Views of Christian fathers of their role as mentors in the transmission of values within the family context

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Abstract

There is a crisis in society with respect to peoples' values. Families are living in an era of moral anxiety and not only South Africa but also the rest of the world is suffering from a value-dilemma. Homes, schools and institutions have problems with the behaviour and values of children. This study explored and described the views about Christian fathers of their role as mentor in the transmission of values within the family context.

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An interpretive description approach was followed using purposive voluntary sampling. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with the designated group in the broader Tlokwe Municipality. Field notes were taken after each interview. Data analysis was conducted using open coding as well as using an independent co-coder.

The results indicated that Christian fathers view their role as vital and relevant in the current situation of families. The six main themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the fathers were their personal experiences of mentorship while growing up, the expectations of the father as mentor in the lives of children, the importance of values, the importance of mentorship, the problematic factors preventing mentoring and the transmission of values and the role of the father should be emphasized in the home.

1.   Introduction and problem statement

South Africa as well as the rest of the world is suffering from a value-dilemma (Freeks, 2013:56-57; Kelly, 2011:76-77; Freeks, 2011:6; Algera & Sink, 2002:161-162; Carr, 2000:49). The media reveal definite signs of superficial or decreased human and society values and even a total collapse thereof (Rens, 2005:1). South African newspapers and the world run daily reports on violence, crime, fraud, corruption, murder, theft, divorce, substance abuse and drug dealers, child trafficking, pornography, sexual immorality and rape, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, learners attacking teachers at schools, parents killed by their own children, learners killing learners and dishonesty and can easily influence children in homes to become full of hatred, rage and pain (Carstens & Zwecker, 2013:2; Lamprecht, 2013:4; Boqo, 2013:2a; Essop, 2013:1; Otto, 2013:4; Nel, 2013:14; Anon., 2013:1a; Boqo, 2013:5b; 2013:4c; Anon., 2013:2b; Zwecker, 2013:7; Boqo, 2013:3d; Carstens & Van Rooyen, 2013:1; Jansen, 2001:2; Williams, 2008:18). Some researchers even allege that we are entering an era of 'moral anguish' (*cf*. Killingray, 2007:7). The crisis in society is worse because the values of people their character as well as their morality has become a dilemma (*cf*. Hyungsook, 2014:55-57; White & Warfa, 2011:45-48).

Looking at homes and schools, we find that parents experience tremendous problems with the behaviour and values of children at home and in school (White & Warfa, 2011:45-48; Freeks, 2013:11-12; Challens, 2008:131-133; Schaps, 2005:1, Homan; 2002:2; Engelbrecht, 2001:32-34; Mangcu,

1999:9). The opinions and perceptions of different people is that children or the youth don't have the ability to make good and effective value judgements and that they need teaching, mentoring and guidance, and should receive education and support to do such decisions (Georgiades, Boyle & Fife, 2013:1473-1476; Logan-Greene, Nurius & Thompson, 2012:373-374; Character Education, 2004a:1-2; Character Education, 2004b:1-3; Character Education, 2005:1-4).

The main problems facing young people in South Africa and in the rest of the world are violence, gang-rape; rave parties, where especially drugs and sex are freely available; social problems; and a lack of respect for each other and the world around them (Carstens & Zwecker, 2013:2; Otto, 2013:4; Oladepo & Fayemi, 2011:8; Engelbrecht, 2001:32-34). It is clear that there are serious problems with regard to values and urgent help is needed to solve these problems (Kelly, 2011:76-77; Freeks, 2007:5).

It is for this reason especially that parents, educators and concerned citizens in many countries are combining their efforts in an attempt to try and halt the decline in values (Freeks, 2013:58-59; Character education, 2004a:1; DoE, 2001). The closer the family life, the less likely it is that children will become involved in violence and dangerous behaviour, such as bullying. Pretorius (2006:3) poses the pertinent question: *"Where have all the parents gone?"* The violence amongst children at school and homes is becoming a dilemma and many are questioning the parent as primary caregiver to help the child develop self-respect. A child with self-respect will show respect for others' time, property, relationships, work, animals, friends and family, and will not 'steal' time at school by disrupting classes, fighting with friends, using bad language and displaying other improper behaviour (Pretorius, 2006:3). Llale (2003:3) states: "*The way in which you raised your children obviously determines the course of their future*". Most of these problems and situations are probably to a great extent caused by absent fathers (*cf.* Williams, 2008:18; Freeks, 2013:3; Freeks, 2011:4; Freeks, 2004:3-5).

Reddick, Rochlen, Grasso, Reilly & Spikes, (2011:1-3), Hazen, McFarland, Jacobvitz & Boyd-Soisson, (2010:51-55) and Palkovitz (2007:195) indicates that unsuccessful father-child-relationships are experienced when fathers are absent. A study by Mandara, Murray & Joyner, (2005:207-220) and Steytler (2007:37) indicated further that boys who grow up without a father can easily move towards crime. The place of the father is often taken by substitute fathers. The typical situation in the African rural culture is that the absent or deceased father is often replaced by an older brother. This replacement creates serious problems such as wrong identification and wrong values

(Olsen, 2007:174-196). The family especially where the father acts as mentor should play a much bigger role when it comes to values because values have lost their place in society (Schaps, 2005:1). In this context mentors and mentoring is about relationships and it unleashes people's potential and it allows people to be the best they can be. This learning relationship is between an individual who is the mentor, and who shares his knowledge, experience and insights with another less experienced person, who is the learning associate (mentee) who is willing and ready to benefit from the exchange with the mentors (Tucker, 2007:iii, vi). But although mentoring relationships are quite complex, it has to be kept in mind that the core of the relationship is the everyday interactions through which growth and development occur (*cf.* Wood & Duck, 2006:156).

Children are supposed to enjoy a greater advantage when their fathers are involved in their lives and when the fathers demonstrate values (Vogel, Bradley, Raikes, Boller & Shears, 2006:189-209, Freeks, 2013:75-77). Fathers should not only be there for the provision of money. Children need their fathers in their lives to spend quality time (Williams, 2008:18). The father's value should not be measured by material or financial needs but it should be measured by the *love* and *attention* which he gives to his family and where he leads by example when it comes to values.

It is important to know that boys are looking up to the father as the role model where he leads by example especially when it comes to values. One day, they will be able to take up their own role of fatherhood themselves (Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2007:221-225). Most of the children seems to be uncertain and confused and are looking for the father's attachment, presence and probably a lifestyle of living good values because these children want to identify and they want a platform of certainty (Ford, Nalbone, Wetchler & Sutton, 2008:284-299).

From the above-mentioned it is evident that there is a dilemma due to the effects of the absent father. Value transmission within the family is problematic, and the absent father contributes toward the problem. As a father it is, however, paramount to be a mentor in the transmission of values. The question that arises from the discussion is how fathers view their role as mentor in the transmission of values in the family context.

2.   Research objective

The research objective of this study was to explore and describe the views of Christian fathers of their role as mentor in the transmission of values in the family context.

3.   The central theoretical statement

Fathers can have an active and effective role as mentors in transmitting values to the family and should be equipped for taking up this role.

4.   Research methodology

An interpretive description approach was used to explore the phenomenon of value transmission by fathers (Thorne, 2008). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fathers.

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the research committee of the Faculty of Theology and the individual fathers in the study through informed consent.

4.1 Sample

With regard to this study the population consisted of fathers from the broader Tlokwe municipal area including black people traditionally living in Ikageng, coloured people in Promosa and majority white in the greater Potchefstroom. Purposive voluntary sampling was conducted (*cf.* De Vos, 2005:202; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:166-167; Berg, 1998:228-229). The inclusion criteria used were: he should be a father in a family, he must have children, he must be a confessed Christian, he must play a role and be involved in the community, he must be able to express himself verbally and he must be prepared to be audio taped. Interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached. Nine fathers in total were included although data saturation was achieved with the sixth interview.

4.2 Data gathering

The researcher first made contact and meet with ministers, pastors, community leaders, lecturers and academics. Aspects such as anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, risks, withdrawal and even possible termination were discussed. The researcher then contacted the participants in the different communities to arrange for an appointment and venue where the individual interviews would be conducted. Interviews were conducted by the researcher at the homes or workplace of the participants according to their choice. All the venues were private, pleasant and comfortable with little or no distractions.

The open-ended questions for the semi-structured interviews were first evaluated by experts to determine whether the questions were clear, understandable, as well as appropriate. They were refined and adjusted using the feedback from experts (cf. Botma, Greeff, Mulaudzi & Wright, 2010:207-208). An initial interview was then conducted to see whether the interviews provided the data as set in the objective. The questions asked were: "Tell me about your experience of having been mentored as a child or young person, either by your father or a father figure in terms of values?"; "Tell me, how you as a father played the role of a mentor in the lives of your children or other children regarding the transmission of values?"; "Tell me what your opinion is about the role of the father in the transmission of values within the family?"; "Tell me, how important mentorship is to you as a father and the transmission of values to your children?"

Rapport was established and an atmosphere without any threats or uneasiness created (cf. Fontana & Frey, 2000:655; Botma *et al.*, 2010:208). Communication techniques were used to facilitate the interview (De Vos, 2005:289-290). The interviews were audio-taped and field notes taken after each interview focussing on personal, observational and methodological notes (Botma *et al.*, 2010:217-219).

4.3 Data analysis

The voice recordings were transcribed verbatim. The method of open coding as described by Tesch, cited by Creswell (2003:192) was used. The steps that were followed: organising and prepare the data for analysis, developing a general sense of the data, coding the data into sub-categories and themes, description and themes and representation. An independent co-coder was used and consensus discussion between the co-coder and the researcher finalised the analysis.

5. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness with regard to this study was ensured using the model of Lincoln and Guba's (quoted by Krefting, 1991:215 & 222). The focus was on truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality (Botma *et al.*, 2010:234-235). Truth value was ensured through prolonged engagement during semi-structured interviews and regularly using reflectivity through fieldnotes and discussions with promoters. Purposive voluntary sampling and a dense description of the research methodology made applicability possible. Consistency was ensured through an audit trail and using an independent co-coder during data analysis. The audit-trail and reflexivity led to neutrality.

6. Ethical considerations

The researcher approached and held different meetings with the participants and explained to them aspects such as their involvement, participation, consent, protection and confidentiality. The right to self-determination is based on the ethical principle of respect for people and therefore the researcher treated all participants as autonomous. Participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without a penalty (*cf.* Burns & Grove, 2005:101; Brink, 2007:32). The researcher respected each participant's right to privacy, and ensured that the participants' names were not mentioned on the tape and only pseudo-names and interview numbers were used (*cf.* Burns & Grove, 2005:107). The researcher and the promoters handled participants' information in a confidential manner by protecting their anonymity of participant's personal information (Strydom & Delport, 2004:61). All participants were treated fair and with dignity (*cf.* Burns & Grove, 2005:107).

7. Results of the study

The discussion of the results of the study will be enriched with verbatim quotes and verified with literature (Botma *et al.*, 2010:197).

Six main themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the fathers: personal experiences of mentorship while growing up; values are important; the expectations of the father as mentor in the lives of children; the importance of mentorship; the problematic factors preventing mentoring and the transmission of values; and the role of the father should be emphasized in the home.

Theme one: Personal experiences of mentorship while growing up

Fathers indicated aspects like: closeness with their biological father or other important figures, the laying of the foundation of Christian faith; their fathers believing in them and teaching them values; and their fathers as leaders.

- **The closeness of the biological father or other important figure**

  Most of the fathers mentioned their experiences of closeness with their biological fathers or other father figures such as foster fathers and pastors. *"We lived as a family where we eat and do things together"*, *"We grow close to one another where a strong bond was formed between us".* Perrin, Baker, Romelus, Jones & Heesacker, (2009:315-316), Freeks (2004:104-105), Bergh (2002:105-110) and Steytler (2007:28) also mention that closeness between fathers and children strengthen the bond between them. The attitude of the father should have an intimate function and his love should be proved by quality time spending.

- **Fathers laying the foundation of Christian faith**

  They indicated that their mentors were devoted Christians and that they served God in their own unique way. Christianity was an important facet of fatherhood and of teaching them faith. They expressed their views in words: *"They laid the foundations in terms of the Christian faith and therefore they believed in them and saw something in them that only God had placed inside of them", "They taught us about the Bible".* Munroe (2008:7) state that fathers have the unique opportunities to make an external investment with regard to the Word of God in the lives of their children.

- **Fathers believed in them and taught them values**

  The fathers played a positive role in moulding participant's lives by believing in them and teaching them values through their entire life. They indicated that their mentors were exemplary role models who taught them values. *"He was the one who really believed in me", "He was the one that was actually the real and the true father to me", "They taught us values such as discipline and obedience".* This learning relationship will also be applicable with regard to the father and his children because the exchanges come into place when values are instilled through certain attributes such as motivating, encouraging, nurturing and teaching, and the father is responsible for that (Johnson & Ridley, 2004:xv, *cf.* also Steytler, 2007:39).

- **Fathers were leaders**

   Participants indicated that the fathers were the leader in the family, and were called by God to do so. *"The father is leader because he brings others to their destiny", "God has called him to be a leader of his family".* The literature that was studied confirmed the findings that the father should be the leader in the family to ensure that values are transmitted. The father is the figure who gives direction to his family because God put him in the position of parenting where he should lead to educate and to discipline his children. He leads also in the area of responsibility where he should carry out his obligations and find solutions with regard to problem areas, crises and situations that need to be handled (*cf.* Freeks & Lotter, 2009:530-531; Munroe, 2008:124-128; Steytler, 2007:54-56; Vorster, 2007:176; Richter & Morrell, 2006:13; Larney & Lotter, 2005:675; Visagie, 2005:93; Freeks, 2004:33-38, 105-106; Bergh, 2002:81-86, 119, 121).

Theme two: Values are important

In the second theme fathers mentioned that values give direction, attributes are instilled by the mentor, the father should teach discipline and patience, and the father instills Christian values in the family.

- **Values give direction**

   Participants indicated that values gives direction and need to be instilled because of the impact it has on communities. *"Values guide you", "Values is a blessing to have in one's life as it gives direction on your path because no person can live without values".* The findings are confirmed by literature that values give direction, especially when an individual is faced with making a decision. It is also indicated that values make life worthwhile and it is worth striving for because it shapes who we are as individuals, how we live from day to day, as well as how we view and treat others (De Klerk & Rens, 2003:356; Eyre & Eyre, 1993; Green, 2004:108; Rhodes & Roux, 2004:25; De Klerk, 2004:3; Van der Walt, 2008:2-3).

- **Attributes instilled by the mentor**

   Participants indicated that the mentor figures instilled attributes like humor, acceptance of others, reading principles, norms and values in their lives. *"There should be laughter in the house", "To accept different people with different languages and different viewpoints", "Reading is important because it broadens your views and outlook on*

life", "Principles, norms and values are important attributes because it builds relationships". Munroe (2008:23-26) confirmed some of the findings by giving a deeper meaning to the father. He said that God was thinking *"father"* when He created man, and therefore it is imperative that mentors should look inside mentees and find the man they long to be (*cf.* also Hendricks & Hendricks, 1995:18). Johnson and Ridley (2004:xv, *cf.* also Pelletier, 2006:46) indicated in their research that mentors should consider attributes such as encouragement, motivation, nurturing, teaching and mutual respect.

• **The father should teach discipline and patience as important virtues within the family**

Participants mentioned that discipline and patience are important virtues within the family. They said that fathers should love and discipline their children, and if children need to be punished the father should do it because it is what the Bible suggests. Participants expressed their views in words, such as: *"Discipline your child is important because it goes hand in hand with discipleship", "The recipe for patience is hardworking".* The findings are confirmed by Hazen *et al.* (2010:51-52), Dinkmeyer, McKay & Dinkmeyer, (1997:103), Faber and Mazlish (2003:100) and Munroe (2008:123). These researchers and authors emphasised the meaning of discipline. They said that discipline is the most effective way for the father to accomplish what he wants with regard to his children. Christophersen and Mortweet (2003:65), Freeks (2004:102, *cf.* Prov. 1:9) also confirm these findings by indicating that the father can be seen as the ideal figure to apply discipline. He indicated further that the father needs to discipline and exercise his authority with regard to his children so that values can be embraced by the family (*cf.* Williams, 2008:18; Richter & Morrell, 2006:17; Munroe, 2008:7).

• **The father instils Christian values within the family**

Christian values were mentioned as important in the lives of participants and that fathers should instil this in the family. *"Christian values had a positive influence in my life as young man", "He influenced my thoughts with Christian values", "Biblical values must be instilled back in the homes, and adhered to".* Van der Walt (2008:2) has shown earlier Christian values influence a person's life positively because the whole personal life of an individual such as marriage, ambition, business, education and professional life is influenced. Christian values relate to man and his view of life, attitude toward life, religious training and submissiveness (Abdool, 2005:10; Bagarette 1995:47). Even Prov.

22:6 says the following: *"Teach your children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it".* It implies that parents have the obligation to live out Christian values and they should teach their children about Christian values.

Theme three: Expectations of the father as mentor in the lives of children

Theme three indicates the expectations of the father as mentor in the lives of children. Aspects like children should have a voice, fathers should show love to their children and the need for discipline in the home were mentioned.

- **Children should have a voice**

  Participants indicated that children should learn how to think for themselves and express their own opinions because they are individuals in their own right. They should have the freedom to be themselves. *"Children must be free to say what they believe and what they stand for amongst friends and peers", "Children take things with them that you as a father taught them and they follow the example that you as a father set".* According to Dickie, Ajega, Kobylak & Nixon,. (2006:58) parent-child relationships influence self-image. Fathers should also keep in mind that children learn from their behaviour and attitude and most of the children refuse to make the same mistake that their fathers did. Therefore the father should not be too critical and strict toward his children because a good self-image is important for children, and if the father is too critical and strict, children may develop a poor self-image (Freeks, 2004:90-92; *cf.* also Ef. 1-4; Col. 3:20-21).

- **Fathers should show love to their children**

  If fathers show love they invest in the lives of their children. This will also ensure children that they are loved by their father. *"This love is not only words but it goes with actions", "This love is an investment, pure and holy", "It is not selfish but it is love that you rather prefer to give instead of receive".* Newland and Coyl (2010:25-26) said that the role of the father is to provide love and security to children. Blackthorn (2004:4-5) indicated that fathering consists of several duties and to show love is one of the essential duties. The father should take care of children, loving them physically, socially and emotionally. The father should show the child that he loves him/her. Most of the fathers feel that it is not for a man to embrace and to kiss his child, especially boys. If a father shows his children that he loves them, these things may have a place and children will normally grow up as loving people (*cf.* Freeks, 2004:91).

- **The need for stricter fathers to show discipline in the home**

  Participants indicated that families are in a great need of strict fathers. They argued that children in former days were brought up very strict. Children did not have any option to argue when their parents disciplined them. If the child did not do it, that child was in trouble. *"The father is not strict anymore and they are not teaching the children values anymore", "Discipline is important and necessary in the home", "Love without discipline is not love, and discipline without love is not discipline".* Freeks (2004:92) also addressed this matter that fathers should be strict by giving undisciplined children a hiding when it is needed but the father should also be their friend and hero. However, Bergh (2002:120) mentioned that children should be educated and disciplined with a sense of responsibility. Still on the point of discipline, Munroe (2008:123) agreed with the above but he takes it to a higher level. He stated that the father is the one who disciplines and discipline is not always punishment. He says discipline takes teaching (mentoring) to the next level where the child is not only taught but also corrected and instructed and this will help to shape a child's character because the discipline now becomes training. In the case of Austin (2007:4), he rather combines the discipline process with affection by stating that the father should care and love his children while he disciplines them (*cf.* also Larney & Lotter, 2005:44). From the above, Henley (1997:118) draws the picture differently by viewing discipline as a two-sided coin where the one side refers to *direction* and the other to *correction*.

Theme four: The importance of mentorship

This theme demonstrates the importance of mentorship which is necessary within the family context. Focussing on: mentoring impacts lives; fathers need to mentor; children should be mentored; and mentoring is teamwork.

- **Mentoring impacts lives**

  Participants indicated that mentoring is very important in the lives of children. *"With mentoring families can raise up a generation", "Mentoring is an opportunity to impact the lives of children with values".* Hendricks and Hendricks (1995:18) earlier pertinently indicate the impact of mentoring in their research. They say that through mentoring, mentors have the ability to shape the characters of their mentees and bring out the person by nurturing them so that these mentees may reach their destiny. Tucker (2007:iii, vi) verifies that mentoring is about unleashing people's potential and allowing these people (mentees)

to be the best they can be. Mulaudzi, Libster and Phiri (2009:47-49) confirm the findings from a nursing perspective which is also applicable in this study. They stated that mentors are obliged to nurture and affirm their young, and these young (children) that find that real sense or spirit of fatherhood within themselves should share it with others. The child thus becomes self-reflective and self-confident because his/her mentor offers vision, develops trust, encourages, cares and protects for a lifetime. Mentors reflect these human qualities during the process of guiding and socialising through life because the principle of *"I am because you are"* makes it possible for people to be with each other and for each other and to value each other.

- **Fathers need to mentor**

    Participants stipulated that fathers need to mentor their families and should not relax. Fathers should prevent their children from following poor role models. *"Where there's no father there is no mentoring", "If we as fathers don't mentor and we don't guide our children there is someone out there who will mentor and guide them in a wrong and deceitful way".* Williams (2008:18; cf. also Richter & Morrell, 2006:14-15) agree that mentoring through fathering has a lifetime impact on the lives of children, and advocating that it should be revered and approached with a sincere passion. This indicates more responsible, more tolerant, and a more supportive role and function. Steytler (2007:100) indicates in his research that men should have the focus of a mentor. He should interpret his role as mentor where he gives direction and be a role model for the child.

- **Children should be mentored**

    Participants indicated that children should be mentored and prevented from falling victim to others. *"Mentoring is a must in the lives of children", "Our children will become victims if we as parents are not doing anything".* Williams (2008:18) previously stated the danger if children are left alone and ignored. He says that the present world is full of violence, corruption and dishonesty and this world can easily influence children to become full of hatred, rage and pain. Killingray (2007:7), however, emphasised the fact that children enter an era of moral anxiety. Engelbrecht (2001:32-34) already put the dilemma in perspective in 2001 by showing that the main problems that are facing young people in South Africa and the world are issues of violence, gang-rape, rave parties, where especially drugs and sex are freely available.

Because of the dilemmas mentioned it is important that children should be mentored by a mentor (father) who believes supports and assists them (*cf.* also Steytler, 2007:79).

• **Mentoring is teamwork**

It was indicated by participants that mentoring is teamwork where the father, mother and the rest of the family should work together. *"Mentorship is not only confined to fathers only, but also to other parent figures", "It is not only the father who is a mentor in the family but also the mother", "Parents should mentor older brothers and sisters so that the extended family can become mentors of the young ones".* The same issue was researched by Steytler (2007:79) who points out in his research that a mentor can be an alternative for the absent father. This mentor figure can be a teacher, a role model, pastor or minister, guardian or any other family members such as uncles, aunts, grandfathers, grandmothers, etc.

Theme five: Problematic factors preventing mentoring and the transmission of values

The fifth theme reflects the problematic factors inhibiting mentoring and the transmission of values. Aspects mentioned are: a failure to transfer values if the father is absent; fathers not living up to their roles; present democracy creates problems; wrong and distorted messages over television with no proper invigilating and parental guidance; excessive cell phone use inhibit language development.

• **A failure to transfer values if the father is absent**

A lack of transfer of values is caused by the absent father. *"… homes do not have a father anymore …", "If children cannot find this love with their fathers, they will search for love from other men".* Freeks (2004:3-5; *cf.* Williams, 2008:18; Freeks, 2007:1-4) indicates in their research that most of the problems such as sexual freedom, unstable relationships, confusion, just to mention a few is probably to a great extent caused by absent fathers. Girls and boys, who do not have self-respect, have no respect for their bodies (Grainger, 2004:133). Palkovitz (2007:195) clarifies in his research that the absent father causes a lack by not providing information in the children's developing stage and it results in an unsuccessful father-child-relationship.

- **Fathers not living up to their roles**

  Most of the participants indicated that fathers seem not to be living up to their roles, leading to problems in the family. *"This lack is the biggest problem in life today", "This gap causes problems such as marital problems".* These findings are stated earlier by Williams (2008:18) where he states in his research that the main reasons why society is in such a bad state is probably the absence of fathers and their role and the lack of values in the lives of children.

- **Present democracy creates problems**

  Participants felt that democracy creates problems through parents having less influence on their children's lives *"Democracy is a diabolic thing because children don't care anymore", "It comes from hell", "We call it demon's cracy and not democracy", "Democracy causes that many duties of parents have been taken away and most of these duties are actually the transmission of values".* De Klerk (2003:361) stated that democracy sets very high demands on the moral fabric of people. By implication, she mentioned that the present democracy in the country will, however, not succeed if the people are not able to discipline themselves.

- **Wrong and distorted messages over television with no proper invigilating and parental guidance**

  Participants are worried that families spend a lot of time in front of the television and that there is a lack of parental guidance. Children then tend to accept what they see on the television. *"Parents watch the rubbish such as pornography with the children on TV", "Families sit with their children and watch evil pictures", "Children watch bad things over the television without parental guidance", "It is rather these glitzy people on television who wear fancy dresses and drive smart cars, they see as role models".* Rens (2005:1) had shown that the communication media are overflowing with signs of the decline and even total collapse of human and societal values. On the other hand Abdool (2005:30) is of the opinion that television has a negative influence on children. This negative influence suggests poor role models to viewers. Codrington (2000:34-35) agreed with Abdool that television portrays poor characters and actors as role models for the youth.

He puts it like this: *"It is via the media that the youth encounter the examples of ill-disciplined people whom they perceive to be role models to look up to".* Engelbrecht (2001:30) substantiated what Rens said earlier but emphasized it stronger that television causes children to be exposed on a daily basis to violence and crime. Bergh (2002:170-172) indicates that the influences of television in homes should not be underestimated. He says that anti-Christian norms are priority in the houses of parents, in the hearts of families and family life.

- **Excessive use of cell phones inhibit language development**

   Fathers expressed their concern with the effect excessive use of the cell phones have on language development of children. *"Children are using "mxit" and it influences their spelling and writing abilities", "Children are writing the same type of language in their essays and letters at school because of the cell phones, where the teacher has to figure out what the child wanted to say".* Engelbrecht (2001:32-34) showed that excessive use of cell phones has a negative influence on children such as spelling and writing abilities, and that cell phones also stimulate the violent factor and free love (sex).

Theme six: The role of the father should be emphasized in the home

In the last theme participants focussed on fathers that should be teachers at home; being committed and being role models and to live by example.

- **Fathers should be teachers at home**

   Participants indicated that it is the duty of the father as mentor to see that he teaches his children at home and not delegate this to teachers. *"The father should not wait for the teacher to do it", "It is his duty as father to teach the child because if the child goes to school, the child must be school ready".*

   Heenan (2004:3) underlines the fact that parents (father and mother) are the first and most important educators especially when values are considered. Bergh (2002:81) mentions that the father holds significant responsibilities for the education and socialisation of his children. Freeks (2004:91) also implies that it is imperative that the father shows interest with regard to his children's education. Coakley (2006:154), however, goes beyond the father as a teacher by indicating that the father serves not only as a teacher but as a coach, manager, agent, mentor and even an *advocate* for the sake of the child.

- **Fathers should be committed**

  Participants indicated that fathers should be committed and should not ignore their role as a father figure. *"The father should be committed wholeheartedly", "A committed father should ask himself the following questions: "What is it that I am teaching to the children?", "Am I living it out?"* Barker (2008:1-3) indicates that fathering means commitment and leadership. Coakley (2006:154-159), however, says that fathers who do not actively advocate the interests of their children are seen by many people as not meeting standards for good parenting. He suggests that fathers who are committed actively promote their children's success because parental commitment is a key factor.

- **Fathers should be role models and live by example**

  If fathers are involved with their children they become role models and live by example. *"The father is the role model and children don't have anyone else to admire or to worship as a role model", "To be a role model the father must do things together with his children".* Bergh (2002:168) and Freeks (2004:91-92) indicates that the father is the best role model for his children because children learn through the behaviour and attitude of their parents, and the father portrays the ideal model to transmit values because of his position as priest in the house. Coakley (2006:154) emphasises the fact that the father should be actively involved in the lives of his children, even if it includes bathing or swimming together with them. Niskanen (2006:397-407) advocated that the father should be active in his role where he practically lives by example. Children are looking to the father as example of how to behave. They are looking forward to adopt the example of the father, and the fact that one day they will be able to take up their own role as father and they will be examples and role models to their own children (Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2007:221-225; Blackthorn, 2004:5 and De Klerk & Le Roux, 2003:15).

8. Conclusion

- The role of the father is very important in the family context.
- Fathers feel very strong about mentoring in the family context.
- There is a great lack and need for fathers as mentors in the family context and in the broader community.
- The importance of values in the home is paramount.

- Fathers sees values as a blessing to have in one's life because no human being can live without values.
- The transmission of values from the father will prevent ample social and domestic problems in the home.
- The father should be a leader, strict and committed toward his family.
- The father should emphasize the importance of God and his Word in the family context.

9.   Recommendations

- Fathers have to be trained and equipped and made aware of the importance of mentoring and the aspect of values.
- Training and equipping fathers in ways such as seminars, conferences, workshops, men camps, church programmes and equipping events, road shows and community training programmes.
- A significant model should be created as a training manual for fathers to be active and effective to impact their family and other fathers in the community.
- Mothers should be motivated and encourage through programmes and workshops to support fathers in their role as mentor in the transmission of values.
- Mentoring is teamwork and therefore the father, mother and the rest of the family should work together to make the mentoring process even more successful in the family context.

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