful can actively participate in the life of the Church, through developing of new ministries such as ministry of marriage, healing, poor, sick, catechesis and reconciliation. The family model makes it possible to live an interactive life, a good that is not found in other Church models.⁶⁵¹

In elaborating the title of the Church as “Family of God,” Tien says that it is not a matter of psychological tactics, but rather it is of fidelity to the Church’s own identity. In the Church, people do not merely feel, but they truly, deeply and ontologically belong to the family of God because they really become children of the Father in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit who gives life in and through baptism.” This is a great treasure in what the Church should offer to the people. The Holy Spirit takes the

⁶⁵⁰ P. Kanyandogo, “Rethinking African Ecclesiological Challenges from People’s Rights and Participation,” in C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 105.

⁶⁵¹ P. Lwaminda, “The Church as Family and the Quest for Justice and Peace in Africa,” in C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 265.

task of inspiring “the communion of faith, hope and charity” among people so that they can be united into one family of God amid tensions of human beings.⁶⁵²

5.4 Strength of the Church as Family of God

The “Family of God” model helps in providing better understanding of a reality that is complex, for instance Jesus often used a cluster of models to make understandable the Kingdom of God. The study chooses this model because through the family of God image, Christians can find their place and feel really at home. It is relevant as a basis for incarnating Christian life and the Christian message in the Agĩkũyũ social-cultural context as far as inculcating moral values into children and youth is concerned.

Peschke makes it clear that the strength of the family as a domestic sanctuary is that it passes on the faith, offers common prayer to God, and translates daily its religious convictions.⁶⁵³ It is here where all family members exercise the *priesthood of the baptized* by “reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life and self-denial and active charity.”⁶⁵⁴ Moreover, the family offers the base structure for socializing and teaching children and youth moral values. The “Family of God” Church model allows the moral teaching not to be separated from religious beliefs and instructions. It would be imprudent to imagine Christians living without the reforming power of the Word of God.

Ecclesia in Africa discusses the African family as the most effective agent of evangelization for the Church. Dialogue with the African cultures, in which the family is overwhelmingly treasured, is a dialogue that is considered a new way of being a Church in Africa. The African family, as the strength of society and bearer of the heritage of humanity has many values and when the family is Christian, it becomes the Church at home or the domestic Church. This model promotes the spirit of disinterested service, at the same time develops solidarity, fraternity and a common goal aimed towards transforming the Church as well as society. Healey agrees with this and says

⁶⁵² N. D. Tien, *The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam* (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, 2006), p. 9, 61; N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 245-292.

⁶⁵³ CCC, no. 1656.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 1657.

that the key central values of the African culture and life are participation, community, human relations and family which are essence of the “Family of God” Church model.⁶⁵⁵ When the family model is concretized in Church life as SCC, it ceases to be just a notion or a theory that cannot affect lives of the faithful in a positive way.

The model of the Church as “Family of God” challenges the Africans to rise up to the problems that threaten the survival of family and society such as parents abandoning their roles. The social aspect of the Gospel is as important as other aspects; the Church should confront poverty, negative self-image, ethnocentrism, embezzlement and looting of the common good and so forth, which all afflict the family and lives of children and youth in one way or another. Recovering the priceless, vital position of the family in Africa through the “Family of God” Church model will lead to recognition and appreciation of people’s oneness, solidarity, and communion which should be in existence in one family of God. This image of Church also challenges everyone to recognize and appreciate the gift of family and the value of each individual. It urges each to shun individualism, to realization of brotherhood and sisterhood of all people. When this is properly taught to Karūrī Catholic Parish families they will benefit in their parenting endeavour. The reading of Scripture as it is done in the SCCs within the same Parish ensures the Gospel message continues to reach God’s people in their base settings.

5.5 SCCs as the Basic Structure of the Church as Family of God

Chukwu explains that the creation of the SCCs is anchored on the need to break the anonymity that encompasses parish structures and also to allow Christians to divide the fellowship and share the word relating it to their experiences.⁶⁵⁶ It can rightly be pointed out that SCCs originated from the decision to implement the Pastoral and Missionary Vision, that is, Vatican II’s new Communion Ecclesiology; ecclesiology of the Church as People of God.⁶⁵⁷ This implies all the faithful fulfill their vocation and mission in the

⁶⁵⁵ J. Healey, Radio Interview at Marino House, Nairobi 2017, Aired on 12 January 2018.

⁶⁵⁶ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 178.

⁶⁵⁷ J. G. Healey, “Historical Development of Small Christian Communities/Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa,” (2012), <http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/africa/africa-continent>; J. Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1994), pp. 319-20.

Church, denoting a change from the priest- based apostolate to a people-based apostolate that demands that the priest assumes the role of a “community- minded inspirational minister.”⁶⁵⁸

Chukwu concurs with the Bishops’ idea of creating SCCs and provides further insights. He asserts that the family model of the Church implies that the Church must truly be family in operation and structure. This image of Church recommends the creation of SCCs so that the needs of the members are sufficiently met, evangelization promoted and the individual’s faith deepened.⁶⁵⁹

The Acts of the Apostles describe well the structure of the early Church where the faithful lived as a community. However, the awareness of being a community faded with time and gave way to another way of being Church, as Azevedo rightly observes “the Church became more heretical, stratified, reflecting the stratification of power and authority in civil society. All these factors contributed to the eclipse of any sense of community.”⁶⁶⁰ But by way of SCCs the Church can be said to be one large family of God since SCCs are spontaneous, vibrant groups with little hierarchical structures and a faith based response to the marginalized and poor people within the Roman Catholic Church and society. This promotes and encourages communal parenting of children and youth.

Catechesis Tradendae considers the SCCs as a suitable locus for catechesis. The Exhortation *Christifidles Laice* of 1988 refers to SCCs as “true expression of ecclesial communion and centers for evangelization.”⁶⁶¹ The Encyclical *Redemptoris Missior* of 1990 describes the strength of SCCs as “force for evangelization and Christian formation center.”⁶⁶² All these speak of SCCs as an effective way of promoting participation, close human relations, disinterested service, experience of fraternity, and

⁶⁵⁸ Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1994), pp. 319-20.

⁶⁵⁹ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017).

⁶⁶⁰ M. Azevedo, *Basic ECC Communities in Brazil: The Challenge of a New Way of Being Church* (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 1987), pp. 60-61.

⁶⁶¹ CT, no. 34.

⁶⁶² RM, no. 52-54.

communion just like in the African extended family, and enabling the Church as family to realize its full potential.⁶⁶³ All this gives advantage to parenting. Therefore, the ecclesiology of SCCs is a shift in ecclesiology, thus is a new way of being Church. In building SCCs, the function of the family is of great significance since “Church begins at home, not at the parish.”⁶⁶⁴ The Church as a family is an approach in contributing to building the Church in Africa and to understanding the mystery of the Church.

5.5.1 Activities and Relevance of Small Christian Communities

The SCC still remains attached to the local and universal Church, thereby remaining valid.⁶⁶⁵ They provide the laity the room to play their roles and take responsibility in the Church. First and foremost, they are places of evangelization and re-evangelization. They make a good environment for the re-evangelization of parents that have neglected their parenting role and the youth who have thrown away morality in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

SCCs advance the model of the Church as family in that it is a means of organizing the Church right from the grassroots practically and rationally. This is again because organizing the SCC as a communion of members of a large family in a given area resonates with Africans since African families are large and inclusive. Concerning the same, Pope Paul says:

Primary they should be places engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God’s Word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ’s love for everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups.⁶⁶⁶

The SCCs have qualities of being built on the Word of God, praying, and being a meditating and sharing community. It is by understanding what Jesus is saying in the Word to them that they get to identify themselves with the victory that God gives in

⁶⁶³ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), pp. 24-25.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 178.

⁶⁶⁶ EA, no. 89.

their respective circumstances and so grow closer to God in relationship. In the SCCs, the faithful can actively participate in the life of the Church through developing of new ministries such as ministry of marriage, healing, poor, sick, catechesis, reconciliation and justice within the Church and outside it. The family model makes it possible to live an interactive life, a good that is not found with other Church models.⁶⁶⁷ Chukwu explains that these activities bind the Christians together, deepen solidarity and raise consciousness of being members of the family of God, leading to genuine evangelization of African communities.⁶⁶⁸ In this regard, the SCC as a community would well be mindful of the youth moral decadence and not be indifferent but resolve to participate in communal parenting.

Ecclesiology of SCCs provides the appropriate environment for the Church as God's family to operate since it fosters brotherhood and sharing among members, for this ecclesiology is relevant for spiritual leadership and the structure in the Church as family. It is also emphasized for its concern for socio-cultural issues in society. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning here that each ecclesiology which describes and promotes some aspects of the Church as family has weaknesses and strengths.

5.5.2 SCCs in Karūrī Catholic Parish

Though not everyone participates in the SCCs in Karūrī Catholic Parish, those who do so believe that the group gives them a platform or opportunity to receive help in dealing with the social issues they face and especially that of runaway youth morality. Like in an African extended family where there is solidarity and care for one another, the SCC is meant to rely on these qualities to help in issues touching on parenting among others. The respondents were all in agreement that SCCs are important for fellowship, prayers, and for moral support. It was also noted that despite all the good these qualities bring, there is a feeling that love, unity, agreement and care lack in the dealings of SCCs.

⁶⁶⁷ P. Lwaminda, "The Church as Family and the Quest for Justice and Peace in Africa," in C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 265.

⁶⁶⁸ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 178.

In the SCC, marriage and family catechesis, and, pastoral care are also conducted though rarely. Teachings on marriage and family life are once in a while conducted by the priest, catechist or the sisters. Teachings on family life are based on the Church instructions towards an improved married life. However, for those who are interested in partaking the sacrament of marriage, their preparation in terms of instructions is done at the Parish. In the SCC, parents are reminded of their important role as the first educators of their children. Pastoral care in the SCCs involves evangelization and forming strong Christian marriages that can be a good basis for proper parenting of children and youth. Bible sharing and reflection is the centerpiece of all SCCs in formation within the community structures which is the goal of inculturation discussed next.

5.6 Definition and Meaning of the Term Inculturation

Magesa, after assessing the state of inculturation in East Africa reveals that Christianity has not yet reached its full expression in Africa, although there have been efforts by various Churches to make Christianity reflect African life and values in every aspect through inculcation.⁶⁶⁹ The term inculturation first appeared in a papal document in 1979 called *Catechesis Tradendae (CT)* and the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio (RM)*, promulgated by Pope John Paul II. The document is considered the *magnum opus* on inculturation, in which inculturation is defined as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their insertion in Christianity in the various human cultures.”⁶⁷⁰ This definition is closely similar to Fr. Arrupe’s definition that is widely quoted in literature and one that the study adopted. Arrupe defines inculturation as:

The incarnation of Christian life and of 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 (this alone would be 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.’⁶⁷¹

Arrupe’s definition shows that every aspect of human experience in life is affected by the process of inculturation, and that faith interacts with the experiences of human life

⁶⁶⁹ L. Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004).

⁶⁷⁰ RM, no. 52.

⁶⁷¹ P. C. Panganiban, “Inculturation and the Second Vatican Council,” *Landas Journal of Royola School of Theology*, 18, no. 1(2004), pp. 60-93.

enabling for instance the Christian values to reinforce proper parenting and family life. God has given every culture including that of the Agĩkũyũ, beautiful true religious elements that allow expression of the Christian experience. The anthropological data gathered on Agĩkũyũ provides a basis for dialogue with the Gospel message.

The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar, on making their consideration on the meaning of the term “inculturation” as defined by Arrupe, suggested that in the process of inculturation, diligence and prudence should be employed so as to protect the essential nature of the supracultural components associated with the Gospel from loss or destruction but secure and interpret them guided by the Holy Spirit, inculturating them into new cultures.⁶⁷² In agreement with the Bishops, Barney continues to show that since “God is constant, absolute and un-derived, therefore that which is initiated and affirmed to people in God’s covenant and redeeming acts is constant.” But the forms through which people respond to God are tied to their culture and therefore are relative.⁶⁷³ The approach designed to address the subject matter requires focus on a particular culture that of the Agĩkũyũ, as this study does.

The people’s response to God can vary from culture to culture because each society does express the supracultural in forms peculiar to its cultural structure. Thus the integrity of a culture will be preserved by a relevant expression of God-man relationship but at the same time will in no way compromise the nature and essence of the supracultural.⁶⁷⁴

The relevance of inculturation in Christian evangelization is inferred when Jesus commissioned his disciples to preach the Gospel to all people in the world in their own socio-religious cultural backgrounds. Of all the ethnic communities living in Kenya, Christianity is obliged to take the Gospel message to each, in response to Jesus’ great commission “Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all creature” (Mark 16:15).

⁶⁷² G. L. Barney, “The Supercultural and the Cultural: Implications for Frontier Mission,” in R. P. Beaver (Ed.), *The Gospel and Frontier Peoples* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973), p. 57.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.; A. Shorter, *African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation?* (Michigan: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), pp. 145-161.

⁶⁷⁴ A. Shorter, *African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation?* (Michigan: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), pp. 145-161.

Inculturation is explained by Waliggo as the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and His message of salvation understood by people of every culture, locality and time.⁶⁷⁵ By implication, inculturation is the re-formulation of Christian doctrine and life into peoples' thought patterns, and is a continuous undertaking to make Christianity be at home in different cultures. The interviewed Church leaders affirmed this by indicating that indeed the RCC in Karūrī Catholic Parish takes inculturation seriously and one practical example is the formation of SCCs and use of local language in the sermons.

The goal of inculturation is to allow people to express their faith in God within the structures of their own culture and not a borrowed one. A thorough understanding of individual cultures by preachers is a pre-requisite for real inculturation to take place since inculturation must take place in all spheres of human life, as they allow the Gospel message to purify and enrich their cultures. In this way parents of Karūrī Catholic Parish can bring up morally upright children, who know right from wrong as Christians still living within their Agīkūyū culture. Incarnation of Jesus helps to understand how inculturation changes people while still living within their cultures including new cultures like that of the youth.

Jesus and His Jewish culture can be taken as the Inculturation Commission, for the approach of Jesus to the culture of His people should be the yardstick and source of inspiration for African Christians to assimilate the Gospel message, while remaining faithful to all authentic African values. Jesus was born and grew up as a Jew. As a faithful Jew, He went to the Synagogue on the Sabbath (Mk 1:21, 6:2; Lk 4:16, 13:10), was among the pilgrims to Jerusalem (Lk 2:41; Jn 2:13; Mk 11:1), was a teacher in the Synagogue like every Rabbi (Mk 1:29; Jn 6:59, 7:14), celebrated the Paschal meal in the traditional Jewish way with His disciples (Mk 14:12ff; Lk 22:15), spoke without disapproval of the temple sacrifices (Mt 5:23) and other pious practices (Mt 6:1-18) which in themselves were valuable. Jesus paid temple dues like any other person (Mt 17:24).⁶⁷⁶ This is of much interest to the study, for the Agīkūyū faithful do not have to

⁶⁷⁵ J. M. Waliggo, "Making a Church that is Truly African," in J. M. Waliggo et al., *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1986), p. 12.

⁶⁷⁶ J. Strong's, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990).

abandon their good traditional family and parenting values embedded in their culture by virtue of subscribing to Christian faith. Like Jesus did, the Church and the community of Karūrī Catholic Parish must recognize the place and times of the new culture associated with the youth.

Inculturation makes a clear distinction between the Gospel message or faith on one hand and culture on the other hand, the two poles that are being related in the inculturation process that will be undertaken later in chapter six. Inculturation has revolutionized evangelism in Africa. The Agĩkũyũ society has and is still experiencing social-cultural, religious and economic changes that pose problems to the values people believed in including family and parenting values. When the Christian message comes into this new environment there is need to communicate it through the community's specific thought forms, symbols familiar to that culture and syntax, thus changing the people through the Gospel values but at the same time preserving their identity and their values. Thus inculturation approach comes in handy as the study seeks to relate the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values with RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections. The study now proceeds to document the examined Church documents on inculturation.

5.7 Vatican II Instructions on Inculturation

The Second Vatican Council in its organization and manner of proceeding, its worldwide scope and most of all, in the theological thrusts of its documents is considered the decisive event in according inculturation the priority it now enjoys. An important insight that emerged at Vatican II is that Church has not been a distinct or self-contained institution from the rest of the world. In addition, the Church has always needed the culture and traditions of the world where she exists. The Council documents, *Ad Gentes (AG)*, *Gaudium et Spes (GS)* and *Lumen Gentium (LG)* are particularly seen as expressive of a renewed ecclesiology that implicitly recognizes the need for inculturation of the Gospel message.

5.7.1 Teaching on Inculturation in *Ad Gentes*

The Council, through *AG*, Art 22 brings to light that every culture is imbued with elements and characteristics that are necessary for evangelization of the Gospel to its respective people. In its assertion of this, the document puts it as follows:

The seed which is the Word of God grows out of good soil watered by the divine dew, it absorbs moisture, transforms it, and makes it part of itself. So too indeed, just as it happened in the economy of the incarnation, the young Churches, which are rooted in Christ and built on the foundations of the Apostles, take over all the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance.

Thus, Flannery suggests that, to make the Gospel message as well as the RCC family and parenting doctrine relevant and fruitful among the people including those of Karūrī Catholic Parish, the Church should take the Agīkūyū family and parenting values and integrate them into RCC doctrine on family and parenting for a more holistic parenting endeavor.⁶⁷⁷

5.7.2 Teaching on Inculturation in *Gaudium et Spes*

The instructions of the Council through the *GS* are significant to parenting for two reasons. First, for the first time in a conciliar document, it is stated that the human person achieves “true and full humanity only by means of culture,” and culture means “all those things which go to the refining and developing of man’s mental and physical endowments.”⁶⁷⁸ The second reason for the text’s significance is for explicitly acknowledging cultural pluralism, and the positive end to which culture must be aimed and used, meaning that the Agīkūyū culture can be exploited to make Christianity at home within Karūrī Catholic Parish, and at the same time preserving the identity of the individual, and the family and parenting values.

The clarion call is to validate the Agīkūyū culture, its philosophy and ways of thinking especially for transmitting moral values to children. Throughout the world, the thoughts and practices of people have value irrespective of how different they may appear alongside European tradition that is associated with Catholicism since the Middle Ages. The Church is universal, thereby not committed to any one culture, but it profits from the riches hidden in various cultures and must therefore foster the crucial contact and exchange between itself and these cultures.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁷ A. Flannery, *Vatican II Council: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 769-770.

⁶⁷⁸ *GS*, no. 53.

⁶⁷⁹ *AL*, no. 13.

5.8 Post-Conciliar Magisterial Documents on Inculturation

5.8.1 *Africae Terraum*, October 1967

Pope John Paul VI encouraged the Church and African leaders not to ignore but look deep into their cultural values without bias and use them to make Christianity more relevant and meaningful to African peoples. He stressed that if properly exploited these values can be crucial for Catechism and Gospel proclamation for a more relevant and meaningful life of the African peoples. He opposes the idea of African traditional religion being referred to as “animism.”⁶⁸⁰ The Pope’s encouragement supports the study’s aim to integrate the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values with the RCC doctrine on family and parenting.

The Pope further makes mention of some fundamental African values which the Church views as providential and as a basis for preaching the Gospel and catechesis, and enrich Christian communities. The first value is the idea of God, as the first of the ultimate cause of all things.⁶⁸¹ The Agĩkũyũ believe God is creator and *Mugai* (divider of the universe). Religion held together each family; each morning an elder said a prayer for his household for God to grant them peace and wellbeing (*uhoro*).⁶⁸² The second value is respect for the dignity of people which is mainly perceived in traditional social life and in initiation rites.⁶⁸³ Respect is one of the values treasured in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society and inculcated in children from early age. The juniors were obligated to respect their seniors always and this helped in holding the family and community together. The third value is the sense of the family as witnessed by the attachment of individuals to the family, as well as the bond with ancestors.⁶⁸⁴ The family members have unity of purpose and solidarity that creates warmth in sharing. Ancestor veneration keeps the communion between the living dead and their earthly family members, thus the family continues to enjoy blessings because of this fellowship. The attention showed to ancestor veneration is in connection with love for life, for the Africans believe that the departed family members continue to live and commune with the living. These

⁶⁸⁰ R. Hickey, *Modern Missionary Document and Africa* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982), p. 176ff.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 29.

⁶⁸³ R. Hickey, *Modern Missionary Document and Africa* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982), pp. 176-182.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

important revelations contribute immensely to our study since the family must stay healthy because it is where socialization of children should take place. The fourth value is that “*Patria Potestas* of the father of the family does not only imply authority and demand for respect but it also sometimes implies the accompaniment with a typically priestly function.”⁶⁸⁵ In the Agĩkũyũ sense, the father as a parent deputizes God in his children’s life and his witness testimony is a means of introducing his children into the living experience of Christ.”⁶⁸⁶ By implication the Church legitimizes the integration of the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values with RCC doctrine of family and parenting towards inculcating moral values into children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

5.8.2 *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, December 1975

Still on the subject of inculturation, His Holiness John Paul VI addressed the Episcopate, the clergy and all the faithful on the entire world through this exhortation. He taught that evangelism of human’s culture is “not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots.”⁶⁸⁷ This then calls for the evangelizer to be keen on always taking the person as one’s starting point and often coming back to the relationship of people among themselves and with God, and secondly the evangelizer has to mind the Gospel message since neither is both the Gospel nor evangelization identical with culture and are independent in regard to all cultures. However, the Kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, making it mandatory to borrow elements of human culture or cultures for building of the Kingdom.

There is a vital connection between values, culture and Christianity. Basic values are the core of a culture that define it, organize it, and give it direction and momentum and confer on it a distinctive identity.⁶⁸⁸ For the youth of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, developing personal identity in the sense of being true self can only be attained by developing in a community, along the lines of basic cultural values. Inculturation therefore should occur at the meeting point between Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values and Christian values

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ FC, no. 25.

⁶⁸⁷ EN, no. 20.

⁶⁸⁸ N. Fogliacco, “The Family: An African Metephor for Trinity and Church,” in C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 121.

while keeping the needs of the children at the center. This calls for exploring deep into the Agĩkũyũ values on family and parenting for a meaningful family ministry, thus authenticating the study's option for inculturation approach.

5.8.3 Pope John Paul VI's Address to African Bishops in Kampala – Uganda, July 1969

During the solemn ceremony of the canonization of the Ugandan martyrs, the Pope, who also was presiding over the function, revisited the important issue of inculturation and stressed the urgent need for the Africans to be missionaries to themselves, to actualize Christianity as a serious duty. While limiting himself to some general aspects of African Catholic life, the Pope observed Africans were missionaries to themselves and the Church was well and truly planted in Africa's blessed soil.⁶⁸⁹ Secondly, the Pope drew the attention of the African Bishops to the evangelizing work by the African Church and the need for inculturation and their role in it when he said: "A burning and much-discussed question arises concerning your evangelizing work, and it is that of the adaptation of the Gospel and of the Church to African culture. Must the Church be European, Latin, Oriental ... or must she be African?"

He reckons that the African Church is faced with an immense and original undertaking; like a "mother and teacher" she must approach and offer to all the sons of this world, a traditional and modern interpretation of life. The Pope also qualified the African culture as adequate in supporting inculturation:

Indeed, you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection such as to find in Christianity, and for Christianity, a true superior fullness, and prove to be capable of a richness of expression all its own, and genuinely African.⁶⁹⁰

In this respect, the Church can be African and reflect the African worldview. In addition to this the Pope highlighted the necessary understanding that would accompany successful inculturation such as Africans being missionaries to themselves. The African Bishops, enabled by the Holy Spirit, should be on the frontline in adapting the Gospel. In light of this knowledge, the study is inspired and opts for the inculturation approach

⁶⁸⁹ AG, no. 6.

⁶⁹⁰ Pope John Paul VI, A message from Pope Paul VI to the Countries of Africa, *Africae Terrarum*, (1968), pp. 71-84.

as it strives to integrate authentic Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values with the RCC doctrine on family and parenting, making Christianity at home among the Agĩkũyũ of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish and more so in their parenting endeavor.

5.9 Pope John Paul II's Instructions on Inculturation

5.9.1 *Catechesi Tradendae*: Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, October 1979

Even in promoting the use of inculturation, Pope John Paul II is careful to point out two things that must be kept in mind during the inculturation process. First, the Gospel message cannot be purely and simply isolated from its original culture of insertion- that is the cultural milieu in which Jesus of Nazareth lived.⁶⁹¹ Secondly, the cross of Jesus should not be emptied of its power (1 Cor 1:17). When the power of the Gospel enters a particular culture it rectifies many of its elements, transforming and regenerating that culture. In other words, it is the culture that changes and not the Gospel, thus the necessity of catechesis. Care is taken for the Gospel message not to suffer loss from the cultures that it has been expressed down the centuries since it does not spring spontaneously from any cultural soil. It is always transmitted by means of an apostolic dialogue which inevitably becomes part of a certain dialogue of cultures. Genuine catechists know that catechesis "takes flesh" in the various cultures and milieu.⁶⁹² True catechesis ultimately enriches these cultures by helping them to go beyond the defective or even inhuman features in them, and by communicating to their legitimate values the fullness of Christ.⁶⁹³ In our case the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values transformed and regenerated by the Gospel are bound to bring much needed positive impact to parenting of children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish.

5.9.2 Pope John Paul II's Address to Bishops of Zaire in 1980 and Address to Zairean Bishops at *Ad Lamina* Visit in May 1983

Still on the matter of inculturation, Pope John Paul II brought up the issue of a theology of inculturation, which he noted as having taken place in the Bible and in the history of the Church. He acknowledged the validity of the term "African Christian Theology" thereby approving it for use, but was careful to teach on the rules of engagement,

⁶⁹¹ CT, no. 53.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., no. 98.

comprising of three guiding factors namely Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Tradition and Magisterium. This then calls for theologians of inculturation to have profound and wide knowledge and understanding of these three areas, and at the same time get adequate knowledge on the individual cultures in order to avoid syncretism. The Christian inculturation approach receives approval for adoption by this study through the validation of the African Christian Theology from the Pope.

In CHIEA the Pope clearly spelt out the need for a truly scientific African theology in which inculturation should become a challenge to the university as an academic situation.⁶⁹⁴ It is in engaging a scientific method to this approach to theology by African theologians that they will discover the intrinsic values in cultures and the relationship of the unchanging content of faith when applied to the varied and changeable contexts in which the message is proclaimed and preached.⁶⁹⁵ It is worth noting here that the study is well supported in its approach by these teachings.

5.10 Related Insights on Inculturation

5.10.1 Inculturation and the Tradition of Faith by A. Shorter

Shorter, while answering the question “Inculturation of African Traditional Religious Values in Christianity – How Far?” brings to the study an in-depth understanding of the inculturation of faith. He sees inculturation as a consequence of incarnation. In becoming human, God has identified Himself with the human nature since culture was a component of human nature adopted by God and the Son. Through His death and resurrection Jesus transcends the limitation of the earthy life and identifies with each and every human culture that has existed, or will ever exist.⁶⁹⁶ Jesus’ infancy, growth, ministry, passion, death and resurrection are inculturational and Jesus’ enculturation reveals God’s acculturation. Jesus incarnation is therefore a perfect model of inculturation.⁶⁹⁷ This guides our study even as it considers Jesus Christ as the best model of inculturation.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., no. 3.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ A. Shorter, “Inculturation of African Traditional Religious Values in Christianity – How Far?,” <http://www.crusadewatch.org/2005/07/27/inculturation-of-african-traditional-religious-values-in-christianity-how-far/>

⁶⁹⁷ A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Great Britain: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988).

Shorter further opens our eyes to the undertaking that will bring success through inculturation by suggesting that when the Christian transformation of culture would be taken in earnest, the possibilities would be endless. What matters in inculturation is to remain faithful to the tradition concerning Jesus and to authentic values of African culture, which is possible through a deep acquaintance with both.⁶⁹⁸ For this study the endless possibility includes bringing up morally upright youth who are truly Christian and African, enabled through the inculturation approach.

5.10.2 Insights on Inculturation from the Synod of Bishops from Africa, 1994

The Synod of Bishops from Africa acknowledged inculturation as a difficult and delicate task, since this prompts the question of the Church's fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst constant evolution of cultures. The Synod Fathers rightly observed: "Considering the rapid changes in the cultural, social, economic and political domains, our local Churches must be involved in the process of inculturation in an ongoing manner" with care being taken to avoid syncretism.⁶⁹⁹ Thus the Bishops were on the spot regarding the realism of the youth impoverished in moral values in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

The Synod challenges Africans to make the Church at home in their cultures, that is, to be a genuine Church through authentic inculturation. As such it is furthermore a challenge for the evangelizers to ensure people of God do understand the nature of the Church so as to be Church themselves in accordance with their God-given socio-religio-cultural endowments. In this respect the Bishops embraced the model of the Church as "Family of God," acknowledging it as an expression of the nature of the Church appropriate for Africa and its guiding idea for evangelization and by extension profitable for parenting.⁷⁰⁰

The Bishops explain that inculturation includes the whole life of the Church and the whole process of evangelization. It includes theology, liturgy, the Church's life and

⁶⁹⁸ A. Shorter, "Inculturation of African Traditional Religious Values in Christianity – How Far?," <http://www.crusadewatch.org/2005/07/27/inculturation-of-african-traditional-religious-values-in-christianity-how-far/>

⁶⁹⁹ EA, no. 62.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., no. 62,63.

structures, and all this explains the necessity for research in the field of African cultures in all their complexity.⁷⁰¹ Furthermore, since inculturation seeks to dispose everyone to receive Jesus Christ in integral manner, it meets and touches them on personal, economic, cultural, and political levels to help them live a holy life united with God their Father, through the action of Holy Spirit. In likening the Church to family, the study receives an affirmation on the Church model opted for among others.

5.10.3 Insights from J. M. Waliggo

Waliggo agrees with the Synod of African Bishops that Africans are confronted with diverse social, cultural and economic challenges such as poverty, social injustices, idle youth, decreasing youth morality and hunger among others.⁷⁰² In this respect, he sees inculturated Christianity as a good attempt to give hope to the Africans in their anxieties and sufferings.⁷⁰³ He reaches out to African Church leaders, liturgists and catechists to acquaint themselves fully with such realities, addressing them through commitment to their pastoral work. He further portends inculturation must cover the entire Christian doctrine and life and at the same time should not be a stand-alone but incorporate liberation for a meaningful change in people's lives for the Gospel is a liberating force for people in their different cultures and situations.⁷⁰⁴ The study's choice of inculturation approach ensures the morally challenged youth of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish get liberated.

5.10.4 Instructions from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Despite the fact that the Church has a diversity of cultures, gifts, peoples and offices, and particular Churches with their own traditions, the CCC considers this as a rich diversity that does not oppose Church unity.⁷⁰⁵ The unity is always threatened by sin and not diversity as Paul writes "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). The Church is committed to her service and "aims to serve the whole Church in all her diversity of her rites and cultures."⁷⁰⁶ The study interprets the diversity to

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., no. 62.

⁷⁰² EA, no. 62, 93.

⁷⁰³ J. M. Waliggo, "Making a Church that is Truly African," in J. M. Waliggo et al., *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1986), pp. 18-19.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., P.19.

⁷⁰⁵ CCC, no. 814.

⁷⁰⁶ CCC no. 1075.

mean embracing of different age groups of people in the Church, thus ensuring the children and youth are guided appropriately through their youth ministry.

5.11 Hindrances to Inculturation

Foreign cultures are finding their way through items such as clothes, music, dance, language and food into the African culture and by extension the Agĩkũyũ culture.⁷⁰⁷ People are tending to forget their own culture and values which are avenues to the success of the inculturation process. Bearing this and Magesa's glumness that globalization phenomena has a tendency to create "cultures on other cultures" which confuse the evangelization of the Gospel message across cultures, care needs to be taken in the inculturation endeavor.⁷⁰⁸

Several theologians associate modernization with the importation and socialization of Western mannerisms which, in their view, actually hinder inculturation by inhibiting and criminalizing local cultures and religious practices as the study found out and as also supported by Nyabwari et al.⁷⁰⁹ Further, with modernization new behaviours such as self-centeredness or substance abuse have arisen among some Church members and serve to deter the promotion of inculturation. This has also become a concern for the Church as Pope Francis laments that people come to Church with the expectation that it is an environment where they will experience peace and justice in times of poverty, injustice and instability. Surprising some of the people in Church themselves are of self-centered attitudes and sinful nature, a fact confirmed by the study. Those who are supposed to be involved, and have such attitudes are not eager to undertake the task of inculturation challenge which demands justice.

⁷⁰⁷ B. G. Nabwari and M. T. Katola, "Constraints and Prospects of Inculturation in Kenya," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4, no. 2(2014), pp. 282-291.

⁷⁰⁸ L. Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004).

⁷⁰⁹ B. G. Nabwari and M. T. Katola, "Constraints and Prospects of Inculturation in Kenya," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4, no. 2(2014), pp. 282-291.

5.12 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

This Chapter examined the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church model which is rich in qualities that support the transmitting of moral values to children and youth. The study discussed the theological and ecclesiological understanding of “Family of God” in the OT and NT and its role in the moral education of children and youth. Further, the activities and the relevance of SCCs as the base structure of the Church as “Family of God” in teaching moral values to children and youth were also discussed. It has been shown that the “Family of God” Church image was fronted by the Synod of African Bishops as the best model for being Church in Africa and thus suitable for this study.

The chapter also provided the definition, meaning and relevance of the term “inculturation.” Most of the documents reviewed approve inculturation as a suitable approach for passing Gospel message and by extension family and parenting values. The insights on inculturation provide an in-depth understanding for the study as it gets ready to integrate the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting for adequate parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish families.

CHAPTER SIX
INTEGRATION OF AGĪKŪYŪ FAMILY AND PARENTING VALUES INTO
RCC DOCTRINE ON FAMILY AND PARENTING IN VIEW OF
TRANSMITTING MORAL VALUES

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter qualified “Family of God” as a Church model that promotes the spirit of disinterested service, solidarity, fraternity and a common goal aimed towards transforming the Church as well as society through the raising of morally upright individuals.⁷¹⁰ The same chapter also examined the concept of inculturation as expounded by RCC documents and selected theologians and concluded that it is a useful approach for transmitting moral values.

The anthropological chapters (chapter two and three) both produced data on the role of Agĭkŭyŭ family set-up in transmission of family and parenting values and the manner of transmitting moral values in Karŭrĭ Catholic Parish. In this chapter, the Agĭkŭyŭ family and parenting values are integrated into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in order to enrich parenting among families. This theological task is an effort to address the main objective relating to the study problem. This is done decisively to empower the parents in Karŭrĭ Catholic Parish to effectively inculcate moral values into their children and youth and live more authentically within the realm of the “Family of God.”

The chapter therefore deals with: Suitability of inculturation approach for transmitting family and parenting values and inculturated Church family image. The following are inculturated: Agĭkŭyŭ family and parenting values, Karŭrĭ Catholic Parish manner of transmitting moral values, appreciation of youth’s potential, Karŭrĭ Catholic Parish youth’s lived-out spiritual life and new cultures. It continues to discuss Karŭrĭ Catholic Parish inculturation effort and finally ends with the chapter’s concluding remarks. The study now proceeds to explicate the suitability of inculturation approach for transmitting family and parenting values.

⁷¹⁰ EA, no. 43.

6.2 Suitability of the Inculturation Approach for Transmitting Family and Parenting Values

The Synod of Bishops saw the task of inculturating the Gospel message as not only necessary for the new evangelization in a rapidly changing Africa but also a priority, as this would enable the cultures from within themselves to be fertile.⁷¹¹ Furthermore, the available evidence from literature and from the study shows that the Catholic Church's official teaching on inculturation is that all cultures have the right to an independence existence within Christianity and that the introduction of Christian message in a new culture must involve an 'adoption' that preserves the essential integrity of that culture, its values, institutions, and customs.⁷¹² On the same note Ryan and McGarry implore the Church to stay relevant and contextualize the Gospel message across space and time or risk fading away.⁷¹³ This gives advantage to parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish where social change demands adjustment in the methods of inculcating moral values into children and youth.

Jesus, in His ministry contextualized his message as seen for example in the parables he used to teach his followers. He spoke to herders about being good shepherds, to farmers about sowing of seeds, to Philadelphia as a gateway city to Asia minor, and to Laodicea as one plagued by water supply problems, and with aqueducts that delivered water that was "neither hot nor cold" (Rev 3: 14-16). To Simon Peter, a fisherman, Jesus calls him to service as a "fisher of men" (Lk 5:1-11). The People Jesus preached to were therefore able to interpret, understand and apply the message in relation to their everyday life experience.

The ministry of Paul to the Corinthians helps us further understand and appreciate inculturation. As much as his determination was to know "Christ and Him crucified", Paul had to take time to address many issues concerning the Corinthian Church. This was because he understood the Church had to bring the Gospel message to every culture and again the relevance of the message of Christ and Him crucified should permeate

⁷¹¹ IL, no. 43.

⁷¹² S. G. Kurgat, "The Theology of Inculturation and the African Church," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1, 5(2008), pp. 90-98.

⁷¹³ C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 30.

every aspect of human life and that culture. In Corinth, Paul dealt with issues such as unhealthy hero worship, marriage and divorce, food sacrifice to idols, divisions in the Church, drunkenness, male-female roles and much more. For him the Gospel message can only be Good News only if it speaks to the current bad and good news.⁷¹⁴ In drawing a comparison between two messages that he preached in Antioch at a Jewish Synagogue (Acts 13:16-20) and at the city gates of Lystra (Acts 14:15-17), one can clearly see how he tailored his messages to suite the audience, laying emphasis on some facets of the Gospel relevant to each group's situation. The Karūrĩ Catholic Parish community needs to identify with the Gospel message in a similar manner. The study's understanding is that when inculturation approach is employed it will continuously root the Christian message in the Agĩkũyũ social context, making it grow in its family and parenting values to bring about a new creation, an advantage in socializing the children and youth in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish.⁷¹⁵

In the process of integrating Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC family and parenting doctrine, inculturation motif is fundamental as a strategy for liberation and should be guided by RCC teachings. Through inculturation, Christian message and a culture such as the Agĩkũyũ one are interrelated considering the total collective social, moral and religious life with the message gradually taking a concrete form in the culture. In our case, the inculturation process is beyond the selection of compatible Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values and is only as the Word of God becoming "flesh" in the people of God that the values take shape within their culture.⁷¹⁶ Thus the contemporary clergy in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish are compelled to inculturate and preach messages that do not contravene the Biblical concepts of truth.⁷¹⁷ Such teaching should make individuals in Church feel at home in whom they are, for the Church to be truly

⁷¹⁴ D. Robins, *This Way Youth Ministry: An Introduction to the Adventure* (New York: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2004).

⁷¹⁵ P. Arrupe, *A Handbook of Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p. 35.

⁷¹⁶ A. M. Padilla, "The Role of Cultural Awareness and Ethnic Loyalty in Acculturation," in A. M. Padilla (Ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings* (Boulder: Westview, 1980), p. 78; S. G. Kurgat, "The Theology of Inculturation and the African Church," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1, 5(2008), pp. 90-98.

⁷¹⁷ B. G. Nabwari and M. T. Katola, "Constraints and Prospects of Inculturation in Kenya," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4, no. 2(2014), pp. 282-291.

authentic to them. The children and youth would too be imparted appropriately with the teachings that are vital in molding their character.

Through inculturation, people will learn to be self-reliant and not always depend on the Western interpretation of their own cultural family and parenting realities, a position the Church very well supports: “Inculturation will show much more clearly that, in the Biblical perspective, everybody is given to Christ as his inheritance, and that by the inculturation process, peoples can offer to Christ what they received from Him.”⁷¹⁸ Through inculturation, negative and oppressive elements like barring women from participation in Church leadership are exposed in the light of dialogue between culture and Christian faith; thus inculturation it will promote parenting of both boys and girls without discrimination.⁷¹⁹

Shorter advises that the type of inculturation advanced ought to make RCC teachings meaningful by dialoging with the African culture and finding elements suitable for integration with RCC doctrine in order to bring into existence a “new cultural creation.”⁷²⁰ The study found that the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values are suitable for integrating into RCC doctrine on family and parenting. This is not to say that the Agĩkũyũ cultural elements that are fading away must be ignored, they may be incorporated in the teaching so long as they are not anti-Christian or retrogressive. Therefore a reflective critical understanding, respect, appreciation and to be attuned to this particular culture is needed by the pastoral agent in order for the successful inculturation to happen.⁷²¹ This legitimized the study’s option for inculturation motif for better understanding of RCC doctrine of family and parenting.

In inculturation, there is need to go beyond the mere adoption of visible cultural elements in rendering the Gospel message culturally meaningful and go past the visible structures of faith that will point to real transformation of culture by the Gospel. Further,

⁷¹⁸ IL, no. 44.

⁷¹⁹ Nasmiyu, “African Women’s Legitimate Role in Church Ministry,” in Mugambi and Magesa (Eds.), *The Church in African Christianity, Innovative Essays in Ecclesiology*, p. 58.

⁷²⁰ A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Great Britain: Geoffrey Chapman, 1998), p. 263.

⁷²¹ J. G. Healey, “Small Christian Communities Promote Family and Marriage Ministry in Eastern Africa,” *Human Dignity Journal*, 2, (2016), p. 202-215.

the inculturation process should be regarded as an ongoing process, a transformation that will not merely change behaviour but root a changed belief not contradictory to the faith our mouths proclaim.⁷²² This will assist in resolving the double identity crisis the African Christians, those of Karūrī Catholic Parish included, may suffer as the Synod of Bishops clearly put it:

Inculturation will help the African Christian resolve the tension between the two ways of living, and to accept what it costs to abandon beliefs and practices that are incompatible with the Gospel. Without inculturation, the faith of the African will remain fragile and superficial, lacking depth and personal commitment.⁷²³

It therefore follows that youth who wish to rectify their behaviour can be sustained by the changed belief within them. The process of inculturating the Agīkūyū family and parenting values will be greatly enhanced by the “Family of God” Church model.

6.3 Inculturated Church Family Image

In a sense when the Church in Karūrī Catholic Parish is considered a family of God where children and parents are taught the Word of God, it may be incarnated in the African mindset and tradition through inculturation. Just as a reminder, the African Bishops discuss the African family and its values of warmth, acceptance, dialogue and trust and posit that the African family is the most effective agent of evangelization for the Church.⁷²⁴ The aim of the new evangelization in Karūrī Catholic Parish is thus to build up the Church as family with exception of all negative aspects especially ethnocentrism and excessive particularisms but encouraging true communion and reconciliation.⁷²⁵

The Church as “Family of God” model challenges everyone to recognize and appreciate the gift of family and the value of each individual while urging each to shun supremacy of own selfish interest to realization of brotherhood and sisterhood of all faithful. This model provokes the Africans to rise up to the challenges in their personal, cultural, spiritual, and economic levels that threaten the survival of the family and society, and

⁷²² D. R. Wielzen, *Popular Religiosity and Roman Liturgy toward a Contemporary Theology of Liturgical Inculturation in The Caribbean* (Published PhD Thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2009), p. 159.

⁷²³ IL, no. 45.

⁷²⁴ EA, no. 63.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., no. 63.

which impede them from living a holy life in total union with God the Father.⁷²⁶ Communities and families that are grappling with such problems as the witnessed unacceptable behaviour of the youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish will find help from the Church because of the relevancy of this inculturated Church image and by extension through the SCCs.

Still, when everyone in Karūrī Catholic Parish extends a hand in parenting of neighbour's children, this will be seen to be extending the mission of Christ that derives from the Triune God. Chukwu agrees with the Bishops' idea of creating SCCs, and further sheds more light by explaining that it is in operation and structure that the Church should truly be a family of God.⁷²⁷ By the foregoing then, the Church has witnessed the creation of SCCs within Karūrī Catholic Parish to help actualize the idea of Church as "Family of God." Thus the family image will express better the nature of the African Church than other Church images since it emphasizes on care for others, warmth in human relations, solidarity, dialogue, trust and acceptance.⁷²⁸

The social aspect of the Gospel is as important as other aspects. Recovering the priceless, vital position of the family and that of the youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish requires the Church to recognize and appreciate the reality as it is on the ground. The setting up of local SCCs as a practical home grown solution in all five outstations shows the Parish has gone pragmatically beyond recognizing and appreciating the reality of the problems faced by the families of the faithful. The participation and fellowship at the grassroots should help people live as family with its values of unity, solidarity, love, warmth and sharing. In the SCCs, the Scripture is central, which conscientizes and empowers the youth to be transformed by renewing of their minds and not being transformed to the world (Rom 12:1-2).⁷²⁹ The sharing in SCCs ensures that the Gospel message continues to reach people in their base settings, those in need of re-

⁷²⁶ Ibid., no. 80.

⁷²⁷ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 70.

⁷²⁸ EA, no. 63.

⁷²⁹ B. Gleeson, "Images, Understandings, and Models of the Church in History: An Update." *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 12, no. 1, 2018, http://aejt.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/107526/Gleeson_Church_in_history.pdf; C. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II* (Alcester & Dublin: C. Goodliffe Neale, 1978), pp. 242-250.

evangelization like parents who the study revealed neglect their duties, and the morally impoverished youth, “so then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:17).

Having acquired the understanding of the inculturated Church family image, the information on Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values, and the manner of transmitting moral values in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, enabled by Boffs mediation theory, the study is now ready to integrate the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC teachings and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting for a more fruitful family ministry.

6.4 Inculturating Agĩkũyũ Family and Parenting Values

In recognizing Africa as wealthy in cultural values, Pope John Paul VI emphasized the potential values have in transforming the world. This will however require their exploration and elevation by the African Christian theologians and the Africans themselves. This section discusses the value of Agĩkũyũ sense of communal life and the extended family.

6.4.1 The Agĩkũyũ Sense of Communal Life

The Agĩkũyũ culture is full of the sense of community and solidarity.⁷³⁰ This sense of community is described by McMillan and Chavis as a community where, being part of it, members feel they belong, are valued, and have a shared faith that individual and group needs will be fulfilled owing to their resolve to be together.⁷³¹ The Agĩkũyũ are known to be communal and relational, whose ties of kinship made every individual a member of a united caring family and anything that disturbed this solidarity as Wachege says, can only be described as a serious deviation from the norm.⁷³² This kind of sharing was geared towards creating solidarity in a family.

⁷³⁰ EA, no. 43.

⁷³¹ D. W. McMillan and D. M. Chavis, “Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory,” *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14 (1986), pp. 6-23.

⁷³² P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 11.

The voice of the Church on this issue comes from Pope John Paul II who exhorts the Africans to deal with weaknesses in Africa that can decimate her young generation.⁷³³ Despite the weaknesses, the same Pope showcased the sense of community with all its richness as strength in the African culture that would support inculturation. In this respect, the Church in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish can appeal to the people with regard to their heritage to cultivate the mind of a community, being consciously alive to it. Just like within the Agĩkũyũ community where all peoples' needs were met irrespective of their age, the Church members can develop a mind-set of self-reliance so that within the SCC, parents can express their joys and disappointments concerning parenting of their children in a group where members can identify with the parents' situation. Long term solutions to parenting problems will be found as the SCC members, a grassroots group, keenly interrogate the specific issues behind the youth immoral behaviour. In this way it will be easy to identify problems such as parenting that is not responsive to specific needs of a child, or absenteeism of parents. This will also help the parents to develop a sense of belonging and encouragement to live as a community through the SCCs, where their issues receive attention.

On resolving to unite together and have confidence that the parenting problem will be resolved within the SCC, the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish faithful contribute immensely to the inculturation of the sense of community since it is to the community the Word of God is addressed, making that Word the glue around which the community should gather. The kind of faith response the Karūrĩ community gives to the Word is what gives the community meaning and reason for being. Azevedo says that the community that hears the Word must proclaim it, bear witness to it, and convert it into real-life action on the individual and social levels.⁷³⁴ The community will also embrace parenting that is in line with Christian principles. This will then mean liberation of the parents and youth.

⁷³³ Second Extraordinary Synod, The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of the World.

⁷³⁴ M. C. Azevedo, "Basic Ecclesial Communities: A Meeting Point of Ecclesiologies," *Theological Studies*, 46, no. 61(985), pp. 601-620.

The principle on which African communal life is built is summed up by Mbiti as “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.”⁷³⁵ This means the individual exists only corporately, the corporate creating the individual.⁷³⁶ Still, to quote Areji et al., they say “...to live is to live in a community.”⁷³⁷ Therefore what the study found happening in Karūrī Catholic Parish where the individual’s life is largely one’s affair and the diminished sense of community is fiercely opposed to the African community life ideal and as Moila argues, such disruption should call for an intervention.⁷³⁸ The communal life emphasis is on interdependence thus agreeing with Apostle Paul’s teaching that for the Church to be as originally intended, all gifts from all people need to be utilized for edifying and nourishing Her for the good of all (1 Cor 12:30; Eph 4:11-12). Therefore, the formation of SCCs is a good intervention in restoring the sense of community in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

The spirit of community is expressed in the African proverb ‘he who eats alone dies alone’. Sharing in meals in the Agīkūyū tradition was a norm, and acted to unite, establish social bonds and bring people together. This was also extended to other aspects of community life such as correction of children misbehavior and reprimanding of under-performing parents by neighbours and extended family members. All this collectivism was important and necessary, and as Healey and Sybertz asserts “deep and sincere.”⁷³⁹ Sharing of an Eucharistic meal in the SCC will give everyone a chance to reflect who they are in the Church. Those who do not participate will be confronted since in the community there is concern for one another and everyone has to be present for the meal, and this helps each to reflect more on how to become all inclusive.

The Loss of communal life in Karūrī Catholic Parish translates to confining the task of parenting to the immediate family. In the earlier society, parenting happened naturally

⁷³⁵ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 106.

⁷³⁶ Ibid., pp. 108-109.

⁷³⁷ A. C. Areji and M. C. Anyaehie, “Igbo Traditional Morality as a Panacea to Nigerian Security Crises,” *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5(2015), pp. 102-108.

⁷³⁸ J. N. Mbugua, *A Study to Formulate a Model for Agīkūyū Christian Funeral Rites that Would Integrate Relevant Cultural, Scriptural and Practical Norms* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, South African Theological Seminary, Bryanston, 2014), p. 40; M. P. Moila, *Challenging Issues in African Christianity* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre, 2002).

⁷³⁹ J. Healey and D. Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1996), p. 168.

and required no invitation or other sacrifice on the part of community members to participate. Individuals therefore will not attempt to act alone because it would be selfish and futile.⁷⁴⁰ Further, as Healey and Sybertz enlighten, Africans expected to be invited to offer such help freely and would complain if overlooked. The weakening of the sense of community in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish translates to reducing the circle of influence or contacts for the child as far as socialization and teaching of moral values is concerned.

Indeed, in Jesus time children were not considered quite endearing or special unless to their parents. Despite such a culture, Jesus went against the norm, opened doors for the disciples and the parents in particular, for the society to expand care for the children beyond the home as that is where they will receive a different kind of blessing or teaching, “let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt 19:14). Jesus reminds the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish community that care for the child translates to building the Church. It is necessary therefore for the spirit of Jesus to be expounded among them. The parents, the community and the Church will make a strong bridge that ferries children and youth to moral maturity.

Despite some unsettling observations made about the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish community by this study, the community still conceives the communal principle as best for upbringing of children and youth even though in reality individualism is appealing. Today, members of the community display this Agĩkũyũ sense of community though in a minimal way in occasions such as marriage betrothals, weddings, initiation rites, mourning for death and fund raising for various reasons. However, in some instances, the participants are family members and close friends and still in some of the functions, attendance is by invitation only. The sense of community is promoted when such activities are expanded to include more of the kin and outsiders without dragging along any aspects of tradition that are anti-Christian, similarly parenting can be promoted through deliberate community driven efforts.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 168.

The informants are clearly conscious of the benefits of communal life on which their prosperity partly depends. The Agĩkũyũ saying “wealth comes by working together,” was always in their minds as it reminded them of their inter-dependency as a common people. To prosper, it was essential to work hard in a supportive genuine atmosphere of cooperation between the family, clan and community even in teaching the children as they grew up.⁷⁴¹ This cooperation is supported by the understanding that “two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other rise up...” (Ecc 4:9-12). When this kind of perception is applied to the teaching of moral values to children and youth, the daunting task of resolving the youth moral crisis in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish would be nearly accomplished.

The Catechesis of the Catholic Church sees the rich diversity in Church membership as not opposed to unity but strength in rendering service.⁷⁴² This statement has an implication in embracing parenting of children and youth. Genuine catechism in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish will be one that incorporates new challenges affecting the youth without fear of being seen, as Pope John Paul II says, endangering the “precious deposit” of faith, and help them by communicating their legitimate concerns. The Church is to examine its interpretation of the Gospel message to make it relevant for this generation without the message suffering loss.⁷⁴³ Therefore, in inculturating the value of the sense of community, a result oriented approach and an evaluation of the Church’s effort in teaching children and youth will contribute to the realization of morally upright youth.

While the Church evaluates her work, it is important to remember even in SCCs it has not fully dawned in the minds and hearts of the people that they are the Church at the grassroots, with the supposed benefits of living as “Family of God” and as a community. The act of many members not seeking assistance within the SCC on the issues affecting youth morality, may be interpreted as a lack of sensitization. McGarry

⁷⁴¹ J. M. Gathogo, “Some Expressions of African Hospitality Today,” *Scriptura*, 99, (2008), pp. 275-287.

⁷⁴² CCC, no. 814.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 97; Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 13.

and Ryan warn the Church to take the task of inculturation seriously or risk losing its relevance in the very community it is supposed to change.⁷⁴⁴ This may not be easy if the present Christian experience is more want for personal gain or more of dispensing sacrament without authentic Christian experience.⁷⁴⁵

Even as the Karūrī Catholic Parish community tends to incline more towards individualism and selfishness, and while still faced with other difficulties, the integration of children and youth into the Church community helps them to spiritually and physically march towards the future.⁷⁴⁶ The children will benefit from fun filled opportunities created and facilitated by the Church to socialize them as they grow in Christian life. Also as the first school of social living and a caring love, the Church community will provide self-giving law that will guide the children. Important to the child's upbringing is the extended family network through which he/she receives social, psychological and economic security, and obtains cultural identity and belonging.

6.4.2 The Extended Family

In the Agĩkũyũ cultural context, speaking of a family meant one is referring to the extended family.⁷⁴⁷ The nature of the extended family made it a strong tool in parenting children from an early age as all relatives were useful in their own way in inculcating moral values into the children and youth. The relatives' contribution should be more necessary in Karūrī Catholic Parish where several parents are in formal employment or involved in other income generating activities. The Synod of African Bishops observed that when grandparents are involved, they are the link between generations and play the role of ensuring family continuity and stability, and in so doing maintain the psycho-affective balance necessary for the transmission of customs and values.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁴ C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 30.

⁷⁴⁵ IL, no. 14-15.

⁷⁴⁶ O. A. Ikwuagwu, *Initiation in African Traditional Religion: A Systematic Symbolic Analysis with Special Reference to Aspects of Igbo Religion in Nigeria* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag GmbH), p. 212.

⁷⁴⁷ P. M., Amos "Parenting and Culture – Evidence from Some African Communities," in M. L. Seidl-de-Moura, *Parenting in South American and African Contexts* (Vienna: InTech, 2013), pp. 66-76.

⁷⁴⁸ Synod of Bishops, *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World*, p. 21.

The Holy Scriptures highlight the role of a grandparent in imparting spiritual faith. Paul was persuaded of the sincere faith passed on to Timothy, that first lived in his grandmother Loise, who provided the necessary teaching and help, encouragement, and joy to the grandchildren (2 Tim 1:5). The extended family members act as role models and approve appropriate behavior patterns for the children.⁷⁴⁹ With the radical social changes taking place in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish, there is need to reflect on the Church as the seedbed of the extended family for the sake of parenting children who are the future Church and society.⁷⁵⁰ Some approaches the Church may take will appear radical to the conservative but the Church should be encouraged by Pope Francis' view that hard times call for tough decisions; the Church has the implied mandate to upset the tradition.⁷⁵¹

In the SCCs, just like in the normal family, there are older Christians who can model the role of grandparents, uncles and aunts for the younger members to follow. Since SCCs operate at the grass root level, it is practically possible to do so since these categories of the members are within close proximity. Titus talks to the more mature Christians and reminds them what God expects of them; to act like fathers and mothers, be good examples to young men and women, and teach them how to live worthy lives (Titus 2:1-5).

The Agĩkũyũ cultural value of extended family confronts the Church with what needs to be exploited to better articulate the doctrine of family and parenting towards handling youth moral situation in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish. When the Church is modeled as an African extended family with all its values, it can enrich the mode of parenting, thus creating a strong local Church that can also contribute to the universal Church. The Synod of African Bishops (1994) opinioned "...for a Church to exist, we must have Christian families that are authentic domestic churches, and ecclesial communities that are truly living."⁷⁵²

⁷⁴⁹ C. Moncrieff and J. Brassard, "Child Development and Personal Social Networks," *Child Development*, 50, (1979), pp. 601-611.

⁷⁵⁰ D. P. Scaer, "The Christian Family in Today's Society," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 54, no. 2-3 (1990), pp. 80-97.

⁷⁵¹ AL, no. 25.

⁷⁵² The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Address of Pope Paul VI to Young Men and Women of the World, (1965), <http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/g0y.htm#fe>.

Moreover, the Church as “Family of God” model will remove the individualistic and un-caring mind from the people. It will conscientize the passive laity to rise to the occasion and use their gifts and charisms towards the community’s need of restoring youth morality. This is unlike Church as “institution” model where emphasis is on top-down leadership with no participation of the laity. The mother and father roles further reveal the richness of the nature of the extended family that the Church can benefit from in modelling itself as “Family of God” and are discussed next.

6.4.3 Mother’s Role

The Agĩkũyũ place emphasis on the role of a mother as a creator, care giver, nurturer, teacher, and her all sacrificing nature. A mother carries new life in her, nourishing it through her flesh and blood. She goes through pain, sufferings and difficulties in order to bring forth the new life. The selfless love for her children is demonstrated by the sacrifice mothers make as they struggle in body, caring for the baby, cooking, working hard so that the lives of others can flourish. In this manner the mother’s body is eucharistically given. Mary stands out for all mothers as the one whose body was used in the incarnation to provide the Saviour (Lk 2:11).

Thinking of such motherhood reminds us of the traditional Church title, *Ecclesia Mater* (Mother Church) and helps in understanding that the nature of human motherhood and of the Church are intertwined. Church as a mother is a creator that is connected to the creation of new spiritual life. The Church gives her members the life of faith in Baptism; that is the moment in which She births them as children of God. In his letter to the Galatians Apostle Paul describes his ecclesial work in motherly terms and says “My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19). Church as a mother nourishes and sustains her children with sacraments, sound doctrine, and feeds them with the fullness of the Gospel.

As a mother, the Church is also a care giver and a teacher. In his encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), Pope St. John XXIII spoke of the Church as the mother and teacher of all nations. He put it this way: “To her was entrusted by her holy Founder the twofold task of giving life to her children and of teaching them and guiding them- both as individuals and as nations- with maternal care.”⁷⁵³ As teacher the Church gives instructions, admonition and correction. Thinking about Church motherhood can help the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community and especially parents have a deeper revelation of what the Church in their midst really means. When these truths are

⁷⁵³ Pope St. John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), (1961), no. 1.

modelled as a study guide, they can be taught in Church groups like SCCs, CMA and CWA for a more productive parenting endeavour.

The Agĩkũyũ mother knew when, how and what to teach the child. For instance, when the baby did not like a particular song, the mother changed to another for the sake of passing the same message. The Church would enrich her role as teacher and nurturer to the children and youth towards spiritual maturity by delivering teachings that are not only relevant but also timely and through suitable mode of delivery. Reading, meditating and sharing the Word should be central in the Church group settings and tailored to positively affect the challenged youth and parents, especially the father.

6.4.4 Father's Role

The traditional role of the father in the Agĩkũyũ society was respected as head of the family, mentor and provider. He was the priest of his house that would make prayers every morning for God to bless his house. He would also be responsible for all kind of sacrifices on behalf of his family. The Synod of African Bishops highlights the father's role as that of protecting his family and a role model to his children; the critical importance of the father's involvement in his children's life especially in ensuring the boy child is raised with the right sense of values.⁷⁵⁴ There is evidence in Karũĩ Catholic Parish which links the father's involvement to positive outcomes for children which include having higher self-esteem, lower depression and anxiety and less anti-social behaviour.⁷⁵⁵ Nevertheless, in this community, this traditional role of the father which was once respected as head of the family, mentor and provider has undergone several shifts.⁷⁵⁶ Generally the father's role has been de-traditionalized to become more of a bread winner than a moral teacher for his children.⁷⁵⁷

Jesus calls God “*Abba*, Father,” a unique relationship to God that Jesus enjoys. His is a relationship Jesus has invited all to share with Him. The filial love of the Father

⁷⁵⁴ S. F. Duncan, “The Importance of Fathers,” (2000), <http://msuextension.org/stillwater/fcsmontguides/TheImportanceofFathers.pdf>

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ R. M. Schmitz, “Constructing Men as Fathers: A Content Analysis of Formulations of Fatherhood in Parenting Magazines,” *Journal of Men's Studies*, 24, no. 1(2016), p. 3–23.

⁷⁵⁷ S. F. Duncan, “The Importance of Fathers,” (2000), <http://msuextension.org/stillwater/fcsmontguides/TheImportanceofFathers.pdf>

demands for service to humanity, that is, loving one another as Jesus has loved people (Jn 13:34).⁷⁵⁸ It will not be uncommon for Karūrī Catholic Parish youth to have an appreciation of God as Father depending on their pleasant experience with their earthly fathers. Though one's human experience with his/her parents can distort the face of fatherhood or motherhood, God is neither man nor woman but transcends the natural fatherhood and motherhood.⁷⁵⁹ It was not by all earthly fatherhood that God revealed Himself, for that would have meant manifestation, not revelation. He revealed Himself by a son; "all things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to the Son chooses to reveal Him" (Matt 11:27).⁷⁶⁰ But one thing stands out, God is a Father who protects (Psa 121:5-8), provides, an intimate companion (Isa 41:10), a leader and authority, source of life and strength (Gen 1:26-28), who has the power to transform the youth's lives in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

Considering the Agĩkũyũ father was held in high esteem because he was responsible, we will put too little into the name "Father" when we think no higher than natural fatherhood at its heavenly best. In inculturating this value of father, the Church will work out a teaching for men on two things that are central in their lives as men and fathers; to be a diligent worker in stewardship, and work apostolate. As it is with God, the filial love demands the father's service to his children, bearing fruits with his hands, heart, and mind. The Church in Karūrī should be worried by the absence of many men in the SCCs.

6.5 Inculturating Karūrī Catholic Parish Manner of Transmitting Moral Values

The youth's strengths and weaknesses are found in their enthusiasm, idealism, energy, a lack of encumbrances, willingness to experiment and a desire to learn and grow; qualities that are experienced when growing up.⁷⁶¹ The strengths are assets to the community and are complemented when the youth show a morally approved trait of character necessary for a disciplined future parent and leader in their society.⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁸ CCC, no. 275.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., no. 239.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., no. 240.

⁷⁶¹ H. B. Tribble, "Emerging Adulthood: Defining the Life Stage and its Developmental Tasks," *Educational Specialist*, 2, (2015), <http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/edspec201019/2>

⁷⁶² H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 23.

6.5.1 Stages of Growth

This section aims at inculturating the manner of transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. It includes stages of growth and the values inculcated into children from infancy to young adulthood that culminate in the rite of puberty. This is done with the hope that the RCC will exploit it to enrich the doctrine on family and parenting, thus providing an enhanced version of the same to the families. Going by the results of the study, Magesa is right when he observes that life was respected in the African society and every effort was made to preserve it.⁷⁶³

The Karũrĩ Catholic Parish community appreciates that life starts at conception and parenting starts before the child is born. Based on this, the Church can add a regular prayer for the unborn child with their parents acting as the point of contact. Such prayers can be said within the SCC, Church devotion groups and during mass. The power of prayer is well demonstrated in Scripture. Further when praying for the unborn, the Church will be acknowledging the importance of life at any stage of growth and the need for proper parenting. To keep hearing such a prayer consistently may deter some from contemplating abortion and embrace the beauty of motherhood. The expectant mothers and their spouses will be quickened to the criticality of their parenting roles early enough.

The Church may rely on the insight beneath the different stages of growth so as to remodel the structure and content of the programs for children and youth in order to capture some nuggets that will boost the effectiveness of the programs. Why this is even more important is because the children interact mostly with the Church during the holidays, and therefore there is need to give relevant teachings according to respective ages and gender within the short time they have. Pesckhe advises that the children will be better equipped morally if the foundational teaching is well handled.⁷⁶⁴ T The moral teaching should be handled with seriousness is because it could be the only meaningful moral education the child receives compared to any other they encounter at home or elsewhere.

⁷⁶³ L. Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004).

⁷⁶⁴ C. H. Pesckhe, *Christian Ethics Volume II-A Presentation of Special Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, pp. 242-250.

Additionally, in the current times the Church must appreciate theatre is key in edification, entertainment, and exaltation of the human spirit. Drama in form of storytelling is a useful evangelization tool and a way of allowing talented youth to use their gifts to glorify God.⁷⁶⁵ It also reflects human behavior through dance and acting, has the ability to bring fresh insight to stories that are familiar, is not only participatory but inclusive and should be useful when it is appropriately adopted by the Church in youth programs.

It would be spiritually enlightening for the faithful of Karūrī Catholic Parish to know that the puberty rite in the Scriptures has a religious connotation. The physical circumcision is of no importance if the initiates do not learn that “...God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name” (Acts 15: 14) and “...purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15: 9). Paul saw circumcision in theological lenses and often explained that circumcision by flesh alone is not enough because it does not confer status of righteousness but is nevertheless a visible mark of the righteousness status already acquired. As young Christians, the youth go through Christian formation by means of the sacrament of Confirmation that bonds them with God. The Sacrament of Confirmation allows them to commit to Christian maturity. In preparing them for confirmation, they are taught to internalize the meaning of being responsible, committed Christians and intimate with Jesus and the Holy Spirit who will enable them to be true witnesses. Thus acquiring Christian maturity ensured moral maturity just like completing the Agīkūyū circumcision process did.

The study acknowledges and appreciates the attempt made by CMA in Karūrī Catholic Parish in facilitating the male youth to moral maturity. Just like in the traditional ritual, the CMA hopes the seclusion of the initiates from their families and their normal day to day activities, together with the teachings they receive, will help bring a deep reflection in them concerning the purpose of the ritual and way forward; that of being responsible individuals who can be relied on by their parents and community. That is why the Church should prepare the youth in such a manner so as to experience impact that gives them real change.

⁷⁶⁵ L. L. Doyle, *Church Drama and Conservative Christianity: Developing a Drama Ministry at Broadway Church of Christ* (Published PhD Thesis, Texas Tech University, 2002).

Inculcating the associated aspect of *riika* (age group) naming can produce some benefits for the initiates. Contrary to how the name is currently chosen, the Church in Karūrī Catholic Parish can choose a name of a preferred saint with outstanding works or recommendable identity. The *riika* members can organize themselves as a Christian devotional group or sport group that observes certain values as a way of keeping the good name of their patron saint that they identify with. The saint's character becomes the essence and basic crucial element that offers large reservoir of internal virtues necessary for the youth to manifest greater resilience in confronting crisis.

A saint acting as a role model should exhibit Christ's example of being kind, loving and charitable - the essence of Christian life. These are principles that bring about a Christ-like living. The character of Christ reveals He loved His own up to the end (Jn 13:1), was respectful, hardworking, kind, honest, obedient, humble, disciplined and revered the Father; values that Christians likewise are called to possess and exhibit.⁷⁶⁶

6.5.2 Moral Values

6.5.2.1 Honesty and Obedience

Inculcating the value of honesty would require Church leadership to be honest in their work. Apostle Paul, in concluding instructions on moral direction said "We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things" (Hebrews 13:18). Servant leadership is all about being honest, credible, and trustworthy; no cutting corners. When the youth know their worth, they can be counted on to develop a sense of honesty and remain true to it looking at their Church leadership as role models. Among the Agĩkũyũ, it was expected of children to obey their parents, elders or authority without questioning because they were true role models.⁷⁶⁷

Obedience to moral principles was a serious matter to Agĩkũyũ as pledges were made accompanied by experience of pain such as in the initiation rite. The consciousness and reverence of the unseen God imbued in their lives and hearts caused the Africans to

⁷⁶⁶ R. E., Brown, J. A Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy and O. Carm, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Burns and Oates, 2000), p. 1420-1424.

⁷⁶⁷ J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2015), p. 6.

conduct themselves in a manner acceptable to the Supreme Being.⁷⁶⁸ After washing the feet of His Disciples, Jesus tells them, “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them” or obey them (John 13:17). In inculcating the value of obedience, the study goes back to the drawing board to discover why the Agĩkũyũ took obedience seriously and why Jesus spoke the above words and why the Church today is falling short in inculcating the same value in children and youth, bearing in mind that the purpose of hearing or knowing the Word of God is to obey it. Jesus consistently preached that obedience to His word is proof of one’s love for Him.

6.5.2.2 Kindness and Respect

Among the Africans, God is described as hospitable or kind. Extending hospitality is reminiscent of participating in God’s gracious acts, “Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you; and hence He waits on high to have compassion on you ...” (Isaiah 30:18). In inculcating the value of kindness, the Church in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish will require considering where Christ’s ideal kindness interacts with Agĩkũyũ hospitality and persistently teach and demonstrate it to children and youth. This will open their eyes to what truly matters both in terms of their actions and their relationships. Where hospitality exists, the Church is a true “Family of God” with none lacking in what others can provide including giving a hand in parenting neighbourhood children in honesty as Christians.

Just as the Agĩkũyũ did, John Paul II cautions against disrespecting any moral value.⁷⁶⁹ The Pope was categorical that reverence of God makes certain the respect for nature and persons is not lost. Smith reminds Christians that they show respect and obedience to God’s authority when the inherent dignity of man is respected, simply because man is a creation of God.⁷⁷⁰ The Church therefore shows respect when it pays attention to all categories of its membership with a view to winning some to God like the youth of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, some of whom the study found have a substantial amount of idle time.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁸ M. U. Ushe, “Role of Traditional African Moral Values in the Development of Nigeria,” *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 3, no. 2(2011), pp. 1-13.

⁷⁶⁹ John Paul II, General Audience, (1978), no. 2.

⁷⁷⁰ R. Smith “Reverence and Respect,” (2015), <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/11/19/reverence-and-respect/>

⁷⁷¹ CCC, no. 1942.

6.5.2.3 Hardwork and Self-Discipline

The Pontifical Council explains that work is valuable and necessary as it provides the means to maintain the family.⁷⁷² Jesus taught many parables concerning work and labourers and likened it to the kingdom of God. The hard working labourer is most preferred. In inculcating the value of hard work, it is paramount to teach the youth the value of hard work and also demonstrate it in service (Eph. 4:12). That is why the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish leadership, aggressively working together with the Holy Spirit needs to call the youth to their ministry vocations. Spiritual growth requires work and cooperation with the Holy Spirit in that growth. Moreover, the seriousness by the Church leadership in being hard workers will be seen in the way they put into practice disciplines such as fasting, chastity, sacrifice, worship, biblical study, service, prayer, fellowship, confession and submission which will inspire the youth to commit intentionally to hard work (Tim 4:7b).⁷⁷³ In this way the youth will also internalize self-discipline.

To accord the children freedom and at the same time guiding them along will enable them develop self-discipline and responsibility in handling freedom. Moreover, through Baptism, the recipient is conferred the grace of purification from all sins but must continue struggling against flesh and desires. With God's grace the youth will prevail by discipline of feelings and imagination.⁷⁷⁴ In the same way God's power will unlock hard hearts, subdue rigid souls to bring the youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish to the realization that in demonstrating honesty, obedience, kindness, respect, hard-work, self-discipline, humility and fear of God, is in God's purpose for their lives. Doubtlessly, God as a parent disciplines His children, "the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastens everyone he accepts as his son" (Heb 12:6). Though disciplining is still appreciated by parents of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, it would bear more fruits when carried out swiftly and good deeds rewarded. The parents and the Church leaders together can summon the culprit to impress on him or her the seriousness of wrong-doing.

⁷⁷² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church* (Vatican: Holy See, 2005), no. 248.

⁷⁷³ R. Keeler, "Developmental Theory and Ministry to College Youth," *Fall*, 31, no. 2(2002), pp. 186–193.

⁷⁷⁴ CCC, no. 2520.

African values have something to learn from Christ's sacrificial demeanor as a perfect God or a role model. Christ-like values are ideally unique and worth imitation by all.⁷⁷⁵ The Karūrĩ Catholic Parish youth who hold the wrong perception on moral values are subject to perfection by Christ. All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, meaning, learning from Christ will lift them from their fallenness. This should compel all to accept the youth as good gifts from God requiring transformation through proper catechesis and programs that will equip and bring them to Christian maturity. The Bible plainly and in a simple way has outlined the commandments of Christ that the youth of Karūrĩ Catholic Parish should learn, that which should keep them away from unacceptable behaviour.

While violating moral values attracted immediate punishment in the Agĩkũyũ society and therefore seemed to be effective in deterring would be violators, Christians believe the effects of violating Christian values will be felt during the delivery of judgement on individuals.⁷⁷⁶ The idea of a punishment and reward in future postpones the urgency of strict adherence today. What is not urgent loses its importance and seriousness.⁷⁷⁷ However, the Church enabled by her status as a family has power to align the mind and spirit of youth in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish towards upholding moral values. The pastoral duty in the local Church is to also keep in mind that ultimately human beings rebel even when they know certain acts are forbidden (Rom. 1:18-32).⁷⁷⁸

It is important to note that the power of religion appears as though it is losing its effectiveness as far as combating youth moral decadence in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish community is concerned. Poshkid laments that religious institutions, which are regarded as an organized collection of belief systems, cultural systems and world views relating humanity to spirituality and to moral values, seem to have failed in their fight against moral decadence and have indulged more in the pursuance of materialistic gains.⁷⁷⁹ Although the Church can do only so much, the implication is that the work of

⁷⁷⁵ J. M. Gathogo, "Some Expressions of African Hospitality Today," *Scriptura*, 99, (2008), pp. 275-287.

⁷⁷⁶ H. W. Kinoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2013), p. 59.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ J. Strong's, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), p. 761.

⁷⁷⁹ G. Poshkid, "Religion and its Role in Promotion of Moral Decadence," (2014),

the Church to herald the Good News should continue and this is important in the face of the growing mass media effects on youth's attitude.

6

strong.6 Appreciation of Youth's Potential

The Karūrī Catholic Parish youth respondents said that their potential is not appreciated as it should be and often their issues are side-stepped on the basis of their junior position at home and/or Church. As a result, there is a growing disillusionment between them, and the family and Church, whereby the youth have come to think the Church could do better to engage-them, even in making decisions affecting them. We learn that there is much good to be found in people of all kind since God instilled into all people Supreme Goodness. As enlightened by Teffo, it would be unwise to ignore the fact that the youth are human, made in the image of God and have the potential and capacity to error and miss the harmonious existence envisaged from the time of Adam.⁷⁸⁰ John Paul II advises the Church to speak to the youth's hearts with joy for that is when they feel welcome. The Church, as the extended family of the youth is taxed with the responsibility of bringing transformation and liberation to them as these are the future of the Church and society.

The youth feel empowered when they are understood and listened to. To allow them a voice and a platform endears them to the Church as they see the Church activities as useful in their lives. Indeed, and despite their shortcomings, the youth's unique characteristics and gifts like their large numbers and wide connectivity to contemporaries, understanding and experience with new cultural orientation can be a resource to the Church. Rather than see them as a problem and possessing limited skills, the Church can view them as people who have capabilities and potential if given the right opportunities.

<http://www.poshkidcharming.wordpress.com>

⁷⁸⁰ L. J. Teffo, "Remaking Africa through a Spiritual Regeneration," in The Lutheran World Federation, *Crises of Life in African Religion and Christianity* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2002), p. 127.

Apart from seeking a lively Church atmosphere, the youth are attracted to the Church that will offer them a great source of inspiration.⁷⁸¹ We learn from the teachings of Jesus that none is worthy of the Kingdom of God unless they change and become like little children who are hierarchically “lowest” in position in the community (Matt 18:3-4). This is important as we deliberate on the moral restoration of the Karūrī Catholic Parish youth, sidelining them may be a first impulse to many but this is contrary to the teaching of Jesus.

6.7 Karūrī Catholic Parish Youth’s Lived-out Spiritual Life

The allegiance of the Karūrī Catholic Parish youth to the Church seems low even though most attend mass and youth programs. A problem with youth’s spirituality in the preset times is that they do not seem to fit in the “Church mould.”⁷⁸² A study on youth and religion revealed that a youth’s spirituality is a feel-good, do-good spirituality lacking love enough for Jesus.⁷⁸³ Dean refers to such state of affair as being “almost Christian”; not the place a Christian should be either theologically or practically (Acts 26:28). The reality lies in part in the problem of double identity of the youth, tending to be partly Christian and partly secular. This is the life some youth informants confess to live. This kind of situation made Dean conclude that teenagers merely reflect their parent’s religious devotional attitude and by extension, that of the laity. This implies that the Church’s role in helping the youth is more vital now than ever.

Root and Dean explain that the Church is responsible for understanding the life and challenges of Her children and youth, understanding their specific goals and their desired process of achieving it, and sourcing for right way to minister to them in their context.⁷⁸⁴ As youth mature, they are bound to be aware of the contradictions and

⁷⁸¹ P. S. T. E. Ndeke, (2017), “Influence of Pentecostal Churches in Christ the King Parish, Catholic Diocese of Yei - South Sudan,” *The International Journal of Science & Technoledge*, 5(6), pp. 42-57.

⁷⁸² P. McQuillan, “Youth Spirituality: A Reality in Search of Expression,” *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 6 (2006). <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4ea8/97f1be12a1ba474587791dacaab3660bf7c6.pdf>

⁷⁸³ K. C. Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 4.

⁷⁸⁴ A. Root and K. Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2011), p. 14; P. McQuillan, “Youth Spirituality: A Reality in Search of Expression,” *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 6(2006). <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4ea8/97f1be12a1ba474587791dacaab3660bf7c6.pdf>

contentious issues in life including religious ones. The Church could engage an experienced person who can guide them and be able to provide real answers to questions the youth struggle with such as those touching on the use of social media, forming Christian based relationships, and the nature of God and how He fits into their world.⁷⁸⁵ This would be like the Agĩkũyũ traditional parents who involved their youth in daily work. The approach however may require the Church to allow the youth some involvement in the selection and continuous evaluation of their leaders based on output satisfaction.

The Church can bring awareness to the youth that many of them are in the process of making sense of the information they have in view of forming perspectives, constructing and shaping their beliefs. As they participate in Church life through specific roles or programs which allow them to contribute in singing, ushering or just being listeners, it interests them to remain in Church.⁷⁸⁶ Therefore the Church ought to take a deliberate constructive role in the moral growth of youth, respecting their autonomy, seeking to dialogue along. Inculturation of the Gospel message has not been without challenges and in the present times modernization effect is posing unique problems.

Nyabwari et al. would like to see a situation where globalization becomes just a tool for creating awareness among people of the world and not interfere with local cultures. This, they suggest without showing how it would be possible.⁷⁸⁷ Even though such an outcome is desirable, already the youth's lived reality points to a continuing crisis where, for instance, their mode of dressing and especially for the ladies do not reflect the Christian they confess to be. According to Nyabwari et al. such adaptations of

⁷⁸⁵ D. T. L. Shek, "Spirituality as a Positive Youth Development Construct: A Conceptual Review," *The Scientific World Journal*, 2012 (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1100/2012/458953>; C. Cook and P. Hughes, "Youth Spirituality: How Young People Change," *Pointers*, 6, no. 3 (2006), <https://cra.org.au/youth-spirituality-how-young-people-change/>

⁷⁸⁶ D. T. L. Shek, "Spirituality as a Positive Youth Development Construct"; C. Cook and P. Hughes, "Youth Spirituality: How Young People Change," *Pointers*, 6, no. 3(2006), <https://cra.org.au/youth-spirituality-how-young-people-change/>

⁷⁸⁷ B. G. Nabwari and M. T. Katola, "Constraints and Prospects of Inculturation in Kenya," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4, no. 2(2014), pp. 282-291.

foreign cultures and values only work to hinder success of the inculturation process.⁷⁸⁸ Perusing the responses from the informants, one can notice how sobering the creeping and harsh reality of modernization has affected parents, the moral teachers, who also appear to draw blanks, especially where the children and youth whom they have lost control of are involved.

Similarly, Pope Francis indicates that the attitude of some people in Church reflects an un-assisting nature of self-centeredness and sinfulness present in every generation. Such people who should be involved in the inculturation process are not eager to undertake the challenge.⁷⁸⁹ This complicates the situation considering that the Synod Fathers also lament about the behavior of the present generation of parents especially the younger ones, who are cautions not to pass faith to their children to avoid conflict and normally leave the responsibility to religious institutions.⁷⁹⁰ This demonstrates the enormous task of inculturating the Gospel message in Karūrī Catholic Parish and elsewhere for the purpose of transmitting moral values to children and youth. To inculturate the value of dressing decently, the youth need to be persistently guided by role models in the Church and counseling aimed at making them understand the implication of their dressing mode. Apostle Paul exhorts Christians to dress in "modest apparel, with propriety and moderation" (I Timothy 2:9).

The study learnt from the youth respondents that song and dance positively affect their vitality, behavior and relationships. When they dance, it binds them together with Church; when they sing they too experience joy, the letting go of their sorrows and joys find an outlet for their hopes and fears about the future. On the other hand, singing conveys certain truths or sentiments and when connected with religious rite it expresses the faith not only in God but gives them assurance and hope about the present and future. Thus when integrated into Christian worship, participation in Gospel music will not only be a good way of keeping the youth from real or virtual secular spaces where they could end up in self-destructive habits, but it also has potential for packaging the messages in a way easily understandable and applicable in their daily lives. In effect the music becomes 'practical' salvation, and through communication it can warn and

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁰ IL, no. 135.

educate the youth on dangers of earthly realities and aspects of life such as substance abuse and crime among others, issues that reflect moral decadence.⁷⁹¹

Further, when song and dance is combined and Africans including those of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish express their fellowship and full participation, it is more than mere entertainment; the youth can communicate their inner sentiments, aspirations and expectations in life.⁷⁹² While majority of youth see Gospel music as beneficial in evangelizing them, nonetheless they should be sensitized on the negative effects of the types of music they adopt as Satan can easily mislead them by encouraging destructive and harmful behaviour. Despite the youth's taste of "cool" and attractive praise and worship, the Church has responsibility of modeling their faith to be mature and passionate by guiding music artists among them in creating their own styles and tunes to convey the Gospel lyrics according to the will of God.⁷⁹³

The emerging generation of youth including those of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish is easily bored by the conventional religious institutions and rigid pieties. Thus continuing with the old Church model and mission may end up disfranchising them. However, it is not all gloom as, for instance, research has found that cyber spirituality is spreading quickly as people search for meaning in their lives, spiritual guidance and other information on the internet.⁷⁹⁴ The new technologies can be used to glorify God through music, information on healthy relationships, Christian video games, appropriate fashion, sports and sermons.

The Church should bear in mind that evangelizing the youth to wholeheartedly embrace the person of Christ alone will give salvation that helps them find purpose in their lives

⁷⁹¹ D. N. Kagema, "The Use of Gospel Hip-Hop Music as an Avenue of Evangelizing The Youth in Kenya Today: A Practical Approach," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3, no. 8(2013), pp. 161 -169.

⁷⁹² J. S Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (New York: Praeger, 1975), p. 26-27; J. M. Gathogo, "Some Expressions of African Hospitality Today," *Scriptura*, 99, (2008), pp. 275-287.

⁷⁹³ D. N. Kagema, "The Use of Gospel Hip-Hop Music as an Avenue of Evangelizing The Youth in Kenya Today: A Practical Approach," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3, no. 8 (2013), pp. 161 -169.

⁷⁹⁴ S. George, "Emerging Youth Cultures in the Era of Globalization: TechnoCulture and TerrorCulture," in R. Tiplady, *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalisation on Mission* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003), p. 35.

and establish healthy relationships. To do so the Church has to look for a vacuum in the new culture, and decisively engage it to bring new realities that bear upon Kingdom purpose.⁷⁹⁵ With the Church acting as an extension of their family in real African sense, where individual problems are regarded as group problems, the youth will feel at home because they can seek advice on spiritual matters and other issues disturbing them.

6.8 New Cultures

The modification and reformulation of the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish youth behaviour and lifestyle is a culture change that has already occurred.⁷⁹⁶ The informants, by their confession and deeds appear to have been substantially influenced by the new changes. In one of his encyclicals, Pope John Paul II refers to one of his est themes, inculturation, as the “...intimate transformation of authentic human values through their integration in Christianity in the various human cultures,” and pushed for it to be promoted as an ongoing process. This is imperative given that the Agĩkũyũ culture like any other is not static and so cannot be treated as purely traditional. The interviewed Agĩkũyũ elders admit that what used to be an important part of their culture in transmitting moral values, such as the initiation rite, folklores, family ideals, local language, dance and song are changing. But one thing should remain though, that is, the moral values, since they do not lose their relevance.

Still, in inculturating Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into the Christian message, one is dealing with a moving target. Tien advances an argument that with continued modernization and changes which come with it, the institution of the Church may lose its grip on society as it is faced with individuals whose morality and belief are no longer evident.⁷⁹⁷ The Karũrĩ Church too is affected by the modernity changes. The challenge is to find the best way for enabling the Gospel to take root in such an environment bearing in mind that broadcasting Biblical truth into a community of people living with complex problems, can bring to them as much relief as distress, especially when

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁶ K. Kang’ethe, *The Role of the Agĩkũyũ Religion and Culture in the Development of the Karing’a Religio-political Movement, 1900-1950 With Particular Reference to the Agĩkũyũ Concept of God and the Rite of Initiation* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 1981), p. 43.

⁷⁹⁷ N. D. Tien, *The Church as Family of God: Its Development and Implications for the Church in Vietnam* (Published PhD Thesis, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, 2006), p. 248.

community issues are controversial in light of the Gospel message.⁷⁹⁸ This challenges the pastoral team to step up creativity and make sense of the reality of a new Karūrĩ Catholic Parish youth culture that is not fully traditional nor totally modern yet in need of inculturation. The RCC in Karūrĩ, basing Her teachings on Scripture and being conscious of Her role as a moral social agent, may bring the required transformation and change thereby liberating parents and the youth from moral impoverishment, and also their environment from the evil of oppressive situations.

The contradictions between traditional and modern lifestyles are easily observed in Karūrĩ Catholic Parish. For instance, appreciation of the usefulness of information technology among the youth is still a debate and one reason is because of its ability to significantly contribute to the formation of new culture as the youth interconnect easily and quickly. According to George, the end result of this new culture is that perceptions, social values and meanings are programmed and re-programmed usually taking a contradictory stand to that of parents and society.⁷⁹⁹ Thus this new culture among the Karūrĩ Catholic Parish youth differs in many aspects with the old and therefore representing a breakaway from tradition. Sivi elaborates this as connected to the thought that introducing doubt in established and accepted values and norms as the internet does will give reason for young people to accept alternative choices and lifestyles.⁸⁰⁰

The youth is facing hard times and choices, and have few avenues to express their concerns and still few understand their real needs. In addressing such an issue, Apostle Paul relates the message of the Gospel of Christ to different cultures to make it relevant in those contexts.⁸⁰¹ This is supported by McGarry and Ryan when they say that a story can only be relevant when it communicates in the people's language.⁸⁰² The Gospel

⁷⁹⁸ D. Robbins, *This Way to Youth Ministry: An Introduction to the Adventure* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2004).

⁷⁹⁹ S. George, "Emerging Youth Cultures in the Era of Globalization: TechnoCulture and TerrorCulture," in R. Tiplady, *One World or Many?: The Impact of Globalisation on Mission* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2003), p. 44.

⁸⁰⁰ K. Sivi, *Kenya Youth Scenarios: Youth.... the Key to Unlocking Kenya's Potential* (Nairobi: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2011), p. 59.

⁸⁰¹ D. Robins, *This Way Youth Ministry: An Introduction to the Adventure* (New York: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2004), p. 154.

⁸⁰² C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 30.

message therefore can be relevant in Karūrī Catholic Parish youth's lives if it meets them in their youth culture whose spirituality is now slightly different from that of the older generation. To respond to the new culture, it will demand a new paradigm, a shift in how the Church integrates youth in its programs. A similar strategy should be adopted in the manner the moral values are taught.

The use of social media brings with it costly habits. A significant number of the users have lost their relational skills, manifest low depression, lower attention spans, anger and frustration.⁸⁰³ Overall though, the youth of Karūrī Catholic Parish view the new cultures as fulfilling their longings that make their lives better, thus a cause worth pursuing even though not always compatible with the values of the rest of the community. The Church could relate with the youth by leading the community in affirming the changed culture and using what is acceptable in it to teach moral values to the youth.

Many lay Christians in Karūrī Catholic Parish complain that though they can read several Church documents on the subject of family and parenting, they find it hard to get the message due to the language that is sometimes not straightforward. Being able to read and comprehend will enrich their understanding in detail of what is expected of them in their parenting role and how to go about it. For instance, the encyclical *Familiaris Consortio* is loaded with useful applicable teachings that address the subject of Christian family and parenting. Compounding the challenge of using such resources is the culture of over-dependency on the pastoral team.

6.9 Karūrī Catholic Parish Inculturation Effort

The effort by RCC to inculturate in Karūrī Catholic Parish is seen through the creation of SCCs that address marriage and family catechist, pastoral care and youth participation and empowerment. In these activities the community members contribute in prayer, food and identify those who need evangelism and sick cases needing prayer and treatment. These small communities are, as Pope Paul II says:

Primarily serve as places engaged in evangelizing the members themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be

⁸⁰³ S. George, "Emerging Youth Cultures in the Era of Globalization: TechnoCulture and TerrorCulture," p. 41.

communities which pray and listen to God's Word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups.⁸⁰⁴

This study observes that the SCCs are yet to significantly identify the new signs of the times that need creative response with concrete actions regarding the issue of youth morality, the lived experience by parents, children and youth. Further, the work of Karūrī Catholic Parish is challenged by the absence of the father figure in the SCCs and as was observed by some informants, the financial condition of some members also hinder them from willingly sharing with the needy in their midst. The absence of the men may be likened to a family without a father. Though the men are not against the work of SCCs, they do not show participation as a priority, that is why the present SCC in its state of attendance does not reflect the essence of the Agĩkũyũ communal life. When all participate in the affairs of the SCC, that is when it expresses the image and spirit of the African extended family where everyone is, where there is unity, solidarity, sharing, warmth, love, responsibility and finding of one's identity within the larger Church. This inclusion of all members in the SCC makes inculturation authentic and successful. Shorter advises that the whole community should be involved because it is the life of the community which is in question and still the community provides the means of implementing the Church programs.⁸⁰⁵

In a functional SCC, the faithful can actively participate in the life of the Church through developing of new lay ministries such as the ministry of marriage, healing, the poor, the sick, catechesis, reconciliation, justice within and outside the Church.⁸⁰⁶ Chukwu explains that these activities bind the Christians together, deepen solidarity and raise consciousness of being members of the family of God leading to genuine evangelization of African communities.⁸⁰⁷ This should benefit the youth while learning

⁸⁰⁴ EA, no. 29.

⁸⁰⁵ A. Shorter, *Christianity and African Imagination after African Synod – Resources for Inculturation* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1995), p. 266.

⁸⁰⁶ P. Lwaminda, "The Church as Family and the Quest for Justice and Peace in Africa," in C. McGarry and P. Ryan, *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001), p. 265.

⁸⁰⁷ D. O. Chukwu, *The Church as the Extended Family of God: Toward a New Direction for African Ecclesiology* (Bloomington: Xlibris Corp, 2017), p. 70.

values for their successful living. When the SCCs in Karūrī Catholic Parish therefore provide an amiable environment for lay gifts to operate, people will feel comfortable to share about their children moral issues. Throughout the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus calls for a new family that is above all social differences or divisions in order to develop the Church of Christ which believes in His message of salvation.

6.10 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, an effort has been made to inculturate the Agīkūyū family and parenting values and the manner of transmitting moral values towards adequate parenting. This has been done with decisiveness to address the main objective relating to the study problem and empower the parents, and Church family to effectively inculcate moral values into children and youth. It is through the Church as “Family of God” that the lay Christians and their family members positively affect the lives of children and youth by forming a caring community that helps in inculcating moral values. Inculturation effort itself makes the Agīkūyū family and parenting values more understood.

It has been shown that through inculcation, it can be appreciated that the Agīkūyū have rich family and parenting values such as community and extended family which can be integrated into RCC doctrine of family and parenting for adequate parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish. Similarly, the moral values taught to children and youth in the Agīkūyū family and the manner of transmitting these values can be integrated into the Christian Message. In the inculturation effort in Karūrī Catholic Parish, the Bible message remains the focus, and thus in carrying out inculcation Christ remains the central focus with the Agīkūyū values drawing from it. The benefits of inculturating the Agīkūyū family and parenting values and the manner of transmitting moral values will be that the Gospel Message will be passed in ways that are familiar with the people of Karūrī Catholic Parish, and in a manner that makes them feel at home in the Church and the Church at home in the community. This way, the study argues that parents are empowered to teach their children moral values.

This inculturation exercise has helped to determine how the Church remains relevant in the face of social changes within the community but the effort is challenged by factors like the new cultures that are manifesting today. However, through this study, the Church and community are sensitized appropriately as they design relevant

solutions to the parenting challenge. All the insights in this chapter together with the investigations and explications made in the previous chapters enable the study to make a summary of the findings, implications of the study, recommendations and conclusion in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter and it summarizes the main findings of the study. The chapter also gives the implications and emerging recommendations, suggests areas for further research and the general conclusion.

7.2 Summary of the Study

The aim of this study has been to investigate Agĩkũyũ family set-up and the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image in view of transmitting family and parenting values to children and youth in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambu County using inculturation approach. To answer the study’s main question comprehensively, the five specific objectives were addressed as follows: Objective one: To examine the role of Agĩkũyũ family set-up in transmitting family and parenting values. This objective was addressed through the administration of questionnaires to parents and youth, and through interviews with selected elders in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish; objective two: To determine the manner of transmitting moral values in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish. This objective was addressed through the administration of questionnaires to parents and youth, and through interviews with selected elders in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish; objective three: To scrutinize RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting with regard to teaching moral values. This objective was addressed through a desk review of RCC documents and selected theologians’ teachings on family and parenting which included Apostolic Exhortations, Encyclicals, Catechism of Catholic Church, Pontifical Council teachings, and insights from renowned theologians; objective four: To examine the Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church image and inculturation approach with regard to transmitting moral values. This objective was addressed through a secondary review of Vatican II instructions, post conciliar magisterial documents, theologians’ related insights, and the Catechism of Catholic Church on Church image and inculturation approach. The study also obtained views from Karũrĩ Catholic Parish respondents including the Church leaders through interviews; objective five: To integrate Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in view of transmitting moral values

in Karūrī Catholic Parish. This objective was addressed through a definite integration of related authentic Agīkūyū family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections on family and parenting with a view to inculcate moral values into children and youth.

The main claim of the study is that transmitting family and parenting values for holistic development of children and youth will be difficult because of the dwindling family involvement and the lack of an elaborate manner of parenting. As the study spells out, the transmission of moral values and the liberation of the youth should be inspired both by Agīkūyū insights on family and parenting values and ecclesial pedagogy on genuine holistic parenting actualized through inculturation approach. This should be done ensuring that children develop the necessary virtues as they grow up. The study now proceeds to discuss the findings on each objective.

7.2.1 Agīkūyū Family Set-up and Transmission of Family and Parenting Values

The study established that the Agīkūyū family set-up is essential for passing moral values even though the traditional structures that helped to pass down the values no longer function as intended as far as parenting of children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish is concerned. Though the social organization has substantially remained the same, the community's uniting and bonding characteristics have lost their originality, interpretation, meaning and purpose and the effect has been a change in the manner moral values are transmitted to children and youth.⁸⁰⁸ Deviating from the norm, the nuclear family has taken root in a community where life revolved around the extended family unit thus denying children the benefit of its contribution. For instance, the parents shy away from discussing sexual matters with their children, an issue which could ably be handled by the extended family members. Moreover, the neighbours no longer easily intervene in the neighbourhood parenting watch for fear of reproach by the parents.

The task of teaching children in Karūrī Catholic Parish therefore is no longer a communal affair and has mostly been left to the parents. The mother is more involved than the father but her time with the children is minimal due to her involvement in other

⁸⁰⁸ Interview with Elder, 2016.

duties like income generating activities. On the other hand, some fathers are largely absent from the parenting task and usually provide inappropriate role models. The respondents indicated that the ideal is where both parents are involved in the parenting process.

A change has also occurred with the initiation rite such that it is now more of a physical cut than an intensified way of inculcating moral values and acquainting the youth with crucial knowledge and skills for life. In this regard, the RCC in Karūrī Parish has opted to teach the male youth through the CMA boys' initiation program, which is an effort to develop good character in them. Though the program was reported to have achieved some of its intended objectives, it has reached a limited number of youth. Thus respondents felt that the Church can offer more opportunities to the youth for socializing and talent development as well as assisting them shape their moral values. Of note is the lack of an appropriate program for the girls who are also morally challenged. The study now proceeds to summarize the manner of parenting in Karūrī Catholic Parish.

7.2.2 Manner of Transmitting Moral Values in Karūrī Catholic Parish

The findings show that the moral values taught to children and youth in Agīkūyū society are still regarded as important. The general consensus is that there is an urgent need to liberate the youth of Karūrī Catholic Parish from moral impoverishment. The youth are not enthusiastic to fully embrace some values like humility and self-discipline thinking that one can decide to do what is convenient to himself or herself, whether wrong or right. To them, the end justifies the means. This is in contrast to the training in the traditional Agīkūyū society which ensured that children would not depart from values they learnt when they grew up. The task of the parent is to make sure children understand that being moral is an obligation and not debatable.

The findings also show that the Karūrī Catholic Parish community lacks a common, orderly and proven way of teaching children from an early age. This makes it difficult to judge the comprehensiveness of the teaching the children receive hence, according to some respondents, the contemporary parents are ignorant, in one way or another, of how the child should be handled so as to acquire the necessary strength in a particular stage of growth. In this context, the study found that the Erikson's development stages

of growth in a child's life are useful for reflection in the upbringing of children in Karūrī Catholic Parish. Each stage hints to what the parents should expect and at the same time reveals both strengths and weaknesses that should be basis for proper parenting.

Sometimes the children enjoy uncontrolled freedom in the use of social media which the parents blame as a key contributor to a morally impoverished youth through watching or listening to inappropriate content. The nature of its use shields the youth from the monitoring eye of their parents and brings new cultures that negatively affect the teaching and learning of moral values. On their part, youth regard social media as a good source of information on various issues they face in life; information they are not able to get from their parents or other persons. A related finding, as reported by the social workers in the study, was that the moral problem in Karūrī Catholic Parish could be blamed not only on the influence of western culture, but also on the neglect of children and youth by parents who were noted to sometimes lack parenting skills. The social workers add that some parents are also indeed engrossed in western culture just like their sons and daughters and they too do not safeguard their moral values.

Karūrī Catholic Parish Church engagements in the community are seen as crucial for the teaching of Scripture and by extension moral values to children and youth. The interventions include the Christian initiation rites of Baptism and Confirmation, youth programs and the participation of the ecclesiastical groups. In addition, SCCs created by the Church give opportunity to the laity to put their gifts into practice while living as a family of God which is an important aspect for creating the right environment for bringing up children. The youth in Karūrī have mostly kept away from the SCCs while the fathers are not enthusiastic to attend either. The Church also promotes the parenting endeavour through ecclesiastical movements such as CMA and CWA in the realm of the family of God. The study now proceeds to summarize the findings on RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections on family and parenting.

7.2.3 RCC Doctrine and Theologians' Reflections on Family and Parenting

The finding is that RCC doctrine and theologians' reflections contain important teachings on family and parenting with regard to transmitting moral values to children and youth. The teachings are comprehensive on all aspects of family and parenting. The RCC doctrine affirms that the family is the right environment for children and youth to

learn in under the responsibility of their parents, assisted by other family members. The teachings also revealed that the parenting role is a decisive one that cannot be delegated or usurped by another and therefore the participation of the father and mother is crucial.

The study gained a good understanding about the important similarities of the OT family and the Agĩkũyũ family. In both, the centrality of the father and mother was core in the parenting task, serving as role models with love and ensuring the right environment for teaching and formation of moral values for their children. The Church and the theologians recognize that the mother is more involved in parenting children at all stages of growth and this started way back even in the OT days. However, the documents caution against a danger in women assuming male roles in parenting as witnessed today. The absence of a father gravely affects the teaching of moral values to children. The theologians observe that the man is increasingly losing sight of his role. The family will benefit if the priests trained on family matters preach and nurture the vocation of husband and wife.

Throughout the documents, the uniting and all inclusive extended family is favoured. The Church doctrine observes that the extended family includes special members such as grandparents who are important in the transmission of values and the faith. The Church too refers to Herself as a parent and has acknowledged the specific needs of a child at different stages of development which are, innocence, puberty, adolescence and adulthood. In these stages, a child's specific and individualized needs are met as they also receive relevant education.

The review of the RCC doctrine showed that the Church encourages the use of social media in evangelizing the youth, the people formed by the social media culture. The Church refers to the media as "gift from God" that, if used properly, can help in teaching the youth moral values as well as the Scripture. The RCC teachings also note the unsettling challenges parenting faces today which include not only social media but also a culture which blatantly chooses to ignore the contemporary society's issues such as the one tackled by this study. There is a worrying trend where young people are encouraged to reflect upon and decide on moral issues. The Church leaders and the theologians are convinced that the time has come for the Church to be flexible as the

retraction of the youth moral problem starts. Love will be required and an examination of conscience while dealing with this issue of moral values.

7.2.4 Roman Catholic Family of God Church Image and Inculturation Approach

Karūrī Catholic Parish has made an attempt to implement the “Family of God” Church model by way of SCCs in its five outstations. The study found that SCCs are yet to be fully functional in terms of their mandate and need to be active and creative in designing interventions in response to the issue of youth morality. On the other hand, the case of the boys’ initiation program introduced by CMA is a good attempt by the Church as the family of God to restore family and parenting values. After examining the concept of inculturation as documented in the ecclesial documents, the study qualified it as a good strategy for conducting a dialogue with Christianity in which cultural issues can find expression. Inculturation therefore is a suitable approach which allows integration of the Agīkūyū family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in the realm of family of God for a more fruitful family ministry.

7.2.5 Integrating Agīkūyū Family and Parenting Values into RCC Doctrine and Theologians’ Reflections on Family and Parenting

In chapter six, the study integrates the Agīkūyū family and parenting values into RCC doctrine and theologians’ reflections on family and parenting in view of transmitting moral values to children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish. The integration was necessary as a first attempt to authenticate the Agīkūyū family and parenting values in Karūrī Catholic Parish. The study asserts that inculturation preserves, purifies and corrects the Agīkūyū family and parenting values as seed of God in their culture, and enables the parents to understand better and apply the same with regard to inculcating moral values. Inculturation will also root the peoples’ Christian faith and practice in their own cultures, give them security and social harmony as well as a sense of purpose and direction.

The Karūrī Catholic Parish community will benefit by embracing the RCC family and parenting doctrine as it will empower and enable them to live as Christians authentically, appreciating the family and parenting values in their culture as God-given as the Christian message gradually takes concrete form in their culture. Having

summarized the findings, the study is now ready to draw the implications and spell out the way forward to empower the parents, the Church, community and others towards inculcating moral values into children and youth in Karūrī Catholic Parish and elsewhere.

7.3 Implications

This section elaborates the spiritual, catechetical, and pastoral implications. It also draws out implications for the community, and for the fathers and mothers.

7.3.1 Spiritual Implications

The inspiration of the Church as God’s family based on Christian foundation gives parents and youth a good reason for living without fear of failure in fulfilling their purpose. The Agīkūyū family and parenting values as the seed of God in their culture rightly disposes the people to God through the parenting endeavour. Christ is a universal God and so not a stranger to the Agīkūyū people and their Church, and He means to pass through their cultural values to make a better new people that are achieving their lives in fullness as Christians.

The “Family of God” ecclesiology is not only about inculturation but also liberation. In respect to the Agīkūyū family and parenting values, this Church image goes to address people’s needs and aspirations in their specific situations thus guiding on what is expected of them as teachers to their children according to Church instructions and their tradition, which is quite enlightening spiritually. The “Family of God” communion as a community of believers restores the community as a family and parenting value, and its vitality, enabling people to live authentically thus overcoming selfishness and individualism in the contemporary Karūrī Catholic Parish.

Embracing the RCC doctrine on family and parenting will lead to a change in the community thinking, living as Christians authentically and appreciating family and parenting values. The influence will create a more leaning towards God and the Church, promoting a new community with lively domestic Churches, people relating as brethren, friendly neighbours, minding others’ children and warming together as one family of God.

The call to meditate and share the Word in the SCCs will lift the Karūrī Christian community spiritually, their lay ministries becoming more productive arising from their living union with Christ as articulated thus: Christ is the source of the whole Church apostolate. The fruitfulness of the apostolate of the lay people in the lives of children and youth and others depends on their living union with Christ; as the Lord Himself said: “Whoever dwells in me and I in him bear much fruit, for separated from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). When the laity in Karūrī Catholic Parish community advance fervently, joyfully along this path, they will overcome difficulties such as youth moral crisis and other undesirable issues with prudent patient efforts.

The study has provided an important solid standpoint for Karūrī Catholic Parish to confidently contribute to other Christian denominations because the Church is one; it is the sole “Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, Catholic and apostolic,”⁸⁰⁹ for in many communities they are besieged by the same problem of youth moral decadence. Overall, the study is a good model for evangelizing the Karūrī Catholic Parish community for better families and spirituality.

7.3.2 Catechetical Implications

The catechetical implications are essentially connected with the spiritual implications. The purpose of catechesis is to lead individual members and communities of the faithful to maturity of faith. Catechesis deepens the Christian faith thus in our case strengthening faith through better understanding of the RCC doctrine of family and parenting thereby enabling the faithful to become better parents in the realm of “Family of God.”

As the study proceeds to explain the catechetical implications, it is worth understanding more of what catechesis means in the Church and entails. According to the apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, and under the concept of evangelization, catechesis is described as “one of the steps or moments in the total process of evangelization.”⁸¹⁰ The “moment” of catechesis relates to a time when conversion to Jesus is solemnized and becomes the basis for first adherence to Him. Converts therefore through a given

⁸⁰⁹ LG, no. 811.

⁸¹⁰ CCC, no. 18.

period of formation in the whole Christian life, are initiated into the mystery of salvation and an evangelical living style. This means the hearers are initiated into the fullness of Christian life.⁸¹¹ All in all, it can be said “Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, youth and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.”⁸¹²

Catechesis can play a major role in dealing with the youth moral problem. To quote the Holy Father in his *Ad Lamina Treatise* of May 30, 1998 to United States bishops, he indicated that catechesis:

"Plays a fundamental role in transmitting the faith... The Gospel message is the definitive response to the deepest longings of the human heart. Young Catholics have a right to hear the full content of that message in order to come to know Christ, the one who has overcome death and opened the way to salvation" (I Cor 15:1).

Catechesis therefore expresses the content of *kerygma* (proclamation of the Good News), which the Church proclaims to new converts. It is expressed in clear detail in form of instructions and explanations of the Scripture, and in light of the Christian event. Catechesis, whereas distinct from *kerygma*, is in continuity with it, developing and deepening it. The catechetical implications of the study are discussed next.

The ecclesiology of “Family of God” Church image and of SCCs should be seen as a real effort to make the Gospel at home within Agĩkũyũ community and by extension make the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values more relevant in the families. The “Family of God” Church model when applied appropriately can benefit the youth since it is in a family where they belong, derive their identity, learn to share, and live as responsible members of society. The SCCs will further provide an environment in which children will participate in approved activities aimed at promoting right behaviour, bridging the gap identified by this study.

The Agĩkũyũ family tradition that is passed down to children and youth aided by the inculturation process helps them learn responsibilities and moral values. It can be likened to the Christian instructions where when they are obeyed progressively, it

⁸¹¹ Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis, (1971), no. 63.

⁸¹² CT, no. 18.

deepens one's faith. God instructed Abraham to pass on all what he had learnt from Him to his son Isaac, and Isaac would do the same to his children, a tradition that should not cease. When parents teach the children responsibly, they empower them to do the same to their future families, thus guaranteeing the continuation of morally upright generations. Parents will also not assume other agents like Church or school will do it for them.

The "Family of God" Church image will be important and of much value to the youth who are seeking a sense of belonging and purpose of life in a society that is vastly dynamic exposing them to incidences where being moral ranks behind other priorities like becoming rich fast by whatever means. When the SCC outfit is well utilized and exploited, the youth will find spiritual parents that direct them in the way they should behave, and friends and peers with the right influence. In the spirit of love, sharing and warmth, the youth will feel the SCC is a true home and become free to seek advice whenever they need it. They will also grow deep faith as they continue to take part in the Bible reading, meditation and prayer within the SCC. In this way, the youth will develop a sense of belonging and learn to see Church as a "mother."

The SCCs in Karūrī Catholic Parish have not fully progressed for all to feel at home in them and certainly they are not yet an environment that all male and female youth would find attractive. Without key family figures' involvement in a minimal way, and without the assurance of meeting certain expectations, these SCC activities which should bind the Christians together, deepen their solidarity and raise consciousness of being members of the same family of God will not bear the intended fruits. The closer the Church in Karūrī Catholic Parish moves towards solidarity the more it becomes a genuine family. The further it moves away the less it can claim the title "Family of God."

Furthermore, the impact of the Scripture and other important Church teachings such as family and parenting values is slowed down by the way the message is communicated to the laity most of whom are also parents. When the message is difficult to comprehend, inculturation is hindered. Thanks to this study which has integrated the Agīkūyū family and parenting values thus the Karūrī Catholic Parish faithful will now learn how to interpret what the Church teaches in relation to the godly seeds in their

culture. They will be encouraged to demand an inculturational work like this one on other Christian doctrines for a more productive, meaningful, committed and enthusiastic Christian life. The work has therefore provided the Parish with a way of making the catechetical instructions more instructive to the families. These, when taught to parents will act as a wake-up call for them to own their worth as mothers and fathers and be role models to their children. The moral aspects tackled by the study will enrich the children and youth on positive values and responsible living.

The Biblical, the Church magisterial and Agĩkũyũ cultural teachings, on family and parenting, all offer a comprehensive understanding of parenthood as a God-ordained responsibility that ought to be reflected on with seriousness in deepening the faith. This should be an encouragement to the mothers who, looking at Mary the mother of Jesus, an exemplar of “the woman”, learn through her will-power that they can deliver their purpose in life, taking the challenges they face as opportunities to perform better rather than obstructions to lament about. Mary’s conception outside marriage was an interruption that never brought her down because of her positive attitude; “may it be as you have said” (Lk 1:38). She also brought up her son Jesus to be a model youth. A positive attitude makes one resilient, more creative, happier, and a better decision maker. This should challenge the mothers in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish to deliver on their responsibilities for the sake of their children and society at large.

As we saw with the OT family, it is a blessing for the man and his wife to not only bring forth children but also raise them up responsibly. Scripture further supports this mandate of procreation or propagation of life, just as seen with the Agĩkũyũ who loved their children and brought them up with care to become responsible people. Thus such an undertaking of a process that ensured continuity of family and society promotes the plan of God for the human family and the larger “Family of God.” Motherhood and fatherhood are divinely appointed states that the parents will honour by playing their role of parenting adequately. The task for the agents of the Gospel is to articulate these issues in a catechesis which will not only assist parents in their parenting role but also deepen their insight of motherhood and fatherhood, and the value of family.

The Church teachings have qualified inculturation as an effective way of helping the Agĩkũyũ live as Christians more fully and authentically within their own culture, when the Gospel message elevates their values. They will not feel uncomfortable in who they are ethnically. When the family values are taught to them in a similar manner as the study has done, then the relevance of catechetical instructions on parenting is enhanced and received with more interest. Inculturation therefore does not imply being disconnected from one's culture but guarantees a fuller life of integrating with their humanity. This will aid the people in understanding well what God intends for families in a more comprehensible way than would be when family and parenting realities are interpreted according to the western world view.

7.3.3 Pastoral Implications

While the study appreciates that the Church in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish has a pastoral approach for ministering to the families, a new approach would be inevitable as implied by the study findings and also in regard to the spiritual and catechetical implications. In light of our study, the laity will be quickened and made aware that it is possible to understand different doctrines of the Church, which will help them become active participants in their lay ministries concerning children and youth. Pope Francis reminds the Church to always value the transformative power in faith-filled laity. He says: "We need well-formed lay people, animated by a sincere and clear faith, whose life has been touched by the personal and merciful love of Christ Jesus."⁸¹³

The boys' initiation program conducted through the CMA is a good initiative and if well directed can help resolve some youth problems such as the one this study has handled. The impetus of such a program can spread beyond the walls of the Parish to the wider community. The lack of a training outfit to handle the girl may hinder the achievement of the intended objective since she is also morally challenged and a future partner to the boy. Restoring the character of the male and female youth implies strong future families headed by responsible fathers as role models not only to their children but also to those in the larger family of God.

⁸¹³ Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, (2017), Vatican City, CNA/EWTN News, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/for-pope-francis-the-catholic-laity-can-transform-the-world-86987>

Through the SCC, individualism is swallowed up by the spirit of communion thereby restoring the sense of community which should be a way of life. This is befitting since the SCC is the Church at grassroots, inclusive, participatory and where Christians practice their lay ministries, express faith, hope and charity all central to the Gospels. SCC as the Church in the grassroots will also live as one extended family where people address their neighbour's problems like disciplining their errant children. When people get a sense of belonging in the SCC then a strong Church will be built. Alongside these benefits, the local Church in Karūrī Catholic Parish will contribute to the universal Church. When the SCC operate in earnest as a domestic Church, it will not be surprising to, compare it to a field "hospital" that is called to treat needy families, broken homes, inadequate parenting and youth lost in moral decadence. This is therefore a key pastoral priority.

The three theories applied in the study have implication for the pastoral team. First, the pastoral agents are helped to insert themselves into the particular situations in need of investigation, making a social analysis of what problems hails the community. The agent will then confront the findings with the Will of God found in Scripture and Tradition, and come up with a reflective way forward to the problem. Secondly, the pastoral agents are also reminded that children have different training needs at different stages of growth and programs responding to their issues should be in accordance with their needs. Such understanding will help the pastoral agents to draw out the necessary requirements at different stages of growth and the corresponding parenting actions that are compatible with Christian teaching and therefore ensure children and youth are taught what is relevant to them. Lastly, the pastoral team are made aware that the catechesis for parents and those aspiring to start families will contribute to adequate parenting when designed to address the parents' weaknesses such as failure to be good role models.

7.3.4 Implications for the Community

Neglecting the values of sense of community and the extended family implies that the declining level of morality may persist because without the community bond, children and youth continue to miss out on the crucial training and contribution of appropriate role models. As such subjects that touch on intimacy are not given the treatment they deserve from the community structures or competent and willing people like the

grandparents. Further, the children and youth do not get emotionally attached to the wider circle of family members which is an important aspect in psychological development for proper balance. Being connected to a family would give them a sense of belonging in their community and not suffer identity crisis in terms of who they are and where they belong. This further implies that reviving the values of sense of community and the extended family becomes an urgent task and especially now when the older generation of elders who have invaluable insights on adequate parenting is still around.

The continued overshadowing of Agikūyū family and parenting values by the new culture that makes the youth think some moral values are not relevant may herald difficulties in inculcating the same into children and youth. The challenge lies with teaching them when they continue holding this view. Both the parents and the youth agree that there is something wrong with the manner in which children and youth are taught moral values. This is therefore a good starting point and reason to think that any effort put into place to address the youth moral problem will not go to waste. Kattering, as quoted by Annamala et al. asserts, “a problem well-stated is a problem half-solved.”⁸¹⁴ However, given that the moral crisis among the youth has taken long to resolve, the bigger task could be in deciding on the strategies of bringing the parents and other stakeholders together to deal with the problem. Again, the youth moral crisis is not bound to be resolved unless a way is found to control what they access in social media, which appears to be problematic given that technology changes fast with parents unable to catch up.

7.3.5 Implications for the Fathers and Mothers

The battle of winning the children and youth back to listen to their parents is a tough one. This is mostly so when one considers the parents are taking the larger share of the blame for their children’s impoverishment in moral values. However, given that the nature of the modern economy contributes substantially to the situation the parents find themselves in, their absence is expected to continue. The father’s absence implies that the children lack the emotional connection he brings into the family while the absence

⁸¹⁴ N. Annamala, S. Kamarudd, I. A. Azid and T. S. Yeoh, “Importance of Problem Statement in Solving Industry Problems,” *Applied Mechanics and Materials*, 421 (2013), pp. 857-863.

of the mother implies that the child does not get proper nurturing, companionship and bonding. The danger of children embracing wrong ideas from unhealthy sources is therefore very real today when these two are absent physically or emotionally as it is sometimes the case in Karūrī Catholic Parish. The parenting effort will not be effective when the parents themselves are besieged by the same moral problem as their sons or daughters. It may be disastrous for the youth to role copy such parents. The fact that the youth view parents as the best source of information on moral values clearly shows who has the greatest chance to influence their morality positively.

7.4 Emerging Recommendations

The study now makes a number of recommendations based on the implications. These are: recommendations for the Church, recommendations for parents and community, recommendations for government and recommendations for the youth.

7.4.1 Recommendations for the Church

Inculturation is bringing a fresh way of being Church that though still in the process, is interactive and given time, could unite the Church as one family of God with all the good qualities of an African extended family. The inculturated family and parenting values should be passed to the parents, children and youth through Church programs. The Church, by virtue of Her unique position as herald of the Good News should extend grace and help to the youth and allow them guided freedom to contribute in the Church despite their imperfections. The leaders should be committed to mentoring the youth in spiritual matters. Inculturation therefore should continue in all aspects of the life of the Church in order to make it an inclusive and participatory community.

Social media is not just a fad but a fundamental shift in the way issues are communicated. The Church should recognize this and aim to interest the youth by offering appropriate social media content such as sharing Scripture, interesting Christian games, godly conversations, sharing prayer requests, creating online communities, creating blogs where youth, Church members and leaders “like”, and many more. Further, for the purpose of contextualizing the family and parenting values, the Church is called upon to make the message relevant to the needs of this generation by for instance incorporating Christian youth friendly content. The content should integrate relevant spiritual and moral formation messages in ways that interest the youth

otherwise programs for young people risk becoming routine thus losing impact on character formation.

The study recommends that SCC fellowships and Church leadership should find ways to attract the youth to the SCC by organizing them into units of action with the aim of expanding the youths' livelihood options for holistic wellbeing and transformation. The inculturated family and parenting values should find a permanent place in the deliberations of SCC and Church media targeting children and youth.

The ordained ministers should “correctly draw out Catholic doctrine of family and parenting from divine revelation, profoundly penetrate it, make it the food of their own spiritual lives, and be enabled to proclaim, explain, and protect it in their priestly ministry” for the purpose of inculturation.⁸¹⁵ In making the RCC doctrine on family and parenting at home in the Agĩkũyũ culture, the ministers will have to be willing and competent to engage in authentic inculturation process, that will see the youth and parents rescued from their present moral predicament. The ministers should also understand that meaningful and sustainable success in parenting is not easily achievable without appreciating the views, roles and contribution of all stakeholders involved including the youth.

The pastoral plan needs to focus on building friendly parish communities. Such will help in combating challenges to parenting posed by modern culture. There is also need to create a pastoral plan that looks at how people can be helped to understand and experience the objective truths of the faith, even in midst of their problems, failures and hopes. These problems impede proper formation of consciences. The Church should not only proclaim the objective moral truths but also address how the people can be formed and experience these truths. This calls for the Church to systematically intervene by integrating Her work of evangelization and other pastoral initiatives with development programs that target the youth. Thus the spiritual, social, physical and intellectual development programs should be implemented in a reinforcing manner to improve and expand the youth's livelihood options for holistic wellbeing and transformation. When “community members are empowered, are healthy and can

⁸¹⁵ Pope Paul VI, Decree on Priestly Training, *Optatam Totius*, (1965), no. 16.

withstand shocks, the RCC is effectively delivering sustainable services to communities.”⁸¹⁶

7.4.2 Recommendations for the Parents and Community

The respondents’ appreciation of the role of extended family members in parenting calls for the Karũrĩ Catholic Parish families to earnestly seek the involvement of the extended family in parenting. Parents should frequently introduce their children to their extended families on both sides. While the extended family in its original form is a thing of the past, parents should seek the involvement of trustworthy persons including those among the laity in parenting their children and providing the right role models.

The Church and the parents should realize that today, none can satisfactorily solve the youth moral problem alone without the other. A complementary approach therefore is what is needed. Even as the parents endeavour to expose the children to what is good in their rich cultural heritage, the starting point should be to realize modernity is irreversible and that the youth are already formed by the new culture. The young people will not just accept some teachings without questioning. For this reason, an appropriate environment should be created at home for teaching moral values. Without doubt, in cases of single parenting, children could benefit more if the contribution of the absent parent is sought from say, the Church; the “Family of God.”

The parents should embrace the culture of inquiring and following on what their children are doing in the social media, be vigilant and keep educating the children on the merits and demerits of social media with simplicity and at the same time, help them identify alternative healthy ways of spending time. The concern should be more on the ability to limit the time children spend on the social media and censoring the type of information they are able to access. Children and youth need to be guided in self-discipline in order to regulate themselves in the use of social media, being encouraged to exploit the positive aspects.⁸¹⁷ Where possible, a child who refuses to follow instructions should have his or her electronic gadgets confiscated to allow space for reflection. Whatever needs to be done concerning liberating the youth from moral crisis

⁸¹⁶ Catholic Diocese of Ngong, Strategic Plan 2016-2020, p. 14.

⁸¹⁷ K. Sivi, *Kenya Youth Scenarios: Youth... the Key to Unlocking Kenya’s Potential* (Nairobi: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2011), p. 23.

should be urgent with the parents at the forefront because as the study has shown, they have enormous potential to influence the youth positively.

Hence, rather than see social media as always a problem, it is good for the parents and community to recognize that youth have a great ability to exploit its potential for personal benefit as well as for creating business. The advancement of information technology by the day means that the youth need to be morally disposed rightly in order to possess the discipline of using social media without abusing it. Children and youth are now living in a highly sexualized culture with every new generation growing in the use of internet and exposed to pornography, which is now the norm and not the exception. Parents are advised to teach their children the true meaning of human sexuality and educate them on chastity. First, they need to stress the sacredness and the beauty of sexuality and the body. In addition, parents should use every opportunity and emphasize to the child the impressive God's design for family and marriage.

Given that youth are tending to have low regard for the relevance some moral values have in their lives, and do not associate their morality with the quality of life they live, the study recommends an honest and continued discussion and explanation that being moral is key for a successful life. Young people need to be given a compelling reason why they should reinforce certain behavioral patterns in them. Moreover, the parents, with affection, should take a firm position on inculcating moral values into their children while at all times striving to become good role models themselves.

Both the father and mother need to create opportunities to spend time with the child especially from his/her early age since it is in this early phase when the foundation for the entire person's later life is laid. By doing so, the child will not only have a good foundation but also will become grounded in moral values taught during the time spent together as a family, playing and eating meals together, and in sharing the Word of God. Family get-togethers can create an appropriate environment for interacting and telling stories which are loaded with rich Agĩkũyũ wisdom, religious beliefs, ideals, morals and warnings. In this regard the father is prevailed upon to heed to the call made by the youth respondents to avail himself to the family and be in the forefront in teaching them life skills and providing the much needed emotional support.

The laity should see the SCC as a normal family where older Christians in the position of grandparents, uncles and aunts act as role models to the younger ones. Acting like biological fathers and mothers they will not only be good examples to the children and youth, but will also help the Church in its task of inculturating the Agĩkũyũ family and parenting values. Parents should attend the SCC meetings with their children whenever possible. Such children will grow up bonding with other children in the group thus developing and appreciating the sense of communal life from young age. The fathers and mothers can take advantage of the communal element of SCC to organize activities aimed at dedicating themselves to address the parenting problems in the home and the larger family of God. This is a service long desired for the wellbeing of families.

The holistic development of a child is important. The study therefore recommends that moral values should be taught at the appropriate stages of a child's growth. The effort made by CMA is laudable but should involve teaching children at all levels of growth including girls. The virtues taught need to be in line with an informed approach such as the one explicated by Erikson's theory.

Finally, parents are urged to have confidence as they carry this primary task of educating their children with knowledge and wisdom trusting in God who sustains them through prayer and the Holy Spirit. Everyone concerned should take advantage of the fact that the youth moral crisis is an issue that is acknowledged by all, and therefore this is the right moment when goodwill will be extended to support measures aiming for a positive outcome. Coming together with committed like-minds should lead to fruitful discussions, actions and outcomes. Thus, taking a common ground both the parents and the community of Karũrĩ Catholic Parish can mobilize themselves to create an atmosphere that favours adequate parenting. Inevitably, this will require huge individual sacrifices and adjustment to their present lives.

7.4.3 Recommendations for the Government

Granted that the youth crisis has been identified by the Kĩambu County government as one of the constraints that could derail the development agenda, it is necessary and beneficial for the government to support initiatives meant to address the youth problem. One way would be to borrow the model of RCC Karũrĩ Catholic Parish CMA's boy's initiation program and implement it under the guidance of key players like the Church

and the community. The initiation rite should be valued for the educational purposes it carries with it. The positive values it affirms will continue preparing individuals for coping in the next stage of life. This can be achieved well if the community appreciates the fact that the Church is in a unique and privileged position to change people's lives and their communities considering Her role as herald of Good News to all, acceptability in the community and Her organizational power. For the youth, the initiation rite will boost their morale to accept the adult role by moving from childish behaviour and commitment to a responsible life of embracing moral values.

The interventions of social workers could include keenly seeking solutions to the root cause of the youth moral problem rather than merely managing the consequences of the same. Such an approach will be more effective in dealing with the problem than being reactive. This kind of response should be emphasized given that the wider community has shown indifference in giving a helping hand with the embattled children.

7.4.4 Recommendations for the Youth

The youth can be a force of positive change if they decide to use the power within them positively. This should start with seeing moral values as important and necessary in their lives. As future leaders, they have to be morally disposed to steer their societies to prosperity and for this to manifest, they need to imbibe values that will dispose them to become positively inclined. Hence, they should be willing to be taught in the way they can become positive moral change agents rather than victims in a fast changing society. Understanding that moral values never lose their relevance from one generation to another is paramount.

Youths are reminded to interact with one another and partner with appropriately equipped parties, and create social networks that will easily strengthen them when confronted with discouraging attitudes. This can help to create a strong and viable moral based institution founded on principles that work. While still living in this changing society, the youth should resolve to be reasonable and adapt themselves to the world and not insist on trying to adapt the world to themselves. This will require them to stand out of the crowd and become light in darkness of a morally bankrupt society.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends several areas for further studies.

Drawing from the praxis mediation, Karūrī Catholic Parish faithful have to carry out the actual implementation of the inculturation effort for their liberation. They are the ones to accomplish the task of making the RCC teachings on family and parenting more meaningful and fruitful in their families and community. Engaging in the inculturation exercise for the sake of the challenged family members does not stop with this study but should be a continuous exercise and therefore there will be need for similar studies on the subject.

Parenting is an important issue that permeates all African communities who in general accentuate family issues in a similar way. This study can serve as a trigger for other researchers to be thought-provoked to undertake related works in other ethnic groups thus complementing our study and offering the opportunity to draw a general conclusion on this important multi-faceted subject.

In the present times, this study does not necessarily favour the delineation of duties between domestic and extra-domestic, and between males and females as in the past. However, there is value for a study examining if the division of tasks as it was in the traditional family set-up is associated with adequate parenting outcome. Further being a multifaceted phenomenon, the issue of youth impoverishment in moral values requires the consideration of other aspects of parenting other than those covered by this study such as parenting styles which might reveal beneficial information on why the youth are in moral crisis. Researchers could also focus on how parenting today takes into account the strengths and crisis expounded in Erikson's psychosocial theory.

Future studies on parenting could use mixed methods including systematic measures along ethnographic and observation methods because of contextual environments with universalistic and individualistic difference perspectives. Other researchers can undertake ethnographical studies focusing on parenting goals and the meaning of parenting behaviours among selected communities.

The study's findings points to the importance of the father's presence in the son's and daughter's life. His absence has ramifications for the children and youth, thus the father's absence from the family and its effects should be an area for further studies with a view to develop appropriate strategies to reduce the impact of his absence.

The study, through literature review comprehensively examined the RCC universal teachings on family and parenting for the purpose of integrating the Agikūyū family and parenting values. A study can be undertaken to assess how the RCC universal doctrine on family and parenting is interpreted and implemented by the local Church with the aim of improving the methods of delivery of the same to the laity, in order to achieve the intended results.

7.6 General Conclusion

The study established that the Agikūyū family set-up and the RCC "Family of God" Church image are necessary for transmitting values that children and youth must imbibe to enhance their moral health and character development. It has brought out the awareness that in Karūrī Catholic Parish, the Agikūyū social organization which was crucial for inculcating moral values into children, has shifted significantly and that the all-inclusive family which was useful for bringing up children has disintegrated giving way to the nuclear family that is now popular. This change has affected the manner in which moral values are transmitted to children and youth. The study contributes by affirming the position of the parents as the primary agents in inculcating moral values into their children. Their failure to teach and provide good role models therefore heralds a problematic situation given that the parents are seen to be in the best position than anyone else to positively influence their children.

Another contribution the study brought out is that the Karūrī Catholic Parish community has no elaborate method of training children right from the early stages of their lives thus jeopardizing the foundational strength with reference to teaching moral values. In a case where there is no well-defined parenting content, the Erikson's theory could offer a framework or enrichment for parenting.

A real attempt to help parents understand the RCC doctrine on family and parenting in view of teaching moral values to children and youth has been made. The catechetical instructions actualized through SCCs will become more relevant, understandable, fruitful and fascinating indeed. Thus, the study has provided an important solid standpoint for the Church in general to confidently contribute to adequate parenting. The Church of Christ is one; it is the sole “Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, Catholic and apostolic.”⁸¹⁸ This is a relief considering that in many communities they are besieged by the same youth moral problem and inadequate parenting.

Awareness that a research of this kind was long overdue for the wellbeing of families in Karũĩ Catholic Parish has been created. The study findings can by extension enlighten other communities to desire the same essence of the doctrine of family and parenting, a much needed freshness, a revival and awakening in the family of God. The study establishes an urgent need to reverse the status quo and thus calls for the work of liberating the lost youth to intensify. To do this, the youths’ conviction regarding moral values is of utmost importance if any intervention has to work. This may require a consistent and honest discussion with them on the need to be morally upright, and a drastic change of the parents’ mind-set and that of the community. Overall, the study is a good model for evangelizing communities for better families and spirituality since it provides inculturated family and parenting values necessary for adequate parenting.

⁸¹⁸ LG, no. 8; CCC, no. 811.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Introductory Letter

I am a registered PhD candidate at the University of Nairobi, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. As a requirement for the award of my Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies, I am conducting a research on the topic: “A Study of Agĩkũyũ Family Set-up and Roman Catholic “Family of God” Church Image towards Adequate Parenting in Karũrĩ Catholic Parish, Kĩambu County Using Inculturation approach.” The questionnaire attached herewith is meant to gather information from you.

Kindly respond to the items in the questionnaire. Please do not indicate your name anywhere in the questionnaire. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of this study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are requested to tick inside the spaces marked () or write your response on the dotted areas. Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Florida G. Rũgendo

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire for Youth

PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender : Male () Female ()
2. Age: 14 to 19yrs () 20 to 24yrs () 25 to 30yrs () 31 to 35yrs ()
3. Where do you study/work?
4. Which Church do you attend?

PART TWO: PARENTS INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

5. What is your parent's occupation?
Father.....
Mother
6. When do your parents leave home for work? Father..... Mother.....
What time do they return? Father..... Mother.....
7. Does your mother help you with homework? Yes () No ()
8. How about your father? Yes () No ()
9. Which parent are you most comfortable discussing issues with?
Mother..... Father..... Explain
10. When you have done something wrong how do your parents punish you?
Dialogue () Advice () Shout () Beat ()
11. Do your parents give up trying to get you to obey them because it is too much trouble? Yes () No ()
12. Do you stay out late and your parents do not know? Yes () No ()
13. Do your parents know the kind of friends you keep? Yes () No ()
14. Who do you usually ask for permission when going out? Father () Mother ()
15. How often do your parents call you to offer some advice?
Sometimes () Always () Never () Regularly ()
When I have done something wrong ()
16. How much time do you spend with your parents?
Less than an hour () more than an hour () none ()
17. Do you communicate your feelings to your parents? Yes () No ()
18. Who is your role model?
19. Do you sit for meals together as a family? Yes () No ()
20. What TV programs do you watch or listen to together as a family?.....
21. Do you read the Bible and pray as a family? Yes () No ()
22. Does your father/mother teach you on how to take care of your body and how to dress modestly? Yes () No () Sometimes ()
23. Do you discuss sex matters with your parents? Yes () No ()
Who initiates the dialogue? Father () Mother () Me () Other ()
24. Who do you think is the most appropriate person(s) to educate youth on sex matters?
Parents () Mass media () Teachers () Peer groups ()
25. Your parents reward or give something extra to you for behaving well.
Always () Sometimes () Never ()
26. Which areas do you think your parents should improve as far as teaching moral values is concerned?.....

27. If you have a single parent, what do you miss that the other parent would have provided for you?

PART THREE: YOUTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

28. Do you think modernization has affected the parents’ role of teaching moral values to children? Yes () No () Positively..... Negatively
29. What do you consider to be the most reliable source of information regarding your values?
 TV () Parent(s) () School () Peers () Magazines () Internet ()
 Relatives () Celebrities () Other ()
30. Do you spend time on social media? Yes () No ()

If yes indicate the time spent.

Media	Hours per day
TV	
Radio	
Internet	
Twitter/Facebook	

31. Do your parents get concerned on how much time you spend on the above activities? Yes () No ()
 Explain your answer.....
32. How do you benefit from social media?

PART FOUR: CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT PARENTING

33. To what extent do you see the following factors as hindering parents from teaching moral values to their children?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lack of time for the children					
Ignorance					
Parental negligence					
Poverty					
Poor parent – child relationship					
Parents living away from children					
Children Disobedience					
Influence from social media					
Peer pressure					
School/Church interference					
Parents not well behaved					

PART FIVE: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

34. How do you spend your time at home
35. Please indicate to what extent you value the following.

Value	Very important	Moderately important	Neutral	Low importance	Not important
Being honest					
Being kind					
Being obedient					
Being humble					
Being respectful					
Being hardworking					
Being self-disciplined					
God fearing					

Comments, if any.....

36. What is the source of the moral values that you have learnt?

Value	Parents	Relative	School	Church	Peers	Media
Honesty						
Kindness						
Obedient						
Humility						
Respect						
Hard work						
Self-discipline						
God fearing						

37. In your view are your neighbours concerned about your behaviour?
Yes () No ()
38. Please describe any influence of the following relatives on your life
i) Uncle.....
ii) Auntie.....
iii) Grandmother.....
iv) Grandfather.....
39. Do some of your peer act in ways which are not morally right?
Give examples.....
40. What is your goal in life and what are you doing about it?.....
41. Do you feel you are ready to enter into a relationship which will require you to make sacrifices, i.e. marriage? Yes () No ()

42. In your opinion how do you rate your parents in providing the following needs to you?

Area	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
Formal education					
Food and shelter					
Moral teaching					
Spiritual guidance					
Sex education					

43. What challenges do you encounter as a youth?.....

PART SIX: SPIRITUAL LIFE

44. How often do you attend Church?
 Weekly () Sometimes () Never ()
45. What motivates you go to Church?.....
46. What programs do you participate in?
47. How does your SCC help you to mature morally?

48. Explain how the following are involved in your personal moral development.
 i. Church members
- ii. Church leaders
- iii. Priests
49. Do you think there is a difference in terms of moral behaviour between you and those who do not go to Church?
 Please explain

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire for Parents

PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male () Female ()
2. Age: Below 30yrs () 30 to 40 yrs () 41 to 50 yrs () Above 50 yrs ()
3. Marital status: Married () Single () Widowed () Divorced ()
4. What is your level of education?
5. What is your occupation?
6. Which Church do you attend?
7. Please indicate the age of your children.

	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-30 years	31-35 years
Sons							
Daughters							

PART TWO: PARENTS INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

8. Who constitutes a family today?
9. When does parenting start?
10. Why at that stage?
11. Do you nurse your baby personally during the first 2 years after birth?
12. Yes () No ()
13. What kind of play/activities do you engage the baby in?.....
14. What do you aim the child to achieve at this age?.....
15. What virtues are you currently helping the child to develop? Hope (), Will (), Purpose (), Competence (), Fidelity (), Love (), None (), Do not know ().
16. Do you know what type of friends your son or daughter keeps company?
Yes () No ()
17. What activities do you encourage your child to get engaged in with his/her peers?
i. Son.....
ii. Daughter.....
18. When your child goes for outdoor activities such as sports and retreats, do you discuss the after activities/events together? Yes () No ()
19. Do you teach your child basic things about
i Sex matters? Yes () No ()
ii Substance abuse? Yes () No ()
iii Dressing decently/modestly Yes () No ()
20. As a parent do you think the extended family is necessary for adequate parenting?
.....
If yes, please indicate which members are most useful.....
Briefly explain how they are useful.....
21. What issues do you find difficult to discuss with your child?
i. Son.....
ii. Daughter.....
Why do you find it difficult?
i. It's a sensitive issue.....
ii. It's a taboo.....
iii. The children are too young to understand.....
iv. It can be better handled by someone else.....
v. It is not important.....

22. How do you transmit the following values to your son or daughter?
- i Honesty.....
 - ii Kindness
 - iii Obedience
 - iv Humility
 - v Respect
 - vi Hardwork
 - vii Self-discipline
 - viii Fear of God
23. Describe the relationship between you and your
- i. Son?
 - ii. Daughter?
24. Your child comes home more than an hour past the time you expect him/her?
Yes () No ()
25. How often do you give individual instructional guidance to your children?
Always () Sometimes () Never ()
26. How do you punish wrong doing by your son or daughter?
Dialogue () Advice () Shout () Spank () Other ()
27. If you cannot settle an issue with your child whom do you turn to for help?
- i In the case of your son.....
 - ii In the case of your daughter.....
28. How do these persons guide you in resolving the issue?.....
29. You give up the discipline of your child because it is too much work without positive results. Always () Sometimes () Never ()
30. Do you reward or give something extra to your child for obeying you or behaving well?
Always () Sometimes () Never ()
31. Does your community contribute in ensuring that children in the neighbourhood are morally brought up? Always () Sometimes () Never ()
Explain how.....
32. How have you participated in parenting neighbourhood children?
.....
33. Whom do you think should best serve as teacher of moral values to a child?
- (i) Parents Yes () No ()
 - (ii) Relatives Yes () No ()
 - (iii) School Yes () No ()
 - (iv) Church Yes () No ()
 - (v) Peers Yes () No ()
 - (vi) Media Yes () No ()
- Give reason
34. What suggestion can you make towards making the family a better place for moral training of children?.....

PART THREE: CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT PARENTING

35. To what extent do you see the following factors as hindering you from teaching moral values to your children?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lack of time					
Ignorance					
Parental negligence					
Poverty					
Poor parent – child relationship					
Living away from children					
Influence from the media					
Peer pressure on children					
External interference					
Children disobedience					
Inexperience					
Modernization and substance abuse					
Lack of guidance and counselling techniques					

PART FOUR: SPIRITUAL LIFE

36. Have you ever attended a seminar, talk, conference or workshop on responsible parenthood?

Yes () No ()

If yes briefly explain your experience

If no, why?

37. What programs does your Church have that help you in parenting your children?.....

38. Which small Christian community (*mwaki*) do you belong to.....

39. How is this group useful to you in terms of adequate parenting of your children and youth?.....

Your *mwaki* has the following characteristics:-

Unity: Yes () No (), Love: Yes () No (), Care for one another: Yes () No (), Warmth: Yes () No (), Agreement: Yes () No ().

40. How do the leaders in your Church interact with the youth?

41. How else can the Church leaders be involved in helping the youth to develop good character?.....

42. What suggestions can you make to the Church towards Christian moral education of children?.....

APPENDIX 4: Interview Guide for Church Leaders

PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

General Information of the participant

1. Gender Male () Female ()
2. Name of Church.....
3. Position held.....
4. How long have you served in this center?.....

PART TWO: OBSERVATION AND CONTRIBUTION OF CHURCH

5. How does your Church define a family?
.....
7. Are the parents careful about their children receiving religious instructions and sacraments according to the ages set by the Church? Y () N ()
If not, what would you attribute such lack of concern to?
 - i. Overwhelmed by work ()
 - ii. Leave the role to the Church, School other ()
 - iii. Most are ill equipped to deal with problems faced by modern day children ()
 - iv. The problem of single parent families ()
 - v. Attaching less importance to Church teachings ()
 - vi. Other
8. What are the difficulties you encounter in your effort to ensure parents effectively and efficiently teach moral values to children and youth?
.....
9. What are the socio-economic factors that are militating against effective and efficient family life education in your parish?
.....
10. Are parents always available for consultation on matters to do with parenting?
11. How do you rate the behaviour pattern of those youth who have gone through Confirmation and those who have not?
12. What efforts are you putting to motivate the parents inculcate values to their children?
13. In handling matters in relation to the youth, what is your observation on the quality of parenting?
14. Who do you think should be the primary educator for children in moral values?
Parent () School () Church () Mass media ()
Explain
15. To what extent is a child a product of good parenting and the Church involvement? Explain.
16. In what way do you think the following qualities can be inculcated into the children?
 - i. Honesty
 - ii. Kindness.....
 - iii. Humility
 - iv. Obedience.....
 - v. Industrious.....
 - vi. Respect.....

- vii. Self-discipline
.....
- 17. Is dealing with sex matters of the youth a challenge to your Church?
.....
- 19. What comment do you have on the notion that “parenting is hard today”?
.....
- 18. What suggestions can you make to the following as far as bringing up morally upright sons and daughters is concerned:
 - i Church.....
 - ii Parents.....
 - iii Community.....
- 19. How is Church as a “Family of God” contributing to adequate parenting within the parish families?
- 20. What are the limitations of the concept “Church as Family of God” as far as adequate parenting is concerned?
.....

PART: THREE: CONTRIBUTION OF THE SCC TO PARENTING

- 21. (i) How many SCCs are in this outstation?
- (ii) How often does your SCC meet?
- (iii) In your SCC, is there Bible study (bible creed, the sacraments, a Catholic Church document, religious book etc.)?
- (vii) Is there a need in your community to help the parents bring up morally upright children?
- (x) How are you responding to the needs?
- (vii) Please comment on children and youth participation and moral empowerment in a SCC.
- (viii) Celebration in SCC by food, entertainment, storytelling and other cultural activities. yes (), No (). Why.....?

APPENDIX 5: Interview Guide for Agikūyū Elders

PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Which Church do you attend?
.....
2. How long have you lived here?
.....

PART TWO: INFORMATION ON PARENTING

Own Experience

3. In your view what is a family today?
4. Describe the changes that have taken place in the family and community as far as parenting of children and youth is concerned
5. In your view do you think bringing up a morally upright child is a harder task today than it was in the traditional society? Why?
6. How is the extended family involved in instilling values in children and youth?
7. In your opinion, how are the following involved in inculcating moral values into children and youth?
 - a. Neighbours
 - b. Age group (*riika*)
 - c. Sub clan (*mbari*)
 - d. Clan (*mũhĩrĩga*)

Parenting in the Traditional Society

8. What were the key values that every parent wanted instilled into their children?
9. Please explain the role of the initiation rite in passing moral values to children and youth in the traditional society.
10. What has replaced the role of education in the traditional rite?
11. What popular folk songs, stories, or proverbs have a well behaved child in focus? Are they in use today?

Parenting in Agikūyū Contemporary Society

12. How does the value of a child compare in the traditional society and today?
13. What is the commitment of the parents in teaching moral values?
14. Do you think the parents of today are equipped for adequate parenting?
15. In your view does the behaviour of youth show lack of values?
16. Is their behaviour is justified?
17. What do you think is the root cause of this problem?
18. What solutions can you suggest to parents?

Contribution of the Church as Family

19. What role is the RCC playing in the following:
 - Formation of moral values in children
 - Equipping the parents to raise morally upright children
20. What suggestion can you make to the Church towards being a true “Family of God” as far as adequate parenting is concerned?

APPENDIX 6: Interview Guide for Social Workers

PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

GENDER: Male () Female ()

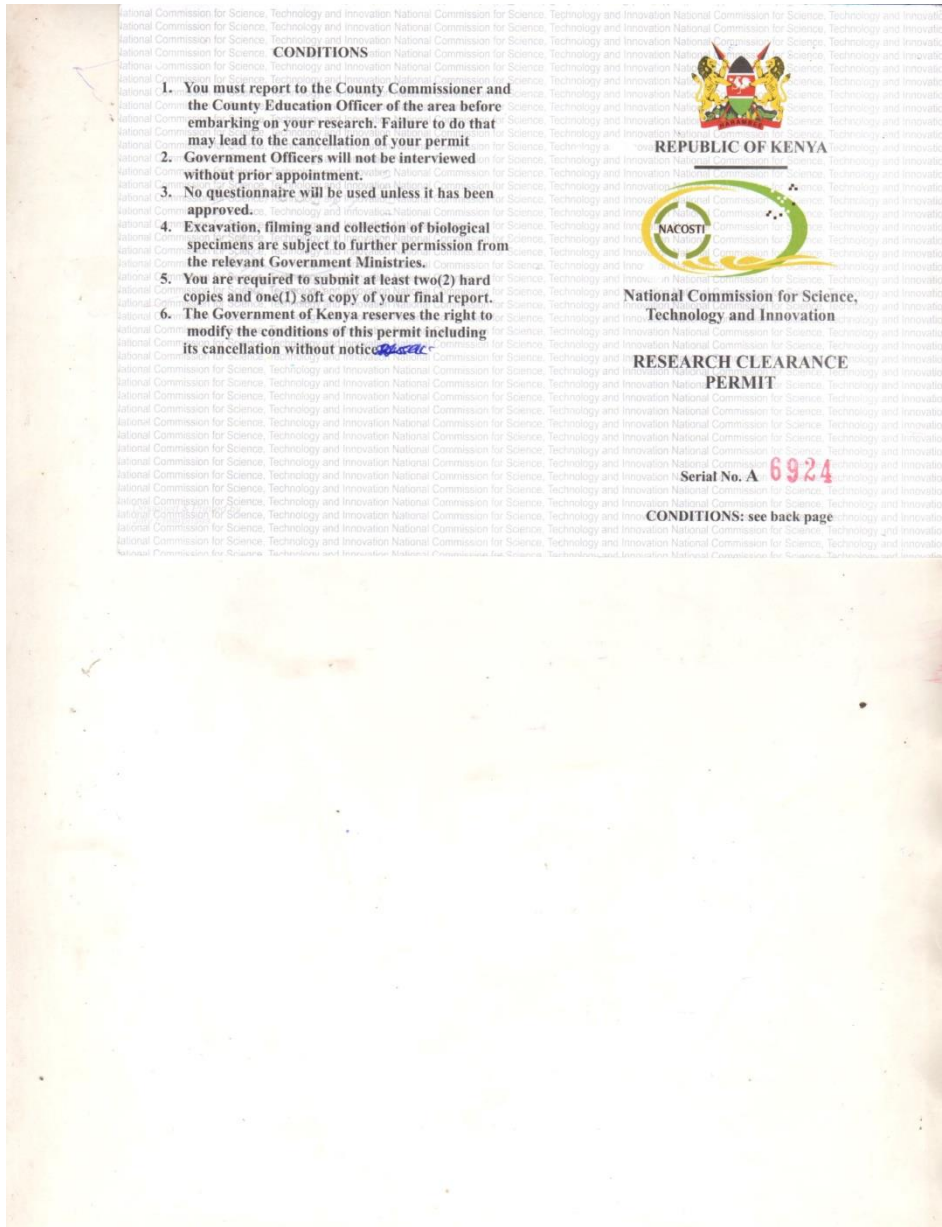
1. Profession.....

PART TWO: CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH MORAL PROBLEM

1. What comments do you have on the moral state of the youth?
2. What issues does your office handle that are related to youth moral problem?
3. How many children are rescued on a monthly basis as a result of youth moral problem?
4. Are there individuals or families that accept to receive in their homes such children and parent them?
5. How many rehabilitation and children homes are in Kĩambu County?
6. Make suggestions on how to rescue the youth from their current moral problem.

APPENDIX 7: Research Clearance Permit

Source: National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation, 2016



**APPENDIX 8: Researcher Meeting with Youth Leaders to Explain the
Questionnaire: Permission granted by the Parish Leadership**

Source: Research Assistant, 2016



APPENDIX 9: Researcher Interviewing Agĩkũyũ Elder, with His Permission

Source: Research Assistant, 2016



APPENDIX 10: CMA Initiation Topics

Source: CMA Karūrī Catholic Parish, 2016

C.M.A INTIATION TOPICS

1. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL VALUES
2. SPIRITUAL INITIATION/ CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY
3. DRUG EDUCATION/ YOUTH AND CRIME
4. LEADERSHIP FORMATION
5. HIV/ AIDS AWARENESS EDUCATION
6. ADJUSTMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL
7. LIFE SKILLS
8. CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY
9. MALE/ FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM/ HUMAN SEXUALITY
10. PATRIOTISM
11. UNDERSTAND YOUR POTENTIAL

**APPENDIX 11: Eric Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development – Summary
Chart**

Source: Wikipedia, February 14, 2015

proximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
Infancy 0 -18 months	Hope	Trust vs. Mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?	Feeding, abandonment
Early childhood 2–4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet training, clothing themselves
Preschool age 4–5 years	Purpose	Initiative vs. Guilt	Family	Is it okay for me to do, move, and act?	Exploring, using tools or making art
School age 5–12 years	Competence	Industry vs. Inferiority	Neighbors, school	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	School, sports
Adolescence 13–19 years	Fidelity	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Peers, role model	Who am I? Who can I be?	Social relationships
Early adulthood 20–39 years	Love	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Friends, partners	Can I love?	Romantic relationships
Adulthood 40–64 years	Care	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Household, workmates	Can I make my life count?	Work, parenthood
Maturity 65-death	Wisdom	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Mankind, my kind	Is it okay to have been me?	Reflection on life