

SPITITUALITY OF AFRICAN WOMEN :A NECESSARY CHANGE FOR MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Annie Wagana
University of Lesotho

Abstract

The impact of moral degeneration is currently being felt around the globe. It is currently gripping all people across the spectrum of all cultures on the globe. Few members of these cultures can claim to be living a life free from stress caused by this kind of evil that is eating up the moral fibre of our society. However, given the fact that moral decay showed up shortly after God had created the earth from Chaos to Cosmos as the holy bible confirms this, we have to live with hope that this situation can be rectified in the near future. Who will, and how this will be done is going to be the focus of this paper's discussion.

The first part of this paper will focus on how God or the supernatural being developed and struggled with the human beings whom he had given special favours and they just failed to honour them due to submitting to Immoral behaviour he had warned them against. Further, the argument that this has now become like a pattern in human history will be emphasized to show that the forgiving God can still provide us with means to rectify immorality of this century.

The third part will be examining current trends that encourage serious moral degeneration of the 21st century. Further I will examine whether today we are hoping for God's mercy by embracing our extrasensory perceptions and accepting them to help us venture deeply in spiritual experiences that face us daily. For instance the natural disasters point to a likelihood of renewing the face of the earth once again as he did in the past.

Since moral decay began as a gender related issue with Eve during creation, I will also apply that aspect of females as the people who

can try to stop what they started. And that the spirituality of Women that leads them into counter-cultural type of life helps them to see other dimensions of concern in life better than their counterparts, the males. This is to elaborate on the fact that they are different from men in all aspects of life and the way they experience the supernatural spirit can make them better people to make the difference in society.

The conclusion will underscore the centrality of the Holy Spirit's work among women from the past years to this new millennium and the likely results of their effort among the entire human race.

Introduction

“Spirituality refers to personal attitudes towards life, attitudes that change an individual's deepest feelings and most fundamental beliefs. It encompasses the religious attitudes and experiences of individual and may often be used as a synonym for religiousness” (Yates G. Gayle 1983:60)

Spirituality of women has the potential to be used as a means to counteract moral degeneration of the 21st century. Morality is generally understood as an acceptable mode of conduct in a cultural setting. Webster defined it as “conformity to ideals of right human conduct.” Currently, there is moral degeneration that is creating a great impact on society globally. This moral degeneration is a phenomenon particularly to an African woman who lives a sub-standard way of life in regard to acceptable modern ways of civilization in the world. For instance women who are illiterate and are basically guided by laws and traditions that were introduced by the patriarchs are the ones in more awkward situations. They need to be enlightened in regard to the importance of upholding moral values, particularly in relation to their sexuality. Among the elite sexual harassment does not have serious consequences on the offenders. Take the case of the deputy chair person of ANC in South Africa. He was nominated and trusted to monitor the factors that contribute to moral degeneration in the country only to find himself committing the most grievous offence. His case was solved with ease in court because there are no severe measures that were laid down by the patri-

archal society to punish such type of offence. And such cases do reflect negatively on the women more than men. In fact the woman is blamed more than a man. That is why the term prostitute applies to women more than it does to men. Despite the fact that the plight of women put them in a dilemma they have the potential to use their spirituality and overcome the moral degeneration of the 21st century.

Immorality began as early as the beginning of creation. When God created mankind in his inhabitant the first human beings He created, Adam and Eve, disobeyed His instructions. Somewhere along the way they tasted the forbidden fruit from the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," which He had reprimanded them not to taste (Gen:3). In the Old Testament the story portrays the whole scenery of their encounter with God. And from that point in time it was woman but not man who was sported to be the one that yielded to the temptation by the serpent. That disobedience made a turning point in the life of mankind, more so in the life of a woman, she was "cursed" (Genesis 3:16). Hitherto, woman has ever struggled to figure out how her spirituality can be utilised to counteract the free flow of immorality in this world.

A woman's quest for genuine spirituality

Apparently, the guidelines for moral stability and development in all cultures of the world largely depend on the holy scriptures for guidelines. They refer to the Holy Bible, Koran, Geetha, Avesta and many others. The different constitutions of governments that design rules and regulations of countries use oaths from various scriptures to swear in their officials. Therefore, holy scriptures are held to be sacred in all cultures. One important reason why they are of great value is that they constitute the wisdom of the patriarchal society that has been evolving with female species. Such a male dominated society regarded women as legal minors in a way of master slave relationship; not as God had planned for them to be companions. Indeed patriarchs failed to exert women's spirituality despite the fact that mothers have genuine impact on nurturing their children. Other women believe that they must nurture their husbands too with the hope that they will be more accepted and be loved. But as generations keep changing women continue to question all this dogma of the

patriarchal society. This therefore, becomes a juxtaposed relationship that was and is still a dilemma for an African woman of the 21st century.

Most, if not all women's lives have been a melancholy from the time of creation up to today. And because of that situation women struggle daily to understand Gods' spirituality and its transcendental nature that provides unconditional solace. Some of them join 'charismatic' groups, others become nuns, others, like in Western Uganda's traditional religions they are known to have 'emandwa' (Hafkin & Bay 1987:158) that guides them in their spiritual journeys and protect them from potential dangers. It has been a long soul searching journey for some women who did not want to adapt to religions that were introduced by colonialists because they live with a lot of obscurity. However, these women put in an effort to transform their plight that had condemned them for their existence.

The famous Holy Bible has been the straight forward educative form of scripture to teach women how spirituality can be a consolation to those who seek for it. These scriptures are still not easily comprehended by illiterate or ordinary minds. The case in point is during the Pentecost, (Acts 2:1-12). The reader notices that the spirit entered a group of believers and they went into a frenzy, as they spoke in tongues. Indeed it was the same case when John was baptising Jesus and a white dove descended and uttered some words (Matt. 3:13.16-17) it remained too amazing a thing for ordinary minds to comprehend. However, the modern world has almost come to understand how to experience the holy spirit without waiting for it to occur just like a phenomenon among believers. Rahner, shades more light on the way spirituality is genuinely experienced by ordinary beings in modern days and he wrote that:

"A human being really affirms moral values as absolutely binding... intrinsically oriented as this is beyond and above itself towards the absolute mystery of God .She poses that attitude of authentic faith which together with love suffices for justification and so makes possible supernatural acts that positively conduce to eternal life,"(Rahner, Karl 1979: 55).

We need to understand that most religious people particularly African

women need to be confident with whatever means works for them in experiencing the holy spirit. This is because religious mysticism has been testified in writing and verbally in big open conventions and also in charismatic groups. One author believed that “they are experiences which in spite of their extreme diverse forms and interpretations are still known as a holy spirit.”(Rahner,1979: 22 .) Further more, the familiar medium of holy spirit that humans testify to fellow believers originates from within their internal bodies “it sometimes intoxicates those who experience it” (Rahner, Karl 1979:22).

One famous mother in the prehistoric patriarchal society who testified such experience was the virgin Mary the Mother of Jesus. Her conversation with the Angel Gabriel was her real internal dialogue with God who assigned her a duty of giving birth to the saviour of the world, and she obeyed (Luke, 2). Most people are still experiencing the appearance of angels while they are both conscious and asleep, but they do not take them seriously yet they bring more than love and light. Lawlis also pleads with people in his book, *The Transpersonal Medicine* “ that there is lack of attention and respect given to the emotional and spiritual needs of people.” (Lawlis, G.F.1996:6 &7). They can be warriors for the good and initiate spiritual struggle (Redfield, Murphy, and Timbers1991:193&195). Many scholars including theologians, poets, philosophers, saints and sages insist on telling all people in writing, music, and art to be more observant and concentrate on what they experience or to ponder more on ideas or dreams that occur to them when they are half asleep. Nevertheless, people seem to find no logic and then they become overwhelmed and ignore those experiences. That is how most women’s spirituality is ignored most of the time and thus people miss out on opportunities to acknowledge the higher power. One may imagine if Mary ignored her internal dialogue that was actually a spiritual message! One’s religious conviction may result in the belief that the angels that appeared during pre-historic days are similar to angels that are experienced today as I indicated in the quotation above. So, most women still need to be aware of their spirituality and intrinsic motivation that emanates from within, in order to do more soul searching for higher power. That may lead women to making valid choices in life and combat immorality.

The sacred nature of woman

Women's encounters with the spirituality of God is quite implicit in various forms. Firstly, He selected a woman and provided her with a uterus and placed in ovaries to conceive so that the human race can continue evolving. Furthermore, he gave women a unique responsibility of nurturing humans from the cradle to the grave. It is again this plight of women that led to their own condemnation as already mentioned in previous paragraphs. The women who do not want to be condemned for originating sin are those who shelved off the responsibility of child bearing like the Catholic nuns who made the vows of chastity. Many other women who do not have a choice but to continue following the traditions in their cultures are the ones experiencing the pressure of being traditional or real women. Gradually they seem to adopt other means of survival. For instance scholars who researched about the spirituality of women like those of Nepal concluded that:

“Women resort to peripheral cults of possession that allow them a modicum of power; these practices operate as female auxiliaries recompensing the dispossessed... from this perspective women in structurally weak positions are seen as susceptible to extreme psychic tension...rites therefore enable women to vent and transfer stress and result in temporary or permanent psychological ‘cures’”
(Gelpi,B.C.1983:41)

This attitude of escapism by women is often revealed in various ways. Some of the women start acting in strange and desperate ways because of failing to be heard or recognised by cultures they belong to. Starting from way back in the patriarchal times of long ago when the Holy Bible was being written some women were portrayed in awkward situations. All that could be written about them was the immorality they promoted as they were not able to make valid choices or be recognised as people with human instincts. For instance , the two daughters of Lot committed incest because they thought there would be no other men other than their father to produce with them(Genesis 19:30-38). And the law regarding the treatment of women as prisoners of war was of sheer disgrace to female species for they were to be used as sex objects (Deut.21:10-14). The list of women is too long . But again the paradoxical nature of handling women in the bible is awesome. It shows that women who seek the knowledge of God are able to become transcendental.

Such illumination is typically associated with mystics and saints of sacred traditions but they happen to people in all walks of life (Redfield, J. et al 1988:140). As already indicated above, those who experience such illuminations refer to them as evil spirits not to discuss about or given any attention.

Women's spiritual encounter with God

A lot of women in the bible had very close spiritual encounters with God and gained confidence to the extent that God used them to save the human race. At some stages in the life of evolution of mankind God has had special duties for female species without regrets. For instance famous women in the Holy Bible alone are eye openers for the women in society who have low regard for spirituality or religion in general. The intimacy of God with women in the Holy Bible once again is intricate and sacred. Also in the other shamanistic religions in African beliefs women hold their heads up to work for their gods and get their blessings in turn.

Women are just portrayed as instruments of God. Their first famous deep intuition from God is remotely revealed through the Levite woman that saved her son Moses and in turn Moses saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Later the former slaves came to be known as the 'chosen people of God' (Exodus, 2:1-10). Historically, this became the first patriarchal society that formulated the rules and regulations which we live by today. In fact these rules and regulations provided a foundation for moral development (Exodus 20:1-17) as has already been stated in the preceding paragraphs.

Many women performed different duties for God as prophetesses, One may make mention of prophetess Anna. She stayed in the temple in Jerusalem praying all the time for the birth of Jesus until he was born. Her intuition or spirituality did not betray her it was so intricate, in that her and the God she prayed are the only ones who knew (Luke 2: 36-37). The fact is that all the prayers she made, as she believed with confidence, brought about Jesus, the saviour of the world. Today it is believed that the Christian religion has the largest number of followers in the world. The next most powerful women's spiritual encounter with God

that brought great revelation to mankind was the virgin Mary's conversation with the angel Gabriel. God, through this angel gave Mary a duty of giving birth to the saviour who later changed the course of history. Still it was for the purpose of counteracting the decaying moral fibre of the patriarchal society at that time. Jews had become obsessed with their culture and wanted to promote it against any other culture regardless. But the birth of Jesus helped all people of the world to be God's children and not as Jews and gentiles but Christians.

The birth of Jesus and his death and resurrection are all works of encounters of women and God. Jesus our saviour came and intervened in the world's immorality of mankind when he was crucified. Along the way during his passion week the three women who were known as Magdalene, Joana and Mary brought about awareness of the spirituality of Jesus at the time of resurrection. They woke up on a Sunday morning and announced the empty tomb with the stone next to its entry. The apostles became sceptical as they thought that what the women said was sheer nonsense (Luke :24 :1-12). From that time, the resurrection they announced has given tremendous blessings to many people of the world. Other believers went on to illustrate the experience of the holy spirit that emerged with Jesus' resurrection on the Pentecost as they spoke in tongues and did other demonstrations as the spirit directed them (Acts 2:1-13) The emphasis here is that this was another turning point in the life of all Christians of the world opened up by women's encounters with God.

Likewise in shamanic beliefs in most African countries women are believed to have had major roles to play in interacting with spirituality the way they understood it and that gave them special confidence. For instance ,in the western part of Uganda women are known to have mediated for some members of their community. Scholars who researched on women in Africa came up with the following conclusion:

“Large number of women could attain highly regarded position as local mediums and priestesses ...they could communicate with one of the clans chwezi spirits . she directed construction of shrines and advised on their maintenance offered prayers on periodic visit to homesteads... their authority unquestioned in all matters.” (Hafkin, J.& Bay,G. 1967:176)

Apparently, women had serious intimacy with God as they ventured for their own survival in the patriarchal society. And if they did not have that good intuition to understand that “transcendental knowledge of extraordinary attributes seem to come from a being beyond ordinary self; and then it can further reveal a higher presence calling us towards greater life and action in this ever evolving world”(Redfield,J. 2002:146) they wouldn't have been able to repel oppression from males to a degree they have achieved today. Through accepting the holy spirit and following their intuition women are gradually living a fair life. They are sometimes able to make some valid choices as leaders in politics. The pioneer as the first African female head of state is the Liberian lady Hon. Ellen Johnson. Somehow women are seen working hand in hand with God as they become transcendental to counteract the immorality that was tough from the pre-historic times up to this day.

By and large, this world we live in has been infested by immorality and it grows worse every day, week, month and year as generations come and go. God's spirituality also is ever spreading, they are like parallel. Many people believe in God's existence, and go to pray on holy, pilgrimages, at river Ganges in churches, mosques, temples and synagogues. Spirituality seem to be the major way to tackle immorality and wipe it away from the face of the earth especially among the poor women of the African continent. Already HIV and Aids disease coupled with crime and substance abuse are unstoppable. These diseases are a phenomenon in our daily experiences. The nature in which they spread leaves a lot of questions as to whether people still respect moral values. Immediate examples are revealed by women who come to the mass media crying for help against their own fathers for raping them and leaving them traumatised. (SABC 1 HIV support group 'siyayinqoba' at 1.30-2.00 pm on Sunday's) This topic featured one of the famous singers 'Andile' among others, on the 20th of August who spoke out about having been raped by her own father. Therefore, we need spiritual guides who are going to revive the spirituality of women in society. They indeed were able to alter the course of history and make the world a better place, temporarily free of immorality.

Life of a 21st century woman

Life of a 21st century woman is just a phenomenon in the life of species. Women have been experiencing rough times at all their levels of development from the time they become babies to adolescents and to a catch all category of adult females in marriage, mother hood, work and society. Therefore, women need to put some mechanisms in place to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. These challenges include living as legal minors, sexual harassment, substance abuse, contempt from opposite sex and general immorality.

Apparently, as soon as the girls change to adolescents the desire for freedom becomes their obsession. Once they gain the freedom as they understand it, which in most cases is when they are free from being responsible to care for their good moral development then they gain entry into the challenges as listed above. Cunningham, had this to say:

“They are often clear about what it is they want to be free from, school parents, rules, oppression, staying at home, illness, etc but what they want to be free for is not clear” (Cunningham, J, & D.1994:8)

Indeed, adolescent girls particularly have other emotional and psychological desires they ever struggle with and are beyond their control. For instance, the menstruation period that they experience every month of the year leaves them confused, moody, and at times temperamental or sickly. This sort of change makes them extremely different and vulnerable to the opposite sex. Thus the desire to have their own space and in charge of their lives, makes them awkward in the eyes of those who do not experience the same. Often mothers who are aware of this experience seem to ignore this pitiable situation and sometimes instead of empathising with them they loose tempers and stage mini wars within the family demanding for what adolescents can not understand because they are often in a state of confusion. One day they will want to be treated as adults who need to be left alone and another day as young girls. Because they are still totally dependent on their families or as the famous psychologist once correctly stated that, “most of them can hardly predict the consequences of their actions”.(Dr. Phil, SABC 2 , July, 2006). Cunningham viewed them to be claiming this status:

“I am the centre of the world I see; where the horizon is depends On where I stand. Education may Broaden that horizon as climbing a Tower broadens the view. But I Remain the point of reference...I’ll be the king of my own castle Paddle my own canoe and be master of my destiny, the right to be and say ‘I am my own person.’” (Cunningham, J. & D. 2000:8)

This attitude by adolescents is totally backed and cushioned by the current generation of information technology. They gain a lot of helpful knowledge for the current modernity, but some of it is detrimental to their moral development, and they just depend on computers, laptops, web cams and cell phones. Youths indeed have shown a tendency of ignoring and despising their own customs and traditions they belong to because of what they learn on computers. This gives parents a lot of stress. Also this neglect is brought about by lack of extended families or lack of parents who are good role models. They therefore succumb to knowledge from the media and peers. This knowledge is basically contaminated with serious immorality.

In most African cultures especially that of before the 21st century, the place of an adolescent African girl was in her mother’s kitchen. The purpose was to enable her to get closer to her mother so that they can have that unique intimacy. Unique as her mother’s intimacy with God. There was a lot of teaching, recruiting, guiding and many informal roles to play as a potential mother. The spirituality that she built from this teaching would provide appropriate transition to adulthood. Most of this intimacy had to do with child bearing, menstruation, medicinal herbs and nurturing of children. Also any adult responsible woman within the extended family would do that. Most youths who studied in missionary schools had the advantage of being exposed to God’s spirituality at an early stage of which they sometimes carried on in adulthood.

As a matter of fact most avenues that would promote immorality into society would be counteracted in its early stages. For instance some mothers knew how to detect very early pregnancy by using some clues or extrasensory perceptions. Webster defined it as when one “resides outside ordinary senses”. But today the cultural setting has altered due to immoral behaviour. Youths and mothers do not have time for one another. Girls think their mothers are nosy in their private lives and mothers are complaining that daughters

daughters have no time for them and they do not listen. Yet the truth is that technology is robbing them of their intimacy. The void between youths and parents that used to be filled by parent child intimacy is being swept away by immorality and God's spirituality too is being marginalised.

Once young girls feel that void they feel the need to occupy themselves with wrong choices in life. They start doing crime, prostitution, substance abuse, the list is long. As most people might be aware of the saying that 'an idle mind is the devils workshop,' the devil gains ground to promote immorality. These days there are many inexperienced or teenage mothers in society. Some girls prefer having abortions or abandoning their babies in awkward situations. Those who deliver and become mothers are some times denied the identity of motherhood as they are called sisters to their babies. African women in this case are the worst hit because they become pregnant after being raped though others deliberately conceive due to immorality.

As soon as the babies of such mothers come to understand their background they feel a sense of betrayal. Definitely, the vicious circle becomes inevitable and more children are brought to the world in such immoral ways. But is this what we want for our sons and daughters? This is a rhetoric question but worth asking at this stage. What actually happens is that we are promoting an immoral society due to the fact that there is concealment of the real truth about motherhood to the innocent children. This is very common in most African cultures.

Young women need to be aware that the life they live as youths has a great impact on them as adults in future. Most of them become school dropouts and experience extreme poverty if some support groups do not give them some financial support. Then they totally lose their experiences of teenage hood, through obstacles of caring for their children. Nevertheless, it is at this point that youths need to be tipped as to how they can find solace in spirituality. All they need is to reform in order to repossess their power that immorality takes away leaving them traumatised with a sense of hopelessness .

As mothers of the youths today who are empowered by formal education and a sense of spirituality unlike most illiterate women of the past generations they need to humbly acknowledge the “virtue of spirit from God, that was given to every woman in life in form of the inner holy spirit that radiates our unselfish love in longing for eternity, patience of the cross and heart felt joy, that nurture all mankind” (Rahner, K. 1979:57). This way the spirituality of women will transform the immoral world into a habitable moral world.

The plight of women and their glory

The origin, existence and value of women is surrounded by a mystery. According to the Holy Bible woman was formed from a rib of a man and later named by God as her companion. It is this mystery that symbolises women as a delicate and weak human being. In other words figuratively women are meant to be subservient to their opposite sex since God made them from their rib (Gen 2:21-22). On the other hand women, within their nature, experience menstruation, child birth contractions and nurturing their siblings. However weak and delicate women may appear, their value to men is irreplaceable. God symbolically used the rib because it supports the most important organs of the body and that is how women support a man's life. However, patriarchs failed to acknowledge it that way, instead gay men are trying to adopt babies in order to supplement roles of women to young ones but that has raised a lot of controversy globally. One of the reasons is that the psychologists believe a well rounded policy of bringing up children involves both a father and a mother. The holy bible condemns same sex couples too (Lev:18:22). Some researchers have found out that a male sea horse can conceive but among male human beings that is still a mystery.

Some African religions also portray women as goddesses in order to elevate their image. Among some religions in South Africa a woman is treated with delicacy. Firstly she is called ‘Inyanga’ meaning moon. The moon in Zulu is associated with the reproductive system. And as ‘Inyanga’ she is regarded as a nurturer of emotions. Also she is regarded to be as gentle as the moonlight, since she provides good company to the husband like the moon does to the sun. So as it is clearly stated women in

this cultural or religious setting are handled with the superficial respect. Again in another cultural setting in Burundi traditional women are nowhere near enjoying some superficial respect. One author who wrote about 'spirit mediums in East Africa' had this to say:

"The people of Burundi believed that women's greater strength suited them better for manual labour, but their clumsiness lack of agility, inability to control their emotions and proneness to jealousy left them generally inferior to men. And despite the recognition of their continual hardships in child bearing...woman is only the passive earth ; it is the man who provides seeds." (Hafkin and Bay 1987:7)

Women were quite aware of the attitude that men had towards them but they had no means to confront their condition as much as they try these days. And those who tried to rectify their plight ,were regarded as insane, "confused and those lacking a sense of direction (basil ba a fokola bahloka kelelo), (Wagana A.I.K.1997: 107) In Western Uganda some women acted as spirit mediums for their extended families or communities. Schweinfurth had this to say :

"These ladies are certainly not beautiful and they would hardly be legible for vestal virgins, but they are feared and therefore venture to take any liberties .As is always the case where professional interests are concerned. They vie with one another in eccentricities. One at Rionga's court grunted every minute; another sat down beside one of the company, wanted her shoulders rubbed and her head bent" (Hafkin and Bay 1976 :163)

This is a typical example where by women were thought to be manipulative of their surroundings or sometimes known as voodoo women. However this was a way of venting their situation using spirituality the way they understood it in order to survive. The myth of 'emandwa' in Western Uganda still passes on as mythical to future generations. It is used by women who do not believe in modern Christianity. Most scholars attribute the active traditional spirituality of women to the fact that generally, "difficulty can be combated and controlled best by heroic fights of ecstasy so the cults by women represented an attempt to master the intolerable environment" (Hafkin and Bay1976:168). Therefore, the modern religious spirituality of women or spirituality devel-

oping through help groups need to be revived vigorously in a more concerted effort. Since this modern world is overcome by immorality there might be hope to bring about the desirable moral change.

There is a huge difference from the morals of modern women of the 21st century and that of before. This is because modern times have a more professional therapeutic mode of helping women to release their bitterness that used to be bottled up by women and lead them in ecstasy. In the long run they are rehabilitated. But those without financial help to attend therapy sessions, must know that there is abundant help in the free spirituality of God. The researchers in the seventies seem to be agreeable with the above argument by realising "that such women's possession afflictions were treated not by permanently expelling but by taming and domesticating it rather than exorcise," because definitely these women were not possessed but just lacked the female technical know how of getting males to accept them as humans with their own choices different from men's (Lewis in Hafkin 1976:168).

As young and old women continue to be educated in various disciplines of higher learning formally and other informal settings they get conscientised about who they are, why they are here, and what they want in life. Most women are now aware that to forgive their painful past experiences is divine. They need to just forgive themselves for hurting and hence hindering development to move on and support their families, economic development, political organisations and religious organisations. Besides, women need to acknowledge that forgiveness gives authentic freedom of mind to the victim." One of the most important things is that it is a choice to forgive ,sometimes it seems easier to just keep nagging and blaming and being angry. But to create magic (spirituality) in our lives we must be present with all our hurts, Judgements and beliefs impacted in all our energy to be able to achieve spiritual transition." (Lodge Wolf:3, 6/ 17 /2006).

This view of a modern woman poses serious threat to the institution of marriage. The gay people are gaining chance to prosper because of women's attitudes during difficult situations. Indeed the president of America G. W. Bush together with the head of the Catholic church, Pope Benedict have already informally tabled this concern about the threat facing the

institution of marriage (BBC News). These days the situation is further worsened by both male and female's contemptuous attitude towards one another. They want to live separate lives all together as they live a life of non-committal. The constant cases of homicide in families by males is a pointer to tough times for women. The most recent of this kind was committed by the former mayor of Klerksdorp on the 2nd September 2006. (SABC radio FM). In one article "Is the Homosexual my neighbour?" by Mollencott, she emphasised that despite women being vocal and agitated about their plight "They retain their traditional frameworks of thought." (Yates, G.1983: 70). The implication is that women still love to be what God created them to be. This belief is supported by the following words:

"We've gotten in the habit of telling what is wrong to a therapist as a way to feel heard and connected we really need to turn that around ...to create a nurturing and helpful place at home to be heard. And we need to work in our communities in the present moment, to create more nurturing and helpful environments."(Eagle, B.M. 17/6/2006)

Again this argument entirely reveals the fact that women have ever been Gods spirit mediums during times of crisis in the course of history of mankind. Therefore, they just need to respect moral values and become sensitised to play the role of spiritual mediators to counteract immoral relationships. Women who are already in relationships clearly know that without God in their relationship there is no clear foundation. Some women tend to act according to their bitterness and use punitive justice instead of succumbing to the holy spirit that gives wisdom and courage to practice the restorative justice and promote moral development.

If it was in the power of women, definitely they would wish to be front bares' of the burner written on 'PEACE'. At the moment around the globe there are many women's organisations, some political, economical, religious and many more. What connects these women together is the moral fibre that guides the way they live. They might be weak but they are at least aware of what is right or wrong. Sometimes they need to be together and guide other women who are helpless, through church groups and HIV support groups and many others. Other times women are seen tackling bigger obstacles than we think they can handle because we fail to perceive their renewed spiritual strength For in-

stance the women who are serving in the military along side the males.

In conclusion, this paper has argued that the patriarchal traditions have over looked the contribution women can make towards spiritual life in Africa throughout the course of history. The paper has further argued that from the scriptures, there is evidence that God recognises women's contribution to spirituality. Lastly the paper makes a plea to women to exert their spiritual influence on their various communities especially in the 21st century in order to avert moral degeneration.

References

- B B C (News), 2006.
- Cunningham, D. J. *Choose Freedom, Leaders Guide to life skills and Relationships for Young People*, Bulawayo 2000.
- HAFKIN, J. Nancy, Bay, Edina, *Women in Africa :Studies in social and economic change*, Stanford University press(1987) .
- Holy Bible, First South African Edition 1998 .
- LAWLIS, G. F. *Transpersonal Medicine: A New Approach to Healing body-mind Spirit* (1996).
- [Http://www.Transpersonalmedicine.com.au/tpm.htm](http://www.Transpersonalmedicine.com.au/tpm.htm)
- OKURUT, M. Karooro, *A Woman's Voice: Anthology of short stories by Women* Femrite Publications, Kampala, 1999.
- RAHNER ,K ,*The Spirit in the church* The Seabury press New York, 1979.
- REDFIELD, J. MUPHY, M. Sylvia. *God and the Evolving Universe* Bantam Books, New York ,2003.
- Sign ,Journal of Women in culture and Society University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- South African Broadcasting Co-operation, Radio FM, 2006 .
- WAGANA, A . I,K , "Agrarian Land use and Management in Basutoland" (M.A History Dissertation) NUL,1997.
- MERRIAN ,W. *Webster's New Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* . Springfield, Massachusetts, 1984.
- Women's Mysteries (2006). Straight girl talk. Retrieved June 6, 2006 from <http://www.wolfodge.org/women/girltalk.htm>

EVALUATION CHECK LIST

Rating Criteria

1. Voice:
 - a. Clearly audible
 - b. Well modulated
 - c. Pleasant tone

2. Pace:
 - a. Varied
 - b. Steady
 - c. Appropriate ideas
 - d. suitable

3. Non-verbal:
 - a. Good gestures
 - b. Eye contact
 - c. Good body language

4. Organisation:
 - a. Well organised
 - b. Well planned
 - c. Coherent
 - d. No repetition
 - e. Clear ideas
 - f. Edited material
 - g. Supporting documentation

5. Features:
 - a. Set induction
 - b. Summary provided
 - c. Supportive of presentation

6. Attitude:
 - a. Friendly and warm
 - b. Enthusiastic
 - c. Positive