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Challenging prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies: A Practical Theological Study

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SOLEMN DECLARATION

I, Thoredi Elizabeth Choabi declare that this thesis, submitted to the North West University, Mafikeng Campus, is my own work and has not been previously submitted to any University. Sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

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CONCEPT CLARIFICATION / DEFINITION OF TERMS

Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy refers to "a period of gestation when a woman aged between 13-19 years has conceived an unplanned foetus in her uterus" (Mothiba & Maputle, 2012:2).

Teenager

A teenager is "a person who falls within the ages of 13 to 19 years old. The word "teenager" is another word for an adolescent. When a teenager turns 20, they are no longer a teenager because they are no longer in that developmental stage" (Wikipedia).

Adolescence

Adolescence is "the developmental transition of teenagers from childhood to adulthood entailing major physical, cognitive and psychological changes. It begins with puberty and is a process that leads to sexual maturity or fertility, i.e. the ability to reproduce. Adolescence start from 11 or 12 until the late teens or early twenties and it entails major interrelated changes in all realms of development" (Papalia *et al.*, 2004:387).

Adolescence is "derived from the Latin verb *adolescere,* meaning "to grow up" or "to grow to adulthood", thus referring to a development phase in the human life cycle that is situated between childhood and adulthood" (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017: x). A universal definition of adolescent is very difficult to specify, because the chronological age differs from culture to culture. However, it is easy to identify and adolescent due to visible bodily changes that occur to the particular individual. Normally during that stage, the body begins to grow, the sexual organs start functioning and the individual reach sexual maturity. Age as determinant of adulthood differs from country to country. For example, the legal maturity in Spain is 25, whilst in Britain and South Africa it is 18 years. South African adolescence ends when a person is entitled to vote or apply for a driver's licence at 18 years and when the need for parental consent falls away. From a social point of view, adolescence ends when a person takes on adult roles, such as getting married or embarking on a career (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017: x, xi).

Unwanted pregnancy

"Unwanted pregnancy is defined as pregnancy that was not planned for or desired by the couple at the time of conception" (Ravindran, 2003:23).

Wanted pregnancy

"Wanted pregnancy occurs intentionally, as it is usually planned and anticipated" (Gessessew, 2010:184).

Practical Theology

"Practical Theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world" (Swinton & Mowat, 2016:7).

African Churches

The African church represents all churches founded by Africans, in Africa and without direct links to the missionaries. In South Africa an example of an African Church is the African *Initiated* Church (AIC). Its philosophies include ancestral veneration and various elements of the African spiritual realm, such as the belief in spiritual forces and spiritual healing. They have integrated aspects of spirit possession and witch-finding cults into their services and their popularity is based on prophetic and deliverance ministries. Their healing activities include granting people protection and fortification against the powers of evil (Coertze, 2005:45,47; Öhlmann *et al.,* 2016:2-3). For the purpose of this study the examples of African churches referred to are traditional Christian churches in all townships and rural areas in South Africa which include the Methodist, Lutheran, Roman, African Methodist Church, Anglican, ZCC, Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, the Uniting Reformed Churches of South Africa and Zionist Churches.

ABBREVIATION OF BOOKS USED FROM THE BIBLE

Genesis- Gen.

Exodus- Ex.

Deuteronomy- Deut.

Judges- Judg.

Samuel- Sam.

Kings- Kgs.

Psalms- Ps.

Proverbs- Prov.

Jeremiah- Jer.

Malachi- Mal.

Matthews- Matt.

Romans- Rom.

Corinthians- Cor.

Ephesians- Eph.

Philippians- Phil.

Colossians- Col.

Thessalonians- Thess.

Timothy- Tim.

Titus- Tit.

Hebrews - Heb.

James - Jam.

Peter- Pet.

ABSTRACT

The focus of the study is to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies. In precolonial times teenage pregnancy and sex before marriage was rare amongst Africans. Nevertheless, modernity transformed the African values and morals and as such the rate of teenage pregnancy increased in alarming rates. As Africans became Christians it became a challenge to conform to biblical principles which were almost similar in the area of abstinence and no sex before marriage. The study engaged African and Christian way of life to detect where African teenagers went wrong.

In addressing this problem, the study attempted to accomplish the following objectives:

- To engage in an in-depth literature study of prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies.

- To investigate and articulate the main reasons for the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies.

- To articulate principles based on the African tradition and Christian texts for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to empower the church to challenge prevalent sexual practices.

- To propose a strategy for pastoral guidance of youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies.

As the study's main aim was to contribute to the field of practical theology and pastoral counselling and coaching, the interpretive model of Osmer was applied in a literature based approach. Another important aim was to contribute to the growing corpus of literature on contextualised pastoral care which is much needed within the African context. In this way it hopes to make a contribution to a theological approach which is cognisant of the African worldview and culture while is at the same time congruent with the Bible as the Word of God.

Key words: unwanted teenage pregnancy, black teenage girls, African church, sexual practices, South Africa

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
1. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT
1.1 BACKGROUND

To suppose or accept that current day South African teenagers are maintaining sexual abstinence, until they can legally marry, is proving to be a growing misconception. Magezi (2016:1) reports that South Africans as young as 17 have engaged in sexual intercourse, either experimentally or on a frequent basis. He also states that 52% of teenagers have had full penetration by age 17 and 35% of teenagers who have sex say they only sometimes wear a condom, while 32% who have sex say they never wear a condom. Furthermore, Magezi (2016:1) indicates that more than half (52%) of parents of teenagers and youth are unaware of their children's sexual experiences.

Studies have shown that teenagers in South Africa and somewhere else in Africa are increasingly engaging in sexual activity at a very young age (Kara & Maharaj, 2015:58). Eaton *et al.* (2003:149) report that in South Africa at least 50% of teenage girls, the majority being students, are sexually active at age 16 and as many as 80% engage in sexual relationships by the age of 18. Shefer and Ngabaza (2015:64) state that increasing attention has been paid to the sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls as it has not only become a prevalent phenomenon, but have also given rise to an alarming increase in unwanted pregnancies within this segment of society.

According to Cook and Cameroon (2015:243), the United Nations Children's Fund defines teenage pregnancy as conceiving between the ages of 13 and 19 years old. Willan (2013:4, 7) reports that in South Africa the rate of teenage pregnancy still remains high with around 30% of 15-19 year olds reporting falling pregnant, with the majority of these pregnancies being among 18- and 19-year olds. The figure relates to all teenagers (13-19 years old), but motherhood for an 18 or 19 year old has very different implications than for a young teenager of, for example 15. Whilst Thobejane (2015:273) found that most of the teenagers fall pregnant at the age of 16 and 19 years, a study conducted in Soweto, South Africa, by Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:2), revealed that 23% of teenagers between 13-16 years old in the sample group engaged in unprotected sex that resulted in pregnancy.

Falling pregnant before they reach legal adulthood usually constitutes unwanted pregnancy. Ravindran (2003:23) describes unwanted pregnancy in general to refer to "a pregnancy that was not planned for or desired by the couple at the time of conception". Gessessew (2010:184)

states that pregnancy is classified as unwanted if it occurs without the intention of the woman. On the other hand, wanted pregnancy occurs intentionally, as it is usually planned and anticipated.

The phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancies in South Africa is of course not isolated from the rest of the African continent or the world. The same tendency is reported in other African countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria (Ahorlu *et al.,* 2013:1; Amoran, 2012:1). Taffa and Obare (2017:90) also indicate that according to a recent demographic and health survey in Ethiopia, 16.3% of the girls between the age 15 and 19 years were already mothers or pregnant with their first child.

On an international level, Mezey *et al.* (2015:1) and Holgate *et al.* (2006:1) report that unwanted teenage pregnancy is similarly prevalent in countries abroad like the United Kingdom and United States of America. Despite governments' intervention across the world to lower rates of unwanted teenage pregnancy, the teenage pregnancy figures continue to escalate.

This growing phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancies presents a wide array of concerns. Some of the most obvious concerns are the social, economic and personal well-being of the teenage girl.

1.1.1 The social impact of unwanted teenage pregnancy

Internationally, teenage pregnancy is still a social problem. Its continued rise has a negative effect on the teenager, their families, taxpayers and society as a whole (Miriri *et al.,* 2014:130). Huang *et al.* (2014:255) highlight that teenage parenting and less social support can cause stress such as depression and has a negative social impact on the mother and child. Hodgkinson *et al.* (2014:114) add that teenage parenthood affect young mothers negatively and most experience mental health problems such as depression, substance abuse, and posttraumatic stress disorder. This high stress levels is as a result of the arrival of the new baby and make it difficult for teenage girls to enjoy normal life. According to Cook and Cameroon (2015:243-245), Thobejane (2015:274) and Akella and Jordan (2015:42), social consequences include financial challenges, lower educational achievements, difficulties with housing, family conflict and breakdown when compared to their peers.

Supporting the above view, in another study conducted by Ntini and Sewpaul (2017:3) in South Africa, teenage pregnancy and parenting are overwhelming and affect the studies of such teenage girls. It is very strenuous to be a parent and learner at the same time. Being a teen mother, bars one from partaking in certain school activities. Either schooling is interrupted or teenage girls drop out of school and cannot finish due to lack of family or lack of family support. Malahlela (2012:33) adds that some pregnant teenagers tend to have a high rate of absenteeism from school or irregular school attendance, due to ante-natal clinic consultations and neo-natal clinic appointments.

According to Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997:55) family income appears to be more strongly related to children's ability and achievement. Children who come from poor background or who live below the poverty line for multiple years, suffer the worst outcomes. During their preschool and early school years, girls who fall pregnant prematurely have lower rates of school completion than children and adolescents who experience poverty only in later years. For example, poor families are more likely to be headed by a single parent, who is educationally unqualified, jobless or has a low income.

Another challenge experienced by pregnant or teenage mothers is physical health. In a study conducted by Rao *et al.* (2017:901) the results show that teenage pregnancy is not only a social problem, but harm the health of younger teenagers and their babies worldwide. The evidence suggests that it is associated with a high risk of pregnancy-induced hypertension, eclampsia and premature onset of labour and foetal deaths. High risk of neonatal morbidity and mortality was also detected.

Jonas *et al.* (2016:2) furthermore indicate that social teenage pregnancy are poverty, premature exit from school, health issues and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS. In some cases, pregnant teenage girls terminate unwanted pregnancies by having an abortion.

1.1.2 The economic impact of unwanted teenage pregnancy

According to Branson and Byker (2016:1), teenage mothers have more economic challenges when compared to married women who bear children in later life. Mchunu *et al.* (2012:433) and Mturi (2015:1959) argue that poverty and unemployment are linked with having a child at an early age and at the same time, as Thobejane (2015:274) indicates, poverty can also cause teenagers to engage in premarital sex leading to unwanted pregnancy. In this regard, economical issues can both be a cause and a result for and of unwanted teenage pregnancy, i.e. reciprocal relationship. In this context, teenagers may perhaps be attempting to gain a sense of

self-confidence or assurance by becoming involved in sexual relationships at an early age, sometimes with older men, because this is where they feel loved.

Nkani and Bhana (2016:4) point out that although there is high rate of teenage pregnancy particularly amongst blacks in South Africa, the majority of parents still condemn it, for ethnic and fiscal reasons. In most cases, the born child becomes the load of the teen mother's family, and places financial pressure on the domestic financial plan. Hence Vundule *et al.* (2001:73) is of the view that teenage births pose a major financial problem on families. Although many pregnant teenagers intend to complete their studies, oftentimes they do not return to school after the birth. Therefore, teenage pregnancy seriously destabilizes determinations to uplift the nation's youth, particularly as regards the educational empowerment of women, which is so important in reducing female unemployment, increasing female economic liberation and improving the well-being of the next generation.

Patel (2012:109) as well as Mushwana *et al.* (2015:11) emphasise that teenage pregnancy also has a negative impact on the economy of South African as a country, since child grants are funded by taxpayer's money. Although government introduced the child support grant programme with the good intention of reducing poverty and promoting equality, it appears to be abused by teenage girls who fall pregnant in order to receive grants, thereby putting more pressure on the economy. Mbulaheni *et al.* (2014:64, 69) support the view that some adolescent girls deliberately participate in unprotected sex in order to fall pregnant so that they may acquire child support grant. Others do the same hoping to get pregnant because they have a high regard for their peers who are getting child support grant.

1.1.3 The impact of unwanted teenage pregnancy on the personal well-being of the teenage girl

The impact of unwanted pregnancy manifests in at least three areas of the teenager's life, i.e. the spiritual, physical and psychological.

1.1.3.1 Spiritual

Bruce and Cockreham (2004:334) describe spirituality as "an important force during a period when institutional religion seems to be losing its hold on adolescence. Spirituality is a deep and mysterious human yearning for self-transcendence and surrender, a yearning to find meaning and a place in the world". Therefore, it is importance to assist teenage girls to discover and make sense in their lives and inspire them to identify who they are, aid them in all their

spiritual level and journey. Some teenage girls experience a spiritual emptiness and lack of guidance in this area during adolescence, can contribute and expose them to high-risk behaviours, 'which can be both a search for connection, transcendence, meaning, and initiation as well as an escape from the pain of not having a genuine source of spiritual fulfilment and meaning'.

Sodi (2009:51-54) states that teenage pregnancy can be a stumbling block to educational progress, an embarrassment and a shameful event to some teenage girls. It can inhibit and restrict them, making it difficult for them to interact with others freely. Others experience feelings of anxiety at times, get easily irritated and impatient for no reason. Negative relations, clashes between the pregnant teenager and her parents, father of the child or any form of rejection can affect the teenager and some contemplate termination of the pregnancy or committing suicide to end their misery.

Makhudu (2010:8, 30) argues that some teenage girls find it hard to cope with the issue of the shame of being pregnant out of wedlock. During this difficult time of their lives, they are stigmatised in the sense that they see themselves as unworthy. Sodi (2009:23) mentions that some teenage girls once they become pregnant, experience ill-treatment from members of their families. They are also rejected even by friends which was not the case before pregnancy. This new behaviour from their family affect them badly psychologically and lead them to severe depression. On the other hand, Mabusela (2014:25) argues that absent fathers in a teenager's life, be it through divorce, polygamy, incarceration, travel, military, remarriage or emotional absence, can contribute to teenage pregnancy. Hence to delay sexual activity and early pregnancy, a teenage girl needs the love and warm relationship of her father. The assurance can affect her positively and enable her to menarche later and abstain from early sex.

1.1.3.2 Physical

According to Azevedo *et al.* (2015:618, 619), teenagers who fall pregnant put their physical health at risk. These include conditions like anaemia and gestational diabetes. They also run the risk of possible delivery complications, which often leads to foetal mortality.

1.1.3.3 Psychological

The psychological well-being of teenage girls can either be negative or positive during pregnancy. According to Nordin *et al.* (2012:702), "psychological well-being consists of the six dimensions of personal growth, purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery and autonomy and positive relations with others. Thus, one who exhibits strength in each of the

dimensions would reflect good psychological well-being and vice versa. Nevertheless, being teenage unmarried mothers can be tough on their emotions, finances, health and psychological well-being". In many cases, families totally reject their daughters who become pregnant before marriage.

Logan *et al.* (2007:8) and Nordin *et al.* (2012:702) state that an unplanned pregnancy can affect the mother mentally during confinement. Teenage girls with uninvited, ill-timed, or accidental births demonstrate lower levels of general psychological well-being during pregnancy and after giving birth, and a higher risk of depression. One of the ways to lessen such problems is by providing them with social supports and educational programs.

Due to lack of knowledge and poor communication regarding teenage pregnancy, Ramakuela *et al.* (2016:5) report that pregnancy has harmfully effect such as nervousness about giving birth, especially for first timers. Some teens frighten each other about issues of giving birth, and this become extremely frightening and disturbing. Rather than looking forward to the arrival of their baby, they become miserable about the whole process of giving birth.

The most hurtful source of distress for some teenage girls during pregnancy stems from rejection and denial of pregnancy responsibility by the presumed father (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012:1023). On the other hand, some experience depression due to pregnancy encountered through forced sex, which is equivalent to rape, and gives rise to the need to educate boys and girls in South Africa on forced sex or rape (De Vries *et al.,* 2014:1089).

Challenging prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

In light of the negative consequences of unwanted teenage pregnancy on the teenage girls themselves, their families and society as shown above, it is unthinkable that this growing phenomenon can go unchallenged. This study is interested in challenging the prevalent sexual practices amongst teenage girls in South Africa from a practical theological paradigm. The specific focus will be on black teenage girls, as they proportionally present the biggest challenge regarding this phenomenon in South Africa. The researcher is a black woman and active member of an African Christian congregation who believes that the Christian and African traditions contain normative and ethical values that can be used to stimulate the

Church's thinking and actions to enable local congregations that are strategically placed within black communities, to challenge the prevalent sexual practices of the focus group of the study.

It is, however, positive to take note of ongoing interventions from government, like those rolled out at public schools, creating awareness of the negative consequences of prevalent sexual practices within this focus group. In support of such actions, Winters and Winters (2012:1, 2) suggest that publicising the high rates of teenage pregnancy amongst the black community can assist dominant stakeholders to discourage promiscuity by showing that teenage childbearing has disastrous consequences. On that note Ntini and Sewpaul (2017:1) emphasise societal ills that contribute to the high rate of teenage pregnancy like gender inequality, poverty, sexual coercion, violence, lack of access to contraceptives and lack of access to education, particularly sex education and Muloongo and Tshuma (2012:36) raise concern on cultural values, such as circumcision (*ukwaluka*[1]), which seem to encourage teenage pregnancy. Traditionally a boy can prove his manhood by getting a woman pregnant. Nkosi (2013:120) highlights that part of traditional male circumcision includes participation in sexual intercourse without condomising. Culturally men believe that circumcision will protect them from contracting sexually transmitted diseases. This line of thinking is very dangerous because it might endorse unintended pregnancies. The ever-rising statistics suggest that more role players are needed to challenge the problem.

This research suggests that the Church, through its local congregations, should take the hands of other role players already engaging the problem. It is a suggestion that mainly rests on the central place and influence the Church has within African communities. Moving through areas mainly populated by African people, whether rural or suburban, one is struck by the many churches in all shapes and forms that adorn the landscape. In part, this could be ascribed to the

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[1]*Ukwaluka*, according to Nkosi (2013:119), is a Xhosa word that refers to the customary practice of male circumcision that implies the "cutting" of flesh. It is a male initiation rite to manhood. In South Africa boys as young as twelve undergo the process of traditional circumcision, taking place in circumcision lodges in the bush. The custom of male circumcision traditionally allows boys to perform surgery under the guardianship of *amakhankatha,* i.e. guardians.

African belief that all life is sacred and that religion plays a holistic role in all activities (Hendriks, 2012:117). The Church, through its local congregations, therefore permeates the African society. It is however an open question as to what extent the Church has critically reflected about ministries like preaching, youth and family ministry, specifically in the African context, in order to present an appropriate theory for current ministries aimed at addressing the phenomenon explored in this study. It is contended here that a practical theological study can contribute to strengthening the voice of the Church by stimulating theory formation aimed at challenging societal issues through the classic expressions of ministry that at the very least includes preaching, youth and family ministry.

1.2 STATE OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH

There have been several studies reporting on unwanted teenage pregnancy as a phenomenon. Although South Africa has the lowest teenage birth rate in sub-Saharan Africa, teenage pregnancy remains a major concern as those under 18 years of age make up a large proportion of the population (Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017:2). However according to Nika *et al.* (2015:539,540) and Jonas *et al.* (2016:2) the rate of unplanned teenage pregnancy in South Africa amongst black teenagers is still very high, regardless of sex-education programmes the health department is freely offering. This phenomenon is a major concern for parents, the education system, health care providers and the government and urgent solutions are required to deal with this problem. Unprotected sex for teenage girls is two-fold as it involves pregnancy and also exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS.

Tshitangano and Oni (2015:1) argue that behind every legal or illegal abortion in South Africa, there is an unwanted teen pregnancy and lack of knowledge about the consequences. Hodes (2017:1) raises a concern that democratic transition in South Africa with too many rights has licensed promiscuity amongst teenagers.

According to Muloongo and Tshuma (2012:26-29, 34), exposure to early sexual debut culminates into a pregnancy and contributes to maternal death. If teenage girls abstained from sex they would be saved from pregnancy and fecundity, and as a result there would be a decline in fertility. They would be able to continue with their studies without being interrupted, and career wise have a bright future. Hence early sexual debut not only violate children's sexual rights, but can also permanently hinder the education, especially of the girl child. In this study some teenage mothers also mentioned rape as a cause of teenage pregnancy. Rape at sexual debut was 79.8% among the African population group. "The study also revealed that 25.2

percent of first sexual encounters among the teenage mothers were incestuous, and the majority (70.3 percent) of these sexual encounters happened in other places, like the relatives' place, bushes, at school or at a hotel and the rest were at home (4.1 percent)" (Muloongo & Tshuma, (2012:34).

Baloyi (2016:12) argues that sex before marriage undermines the morality, dignity, tradition and customs of Africans and it is not wise for teenage girls to fall pregnant at that tender age. Children's sex education needs to be shaped by African customs and traditions and the whole community should ensure that African teenagers conform to good morals. Although close relatives may take responsibility for this in a home situation and may teach children the values and customs that Africans need to uphold, black parents also have to play their parental role and break the silence by educating their children about sex.

Mturi (2016:2) adds that intervention programmes, such as life orientation programmes in schools, are not having the desired effect. Madiba and Ntuli (2015:200) highlight that in spite of clinics offering youth friendly services, "there has been an increase in teenage pregnancy with low utilization rates of contraception by teenagers who mostly utilize the clinic for ante natal and post- natal services".

Nguyen *et al.* (2016:2) raise the concern that despite strict traditions there is a cultural shift, social transformation and sexual revolution taking place in countries. Having sex during the teenage years is becoming the norm among young people without being fully informed about the consequences, like unwanted teen pregnancy. Makiwane *et.al.* (2006:5) report that since the inception of the Child Support Grant system in South Africa, there is a claim that teenage pregnancy has grown. Mturi (2015:1957) reveals that some black teenage girls become pregnant due to external pressure from boyfriends and from their peers who already have babies.

In this study Nelson (2013:18, 19) reveals that some teenage girls deliberately fall pregnant in their yearning for love or to trap the biological father into a relationship. Whilst others intentionally indulge in sexual activity in order to release their frustrations and anger, some do so just to prove their fertility and attract male partners. Despite health programmes offered in South Africa, there are teenage girls who remain ignorant when it comes to menstruation, fertility and contraception and thus fall pregnant. Muloonga and Tshuma (2012:35) confirm that teenagers engage in sex in order to prove that they are in love. Sex serves as a sacrificial symbol to honour an affair and secondly, as a way of cementing the relationship and indicating

that the relationship is serious. There are also teenagers who say that sex is a sign of trust in a boyfriend.

Edin *et al.* (2016:1015-1017) found that a lack of recreation and peer pressure amongst teenage girls or youth add to teenage pregnancy, as they get into relationships to pass time and fight boredom. Mulovhedzi (2004:1) reports that the South African media, such as TV shows, magazines and the Internet, influence and mislead teenagers on pre-marital sex. This affects many young Christians within churches, as they often lack Biblical knowledge and instructions on relationships.

Culture also contributes towards teenage pregnancy. For example, a study conducted by Muloongo and Tshuma (2012:36), at the Eastern Cape Province, indicated that some girls alluded to being pressured into sex by cultural values and expectations. They were expected to have sex with boys to prove their fertility by becoming pregnant. Such cultural pressures are not limited to girls only; boys are also expected to prove their manhood. There is status in impregnating a girl for boys in some parts of the Eastern Cape, who are regarded as heroes for doing so (*imboza*).

James (2015:96) and Waxman *et al.* (2016:3) mention that school dropout is high amongst black teenage girls. The responsibility for and care of a baby is too overwhelming and a burden for the teenage mother. Once teenage girls prematurely become mothers, according to Ehlers (2003:14), they might face failures in many aspects of their lives. This is sometimes referred to as "the syndrome of failure":

- "Failure to fulfil the functions of adolescence
- Failure to remain in school
- Failure to limit family size
- Failure to establish a vocation and become self-supporting
- Failure to have children who reach their potential in life" (Ehlers, 2003:14).

Kara and Maharaj (2015:57) note that lower income households are most likely to experience teenage pregnancy six times more than a high-income household. Varjavandi (2017:89) argues that casual sex, or provision of resources in exchange for sex, between adolescent girls and matured and richer male sexual partners, contributes to teenage pregnancy.

Mturi (2016:2) suggests that this phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancy needs wisdom of the highest order. Consequently, Mashau (2011:6) argues that the Church should come to terms with the reality that African teenagers are caught up in a predicament of a growing tendency of sex before marriage leading to unwelcomed pregnancies.

Few South African scholars have actively engaged teenage relationships within the African context, especially shaping thinking and actions within the faith community and broader society from a Christian perspective. Mashau (2011) addresses the phenomenon of co-habitation and pre-marital sex amongst African youth from a missional perspective. While the above study sensitised the Church about shifting values and practices amongst the African youth, it did not formulate theory regarding ministries that address this issue within the faith community. Baloyi's book (2013) on the building of African Christian marriages investigated heterosexual relationships from a Biblical point of view within the context of marriage. It provides invaluable knowledge of Christian marriages in terms of the African context, but is silent on how the Church can facilitate healthy relationships through its ministries and hence the need for practical theological theory formation that can address thinking and action that can challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst the youth.

African culture, philosophy and worldviews abound with wisdom on family and sexual relationships. One of the main tenets of the African worldview relates to how the individual finds purpose within kinship (Masango, 2013:751). Bearing children is for the greatest part associated with the notion of a blessed marriage and the absence of children is, conversely, seen as a valid reason to not continue the marital relationship (Ngulube, 1989:21). Having children outside of the relational networks treasured in the African philosophy and worldview refutes many of the values nurtured by Africans as well as the Christian worldview. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge theological literature synthesising African and Christian values that support Christian ministry, aimed at propagating and sustaining healthy family values, are not available.

This study thus aims to address the void in literature by contributing to practical theological theory formation aimed at congregational praxis within the African context that can challenge prevalent sexual practices leading to unwanted pregnancies through ministerial functions such as preaching, youth and family ministry.

1.3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Main Research Question

In light of the afore-going discussion, the main research question can be formulated as follows:

How can prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies be challenged from a practical theological perspective?

1.3.2 Aim and Objectives

1.3.2.1 Aim

To address prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies from a practical theological perspective.

1.3.2.2.1 Objectives

- Objective 1: To engage in an in-depth literature study of prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

- Objective 2: To investigate and articulate the main reasons for the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

- Objective 3: To articulate principles based on African tradition and Christian texts for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to empower the Church to challenge prevalent sexual practices

- Objective 4: To propose a strategy for pastoral guidance of youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

A practical theological study of prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls can yield a practical theological framework to challenge unwanted teenage pregnancies within faith communities.

1.5 RESEARCH METHOD

1.5.1 A practical theological study

This study engages the growing phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancy from a practical theological perspective. Miller-McLemore (2014:5) explains practical theology as:

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> "an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday, a method or way of understanding or analysing theology in practice used by religious leaders and teachers and students across the theological curriculum, a curricular area in theological education focused on ministerial practice and subspecialties, and, finally an academic discipline pursued by a smaller subset of scholars to support and sustain these first three enterprises. Each understanding points to different spatial locations, from daily life to library and fieldwork to classroom, congregation and community, and, finally, to academic guild and global context".

As reflective activity, practical theology denotes a scientific field of study within the broader field of theology that has the Church and society in mind and may use different approaches to research in order to achieve its aims.

In this regard Pieterse (1994:79) cites Van der Ven (1993:20) that describes practical theology from an empirical point of view.

> "The empirical approach provides practical theology with the methods and tools to describe and explain what goes on in the actual lives of actual people; to analyse and evaluate the texts which these people use as guides in their religious experience; to explore and validate the interpretations of these experiences; and finally to investigate the hypotheses that are formulated with regard to these experiences and the texts and contexts with which they are connected" (Pieterse, 1994:79).

An empirical approach to practical theological research accommodates research methods also found in the social sciences, like quantitative approaches.

Swinton and Mowat (2016:28,72,77,78,86) describe practical theology from a qualitative point of view that seeks to interpret situations, scripture and Christian practices. "It draws on various hermeneutical perspectives in its attempt to understand God and human experiences. It is interested in situations and practices which involve a variety of methods and approaches that enables the researcher to explore the social world in an attempt to access and understand the unique ways that individuals and communities inhabit it" (Swinton & Mowat, 2016:72). The aim of the practical theologian is to identify, reflect and explore a situation within the contemporary practice of the Church or the world, using other sources of knowledge. Qualitative methods can be implemented effectively to uncover hidden meanings within the

situation and practices on which participants embark. The data acquired from qualitative research can further be used to challenge established interpretations of Scripture and tradition, in light of the ongoing practices and experiences of the church. "The intention of this method is to enlighten, broaden, deepen and challenge both ecclesial practice and theological understandings in the light of the current practice, Christian tradition and the illumination that can be gained from other sources of knowledge" (Swinton & Mowat, 2016:78). In bringing situations together, practical theology and qualitative research require hospitality, conversion and critical faithfulness.

In trying to establish what practical theological research seeks to achieve, different viewpoints can be considered. Browning (1991:13) sees the tasks of practical theology as description, systemising and producing strategies to address certain situations. Dingemans (1996:62) distinguishes three aspects in practical theological research, namely an analytic description of particular phenomena, establishing normative perspectives to address these phenomena and the formulation of strategies from the normative perspectives aimed at changing the phenomena under investigation.

A more recent description of the tasks of practical theology is found in Richard Osmer's (2008) "Practical Theology - An introduction". Although not strictly speaking a methodology in itself, Osmer provides a rich description of the tasks of practical theology that serve as a valuable guide to provide direction to practical theological research. In this regard Osmer suggests that there are four movements that belong to the essence of practical theological research:

- "What is going on?
- Why is it going on?
- What ought to be going on?
- How might we respond?" (Osmer 2008:4).

These movements are aimed at helping spiritual leaders empower the Church and communities through more effective preaching, pastoral care, evangelism, spirituality, Christian-education and other ministerial practices by analysing and understanding faith-challenges in light of the Word.

When the aim and objectives of this study are integrated with the movements of practical theology, as suggested by Osmer, the following schematic outline of the study shows how these movements will stand in service of the execution of this study.

Movement or questions according to Osmer:	Research objectives	Method
The descriptive or empirical task ("What is going on?")	**Objective 1**: To engage in an in-depth investigation of prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies	Literature study
The interpretive task ("Why is it going on?")	**Objective 2:** To investigate and articulate the main reasons for the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies	Literature study

The normative task ("What ought to be going on?")	**Objective 3:** To articulate principles based on African tradition and Christian texts for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to empower the Church to challenge prevalent sexual practices	An engagement with literature on the African tradition, theological literature and Scripture
The pragmatic task ("How are we going to respond?")	**Objective 4:** To propose a strategy for pastoral guidance of youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies	Synthesis of the findings of the previous chapters and articulation of a strategy for pastoral guidance of youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

It is, however, important to note that these movements are in broad terms what the study intends to achieve and cannot be viewed as a simple recipe with four equal parts – as some aspects may receive more weight than others in the execution of the study. It must also be noted that these four tasks will be adjusted according to the needs of the study itself and the methods chosen to achieve the different objectives, as are discussed in the next section.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Flick (2011:65) defines research design and method as a plan and means for the execution of the study that will make it possible for the investigator to answer the questions the research is posing. The chosen method and means thus need to be suited to the particular research question, aim and objectives of the study.

This research pertains to three main focus areas, namely prevalent sexual practices among black teenage girls in the South African leading to unwanted pregnancy, the Church within black communities and the African tradition that inherently forms the background to these two groups.

In the conceptualisation stages of the study, the researcher was challenged to find an approach that would ensure an ethically safe design, which essentially came down to deciding between an empirical or literature study. The main challenge was presented by the fact that within the ethical framework that currently regulates research at the North-West University teenage girls represent a highly vulnerable group. The disposition of pregnancy further compounds and deepens their vulnerability. The ethical implications stemming from this would imply tedious and time consuming precautions to the extent that the viability of the study would become a serious consideration. During the initial literature review, however, the researcher was satisfied that the phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancy amongst black teenagers is sufficiently documented, both in terms of epidemiology and aetiology. From this, the research could deduct the necessary data to provide a report on the prevalent sexual conduct of the focus group at the time of the research.

In light of the practical theological nature of the study, the main aim would become the reflection on possible action of the African church in response to this enduring and growing challenge. As the researcher is a black female in her fifties, she has been in the position of an observer within a black church, but as a black person also aware of the strong ethical undertones regarding sexuality within the African culture and tradition. As an initial review of the literature was silent on relating the Christian ethos and African tradition on sexuality as a response from the faith community to this problem, the researcher decided to embark on a practical theological investigation that could address this matter from the available literature.

Hence, the research design of this study entails two main elements. The research firstly engages scholarly literature on the phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancies, in which the following databases were consulted: NEXUS (the database of the NRF with current and

completed research), SACat (national catalogue of books and journals in South Africa), SAePublications (South African journal articles), EbscoHost (international journal articles) and ProQUEST (international theses and dissertations in full text).

The research secondly engages the theological perspectives and African philosophy and worldviews on the issues of sexuality, family life and values as recorded in literature. This is done in order to establish the principles that can be deducted from the Christian texts and African tradition which may inform efforts to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls within the black Christian church.

1.7 ESTIMATED RISK LEVEL

As the study did not engage human participants, but only literature in the public domain and Scriptures, there was no risk involved in the execution of the study.

1.8 PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF HEADINGS/CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and research method

Chapter 2: Prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

Chapter 3: Factors leading to early sexual practices and unwanted pregnancies amongst black South African teenage girls

Chapter 4: Perspectives from the African Tradition for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls

Chapter 5: Theological perspectives for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls

Chapter 6: Pastoral guidance of youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

1.9 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Viewed in the light of the initial literature overview, unwanted teenage pregnancies present a real social and moral challenge within the South African context – and especially within the black community. Although it seems that the phenomenon is well documented from epidemiological and aetiological vantage points, practical theological insights from a combined Christian and African perspective seem to be lacking, especially in terms of the proposed focus group. The study therefore aims to contribute to a practical theological understanding of the

phenomenon within an African context, which will be the most unique contribution of the study. The practical theological reflection resulting from this research will greatly benefit thinking within the African faith contexts, thereby challenging prevalent sexual practices leading to unwanted teenage pregnancy. It should also inform ministerial practices, which in turn can educate youth and parents on healthy sexuality and good family values to eventually better South African society.

1.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of the study is arguably focused on one particular ethnic group within the South African populace. The void in the literature from a practical theological perspective regarding the focus group, however, calls for reflection on this topic.

CHAPTER 2: PREVALENT SEXUAL PRACTICES AMONGST BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN TEENAGE GIRLS LEADING TO UNWANTED PREGNANCIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is descriptive in nature as it attempts to provide an account of the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls, which was pointed out in the previous chapter as the group with the highest rate of unwanted teenage pregnancy. As such, it stands in service of the first movement of practical theology, namely to provide insight into what is currently occurring in terms of sexual practices among teenage girls in South Africa as documented in literature.

In order to do this, the following issues will be addressed: The phenomenon of unwanted pregnancy amongst black teenage girls in South Africa. The study compares black South African teenage girls with other ethnic groups to detect which group contribute the most to unwanted teenage pregnancies. Statistics are supplied to show which province and ethnic group is affected the most by teenage pregnancy. The section articulates the consequences of teenage pregnancy, how it affects teenage girls in regard to their school performance, social life, relationship in the family, partner, peers, teachers and the community. Issues such as low self-esteem, abortion and ethical challenges are discussed. Preventative measures, such as contraceptives are highlighted, as well as the preventative programmes that the government is initiating in schools to educate learners on sex education. The Church is also engaged to reflect on what is occurring, as it faithfully has to participate in God's redemptive work of saving the African youth from challenging sexual practices.

The tone of this chapter is set against the worrying growth in unwanted teenage pregnancy within the focus group. According to Maja (2007:40), Thobejane (2015:273) and Odimegwu *et al.* (2018:44) teenage pregnancy in South Africa is on an alarming increase as a growing number of teenage girls become sexually active at an early age.

In Thulamela Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa Ramathuba (2013:1, 3, 5) conducted research, using a questionnaire, on 273 secondary school girls between the age of 14 to 18 years from grade 8-12. Out of 20 secondary schools, six were chosen through random sampling and the objective was to explore the girls' knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviour regarding teenage pregnancy, emergency contraception and sexuality. In this study 47% of the sample group reported to have initiated sexual intercourse, whilst 53% had not engaged in it

yet. The teenage girls reached sexual maturity at an early age, but had limited knowledge about sexuality and sexual reproduction. They were ignorant and did not perceive themselves as being at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and falling pregnant. This can be seen from their conduct of engaging in early sexual relationships and not displaying responsible behaviour, such as consenting to safe sex.

It is this growing tendency that highlights the need for further exploration of the matter.

2.1.1 The phenomenon of unwanted pregnancy amongst black teenage girls in South Africa (epidemiology)

The researcher wants to discuss the rate of unwanted teenage pregnancy in South Africa, in terms of data requested from the Department of Statistics South Africa (2017). The Department of Statistics provided the breakdown of statistics of teenage girls between 13-19 years who have already born children. These numbers are representative of four different ethnic groups in South Africa, namely black/African, Coloured, Indian/Asian and Caucasian which provide valuable insight into the state of affairs regarding the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy in the country.

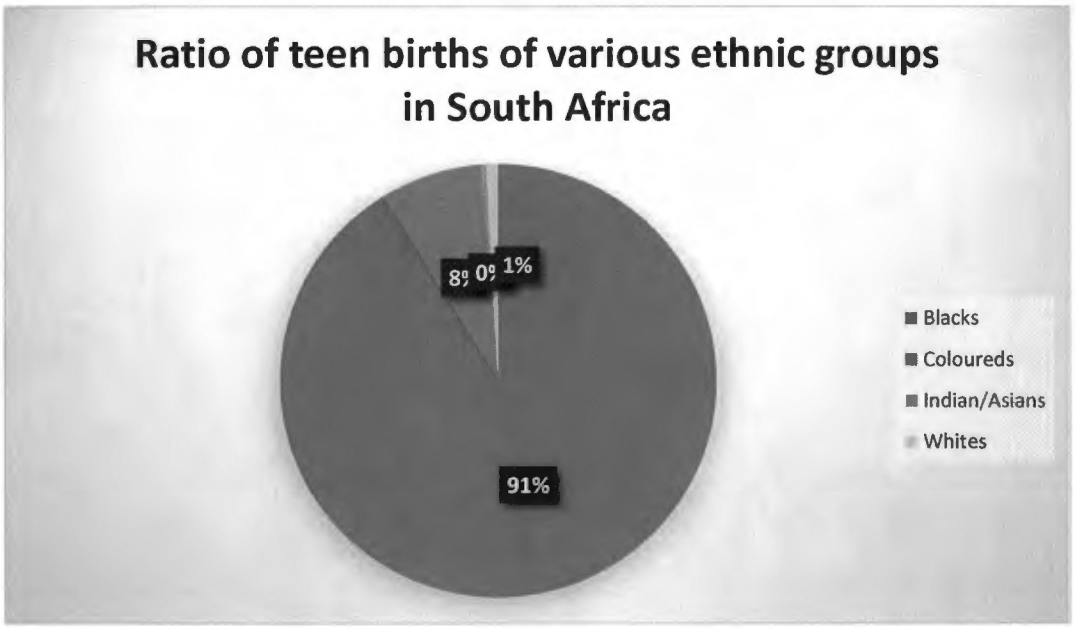
According to these statistics, 268 613 black African girls fell pregnant and 24 065 Coloured, highlighting that black teenage girls are the group with the highest incidence of unwanted teenage pregnancy in the country.

Table 1: Teenage pregnancy rates according to ethnic groups in South Africa

Race	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo
Black African	9482	52516	3707	13345	67284	19837	36090	26260	40092
Coloured	14246	3037	4334	437	477	279	1057	78	120
Indian/Asian	72	25	0	0	767	52	223	33	27
White	557	251	0	240	116	167	913	480	62
TOTAL	**24357**	**55829**	**8281**	**14022**	**68644**	**20335**	**38283**	**26851**	**40301**

Source: Statistics SA (2017)

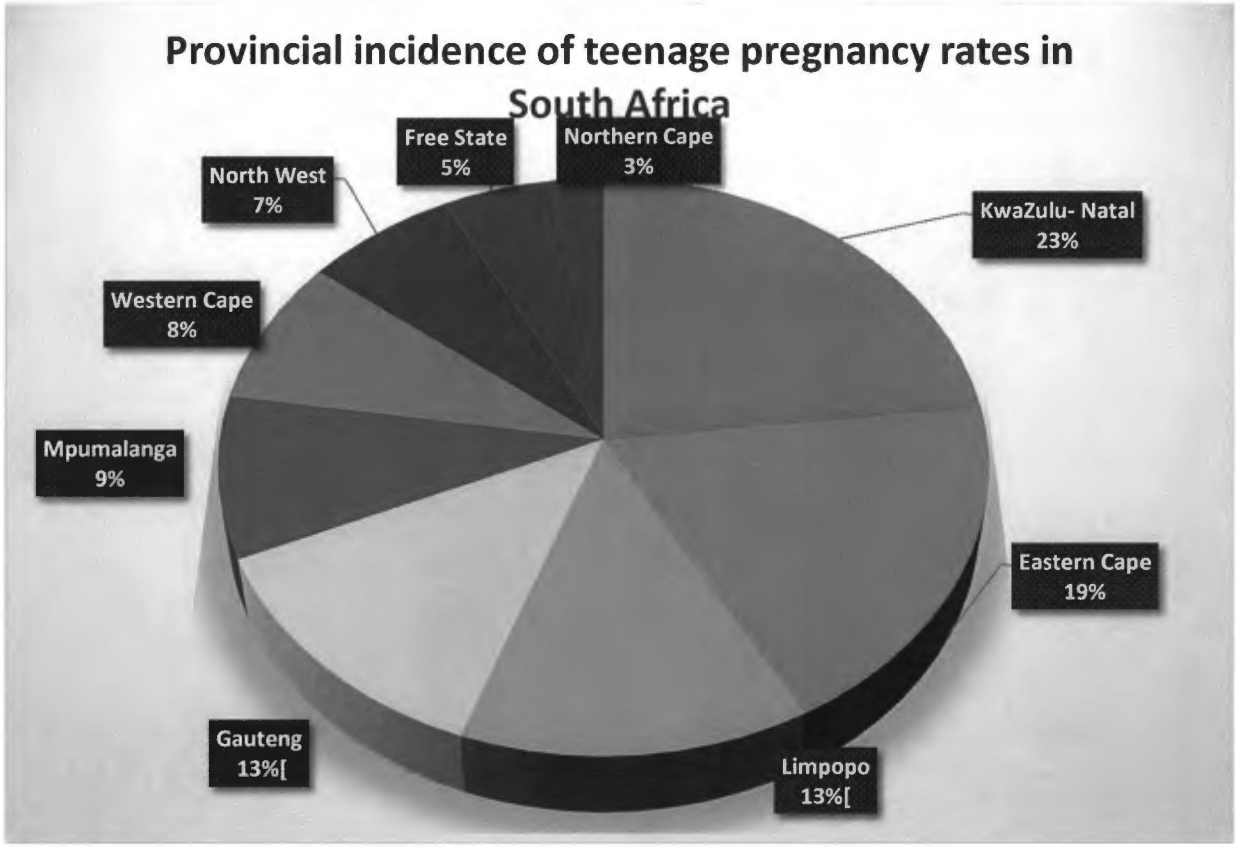
The following chart shows the resultant birth rate that follows on the high incidence of teenage pregnancies in South Africa.



According to Statistics SA estimates (2017), the ratio of teen births between the different ethnic groups in South Africa also points to the highest incidence amongst black teenagers, making black teenage girls one of the greatest groups of concern. Although the table and graph below show notable discrepancies between teenage pregnancies in general between the different provinces, the overall picture it represents, underlines the stark reality of teenage pregnancies in the country.

Table 2: Provincial incidence of pregnancy rates in South Africa

Province	KwaZulu-Natal	Eastern Cape	Limpopo	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Western Cape	North West	Free State	Northern Cape
Total	68644	55829	40301	38283	26851	24357	20335	14022	8281



According to Mkhwanazi (2010:347), most teenage pregnancies in South Africa occur amongst the poorer segment of the black community, while the majority of these pregnancies are unwanted and unplanned.

A great concern is the phenomenon of black girls as young as 10 (Grade 3) up to age 19 (Grade 12) fall pregnant more than once (Payet, 2015). According to Ahorlu *et al.* (2013:1), the transition from childhood to adulthood in teenage girls starts between the ages of 10 and 19. During this period many teenagers start to experiment with sex and some lack the knowledge, skills and resources they need to avoid unwanted pregnancy.

"The South African teenage pregnancy prevalence of 47 births per 1 000 girls aged 15-19 per annum far exceeds that of high-income countries such as the UK and the USA, where the prevalence is 15 births per 1 000 girls and 24 births per 1000 girls respectively" (Reddy *et al.*,

2016:2). For example, the high rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa was indicated by citing statistics on teenage pregnancy in a SABC newscast on 28 August 2016. Deputy Minister for Social Development, Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu announced her shock regarding the more than 3000 minors who fell pregnant during 2015 in the rural Ratlou area, about 70 kilometres outside Mahikeng in the North West Province. The majority of these teenage mothers left school and were unemployed, the youngest of which was only 12 years old. Most of the children were suspected to have been fathered by older men. They all had sad stories to tell, while some claimed to have been raped by their relatives. Some practiced unsafe sex, whilst others were reported to have been the victims of the popular blesser-blessee[2] phenomenon (SABC News, 2016).

Lehohla (2015:19) reported that 13.2% of all births registered by the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa in 2014 were of teenagers aged 15-19 years and totalled 117 139. Ebersöhn *et al.* (2017:185) state that "in South Africa, 39% of 15-19 age group have been pregnant at least once, and 49% are pregnant again within the subsequent 24% months, while one in five pregnant adolescents is HIV positive".

In North West province Karabo and Ayiga (2014:636) used a cross-sectional sample of 582 black learners and the study found that the prevalence of learner pregnancy is high at 38%. Most of the girls from the age of 14 years became pregnant at school and lived in rural areas. It was concluded that an integrated approach involving individual, school, family and neighbourhood level strategies are needed to address the problem. In addition to the above findings, Mchunu *et al.* (2012:426) performed a study in four provinces of South Africa, namely Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga showing a teenage pregnancy rate of 19.2%, of which 6.7% were terminated. Masiteng (2017:1) revealed in the *South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016 Key Indicators Report* that "the age-specific fertility rate for teenagers in South Africa was 71 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, showing little change since 1998".

2.1.2 Black South African teenagers vs. other ethnic groups

In terms of teenage pregnancies, Nkani and Bhana (2016:4) maintain that black teenagers in South Africa seem to be the greatest contributor to this phenomenon. Panday *et al.* (2009:41)

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[2] Blesser is the modern name for "sugar daddy", spoiling girls financially and with gifts in exchange for sex (Thobejane *et al.*, 2017:8717).

conducted research in South African schools and report that the highest rate of teenage pregnancies was amongst black learners aged 17-19 (71 per 1 000), followed by Coloured learners (60 per 1 000). These findings indicate that pregnancies were significantly high among black teenagers (71 per 1 000) - more than any race or ethnic group in South Africa.

Research by Kara and Maharaj (2015:57, 71, 80) to determine the extent of childbearing among teenagers aged 15-24 years in South Africa confirmed that due to prevalent premarital unprotected sexual practices, child bearing among youths between ages 15 and 24 was higher in African and Coloured girls compared to the white and Indian populations. The sample consisted of 2 623 teenagers and revealed that more than one-third (36, 6%) of those teenagers already gave birth.

2.2 HIGHLIGHTING AND ARTICULATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNWANTED TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The aim of this section is to highlight and articulate the consequences of teenage pregnancy. It thus seeks to broaden the perspective beyond the statistics to describe the situation. Consequently, this section provides an account of how teenage pregnancy affects the teenage girl's school attendance and performance; health; social life; and relationship with her family, peers and partner and how it necessitates preventative programmes and government initiatives to curb the problem. It will also show how it impacts the Church and society at large.

2.2.1 Delayed school attendance after giving birth

One of the immediate results of teenage pregnancy and childbearing becomes visible in delayed school attendance. Grant and Hallman (2008:372, 375) report that despite the fact that South African law allows teenage mothers to return to school after giving birth, teenage pregnancy continue to disrupt education. Only a third of teen moms are able to return to school. Malahlela (2012:32, 33, 53) shows that due to immature motherhood on the side of teenagers or lack of parental support, some teenage mothers are not likely to return to school after giving birth at all. Other teenage mothers delay school attendance, because they do not have someone to take care of the baby. However, for some neither pregnancy nor childbirth interferes with schooling, as they return to school within days of giving birth.

Marteleto and Lam (2008:3) concur with Ndluli (2012:37) that some teenage mothers are able to return and complete their studies after the birth of a child, only if they receive support from their families and assisted with flexible child care options. However, motherhood obstructs most teenage girls' educational careers.

2.2.2 Academic performance

An obvious result of interrupted school attendance is academic performance.

Ramalebana (1995:2) highlights several characteristics generally displayed by teenage mothers as follows:

- They seem to be generally demotivated and tend to fail more examinations than before they had babies.
- Their academic performance is low, worse and weaker than that of the "ordinary" schoolgirls.
- Depression occurs.

According to Ndluli (2012:77), pregnant teenage girls can perform better if their educators understand their situation and, for example, give them more time to complete assignments. Moreover, a supportive family, boyfriend and professional counselling can help them to deal with issues around their pregnancy and the demands of schooling. Without support, however, pregnant teenagers face big challenges in the school environment.

Educators reveal that the rate of absenteeism is very high and occur on a regular basis among pregnant teenagers. They rarely come to school and such irregular school attendance is the result of having to attend ante-natal clinic and neo-natal clinic appointments. At times it is pregnancy-related sicknesses, the unsafe feeling of pregnant teenagers at school and/or lack of support from family members or relatives (Malahlela, 2012:33).

Chauke (2013:17) and Ndluli (2012:37) argue that most pregnant teenage girls and teenage mothers are absent because they must care for their babies when they are sick, take them to baby clinics or collect the child support grant. Further reasons for absenteeism are illness or clinic/doctor appointments. Some teenage mothers take their babies to different health centres for a medical check-up, i.e. post-natal examination, on a monthly basis. This indicate that per month a teenage mother can be absent from school because of child related problems, excluding other personal reasons for absence and her own health. Educators report that they miss a large number of lessons, assignments and tests and the learner's academic performance is poor compared to before pregnancy. This argument is supported by Chigona and Chetty (2008:273) that when none of the relatives/parents seem to be available to relief the teen mom to look after the baby, she would not be able to go to school nor finish her assignments.

2.2.3 Grade repetition

Malahlela (2012:35) indicates that teenage pregnancy contributes to grade repetition. Educators report that pregnant learners have so many challenges related to motherhood, such as worry,

mental depression during lessons, lead to lack of concentration or nonparticipation in the classroom. This situation affects the learner's performance and culminates in grade repetition (failing). Teenage mothers are absent at school because they are not ready for motherhood, they do not have time for schoolwork and do not do school work properly. Most of them do not have the oomph to study at home, hence they can't cope with motherhood.

Grant and Hallman (2008:377, 380) highlight that teenage mothers often repeat grades or temporarily withdraw from school, leave school and eventually return to school. Besides, family income and social environment in the teenager's home, play a role in determining whether or not the teenage mother will continue with her schooling following childbirth. Equally, previous school performance, including her age at school entry and prior instances of conditional absence from school and grade repetition, will determine whether her family will be able to enrol her at school and pay for her tuition fee, including the aptitude and interest in school.

2.2.4 Rejection from teachers

Bhana *et al.* (2008:1) argue that since the inception of South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, which forbade discrimination in schools on the basis of pregnancy, some schools do not know how to deal with pregnant learners and learner-parents. While the law is clear that such learners cannot be turned away from school, it is still difficult or unclear how to treat them at schools. Sodi (2009:23) reveals that within the black community, pregnant learners are still stigmatised. Some educators are still in favour of pregnant girls discontinuing with their studies. Their view is that a pregnant girl will not concentrate in class whilst other learners are mocking her.

Research by Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:10) state that teenage mothers feel excluded and shamed publicly in the classroom and even punished by their teachers. They no longer feel welcome at school and this affects their attendance and ultimately their academic performance. This may result in them feeling pressured to drop out of school, which is likely to compromise their future. Chigona and Chetty (2008:270) add that teenage mothers feel unsettled with some teachers who do not understand their conditions and expect them to achieve and manage like any other scholar in their respective classes. Educators and scholars, put a great deal of pressure on them without really comprehending their plight. In some instances, teenage mothers are mocked in front of classmates when they have not completed their assignments.

According to a study by Mpanza and Nzima (2010:432), teenage mothers are at risk of leaving school because some teachers lacked tolerance towards teenage pregnancy which could be harmful to the learners. Their argument is based on the fact that school premises is not for mothers

or pregnant girls but for learners. Besides, educators also believe that when pregnant schoolgirls miss classes to attend antenatal clinic appointments, this occasional interruption of schooling, may in a long run lead to poor class performance. Teenage pregnancy is associated with low achievement scores and low vocational aspiration. As a result, this will lower the school's pass rate, which is not good for educators and the school as a whole.

According to Bhana *et al.* (2008:4), most teachers and principals show a collective lack of enthusiasm for accommodating pregnant learners in schools. Legislation to allow pregnant teenagers and mothers to attend school was implemented without teachers being properly guided/equipped/educated. Mpanza and Nzima (2010:432) suggest that teachers are negative towards pregnant learners because they were never prepared or equipped through training to deal with pregnant learners in the classroom, hence their negative attitude. Teachers believe that it is very essential for schools to be well armed to accommodate pregnant girls. The department should hire professional nurses who will always be available to provide assistance even in cases of emergency.

2.2.5 Premature exit of school

One of the worst consequences regarding the effects of teenage pregnancy on school performance is the growing tendency for learners to abandon their schooling altogether. Weybright *et al.* (2017:1, 2) report that premature exit from school amongst pregnant youths remains an urgent concern. Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:8, 9) argue that some teenage mothers leave school due to the negative attitude of school teachers and principals, especially when they are regarded as "loose girls" who set a bad example for other learners.

Jukes *et al.* (2008) and Waxman *et al.* (2016:3) also found that teenage motherhood compelled some adolescent girls in South Africa to leave school for the simple reason of taking care of their babies predominantly in rural areas. Some came from unbalanced homes which lacked ample family sustenance which often result in discontinuing enrolment from school. They become detached from other youth-friendly services [3]and locations in which they can access healthcare and education services freely.

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[3] Youth friendly services found in clinics that provide friendly services and their health care staff are non-judgemental towards youth and respect confidentiality and privacy (Smith *et al.,* 2018:677).

Rosenberg *et al.* (2015:2) point out that in some cases black teenage girls who leave school face a higher risk of another pregnancy. Schooling could in this sense protect against teen pregnancy and could likely benefit teenagers to receive and have access to high-quality sexual health services. For that reason, preventive interventions have to be designed to keep these teenage girls in school or address the underlying causes of school leaving to help reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

2.2.6 Pressure related to parenting

Studies in South Africa have shown that many teen moms are far from emotionally, cognitively and socially ready for the prospect of motherhood (Mjwara & Maharaj, 2017:10). James (2015:96) mentions that it is an overwhelming responsibility and a burden for a teenage mother to care for a baby, also pointing out that none of the teenage girls plan the pregnancy as they are still learners. As a result, maternity became a burdensome responsibility because the teen moms had no skills in taking care of their babies. Their roles change to that of caring for their babies and providing for their needs, whilst they themselves are still children. The challenging part is that in some cases the caring and upbringing of the babies have to be done by the teenage mother without assistance from their partners and at times from their parents as well.

Panday *et al.* (2009:26), Sekhotsoane (2012:4, 438) and James (2015:92) comment that early parenthood affects teenage mothers psychologically and physically. They are not ready to assume parenting roles and responsibilities, adding pressure to their already strenuous developmental level. Some of these educators, report that the teen moms are sometimes slumbering during lessons and as they had to take care of the baby during the night and now feel drowsy in class. This shows that it's hard for them to play dual roles such as looking after the baby, assisting with house chores, studying and passing exams. Hence the teen moms are not able to balance between schoolwork and the baby duties. Moreover, due to lack of parental skills, pregnant teenage girls experience more stress during pregnancy and after their babies are born. This is triggered by lack or little support from their parents and teachers.

As a result, James (2015:97) and Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:8) report that motherhood limit the chances of success and the scholastic progress of the teenager. Teenage mothers struggle to cope

with the new roles and responsibilities associated with motherhood and attending school. It is difficult for them to achieve a balance between motherhood, studies and social life. They miss out on key social activities and hence feel that pregnancy has denied them opportunities as compared to other teenage girls of a similar age.

2.2.7 Recovering lost time

Teenage pregnancy robs teenagers of the time and energy that would, in the normal course of their lives, be spent on tasks such as completing their schooling. The recovery of time lost by being pregnant is yet another reality that forms part of the phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancy.

Educators have contrasting views when it comes to mothering learners catching up with lost time. Malahlela (2012:44) reports that it is a challenge for most mothering learners to catch up on the time lost after giving birth. For instance, due to the disruption of the babies at home, they cannot cope with homework or assigned tasks allocated by teachers. Nevertheless, the mothering learners could accelerate their school progress, if they are assisted and supported by their educators. On the other hand, as part of motivation to work harder, mothering learners must also maintain a good academic standard by attending counselling. Educators furthermore contend that to make up the lost time will be governed by the extent of the workload, their inclination to work harder and the speed at which they work to complete the missed tasks.

James (2015:97) indicates that the interrupted education on the teenage mother has a negative impact on their expectations for their own and the baby's future. One of the reasons is the amount of physical work at home, looking after the baby, limiting the time she has to spend on her school work and/or even attending school. Sometimes she can only do the homework in the morning before going to school and most of the time the quality of schoolwork is poor, resulting in poor class marks. This shows that it is not easy for the teenage mother to raise a child and be a learner at the same time.

2.2.8 Health risks

According to Mwaba (2001:31), teenage pregnancy often poses a health risks to the teenager and her baby. Literature reveals that obstetric outcomes for teenage mothers are poorer than for adult mothers, with induced hypertension, premature labour and anaemia which cause complications. Vundule *et al.* (2001:1) raise the concern that teenage pregnancy exposes young girls and their babies to "associated health problems including undiagnosed hypertension leading to eclampsia, and complications of untreated syphilis". On the other hand, Sekhoetsane (2012:39) reveals that

early experience of sexual intercourse in teenage girls increases the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:2) state that early childbearing is likely to have far-reaching consequences not only for the child, but also the mother. "Physiologically, pregnant teenagers have a greater risk of anaemia, premature labour and pre-eclampsia than older women. In addition, they are more likely to experience pregnancy complications, poor dietary habits and inadequate nutrition" (Mjwara & Maharaj, 2017:2). Thus teenage girls who have had their first birth before the age of 20 have a higher risk of maternal mortality and pregnancy complications than other women, because their bodies are not yet mature enough to bear children. Moreover, due to lack of knowledge, most teenage girls do not identify the symptoms of pregnancy and as a result delay seeking care (Mjwara & Maharaj, 2017:2).

Sekhoetsane (2012:38,39) argues that due to lack of parental skills especially if little parental and teachers' support is received, drive pregnant teenage girls to be more stressed during pregnancy and after their babies are born. In another study by Fletcher *et al.* (2013:152) teenage mothers and their babies are challenged by adverse health and developmental outcomes. For example, some children of teenage mothers have a 60% higher rate of infant mortality and are more prone to be born ahead of time and to have a lower natal mass.

Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:8) highlight that motherhood brings many changes in the lifestyle of teenage girls. During this research a teenage learner reported that during her pregnancy, she was constantly sick and this led to her missing days at school. Another one reported that her baby was constantly ill and this placed a deal of strain on her. She had to care of her ill baby and simultaneously try and finish her studies.

2.2.9 Social life education

The study of Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:8) shows how teenage pregnancy impacts on the social life of teenagers. Since they became pregnant and had babies they had missed out on key social activities and as a result, feel that they have been denied chances as other women of a similar age. Sibanda and Mudhovozi (2012:324) highlight that finishing school and participating in activities after the child is born is extremely overwhelming. Even if she can be supported by her family, the teen mother will always feel guilty when she tries to socialise like before. She also feels like a misfit when she is with other teenagers of her age, and this makes school unattractive.

Sibanda and Mudhovozi (2012:329, 330) report that dating after teenage pregnancy turns into a challenge for most of these teenage girls. In this study some teenage mothers complain that dating new partners is challenging as their freedom of movement is compromised. They are unable to meet their partners frequently or whenever they want to because caring for their baby takes up most of their time. Additionally, some partners do not love their babies or only pretend in order to secure the relationship. Those who are still dating the father of their children cannot see them as often as before, because the baby takes all their time. When they come back from school they have to take over from their mothers or whoever cares for their baby during the day, wash the baby's clothes, cook and feed them.

2.2.10 Family life and relationship difficulties in the family of origin

According to Sodi (2009:22, 23), the relationship between black teenage girls and their parents and family members sometimes become difficult in light of pregnancy. There is a lot of harsh treatment from their close relatives, especially their parents who felt let down by their children falling pregnant. Pregnant teenagers may feel that their pregnancy has upset their parents, straining their relationship, and they are no longer treated the same as other family members or as they were before pregnancy. In most African communities there are African fathers who blame their wives for their teenage daughter's pregnancies. These fathers may even reject their teenage daughters in their anger and threaten to chase them out of the house. Some teenage mothers pointed out that their mothers were angry towards them. To come to terms with the prevailing negative situation at home with their mothers, some of the teenage mothers were determined to change residence as a way of solution.

In support of the above view James (2015:98) adds that some teenage girls experience rejection and insults from their parents, other family members and at times even by their siblings. As soon as they discover that their teenage girls are pregnant, their attitude towards them changes. In some situations, they are forced to move out of the house and stay with their grandmothers since their fathers do not want to see them.

2.2.11 Rejection from partners

According to Sibanda and Mudhovozi (2012:330), many teenage mothers are rejected by their partners. This means the fathers indirectly deny paternity as they do not maintain their children either socially or financially. Beesham (2000:37) indicates that although some teenage mothers still have sexual relationships with their partners, they do not receive any emotional or financial support from them. More than half of the children's fathers are still in school and unable to provide

for the child or the mother. The majority of fathers do not seem to be really interested in their children, because they do not seem to make any effort to visit their children.

Sodi (2009:22, 23) and Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:10) state that as a result of pregnancy, relationships of pregnant teenagers with their partners are also referred to as being negative. Poor interpersonal relationship exists between the teenage mother and father of the child. In most cases, fathers provide little or no support for their children. Relationships with partners either do not really materialise even though in some families, partners assisted in supporting the children. Others indicated to be still having some relationship with the fathers of their children. It is usually the women and her family who take primary responsibility for caring for children. Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:10) suggest that teen fathers may be reluctant to create lawful parenthood or to acknowledge having fathered a child because of the stigma associated with an early pregnancy or pregnancy outside of a formal union. Furthermore, many fathers do not admit paternity because of being uncertain of fathering those children. Most are not economically strong to maintain their children hence the teenage mothers at times opt for child support grants. They also fear being shamed and ridiculed by their partner's family.

Research by Skobi and Makofane (2017:237) reveal that some pregnant teenagers felt deceived by their partners who show little or no support at all. Most of the pregnant teenagers were fuming towards their partners who let them down after promising them marriage. The majority were depressed, because they received no support from the men who impregnated them and therefore considered committing suicide. Swartz *et al.* (2013:2) state that due to lack of financial resources some partners or boyfriends regard themselves as not good enough to be a father. Cultural obligation, such as paying the damage to the teenage mother's family, cause them to reject the teenage mother and the baby and thus undermine their ability to play an active role in their child's life, both currently and in the future.

2.2.12 Rejection by peers

Bhana *et al.* (2008:4) as well as Sodi (2009:23) indicate that pregnant schoolgirls or learners are stigmatised, discriminated against and taunted in school by their peers which has an impact on their well-being. The rejection by their friends/peers affects their feelings negatively and may result in severe psychological conditions like depression.

Sibeko (2012:21, 22) states that discrimination by peers, discourage and torment pregnant teenage learners emotionally. In class some pupils refrain from sharing a desk with a pregnant girl because

there is belief that if they do that, they will also become drowsy and nap like the pregnant girls. Sometimes they avoid using the same toilet as a pregnant schoolgirl for fear of contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Some learners ignore pregnant learners for fear of being seen with them, especially because pregnant learners are associated with low morals. Learners tease their pregnant peers, taunt them, make embarrassing remarks about their pregnancy and call them bad and other humiliating names, such as whore. They may even go to the extent of excluding them from group activities, such as birthday parties or school functions.

2.2.13 Rejection by the community

The reaction of the community towards pregnant teenagers differs from society to society. The studies conducted by Mjwara and Maharaj (2017:8) and Sodi (2009:22) found that childbearing often disrupt the lives of teenage girls or learners. Some communities ostracise the teenage mothers and they become objects of gossip and ridicule. When a teenager has a child, this phenomenon is perceived as a shame in the eyes of parents and the community. Teenagers indicates that the community members tend to have a wide range of negative reactions towards teenage mothers.

James (2015:98) states that some black communities reject pregnant teenagers. There are even black churches that regard pregnant teenagers as having committed a sin and do not allow them to sit with the youth of the Church anymore, but may only sit quietly at the back chairs. This has led such teenage girls to discontinue their participation in church activities, feeling let down by people they trusted. Despite the negative attitude of their family, friends and community in general, some participants managed to experience their motherhood status positively.

Chigona and Chetty (2008:274, 275) observe that the environment in which the black teenage mothers live, have a positive/negative impact on their lives. Instead of encouraging the teenage mothers to complete their schooling, some culturally inclined communities discourage them from attending school. According to traditional beliefs, pregnant women are not expected to dress in a way which reveal the growing body. Therefore, due to fear of polluting other pupils, the community forced the school to prevent pregnant teenagers or mothers from attending school. Despite the education policy and right to attend school, some community wants to force the schools to expel the pregnant teenage girls. When the school comply with the policy and resist their demands to force teenage mothers out of school, some community members intimidate them on their way to and from school in order to prevent them from attending school. The community usually treats them as girls with low morals.

2.2.14 Socio-economic difficulties

Teenage girls from underprivileged families are falling pregnant at a higher rate than those from middle and upper income families (Lambani, 2015:172). The parents of a teen mother from a financially challenged family cannot afford to babysit their grandchild or take the baby to the crèche. The lack of financial and social support from the children's fathers also multiplies the challenges experienced by the teenage mothers (Chigona & Chetty, 2008:273).

Sodi (2009:20) suggests that most teenage pregnancy perpetuates a poor socio-economic background. For example, teenage mothers are more likely to experience financial challenges later in life when compared to teenage girls who delayed childbearing. Some pregnant teenagers from deprived socioeconomic background tend to keep their pregnancies, whilst some of their counterparts from relatively well-to-do background usually terminate their pregnancies.
Research findings by Nkani and Bhana (2016:2) also reveal that poverty impose major constraints on a teenager's ability to care for her child, and this places an excessive burden on the home and the family. As a result, parents are often antagonistic, rather than supportive towards teenagers who become pregnant. This makes life difficult for the teenage mothers who have returned to school.

2.2.15 Low self-esteem

A number of studies has found that low self-esteem can be ascribed to unwanted teenage pregnancy and in this context teenage girls experience it before they become pregnant and after childbirth. For instance, Arai (2009:32) explains that teenage girls with low self-esteem are likely to engage in early sexual activities even if they do not want sex. This behaviour unfortunately makes them vulnerable to teenage pregnancy, which later leads to regret.

White (1991:7-8) suggests that teenage girls suffering from chronic low self-esteem, compensate for their feelings of rejection or being hurt by engaging in early sex. Being sexually sought after makes them feel good, but leads to teenage pregnancy. Ndluli (2012:39) reports that some teenage mothers develop emotional problems, negative attitudes or low self-esteem after giving birth. In most cases, the cause of the problems stems from rejection by the baby's father who refuses to take responsibility. This unexpected rejection leads to depression and affects the teenage mother's self-image significantly and results in unpleasant learning experiences at school.

2.2.16 Abortion

One of the real issues that goes hand in hand with the phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancy is abortion. Abortion refers to "the artificial removal of a living foetus from a pregnant woman, before the foetus is able to survive on its own as an independent human being. The pregnancy is terminated and the child is killed" (De Bruyn, 2008:118). Abortion as a result of teenage pregnancy is on the rise. Mamboleo (2012:10, 11) states that it is very depressing for any female to have an unwanted pregnancy. It puts her in a dilemma and she may not be mentally, physically, socially and psychologically fit to bear the child. Hence some opt for abortion, which may be safe or unsafe. A safe abortion is defined as "termination of pregnancy by a skilled health care provider with proper equipment and in an environment with required medical standards such as hospitals" (Mamboleo, 2012:11). The likelihood of dying from complications of a safe abortion is minimal. On the other hand, unsafe abortion is the "termination of unwanted pregnancy either by a person lacking necessary skills or in an environment lacking minimal medical standards or both" (Mamboleo, 2012:11). Unsafe abortion causes a substantial amount of maternal deaths and illnesses.

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Research conducted by Ramakuela *et al.* (2016:3) indicates that many unplanned teenage pregnancies in South Africa where teenagers opt for abortion are as a result of poverty, single parenthood and relationship problems. Teenage girls feel that bringing another burden to the family would only worsen the existing financial problems. Most of them are not able to take care of themselves as they depend on the social grants of their grandparents. Thus, many are unwilling to jeopardise and interrupt their education or career, insufficient financial resources to care for an infant.

According to Tshitangano and Oni (2015:571), abortion used to be a criminal offence in South Africa, but due to the rise in backstreet/illegal abortion, the government passed the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy (CTOP) Act 92 in 1996 (as amended in 2008) in order for women 12 years and above to access legal abortion. As a result, teenagers do not need parental or the partner's consent for the procedure. Likewise, it now appears that more teenage girls below the age of 18 years are having abortions more than adults. Tshitangano and Oni (2015:571) as well as Mokgethi *et al.* (2016:1059) state that women of any age and minors from the age of 12 years who want to terminate a pregnancy can legally terminate after 12 weeks' gestation if procedures specified in the CTOP Act are followed.

Ramakuela *et al.* (2016:1, 2) argue that since South Africa is experiencing a high rate of teenage pregnancy regardless of free contraceptive services, many teenage girls view abortion or termination of pregnancy as a way out. Termination of pregnancy is seen as an immediate solution that avoids facing rejection from parents, their partners and their peers. Some pregnant teenagers prefer to abort their babies and continue to further their education, as they feel they are not ready to become mothers or cannot afford to raise a child. Because they are still teenagers, they are scared of the impact of motherhood on their lives and therefore view abortion as another method of birth control.

Studies have shown that despite the consequences of abortion, it does not look like the cycle of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion will come to an end soon in South Africa (Tshitangano & Oni, 2015:571). Consequently, Maja (2007:40) suggests that termination of pregnancy should be used as a last option in preventing unplanned pregnancies, mainly among teenagers as it can have damaging effects on them and their families.

2.2.17.1 Ethical challenges regarding abortion

Unwanted teenage pregnancy brings along another burden for the pregnant teenager, as it puts her in the dilemma of making difficult ethical choices such as those regarding abortion.

Louw (2008:305) indicates that many people believe that the decision to abort depends on the woman alone. The argument is that a foetus is not a human being and its rights should not be allowed to override the rights of a person. Vorster (2004:123-128) argues that an ethical evaluation of abortion should depart from the question of how an embryo and foetus are viewed. Man is the image of God and his life may not be taken. God's involvement with man is evident from the time of pregnancy, as indicated in Psalm 139:13-16. Thus the embryo or foetus is human from the onset and of intrinsic value from the moment it exists, has a future value and is an image bearer of God. Hence the destruction of the embryo or foetus is equal to taking a life and a transgression of the sixth commandment. Abortion interrupts foetus development and is *prima facie* seriously immoral and a self-destructive act that has psychological and sociological consequences on the female. The Christian should act pro-actively through family planning, moral values concerning sexuality and actively lead a holy life.

De Bruyn (2008:118) adds that "life begins at fertilisation and a new human being exists no matter how small or underdeveloped it may be". It is an indication that God has already started to form a

child in the mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-16 & Job 10:8-12). For that reason, abortion must be rejected on the grounds that in the womb, it is not merely an embryo, but the mother is already expecting a baby. Ramakuela *et al.* (2016:1) indicated that in South African, "abortions should only be performed legally when a pregnancy could seriously threaten a woman's life, or when her physical or mental health, could cause severe handicap to the child or she was raped and which has to be proved, incest or other unlawful intercourse, such as with a woman with a permanent mental handicap".

Richter and Mlambo (2005:65) indicate that in their study most teenage girls from rural areas did not support abortion, arguing that it was better to keep the baby since abortion might affect the ability to conceive and have a baby in the future. In another study conducted by Mushwana *et al.* (2015:16) 74.5% of the teenage girls were of the opinion that abortion is an acceptable solution to adolescent pregnancy. Most teenage pregnancies that ended in abortion indicate an intense desire among young women to avoid having children during the teenage years. It is evident that some teenagers lacked information with regard to termination of pregnancy services. They were teenagers who were not aware that abortion is legal in South Africa and can be done before 12 weeks gestation.

2.3 PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Preventative measures have become part of the current reality, as a result of unwanted teenage pregnancy. It was not there before, nonetheless it is now part of the reality of the South African environment.

One of the techniques of improving the health of adolescents and reduce perinatal mortality, is by preventing teenage pregnancy. It is also crucial to have information about contraception, and how to access them. Hence contraception and sexual activity is crucial to this study in order to improve our understanding of teenagers' attitudes towards them (Israel *et al.*, 2016:25). Research by Wood and Jewkes (2006:109) indicates that despite contraception being free and mostly accessible in South Africa, teenage girls become pregnant before the age of 20. Many South African teenagers engage in risky sexual activities such as unprotected sex, with low levels of condom and contraceptive use, and often have multiple sexual partners leading to unwanted pregnancies.

Haddad *et al.* (2014:2, 3) suggest that "effective family planning with modern contraception is an important intervention to prevent unintended pregnancies which also provides personal, familial, and societal benefits". Furthermore, all contraceptive methods are not equally effective for

pregnancy prevention, though some contraception is a cost-effective strategy to prevent pregnancy and reduce the burden of HIV transmission. While condoms are the only contraceptive method that can reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, they have a high failure rate for pregnancy prevention due to being administered poorly.

Chersich *et al.* (2017:307) mention that "contraception has profound benefits for women and society, including reduced maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, empowerment of women to make informed choices about fertility, economic advancement, and a reduction in the number of children infected with HIV". Injectable contraception which comprises three-quarters of the modern methods used, but method discontinuation, timeliness of repeat injections and switching remain key contributors to contraception failures in South Africa. Teenage girls have low contraception use and even less knowledge about these methods, making it clear that the reproductive health component of the School Health Programme needs to be considerably strengthened.

Haddad *et al.* (2014:2, 3) add that hormonal contraceptive methods have higher efficacy for preventing pregnancy than condoms, with a typical-use contraceptive failure rate of approximately 9% for combined hormonal contraceptives.

2.3.1 Contraceptives

Due to the rise of unwanted teenage pregnancy and the spread of sexually related diseases, the free distribution of contraceptives like condoms in public places have become part of the South African environment.

Despite the free provision of contraceptives available to all women in South Africa and free health education by the Department of Health, the number of black teenage pregnancies continues to increase and sexually transmitted infections are still a major public health concern (Ramathuba, 2013:1). As a result, Mturi (2015:1957) raises concern over teenage girls' lack of information on the physiology of their bodies or physiology of sex and its consequences. Either contraceptives were never used before conception or failed to function because they were wrongly used.

The World Health Organisation estimated that close to 17 million girls under the age of 20 years give birth annually and a further 4.4 million abortions were sought by adolescents each year worldwide as a result of inadequate or poor utilisation of contraceptives. In rural areas, the rate is significantly higher as evidenced by the number of youth who fall pregnant at any

given point; hence, there is poor utilisation of contraceptive services in rural communities (Ramakuela *et al.*, 2016:1).

The study by Masemola-Yende and Mataboge (2015:7) reveal that in South Africa there are two available contraception injections supplied by government's primary healthcare settings, namely, depot medroxyprogesterone acetate used three-monthly and the two-monthly norethisterone enanthate. Teenage girls are aware of modern methods of contraception, but most of them do not use contraception, whilst some use them inconsistently and incorrectly. Teenage girls sometimes discontinue using contraceptive because of their side-effects, such as weight gain, especially those using hormonal methods. Weight gain with the use of injections is caused by an increase in appetite that is not counteracted by managing one's eating habits or engaging in physical exercise. High levels of oestrogen cause gain, because of increased appetite and fluid retention.

In contrast, Holcomb *et al.* (2009:22) and Masemola-Yende and Mataboge (2015:7) argue that "there is no evidence of weight gain when using combined oral contraceptives. The non-use of hormonal contraception because of the side-effect of weight gain, as mentioned in this study, may contribute to the sustained incidence of teenage pregnancy. Such misinformation needs to be corrected so as to increase the use of hormonal contraception by teenagers and improve compliance to prevent pregnancy".

As observed from previous studies, Ramathuba (2013:1) suggests that as long as there is pressure from male partners, teenagers engaging in sex but fearing parental reaction to contraceptive use, or reluctant to use contraceptives, poor contraceptive education and lack of counselling, contraceptives will continue to be ineffective and not utilised. Since factors influencing teenage sexuality and pregnancy were socioeconomic, substance abuse and peer pressure, it is recommended that the knowledge and attitudes of the teenage girls should be improved through sex education, as it has a direct effect on contraceptive use and prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

Subsequently, in that research the majority of participants (99.2%) did not use emergency contraceptives and were not aware where to obtain it or that no prescription was required. They viewed the emergency contraception negatively as a way of promoting promiscuity and encouraging teenagers to deliberately sleep around. This kind of action shows that there is no

remorse for falling pregnant out of wedlock and drastic intervention has to be sought and implemented to correct such behaviour.

Research by Wood and Jewkes (2006:111) and Sibeko (2012:15) reveals that due to limited and inaccurate knowledge about contraceptive methods, some teenage girls do not use contraceptives and only take contraceptive pills when their sexual partner comes to visit them. Others do not use birth control, because they are pressurised by their grandparents or boyfriends to conceive. There are also those who believe contraception can make them sick, diminish sexual feelings or fear that contraception could cause infertility.

Madumo *et al.* (2015:191) and Ebersöhn *et al.* (2017:185) report of the myths and superstitions surrounding the use of contraceptives in South Africa. The study revealed that ignorance leads to a negative attitude about the use of contraceptives and prevent some teenage girls from using contraceptives. Many teenagers think contraceptives will make them infertile. Ebersöhn *et al.* (2017:185,186) add that teenagers also erroneously believe the following:

- "Plastic wrap makes an effective condom
- You cannot get pregnant:
    - The first time
    - If you are having your period
    - If the male withdraws in time
    - If you have sex in a standing position".

Most learners or teenagers are aware of contraceptives and their availability, according to Mshweshwe-Pakela *et al.* (2017:170-172), but do not put it to good use. In the above study 86.67% of learners understood that contraception is a pregnancy prevention measure and 8.67% knew it protects against sexually transmitted diseases. Males were familiar with condoms as a form of contraception, whereas more females knew about the injectable contraceptive. Approximately 66.3% of learners had a positive attitude to contraceptives and 77.27% were using injectable contraceptives, with the main reason for stopping the use of contraception being their side-effects. However, contraception services are not available in many schools and this poses a risk to sexually active teenage girls, as it can expose them to unintended or unwanted pregnancy.

As highlighted by Madiba and Ntuli (2015:200), in spite of the clinic offering Youth Friendly Services, "there has been an increase in teenage pregnancy with low utilization rates of contraception by teenagers who mostly utilize the clinic for ante natal and post natal services".

Mothiba and Maputle (2012:1) mention that ultimately engaging in risky sexual intercourse can lead to an unintended teenage pregnancy or sexual diseases which is often considered a serious social and public health problem.

Wood and Jewkes (2006:109) cite nurses' stigmatisation of teenage sexuality, rebuke of teenage girls, harsh treatment and unwillingness to acknowledge teenagers' experiences as contraceptive users are further barriers to sustained contraceptive use amongst teenage girls. This behaviour undermines the effective use of contraception by girls. Another factor is that many teenage girls are pressured by their boyfriends and members of their families to have a baby or prove their fertility. This demonstrate that adolescent girls need enhanced info on reproductive physiology and sexual health, and detailed info on prevention methods. Accurate measures and available knowledge have to be put in the clinic setting, and introduced along with initiatives to ensure that services are adolescent-friendly and do not defame teenage sexual activity.

Maja (2007:40) and Oyedele *et al.* (2015:95) are of the view that even if schools offer sexual education, some teenagers engage in sex before they have received any such education. Despite their awareness of contraceptives, some teenagers still prefer to have unprotected sexual intercourse and this leads to unintended pregnancies. These unintentional pregnancies can be prevented by regularly using effective contraceptives to avoid health risks such as sexually transmitted diseases; prolonged labour, due to cephalo-pelvic disproportion; hypertensive disorders during pregnancy or labour; or higher morbidity and mortality experienced by teenage girls than adults.

In this study Madumo *et al.* (2015:192) suggest that some teenage girls often required permission from their partners before contraceptives could be used. On the other hand, due to cultural constraints, teenage girls never discuss issues of sex and pregnancy prevention with their parents. This lack of communication from their parents, denies teenagers vital sexual information which could guide them about sex and pregnancy prevention and further assist them in making informed decisions. Spiritual norms such as "no sex before marriage" by some churches and community, limit teenagers in accessing contraceptives from clinics.
Chersich *et al.* (2017:307,313) argue that even though contraception is beneficial and accessible for women in South Africa, the country still experiences high rates of unwanted pregnancy and contraceptive failure. In light of this view, this study suggests that the implementation of new contraceptive policy and clinical guidelines will in future improve the

South African family planning services nationally. The School Health Programme also needs to be reinforced considerably and disparities in access to contraception addressed, as teenagers still leave school with little knowledge of contraception.

Teenage boys are also ignorant when it comes to contraceptives. Research by Chideya and Williams (2013:215) indicate that some teenage boys are aware of contraceptives but did not know how to use them properly to avoid pregnancy. They also believe that if they sleep with one partner in a relationship, there was no need to use condoms. This notion mislead them into pregnanting their partners, engaging in risky sexual behaviour and also sexually transmitting infections.

2.4 PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMMES

The intention of this section is to describe what is going on in the government, school and the Church in South Africa regarding the growing phenomenon of unwanted teenage pregnancy.

A study by Varga (2003:159) mentions that one of the earliest health interventions instituted by the democratic government of South Africa was the provision of free healthcare. The aim of these primary healthcare clinics was to provide free reproductive healthcare such as contraception, antenatal monitoring, and care for lactating mothers and babies up to the age of six years. Harrison (2006:41) states that the majority of pregnant schoolgirls have no alternative but to make use of these free services, because of financial constraints.

However, according to Maholo *et al.* (2009:46), an effective community-specific and evidence-based intervention to prevent teenage pregnancy in South Africa is urgently needed. Despite the presence of healthcare awareness programmes related to health and sexuality education in South Africa, teenage girls lack information about menarche and menstruation. The point is that communication about sexuality is apparently lacking and teenagers disregard any risks regarding pregnancies. Hence, sexual information is crucial to assist them in making sexual decisions that could change the circumstances in their lives, their socio-cultural environments, and liberate them from unprepared and unwanted pregnancies.

Varga (2003:169) suggests that with regard to prevention of unwanted teenage pregnancy in South Africa, there should be programs that teach youth about the dangers of unprotected sex, sexual violence and lack of communication between partners. Also target boys in sexual and reproductive health matters and create dialogues that will influence and promote healthy gender roles and responsibilities; to improve both male and female sexual and reproductive health, and help prevent adolescent pregnancy. The program should include educating boys about

parenthood and family life, which could lead to stronger male parenting skills and even reduced pregnancy rates amongst teenagers.

2.4.1 Government initiatives

Beksinska *et al.* (2014:676) argue that "many government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) initiatives have been implemented since South Africa's transition to democracy, such as:

- Policies addressing youth Sexual and Reproductive Health.
- National media campaigns promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS among youth, e.g. the Soul City, Soul Buddyz and Love Life programmes.
- Peer education programmes, e.g. Old Mutual's I Have Hope AIDS Peer Group Project (1993) and the Society for Family Health's Abasha Phezulu Peer Helper project (1993).
- Youth SRH service provision programmes, namely the National Adolescent Friendly Clinic Initiative (NAFCI) launched in 2001 and Love Life programmes.
- HIV prevention awareness programmes, e.g. the Stepping Stones HIV prevention programme".

However, Onyensoh *et al.* (2013:227) note that the number of teenage pregnancies in South Africa continues to rise, despite the government's initiative of reducing unintended and unplanned pregnancies by making contraception a basic human right. Low contraceptive use, as evidenced by high levels of unplanned teenage pregnancy, continue to be a major health and social problem in South Africa. Teenagers continue to engage in unsafe or risky sexual practices and are becoming vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, HIV, AIDS and unplanned pregnancies.

According to Favier *et al.* (2018:38), the South African government legalised abortion under the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (CTOPA) in 1996. Registered nurses were trained to provide safe abortions and reduce abortion-related sickness and death and to protect women's reproductive health choices. Ndluli (2012:36) points out that many pregnant teenage girls, especially pregnant learners, still opt for unsafe or backstreet abortions. As a result, some teenage girls unfortunately die of an unsafe and unsuccessful abortion, while others have to be hospitalised for subsequent treatment. Most of the teenage girls cannot pay for this treatment, which means the state has to use taxpayers' money to pay the bills.

Taylor *et al.* (2014:846, 847) reveal that neither social and health policies nor programmes such as life skills modules or life orientation syllabus, free contraception, abortion nor information

and skills can assist teenagers to improve their sexual and reproductive health. Hence, in order to reduce teenage pregnancy, present sexual and reproductive health educational programmes have to be reviewed to change the attitudes of teenagers about early sexual debut and sexual risk behaviour.

Mshweshwe-Pakela *et al.* (2017:171) highlight that due to unsuccessful methods of reducing unwanted teenage pregnancy in South Africa, the South African Department of Health is determined to transform and revolutionise contraception services and educate children and youth about contraceptives and sexual health in schools.

2.4.2 Sex Education in schools

South African national education policy is dedicated in encouraging gender equality at schools. One of its objectives is to ensure that all learners complete their studies including, those who may become pregnant and parent while at school. However, it is challenging for a learner to become pregnant or a parent whilst at school. This is influenced by how other learners respond to teenage pregnancy, parenting and female sexuality in general (Shefer *et al.,* 2013:1).

Mshweshwe-Pakela *et al.* (2017:170) highlight that the government has tried various methods and programmes to decrease the rate of teenage pregnancy in schools such as life skills and HIV/AIDS programmes. Nevertheless, despite interventions to keep the learners informed about HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies continue to escalate.

Maxwell *et al.* (2016:1) state that sexuality education plays a very significant role in the lives of the youth. Therefore, in order to develop the youth, schools should prioritise sex education, begin to teach and guide learners properly, before they are misled by their peers. Youth should be taught how to prevent HIV and/or AIDS, sexually transmitted infections including teenage pregnancy.

Panday *et al.* (2009:14) and Ndluli (2012:35) note that a number of prevention interventions, including prevention of HIV, have been instituted in South Africa in order to address multiple spheres of influence on adolescent sexual behaviour. These include school-based sex education, peer education programmes, adolescent-friendly clinic initiatives, mass media interventions as well as community level programmes. While the focus of these interventions has primarily been on preventing HIV, they have been of benefit to the issue of teenage pregnancy because of their impact on sexual behaviour. These interventions are funded by the state from tax payers' money.

Swanepoel *et al.* (2017:1) mention that in order to implement sexuality education, the government introduced Life Orientation as part of the school curriculum. This step was crucial

as it was in line with the South African constitution, of respect for sexual diversity and eradication of gender discrimination at societal level. At the same time, it was educating the youth how to be responsible in their culture and various society.

However, Maxwell *et al.* (2016:1) highlight that there is no breakthrough or solution yet as teenage pregnancies have doubled in the past years. Despite 30 years of expenditure on sexuality education programmes and teenage pregnancy, many teenagers are still falling pregnant in South Africa.

"The Department of Education developed the Sexual Education Programme (SEP) for implementation by the Department of Basic Education in 2001. Policy guidelines were established and teachers were provided with workshops to prepare them to teach sexuality education programmes effectively. The examinable learning programme called Life Orientation, of which sexuality education forms part, was introduced in 2002 to be taught in secondary schools. The aims and objectives of sexuality education prescribed by the Department of Education in the guidelines for teachers are:

- to make young people like and respect themselves;
- to help see sexuality as a natural and positive part of life;
- to teach skills to make informed and responsible decisions; and
- to explore different values and attitudes" (Maxwell *et al.*, 2016:1, 2).

Pupils are further assisted "to act in accordance with their values, to understand, tolerate and respect their different sexual needs, orientations and values. They are taught to protect themselves from exploitation and not to exploit others as well as how to use health services and how to obtain information. Numerous media reports have been questioning the effectiveness of this programme and accuse schools or teachers of not doing enough or shifting their responsibilities" (Maxwell *et al.,* 2016:2). However, according to Gauteng Education MEC Creecy (2013:3), in 2007 the Department of Education released Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy. The guidelines continue to advocate for the right of pregnant girls to remain in school.

Mpanza and Nzima (2010:439) propose that the Department of Education needs to have a clear policy on teenage pregnancy. This policy, once formulated, needs to be distributed to all the schools in the country. Teachers must be trained on how to deal with the challenge of teenage

pregnancy at schools by doing elementary midwifery course. The Department of Education should organise workshops for teachers through the Department of Health that will enable them to assist pregnant teenagers. To minimise the dangers when helping highly pregnant learners within the school, the Department of Education should have a sick bay/room for pregnant teenagers, to cater for emergency situations. The environment at school should be conducive for the learners to attend school while they are pregnant. The government need to increase the number of such schools as well as special schools for pregnant learners. In this way teenagers may be well cared for during pregnancy and even after delivery.

Chigona and Chetty (2008:269) propose that in order to curb the conflict between heads of schools, teachers, learners and teenage mothers there should be professional counselling programmes. Maxwell *et al.* (2016:5) suggest that the Department of Education, should continuously train teachers on how to guide learners on sexuality education. The Department should further train them how to encourage learners to open up and discuss sexually related issues. It should consult with the Department of Health, and establish an awareness campaign that also aim to reduce teenage pregnancy in rural areas. Sexual Education should be integrated into other subjects rather than it only being part of the subject Life Orientation.

2.4.3 African congregations and unwanted teenage pregnancies

Tyumre (2016:99,100) points out that black churches in South Africa still feel uncomfortable to discuss sexual education, despite the alarming rate of teenage pregnancy. No wellness programmes or sexual programmes are conducted in churches let alone issues affecting youth emotionally, spiritually, psychologically socially or physically.

Van der Walt and Swanepoel (1997:22), including Mashau (2011:3), state that sex before marriage is still an ongoing problem and has become the norm in South Africa, especially among the majority of black teenage boys and girls. They maintain that they have the right to do whatever they please with their bodies and most of them are sexually active before marriage. One of the reasons for early sexual activity amongst teenagers is to gain self-esteem and popularity amongst their peers. There is also a growing trend amongst black teenagers these days of thinking that virginity is old-fashioned and one must experiment sexually before marriage. They believing in practising sex before marriage so as to familiarise themselves before marriage. Therefore, churches can no longer pretend as if everything is right, whilst it is not. The Church needs to urgently intervene by effectively employing Bible studies and

counselling. Likewise, youth leaders, parents and the Church as a whole should organise workshops, seminars and conferences to talk about these issues lest the youth as a whole perish. Research conducted by Kgabe (2007:1) indicates that pregnant teenage girls are being barred from attending church for a certain period. Irrespective of their full membership or active participation in the Church, disciplinary measures taken by the Church include exclusion from all activities the girls participated in. Pregnancy is viewed by the church as sinful, since it occurred out of wedlock, and a disappointment to the Church and their parents. There is also the notion that they will have a bad influence on other young girls.

Garner (2000:53, 57, 61) emphasises that the unmarried status of pregnant teenagers affect them negatively and some leave their church after conception or the birth of their child to join another church. Secular sex education is also difficult to adapt, because many church members are reluctant to endorse the use of condoms, on the grounds that it encourages promiscuity. Many of the Pentecostal Churches[4] also argue that if people follow biblical sexual morality, condoms are unnecessary and that fertility is a gift of God.

Makhudu (2010:70) states that in some black churches pregnant teenagers have experienced rejection by church members, because they fell pregnant out of wedlock. Once the teenage girls internalise the negative conversations against them, they leave the Church and that can affect their relationship with God. Teenage girls feel hopeless as they have nowhere to be valued and restored and where they can hear that God still cares for them.

Sekhaulelo (2007:42, 47, 48) and Nangambi (2014:52) suggest that black churches in South Africa today need solid Christian education programmes. The education programmes must create a positive attitude towards discussions about socially responsible sexual attitudes and behaviour. Furthermore, exposure to good Bible teaching through church schools, church, Bible study, personal and family devotions are essential for living as God intended.

Mashau (2011:6) highlights the need for parents and youth leaders as a whole to organise workshops, seminars and conferences to talk about sexual issues. They should discuss about

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[4] Some of the example of Pentecostal churches in South Africa are Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Pentecostal Holiness Church, Assemblies of God or Rhema Bible Church (Molobi 2014:3,4).

premarital sex from a Christian perspective. Parents and churches should give their children sex education from, the Bible and teach them to say "no" to sex before marriage. Sex before marriage is a sin before God and black teenagers must be taught to wait for marriage and let their sexuality bloom.

However, according to Magezi (2016:1), "the churches are caught in a dilemma where on the one hand they have to uphold teaching the biblical moral values of abstinence and at the same time respond to the realities of youth who are engaging in sex. With the Church being a subsystem of society, a question that is posed is: how should a constructive engagement between church and society regarding youth sexual reproductive health be done".

Makhudu (2010:80-84) argues that South Africa lacks mediators and ministers of reconciliation. Pastors and leadership of the Church are needed in the black community, who could help teenage mothers or youth to cope with challenges and see the love of God. The Church should help them to reconcile with those that have mistreated them during their pregnancy in church, the community, schools or parents. They also need to be taught to love the boyfriends, with whom their relationship turned sour after the pregnancy, with the love of the Lord. Help them understand that Christ has reconciled them to God. They have to be reconciled to the community within the Church that judged them.

According to Potgieter (2015:1), the brokenness in South African society is strikingly apparent in whole communities' struggle with trauma and life's challenges, such as premature sexual practices of teenagers leading to teenage pregnancies. They often do not know where to turn. Hence, the Church has to take up its biblical mandate to offer pastoral care in order to help in such cases.

Mlotshwa *et al.* (2017:1) argue that teenage pregnancy is life changing, making great demands on teenage girls to adapt physically, psychologically and socially. During this period, pregnant teenage girls need social, emotional and spiritual support. It is thus very important to understand their experiences and assist them in making pregnancy less overwhelming. This move can help them to deal with different challenges before and after the arrival of the new baby.

Makhudu (2010:84, 85) states that pregnant teenagers are broken people in need of spiritual guidance, which is why the Church has to make them understand that their lives are guided by God who has given them spiritual leaders to lead, guide and help them. This could be a good

tool to make them aware that God has a purpose for their lives. Even if they fell pregnant out of wedlock, they are not outcasts.

Mlotshwa *et al.* (2017: 6) mention that emphasis on abstinence before marriage is right. Nevertheless, if teenagers become pregnant, churches should accommodate them and not judge them. Churches should not leave them to withdraw or make them feel ashamed. They should win them to Christ, counsel and welcome them. The right teaching will eradicate the stigma of pre-marital sex and pregnancy, because as Romans 3:23 says: "all have fallen short of the glory of God". So, congregants must not judge them, but give them support and loving care.

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Research by Freeks (2017:206, 208) reveals that although teenage pregnancy is a serious concern in South Africa, studies indicate that a lack of participation of the youth in church life is a serious concern to most Christian pastors. Most churches seem to lack relevant youth programmes and trained youth leaders to facilitate outreach to the young people in communities. In this research pastors, school principals and the social workers expressed the opinion that religion should be reinstated and taught in school. This step would benefit teenagers to obtain basic life skills and mould them to behave responsible, and make good life-choices, properly to follow certain values: obedience, respect, honour, honesty, friendliness, peacefulness, forgiveness, discipline, thankfulness, forgiveness, helping, etc. Eighty percent (80%) of the population are Christian, yet most teenagers in the African community often refuse to attend church and church attendance is very low. Satanism is also a burning issue for churches and in communities, given teenagers high rate of involvement, hence the need to implement programmes such as LIFEPLAN® [5]Training and Equipping Programme as a

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[5]The life inequalities amongst persons addressed by means of Purposeful Living and Nutrition interventions) (LIFEPLAN®), specialise in core lecturing exercises and activities that build knowledge, promote interpersonal skills and trust through contact and sharing, build thinking and planning skills, and build motivation and commitment to action. The programme activities comprise of presentations, interactive activities, discussions, sharing and exercises. Its aim is to conduct training and develop sessions for the youth, illiterate and semi-literate individuals and farm workers who want to be equipped and want to become knowledgeable and self-sustainable. It addresses poverty, health, nutrition and the aim is that after completing, participants will have developed a valid self-image to take healthy pride in their personal ability, capability, potential, skills, experience and co-operation and develop a concern to care for others in their communities. Additionally, the participants can start their own businesses and direct their own lives (Freeks, 2017:213-215).

possible solution, which can be a tool for effective holistic Christian missional outreach to the youth, especially in rural areas.

2.5 PRELIMINARY SYNTHESIS

This chapter was descriptive in nature as it attempted to indicate some of the crucial realities regarding unwanted pregnancy amongst black teenage girls in South Africa.

This chapter presented the epidemiology of teenage pregnancy in South Africa from a statistical point of view and indicated unwanted teenage pregnancy as the most prominent amongst the black population in terms of numbers.

This chapter also described some of the consequences of teenage pregnancy, especially within the educative framework of someone who is still in school. These included aspects such as irregular school attendance and poor academic performance due to absenteeism. It provided information about premature school leaving and inadequate mothering.

The chapter also indicated the health risks and stress encountered by pregnant teenagers, especially those who lack support from their families and teachers. The social life of teenage mothers was affected, as they had to care for their babies. Dating became a challenge, since freedom of movement was compromised. The study included the change in family relationships due to pregnancy. Some parents rejected their daughters and African fathers blamed their wives for being lenient. Some siblings were also negative towards their sisters. Some teenagers experienced rejection, also from their partners, resulting in poor communication between the two parties. The pregnant teenager experienced rejection from peers and in some communities, including the Church. The study revealed how teenagers from low-income families were becoming pregnant at a higher rate than middle-income families. The study further indicated that teenagers who had low self-esteem engaged in early sexual activities, which made them vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy, since they compensated for their feeling of rejection by engaging in sex.

The study indicated that despite the clinics offering free contraceptives and family planning in South Africa, some teenage girls still terminated pregnancy be it legally or illegally. Some still lacked sex education from their parents and boys were also ignorant when it came to contraception, thus engaged in risky sexual behaviour. The chapter revealed that the government initiative to reduce teenage pregnancy through relevant programmes had not succeeded yet. However, it was still committed to reviving or improving Youth Friendly Services that could assist teenagers in sex education effectively. The study underlined that sex

before marriage continued to be a problem in South Africa and that no effective wellness programmes have been implemented yet in African churches to reduce teenage pregnancy. The section mentioned that some churches viewed teenage pregnancy as a disgrace to the Church and parents, hence the rejection and expulsion of the pregnant youth. The study emphasised that most churches seemed to lack youth programmes and trained leaders that could also engage schools, social workers or counsellors to work together. Programmes such as LIFEPLAN® and ministries that could cultivate healthy sexual development were urgently needed, given the high involvement of youth in Satanism.

The next chapter seeks to investigate and articulate the main reasons for the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies.

CHAPTER 3: FACTORS LEADING TO EARLY SEXUAL PRACTICES AND UNWANTED PREGNANCIES AMONGST BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN TEENAGE GIRLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what Osmer (2008) regards as the second task of practical theological research, namely the interpretative function. As chapter 2 engaged in the descriptive function of describing the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls and what is currently being done to counter this, this chapter seeks to indicate why this is indeed the case. The objective of this chapter is thus to investigate and articulate a number of the main reasons behind the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies.

In this regard, the chapter focus on factors such as the ministry of African churches regarding healthy sexual practices, the lack of proper parental guidance amongst black parents, sex education at home, orphanhood, absent father figures, cultural practices and norms exposing black teenage girls to sex, changing value systems, pressures towards teenage pregnancy, poverty, the child support grant, gender inequality, transactional sex, lack of recreation, social media, forced sex, substance abuse and the Constitution of South Africa.

3.2 THE AFRICAN CHURCH

This section explores the role of the African church towards sexual education among the youth and its stance on teenage pregnancy in South Africa.

"The Christian church is the most representative institution or non-governmental organisation in civil society in South Africa" (Krige, 2007:2). The Church is "a subsystem of society and shaped by moral beliefs and values that are different from the rest of society and the community. Churches are regarded as holy places and in many cases they are viewed as institutions that uphold high moral standards. As such there is need to maintain churches' sacredness, but at the same time ensure that they remain social and community institutions that are informed and respond to the prevailing sexual challenges facing the youth" (Magezi, 2016:3, 4).

The African Independent Churches (AICs) in South Africa are strongly and consciously African in orientation. Their religious activities differ from those of mainline churches in the sense that they are closely related to the traditional African culture and worldview. There appears to be friction in their interaction with the Western worldview and theological interpretation. Their character of being friendly to African traditional culture has won them thousands of believers,

for which they have been criticised as not being Christian at all and linked to paganism. However, they can no longer be ignored as they occupy a central position in theological studies on equal level with the mainline churches. The African middle and intellectual class deem them primitive, due to their strong relationship with African traditional religion and yet the rapid growth in membership that these churches are enjoying, as opposed to the decline in the mission churches, leaves people with many unanswered questions (Masuku, 1996:443-445,454). The AICs were born not out of rebellion to the West, but in a quest to be relevant to Africans. "AICs are the authentic African expression of Christianity" (Kgatle, 2019:3). They are steadily growing in Southern Africa and provide African solutions for African problems as well as answers to misfortune and illnesses (Kgatle, 2019:3).

Projections show that 35 per cent of the black population were members of this movement of diverse groups and churches in 2000. More people belong to this group than to any historical denomination in South Africa. Furthermore, the number of AICs in the country rose from 30 in 1913; to 600 in 1939; to over 1 000 in 1955; and from 2 000 in 1960 to 3 000 in 1970. The proliferation since 1970 has been even more impressive, as by 1990 there were at least 6 000 AICs in South Africa (Kgatle, 2019:2, 3).

However, there is a serious crisis of sexuality that currently faces the Church in South Africa. Despite having churches in every community in the country, including the most remote and smallest of towns, the role of the Church in providing formal education has, however, greatly lessened in South Africa. Churches have the infrastructure, in terms of space and educational materials as well as the personnel, who may be willing, to educate young people about sexuality. It is imperative that churches not only properly understand the nature of the crisis of sexuality that confronts them, but that they shape their responses to this crisis in ways that transform them into forceful and effective agents for wholeness, health and justice in peoples' sexual lives (Germond, 2007:48; Van Dyk, 2017:2).

> "Preventing teen pregnancy is as much about moral and religious values as it is about public health. Teens, like adults, make decisions about their sexual behaviour based in part on their values about what is right and wrong, what is proper and what is not. This is because sex is connected to aspects of our lives that we hold most dear: our understanding of family and children, the meaning of love, marriage, and commitment, the role of self-expression and self-fulfilment, and, for many people, our relationships with God" (Whitehead *et al.,* 2001:1).

Chisale and Moyo (2016:89-92) conducted research on 17 churches in Africa, including South Africa. The study was based on church discipline as virginity testing. African Christian churches highly value virginity as a sign of purity. From childhood to the adolescence stage, it shapes women's sexuality by insisting on abstinence until marriage. However, it is always the virginity of the girl child that is put to the test both through church and traditional cultural practice. This is a way of supervising and determining women's sexuality, since it is usually the girls who are seen seeking forgiveness after giving birth. Nevertheless, in most cases the Church disciplines girls rather than boys when it comes to pregnancy out of marriage. This is discriminatory as it takes two to make a baby. The Church is silent on the invisible men who make girls pregnant and it doesn't seem as though the Church's disciplinary machinery cares. In reality some of teenage girls are made pregnant by boys and elderly men in infamous trans-generational sex. Another point is that those who request forgiveness are no longer virgins, ideally implying that those who have not fallen pregnant are still virgins and pure. In some congregations, adolescent girls have been identified as a group that needs to be taught about their sexuality, while adolescent boys are considered knowledgeable about their sexuality. The pastor would deal with the whereabouts of the boys in private, while offering pastoral counselling to the girls.

Esperanza (s.a.:10,11) states that it is imperative for the pastorate to realise that if teenagers are far from their Christian values and understanding sexuality, it will be more challenging for them to comprehend and apply them. The youth may possess many of the appropriate values, but they need leadership that will assist them to put their lives in the right order. The Church should ensure that senior reverends address teenage sex and pregnancy. This attempt will send a message to the congregation that says, this is very important. It will also show that the Church cares and is willing to disciple them as they make decisions related to sex, love and relationships. Senior pastors may also delegate some of the responsibility for preventing teenage pregnancy to youth ministry, but should be the first to lay the foundation.

A study by Mash (2006) indicates that the sexual activity of church-going youths did not differ much from youths that are not church-goers. Church-going youth face the same challenges with regards to premarital sex as other youths. In this particular survey 44% of black youths, 26% of white youths and 30% of Coloured youths were sexually active. To some extent, this underlines the need for the African church to focus on healthy sexuality amongst its youth. Apart from looking at strategies to prevent teenage pregnancy, the challenge is also for the

Church to look at what support structures are in place for teenage mothers. They are not fully aided in a way that will enable them to continue to be part of the church community and to continue with their studies. The problem is that lack of support, will impact negatively on their children. For instance, it is possible for their children to be trapped in the cycle of poverty, whereby they may lack opportunities and goals for the future, which may in turn leads them to early sexual activity and unwanted pregnancy (Mash, 2006:3, 42,44).

African churches are caught in a dilemma when it comes to upholding the teachings on biblical moral values of abstinence and at the same time respond to the realities of youth who are engaging in sex (Magezi, 2016:1). For instance, Eriksson *et al.* (2013:454, 460, 462) believe that the local church should be a place of counselling, support and including moral guidance for the youth. It is very rare for African Church to teach on sexuality, except for messages on premarital sexual abstinence as one way to prevent HIV infection. Boys (between the ages of 13-20) in particular think it difficult to adhere to the teachings of the Church on abstinence and appear to concern young women more than young men. Research by Eriksson *et al.* (2014:1663) indicate that 31% of church-going youth in South African aged 12-19 have engaged in sex, regardless of the Christian stance that sexual intercourse is reserved for heterosexual marriage. Married couples are expected to be faithful and committed to one other in a lifetime relationship. Although the youth are taught about sexual abstinence in church, studies are required to influence them regarding sexuality and HIV prevention.

Many churches are playing a positive role in the field of HIV/AIDS, but some congregants still have a negative attitude towards condom usage especially black men, people of lower educational levels and those from rural areas (Van Dyk & Van Dyk, 2007:694). The question is does the African church deliver, is it doing enough to teach the youth about sexuality in South Africa?

My spiritual journey with the Methodist Church started in 2000. Much as I was baptised and confirmed in Methodist as a full member, I never felt the connection until I accepted Christ as My Lord and Saviour in 1997. For that reason, in 2000 I surrendered completely and wholeheartedly and started participating in church, and in 2003 inducted as a full preacher. I discovered that the doctrines had not changed much from how it operated in my youth days in disciplining unmarried pregnant girls/women, whereby unmarried pregnant girls were still being ostracised and could not participate in any activity. Before they could baptise their children, they had to go to a repentance class. They were asked questions by the leadership

of the Church and promised not to fall into sin again. Afterwards they were reinstated back as full members of the Church. However, the Church never enquired about the fathers of their children till to date. The Church's exclusion from church activities left other girls in a negative state and they decided to stay at home or join charismatic churches. As the years went by and new ministers took over, transformation took place and pregnant girls were told not to attend the repentance class anymore. If they wanted to baptise their children, they were to report to the society elders and stewards. It was based on the argument that all mankind has fallen short of the glory of God, (Rom. 3:23). However, the challenge is that there is no counselling or spiritual support for unmarried pregnant females or young mothers. Neither is there any formal sexual education for youth in the Church, except for a few mounted HIV/AIDS posters and candlelight prayers offered every Sunday for those who are infected or affected. The other challenge is that the times new pastors sought to introduce sexual topics through seminars, some congregants (adults) opposed such messages without understanding the bigger picture of what the minister intended to bring across. There is also minimal teaching on premarital sex, dating or social issues for youth ministry or the congregation at large. Preachers do not engage much in sexual topics that could assist the youth to abstain from risky sexual practices. As such the Church does not grow as it is supposed to in this regard. However, as ministers rotate, my hope is that newcomers will implement sexuality education and create a balance that the Church has been lacking.

Van Dyk (2007:4) indicates that it is the responsibility of the Church to provide sexuality education and HIV prevention to adolescents in congregations.

3.3 LACK OF PROPER PARENTAL GUIDANCE AMONGST BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES

According to Miriri *et al.* (2014:131, 136), parents play a vital role in decreasing teenage pregnancy through the right parenting abilities and approach. Moreover, teenagers attach more value when their own parents supply and teach them how to construct sexual and reproductive values. However, this is not the case when it comes to some black parents and their teenagers. These parents find it very difficult to communicate with their children on the subject of sexuality. This lack of parental guidance of black teens is most common in some black rural communities in South Africa and may result in black teenagers resorting to their friends and peergroup for information, which may lead them to fall prey to teenage pregnancy.

Lack of parental guidance and non-exemplary parental behaviour contribute to teenage pregnancies. Teenage girls who reside primarily with extended family members, especially

grandparents, run a higher risk of becoming pregnant than those living with their biological parents. Some grandparents might have poor child monitoring abilities and teenage girls take advantage of the situation by socialising at weekend parties. This exposes them to drinking alcohol and practicing unsafe sex that ultimately end up in unwanted pregnancies. The research by Phaswana-Mafuya also found that the larger the household size, the increased likelihood of a teenage pregnancy (Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.,* 2016:425).

For example, research by Miriri *et al.* (2014:135, 136) indicate that some teenage girls in the focus group of the study were misinformed or provided with vague information by their black parents regarding menstruation. Some mothers told their daughters that menstruation was painful, whilst others were told that they are ready to have a baby or to get married. Others were told about personal hygiene, how they should start taking extra care of themselves and/or that it's a curse to menstruate. Ebersöhn (2017:28, 29) states that black girls menstruate six months earlier than white girls and it is, therefore, important for parents to provide sexuality guidance to their girls and reassure them that the changes to their bodies are normal.
Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.* (2016:425) as well as Skobi and Makofane (2017:230) state that teenagers who are often not supervised or guided by adults are easily exposed to sexual predispositions. This happens mostly in homes where single parents are working far from home and teenagers know the time their mothers return home. Other teenagers live with their grandmothers, because their parents died, or they are forced to live with their mothers when their parents separate or divorce. Since parents are not able to monitor them, therefore, they may be tempted to take advantage of the situation by engaging in sexual activities that result in teenage pregnancy and early motherhood.

Another contributing factor of teenage pregnancy in South Africa is that some black parents do not guide and supervise their children on issues relating to sexuality. The study of Lambani (2015:173, 174) reveals that sexual education or information communicated by black parents to their children is not sufficient to curb pregnancy. The parents use the government, via schools and teachers, as a way to escape the responsibility of teaching their children about sex. Consequently, they do not train their children on how to face adult life and in most cases this results in unwanted teenage pregnancies.

Nyemba (2017:11) also adds that teenagers from homes with weaker supervision or no parental guidance, were found to start sexual intercourse earlier compared to those with strong parental supervision. Moreover, teenagers living in large households and female or child-headed families may have less supervision and experiment with sexual activities earlier

without it being noticed. It has been reported that in South Africa teenagers who stay with their fathers were more likely to engage in sexual activity earlier than those staying with their mothers.

Akinnusi *et al.* (2018:114) state that the number of single-parent families in South Africa is increasing and some single parents face additional challenges in balancing work and family life. Research studies further indicate that single-parent female-headed households amongst the black population experience a greater rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa than the nuclear or extended families.

3.4 SEX EDUCATION AT HOME

Synovitz *et al.* (2002:163) define sexuality as "a lifelong process that encompasses the biological, emotional, psychological, and social domains, and is a natural and healthy part of living. Sex education aids young people in understanding a positive view of sexuality and helps them make responsible decisions regarding their sexual health". The first educators of sexuality are parents whose primary responsibility is to provide sexual education to their children.

However, Mesatywa *et al.* (2013:90) argue that some black South African parents are to blame for teenage pregnancy. They are often overprotective of their children and as a result do not educate them on sexual matters or pregnancy and other sexually related aspects, such as HIV/AIDS. Neither do they prepare their teenagers for the realities of adult life. The above view is supported by a study conducted by Makofane and Oyedemi (2015: 170, 173) who found that parental communication about sex is lacking in many South African homes, especially amongst black families from rural areas. Sex and sex-related matters are not common topics among many black families. Many teenagers also do not communicate with their parents about sex, protection i.e. contraceptive use and condoms, abstinence, pre-marital sex, choosing a partner, dating and relationships.

Ahorlu *et al* (2015:9) and Mturi (2016:9) mention that previously in the African culture aunts and grandmothers were expected to provide sexuality education and other sexual and reproductive support to girls, whilst uncles and grandfathers communicated with the boys. Mturi (2016:9) states that due to urbanisation and modernisation this mode of communication has weakened, even in those places where this culture used to exist. Maja (2007:45) and Miriri *et al.* (2014:138) indicate that cultural barriers make it difficult for most black parents to

discuss sex or any sexually related issues openly with their children. Communication between parents and children regarding sexuality issues are limited. The respect and fear of elders in turn make it difficult for teenagers to discuss sex openly with their parents. Parents are supposed to be the primary educators of their children, but cultural norms in African communities means that communication is minimal or absent. This unfortunately hampers sex talk between parent and child and close doors to what could have been more effective first-hand information to sex education. As a result, some teenagers end up seeking information elsewhere and normally is from their peers.

Swana (2009:4,6) argues that most black parents avoid taking responsibility for teaching their children about sex. The truth is that they find it difficult and embarrassing to talk about sex and believe that sex education is an influence of Western culture. As a result, they fail to communicate with their children on sexual issues, due to fear of discussing moral-laden topics with their children. Swana (2009:2, 3) further argues that lack of communication in black communities is found mostly in poverty-stricken families and religious homes. They regard sex as a taboo and a sin. Teenage girls may at best be given vague warnings to look after themselves and be careful of men, lest they are sexually used or fall pregnant. Incorrect information and lack of knowledge about human sexuality can lead teenagers to unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.

Mturi (2016:11, 12) argues that few black parents discuss sexual issues with their children (girl child) and communication is usually indirect and in a form of warning or threat. As an African researcher I also add that majority of black parents have never been open about sex education and it is very difficult for them to even say the word "sex" to their children. The question is how can black parents be involved and supported to deliberate sexual health with their teens without either party being ashamed? What steps can be taken to alter the approach of both parents and teens, since traditional beliefs and customs have been acknowledged as one of the stumbling blocks? How can parents be given the assurance to teach and equip their children with accurate facts on sexuality education and know when and how to discuss which topic? Parental contribution and participation is very important in monitoring adolescent behaviour at night and during their free time as well as assisting teenagers with homework, especially on sexuality education.

Ahorlu *et al.* (2015:9) report that black parents are often overwhelmed when they have to provide information on sexual education. Communication between parents and their children on sexual matters tend to be dictatorial and unclear. Instead of promoting healthy and meaningful discussions, children are often left confused and they fall victim to information sources of varying quality. Hence there is a need to enhance the communication abilities of black parents, especially mothers, to communicate successfully with their daughters on sexual matters.

According to Khoza (2004:40) and Malisa (2015:21), parents play an imperative role as sexuality mentors for their teenagers. Unfortunately, many parents are so busy that they are unable to support their youngsters in making good decisions on sexual issues. The risk arises that when a teenager does not feel free to communicate with her parents about sex, either because they forbid sex talk or because they are not around, she will more than likely turn to friends for direction on whether or not to have sex, resulting in misinformation and possible teenage pregnancy. Adolescent girls are more likely to become pregnant if they have partial or no direction from their parents.

3.5 ORPHANHOOD

Another unique factor that contributes to teenage pregnancy is orphanhood. Pettifor *et al.* (2018:268) mention that families provide the primary support structure in which teenagers grow, develop and transition into adulthood. However, research has shown that being an orphan can link teenagers to poorer health outcomes, including risky sexual behaviours, early pregnancy and risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

According to the World Health Organization (2018), orphans may be divided into several subcategories:

- "Double orphan: a child aged under 18 years whose mother and father has died
- Maternal orphan: a child aged under 18 years whose mother (and perhaps father) has died (includes double orphans)
- Paternal orphan: a child aged under 18 years whose father (and perhaps mother) has died (includes double orphans)
- New orphan: a child aged under 18 years who has lost one or both parents in the past year".

In addition to the above terms, the term "social orphan" has been used to describe "children whose parents may be alive but who are neglected or abandoned by their parents or whose parents are no longer fulfilling any of their parental duties" (WHO, 2018:6).

According to Gutura and Manomano (2018:89, 90), orphanhood affect all aspects of a child's development, i.e. socially, physically, emotionally and psychologically. The girl child as orphans appear to be more vulnerable as they take on parental roles before they are socially, physically, emotionally and psychologically mature to do so, a concept called "parentification of the girl child".

Meyer (2017:1) indicates that due to the reduced presence of fathers in homes and child-headed households, roughly 3.8 million children are orphaned in South Africa. It is estimated that 2.3 million are paternal orphans, 700 000 maternal orphans and others are of unknown orphan status. Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.* (2016:425) report that a number of black teenagers in South Africa are orphans and live alone with their younger siblings. They are forced to play the role of a mother at home and end up in sexual activity that leads to pregnancy. Mudau *et al.* (2015:534) mention that child-headed households play a vital role in promoting teenage pregnancy. When parents pass away, some black teenage girls become sexually active early often for socio-economic reasons.

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The study conducted by Khan (2017:3) reveals that dual orphans, i.e. those who lost both parents, are more than twice as likely to engage in early sexual activity leading to unplanned pregnancy before the age of 16 compared to paternal orphans and those with both parents alive. Studies by Shoko *et al.* (2017:392) reveal that orphans have a higher risk of sexual debut compared with teenage girls who are living with both parents.

3.6 ABSENT FATHER FIGURES

In South Africa almost half of the children in the country in African households, especially in rural areas, are raised without fathers (Eddy *et al.,* 2013:3; Makofane, 2015:22). An absent father is defined as "the physical and emotional absence of a biological father during his child's life due to parental relationship breakdown". Absent father in this context means "a father who does not interact with his children regularly and thus does not play an important role in their development" (Makofane, 2015:22, 24). Absent fathers can also be described as "fathers that do not live with their children, do not maintain communication nor pay maintenance" (Eddy *et al.,* 2013:7). Absence of fathers vary in the life of some teenage girls in South Africa. Some children know their fathers, but do not stay with them. Others do not know their fathers at all or have lost their fathers through death. Further causes for father absence is divorce, remarriage, military service, incarceration or work that requires travel (Mabusela, 2014:25; Nduna & Skweyiya, 2015:539). This disruption of the conventional

family structure is most evident amongst African children in South Africa (Ratele *et al.*, 2012:553, 554).

Similar findings by Brehm (1992:127) reveal that teenagers who grow up in homes without a present father were more likely to engage in premarital sex, which could lead to pregnancy. The problem with absent fathers is that they emotionally hurt and wound their children. The children feel lost, unloved, rejected and betrayed by their unreliable fathers (Makofane, 2015:31). When the father is not present, the teenage girl may begin to seek validation and affection from individuals who are willing to give it to her (Glenn, 2018:5) and hence the higher risk of sexual debut, irrespective of whether the father is deceased or living elsewhere (Shoko *et al.*, 2017:380). Research has shown that present/absent fathers affect the development of their girls' femininity positively or negatively. Fathers provide a male perspective and often set the standard of morality when it comes to their daughters' sexual activity. As a result, girls who are closer to their fathers from infancy, communicating with their fathers about decisions to engage in risky behaviours, are more balanced, able to make responsible choices and good decisions about sexual behaviours during adolescence, which promote positive long-term health outcomes (Freeks, 2017:92; Sentino *et al.*, 2018:642, 643).

Research conducted by Ellis *et al.* (2003:801, 815) reveals that father absence is strongly associated with elevated risk for early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. The absence of a father poses a major risk in the life of a teenage girl and undermine the quality of the family environment. In this study teenage girls who had the highest rate of early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy were those who experienced father absence early in life as compared to those whose fathers left later in their lives or are present. Research conducted by Ellis *et al.* (2003:801) and Ngum Chi Watts *et al.* (2015:2) state that countries such as USA, New Zealand and Australia are also experiencing father absence linked with unplanned teenage pregnancies.

Sentino *et al.* (2018:644) suggest that present biological fathers in the home are likely to distinctively influence their adolescent daughters' sexual behaviours. Hence the need for interventions that provide fathers with techniques to successfully converse about sexual behaviour with their daughters and feel comfortable doing so.

3.7 CULTURAL PRACTICES AND NORMS EXPOSING BLACK TEENAGE GIRLS TO SEX

In some African nations pregnancy is understood and valued as the essence of womanhood. Childbearing may be regarded as a rite of passage and thus raises the status of a young woman (Muloonga & Tshumo, 2012:16). Idang (2015:99) describes culture as "the totality of the pattern of behaviour of a particular group of people. It includes everything that makes them distinct from any other group of people for instance, their greeting habits, dressing, social norms and taboos, food, songs and dance patterns, rites of passages from birth, through marriage to death, traditional occupations, religious as well as philosophical beliefs". Culture is passed on from generation to generation.

Lambani (2015:172) reports that culture has an impact to dictate when and how girls should fall pregnant or get married. For example, if girls are in a community where girls get married young, they are all obliged to follow suit. According to Muloongo and Tshuma (2012:33), there are cultural practices in South Africa that could possibly encourage girls into sex and contribute to teenage pregnancy. In this study culture will be contextualised as "the behaviours and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic or age group". Some of the examples of cultural practices are reed dances, traditional dances, matric dance, school functions, bashes, sports, parties, *ukuthwala*[6], sleeping with a virgin, Valentine balls and substances used to drug girls and have sex with them. All these cultural practices can be a passage to teenage sex, as there is little or no supervision from teachers and parents.

Khan (2017:4) reveals that another cultural practice that can lead to unwanted pregnancy is the existence of initiation schools. Once the traditional initiation process is completed, young boys are expected to prove their manhood, usually by impregnating a girl. Femininity is expressed through proof of fecundity, i.e. being able to produce children, and obviously this act leads to pregnancy.

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[6]*Ukuthwala* is a form of marriage that takes place in rural communities in South Africa, most especially in the Eastern Cape. Also referred to as "abduction marriage" or "forced marriage", *ukuthwala* can take place either with or without the knowledge and consent of a young woman's parents. Forced *ukuthwala* marriage is illegal under South African law, as it is deemed a gross violation of rights to gender equality and bodily integrity as enshrined in the constitution (Rice, 2014:381). *Ukuthwala* can also lead to teenage pregnancy.

3.8 CHANGING VALUE SYSTEMS

Nguyen *et al.* (2016:2) raise concern that despite strict traditions, there is a cultural shift, social transformation and sexual revolution taking place in countries. Having sex before marriage is becoming the norm amongst young people. This phenomenon occurs when some teenagers are not fully informed about sexual behaviours or increasing unwanted teen pregnancy.

For example, in South Africa it used to be taboo in African culture for a teenage girl to fall pregnant outside marriage. James (2015:91) reports that a Xhosa-speaking single teenager who fell pregnant was viewed as breaking down tradition, which led to unhappiness in the family. Previously a pregnant teenage girl was perceived as someone with low moral standards and such families were not taken seriously, as their family values were questioned. As such men or boys from a strict family background were discouraged or forbidden from dating or marrying into such homes. Furthermore the father of the pregnant teenage girl would feel that his household has been invaded, i.e. *go ralala motse wa gagwe,*[7]and belittled by that man/boy who impregnated and defiled his unmarried daughter, whilst he has not paid any bride price.

However, research by Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.* (2016:421.422) indicates that there is a change of values regarding teenage pregnancy in the black community. Unlike earlier, when teenage pregnancy was perceived as a source of family shame and deemed a very serious issue, current South African black communities and families have generally become more acceptable and accommodating. It is regarded as a minor error, hence accepted, as compared to a teenager who commits abortion. Some families view teenage pregnancy as a way of increasing their own family, while others accept teenage pregnancy because they love and care about their children or wish to avoid any negative implications. Unfortunately, this acceptability is one of the underlying causes that increase the percentage of teenage pregnancy in the country.

3.9 FAMILIAL PRESSURES LEADING TO TEENAGE PREGNANCY

There is increasing pressure on pregnant teenagers in the South African black community and it unfolds in many forms or comes from different angles such as family and peers.

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[7] *Go ralala motse wa gagwe* is a Setswana expression to invade someone's territory without permission and belittle him. In this context it means the man/boy is not showing respect or honour to the parents of the girl because he impregnated her before marriage or paying the bride price.

3.9.1 Family pressure

Wood and Jewkes (2006:118), Mturi (2015:1957) as well as Khan (2017:4) indicate that elderly family members, such as mothers or grandmothers, pressurise their children to fall pregnant in order to fulfil their desire to have grandchildren. They convince the teenage girl that children are a legacy they leave behind and to keep them company. In the study Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.* (2016:422) undertook to understand this pressure from mothers/grandmothers, as it was confirmed that some parents encourage young teenage girls to fall pregnant as proof of their fruitfulness. The prospect of having a grandchild is a source of pride. As a result, mothers encourage or motivate their teenage children to become pregnant so that they can become grandmothers and have someone to keep them company. Another point is they want them to become pregnant in order to increase the size of the family, especially if the teenager is an only child. Consequently, Miriri *et al.* (2014:138) explain that some parents become impatient and persuade their children or encourage their teenage girls to make babies, because they cannot wait for many more years to have grandchildren.

3.9.2 Peer pressure

Peer pressure among teenagers is a universal problem and manifests itself in different situations. Regarding the focus group of this study, Skobi and Makofane (2017:229) argue that sometimes teenage girls come under pressure when most of their peers have children. Instead of listening to their parents, teenagers opt to imitate their friends. In the quest to belong and be accepted by their peers, they imitate them in becoming sexually active early and fall pregnant to achieve success as a woman as well. Unfortunately, they end up trapped in a pregnancy, while those who use contraceptives are able to finish their schooling. Another pressure of teenage pregnancy come from teenage mothers who already have babies and look down on their peers who do not have children yet (Mturi, 2015:1957).

On the other hand, teenage boys engage in sexual activity and prematurely become parents. The majority are compelled by their peers to participate in sex, because they are also sexually active. Peers who are already fathers in the peer group, treat them differently prior to their becoming fathers. Once they became fathers, they could finally identify with their peers (Chideya & Williams, 2013:215).

Peer pressure, low self-confidence, poor communication regarding sexual matters and gender inequality concerning sexual decision making are all examples of significant characteristics associated with when and how teenagers engage in intimate heterosexual relationships. At the same time, being exposed to an older and therefore more sexually active peer group might

influence teenage girls to become sexually active themselves and fall prey to teenage pregnancy. Thus, belonging to a positive peer group is likely to lead teenage girls to a positive mind-set on education and produce positive outcomes (Edin *et al.,* 2016:1010).

Adolescents belong to peer groups that influence them positively or negatively. Teenagers alter their behaviour to fit in these groups, because they care so greatly about what their friends think of them and are thus likely to go with the crowd to avoid rejection. Peer groups provide a platform where youngsters feel accepted, feel good about themselves and where their self-esteem is boosted. Such peer groups can influence them to postpone or engage in sexual activity. Hence the need to implement programmes that will guide and strengthen them to cope or deal with peer pressure related to risky sexual behaviour (Mpofu, 2012:71).

3.10 POVERTY

There are many people living in South Africa who are still poor, especially in rural areas. As a result of poverty, the majority of the children grow up under unfavourable environment. This condition also impacts negatively on the upbringing and development of children (Manamela, 2004:161, 162). Although family planning services are provided for free in South Africa, according to Makiwane *et al.* (2018:209), research shows that youth living in poverty have a higher ratio of teenage pregnancy than the average population. Scarcity of resources in families seems to play a major role in the rates of teen pregnancy. As a result, giving birth at a young age becomes prevalent and often continues the cycle of poverty and usually it is women who are most affected.

Poverty decreases the capability of parents to provide basic needs adequate nutrition and to access good educational opportunities for their children consistently. Poverty can undermine parenting significantly by decreasing the life chances and healthy development of their children and thereby perpetuating poverty from one generation to the next (Ward *et al.,* 2015: 69).

Furthermore, poverty is one of the most important determinants of early sexual activity and childbearing for black teenage girls aged 15-24 years. The results of this study by Kara and Maharaj (2015:57) suggest that black teenage girls living in lower-wealth households are six times more likely to experience early sexual activity and childbearing compared with black teenage girls living in higher-wealth households.

In most cases learners who fall pregnant are those who have not completed their schooling and do not have skills to enable them to enter the job market. Much as teenage girls are taught about the consequences of teenage pregnancies, they are not aware of the difficulties that early pregnancy can create economically, financially and socially. They are unaware of the correlation between poverty and teenage pregnancy. They are forever dependent upon

their parents for their basic needs and do not mature on par with their peers (Lambani, 2015:171, 175).

In a study by Miriri *et al.* (2014:138) poverty is also cited as an influential cause to teenage pregnancy and some young girls see pregnancy as a way of liberating themselves from the effects of poverty. So, they will be taken to their boyfriends' homes, without a bridal price, and opt for cohabitation rather than facing the poor living conditions of their homes. Makiwane *et al.* (2018:217) state that poverty is a contributing factor to teenage pregnancy in that most of the youth remains unemployed for long periods, irrespective of whether they are educated or uneducated. They are perceived to be at a higher risk of engaging in transactional sex, especially girls.

3.11 CHILD SUPPORT GRANT

Despite contradicting views and findings from researchers, another factor contributing to teenage pregnancy in South Africa is the provision of the Child Support Grant (CSG). Makiwane (2010:194) and Patel (2012:108,109) both indicate that the CSG was introduced in 1998 following recommendations of the Lund Committee, which succeeded the old State child maintenance system. It was motivated by the need to redress racial imbalance in maintenance grants that were only available to particular race groups and excluded black children and women. Lambani (2015:171) adds that the CSG is supported by the country's Constitution to fight poverty. It is funded by the South African government and granted to mothers who are jobless and incapable of providing for their children. It is usually given to teenage girls who fall pregnant at an early age and also to children whose parents are jobless or orphans. The cash grant is meant to directly assist children living in poor households.

However, Lambani (2015:171) indicates that some teenage girls deliberately fall pregnant by engaging in unprotected sex, because they know that the government will support them. Research by Rosenberg *et al.* (2015:2) found no evidence that the CSG encourages pregnancy. Nonetheless, critics of such programmes have argued that some women can have more children in order to receive a larger monthly payment. In contrast Gibbs *et al.* (2018:2) suggest that children whose caregiver accesses the CSG in South Africa have better growth, reduced hunger and are more likely to be enrolled and progress in school. Additionally, teenagers have "reduced sexual activity, pregnancy, alcohol use, age-disparate sex and transactional sex". Apparently a study conducted by Ndinda *et al.* (2017:8) cite that some participants expressed the belief that girls were becoming pregnant in order to access the child grant. Makiwane (2018:217, 218) state that in spite of many studies showing that there is no direct connection

between the CSG and teenage childbearing, this view is still widely spread. Goldblatt (2005:239), on the other hand, is of the opinion that South Africa already had a high rate of teenage pregnancy amongst blacks before the introduction of the CSG.

In the study by Mbulaheni *et al.* (2014:70, 71) respondents believed that the CSG plays a pivotal role in promoting the increase of teenage pregnancy. In order to survive poverty, the teenage girl finds that the quickest way to make money is to fall pregnant in order to access child support grant. In the absence of a breadwinner, the CSG becomes an alternative and to qualify one has to have a baby, which leaves the girl child with no option but to fall pregnant.
Makiwane (2010:200-202) state that the main objective of CSG in South Africa, was to lessen poverty amongst teenage mothers. However, it has raised concern and is now perceived as a fruitless venture in that it could motivate teenage girls to have children. This phenomenon puts teenage mothers at a higher risk of living on lower incomes, have lower educational achievements and experience difficulties with housing and family conflicts in comparison to their peers. Yet, the data examined in the study did not show a positive association between the introduction and use of the CSG and the trend of teenage childbearing.

Manamela (2004:162, 164) states that children growing up in poverty place them at a profound disadvantage and greatly lowers the chances of the child to mature into a well-adjusted, productive and contributing member of society. It also creates long-term economic problems for families and society in general. Children who grow up in poverty are likely to find it difficult to succeed in life, because of the lack of fundamental resources. Hence, to address the problem of poverty and assist those individuals and families that were not able to support themselves, the South African government formulated a new strategy and programme called the child support grant. Its objective was to transform the old welfare system that conformed to the democratic values and fundamental rights entrenched in the Constitution.

Gibbs *et al.* (2018:1, 2) mention that South Africa has embraced unconditional cash transfers, both as a way to reduce poverty and to establish formal citizenship rights for all in the post-apartheid context. Hence the inception of the CSG, which is available for the primary caregiver of a child and the majority of recipients are women. The process of registering and disbursement of the CSG is undertaken by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). Technically there is nothing wrong with government implementing such a child support grant system to help children living in poverty in South Africa (Lim, 2010:2), but research by Xaba (2016:153, 154) found that as much as the CSG is effective in reducing poverty, particularly

amongst children, it is unable to end poverty. One school of opinion holds that the grant promotes passivity, pregnancy and a poverty trap, leaving the recipients dancing in a cycle of poverty.

Lambani (2015:175) highlights that some learners rush to fall pregnant, enticed by friends with the prospect of receiving Child Support Grants. Their peers convince them that CSG would provide them with financial freedom to fulfil their basic needs, such as clothes and groceries of their own choice. In Lambani's study the majority of the learners stated that they knew that this view was a mistake and exposed their ignorance. They knew the consequences, but fell in the trap of becoming pregnant, because they knew that they would receive assistance from the government through child support grants. One participant specified that it was the right time for her to conceive and have a baby. This is a clear signal that poverty is one of the prime cause of teenage pregnancy.

There is a strong debate regarding the CSG among black teenagers in South Africa. It is seen as a possible perverse incentive that may encourage teenage pregnancy, especially to teenagers between the ages of 15 to 18 years as compared to other teenagers who do not receive the grant (Udjo, 2013:833). This state of affairs is also related to peer influence, portraying teenage pregnancy as acceptable and receiving the CSG as a benefit (Miriri *et al.,* 2014:138).

Kubheka (2008:21) concurs with Mokoma (2008:9) that in South Africa there is a perception that teenagers are falling pregnant in order to access social grants to combat poverty. They argue that certain teenage girls, especially those with a low educational background, use the CSG as an income generating scheme. Such behaviour forces teenagers to participate in relationships where contraceptives are largely ignored. Mokoma (2008:26, 27) interviewed pregnant teenage girls and teenage girls with children who were receiving the CSG for them. The data was used to determine whether or not recipients of the CSG influenced teenage pregnancy. The analysis of quantitative data indicated that there is no association between the CSG and teenage pregnancy. On the other hand, the analysis of the qualitative data showed that some teenagers took advantage of the CSG, because much as they need money for school fees and school uniforms there were those who spent it on clothes for themselves. They were also mindful of the difficulties of raising a child, especially while at school. The conclusion is that even if there is no link between the CSG and increasing teenage fertility, respondents take advantage of the CSG, because their friends fall pregnant to boost their monthly income.

In the researcher's view, the amount is not sufficient enough to meet the daily needs of a child. Another disadvantage is that the final responsibility of looking after the child will become that of a poor family and also of the state through the CSG.

3.12 GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality is one of the significant factors contributing to unwanted teenage pregnancy. In South Africa, studies reveal that teenage girls lack the freedom to make decisions about sex with partners, thus hindering them to practice safe sex (Flanagan *et al.,* 2013:15). Research by Jewkes and Morrell (2012:1729) indicates that gender inequalities in South Africa give men considerable relational power over teenage girls, particularly in circumstances of poverty where sex is materially rewarded. Teenage girls are often described as victims of men and as a result some become pregnant.

Maja (2007:44) argues that male domination over teenage girls contributes to unintended pregnancies. In most cases teenage girls have to protect themselves against pregnancy without the help of partners. Some men are overbearing and do not care to use contraceptives. If the girls become pregnant, they refuse to take responsibility or force them to abort the pregnancies.

3.13 TRANSACTIONAL SEX WITH OLDER MEN

Varjavandi (2017:88, 89) reports that in South Africa teenage girls continue to become pregnant in transactional sex with older men of greater financial means. Mesatywa *et al.* (2013:91) indicate that teenage girls who enter into intimate relationships with older men are more likely to fall pregnant than their counterparts who are in intimate relationships with their peers or boys in their age group.

Lambani (2015:175); Madumo *et al.* (2015:187) and Waxman *et al.* (2016:7) argue that teenage girls engage in transactional sex with older men in order to gain material and basic needs, such as food and clothing. When their daily needs are not met, some teenage girls purposefully enter into relationships with older men, exchanging sex for money or presents. Material reward is the root cause of their pregnancy. Some girls who engage in transactional sex are out of school, living in child-headed homes and are very poor. Thus, in order to maintain a relationship or hold on to their man, they willingly engage in all forms of sexual behaviour that could expose them to sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy.

Skobi and Makofane (2017:230) state that older men who lure adolescent girls into sex and award them with material goods, money or promises of a better life are referred to as "sugar daddies". Sugar daddies have become romanticized in the lexicon and it lends normalcy to a relationship that preys on the girls' weaknesses or lack of a moral compass. Young girls are left

with the responsibility of raising the progeny of such a union whilst the sugar daddy is protected from public scrutiny or embarrassment and usually fail to maintain the upkeep of the child in terms of Chapter 4 of the Maintenance Act (22 of 2005).

Varjavandi (2017:89) mentions that since 2016 the word "sugar daddy", has been popularly converted to "blesser" in South Africa through social media by women who claimed to be beneficiaries of "blessers" who "bless" them with luxurious gifts. Thobejane *et al.* (2017:8717, 8720) state that blessers take advantage of the background of young females by offering them things beyond their own capacity. The relationship is transactional, exploitative and at times coercive, which often leads to unwanted pregnancy. Poverty is a major factor for teenage girls or schoolchildren exchanging sex for money at an early age. It is a survival strategy to meet their basic needs such as food, school fees, shelter, clothing, protection, affection, etc. They practice unsafe sex, which can lead to unwanted pregnancy.

South Africa is not the only country affected by transactional sex leading to teenage pregnancy. Due to poverty, teenage girls in many parts of Africa engage in sex with older men and this phenomenon is responsible for unwanted teenage pregnancies (Kim, 2008:1; Thobejane *et al.,* 2017:8717, 8718; Skobi & Makofane, 2017:230). For instance, sex for money or gifts is common in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In Tanzania these types of blesser relationships are also common. In Ugandan, Malawi and Cameroon girls date older men for financial reward (Thobejane *et al.,* 2017:8717, 8718). Despite national interventions in Malawi, teenage pregnancy continues to remain high (Baruwa, 2018:2). This phenomenon is also found in places like Kenya (Matheka, 2012:30), Zimbabwe (Mutanana & Mutara, 2015:29), Lesotho (Motsima & Malela-Majika, 2016:35), Ghana (Krugu *et al.,* 2016:293), Nigeria (Alabi & Oluwafemi, 2017:25), etc.

According to Thobejane *et al.* (2017:8717), the high rate of inter-generational sex has been reported to impact negatively on South African society. Teenage girls between 15 and 24 from poorer backgrounds, especially orphans of the national HIV/AIDS epidemic, are the most at risk of being targeted and exploited by blessers. Abject poverty of many teenage girls in South Africa makes it easier for the blesser phenomenon to boom. Blessers take advantage of the background of the teenage girls by offering them things that are beyond their own capacity and in the end result in the challenges of HIV infection and teenage pregnancy.

3.14 LACK OF RECREATION

Sibeko (2007:2, 7) describes recreation as a vital social issue that stimulates, brings joy and pleasure, especially to young people. Recreation provides an opportunity to the youth to test

their skills, physical endurance, better their standards and broaden their general life experiences. It is voluntary, pleasurable and has socially redeeming qualities. The active participation moulds the behaviour and attitude of the youth, thus bringing permanent patterns to their lives. Hence, recreation and the right environment are necessary and can mould our youth into responsible citizens, but the lack thereof can lead to boredom and open the door to negative behaviour.

Research conducted by Edin *et al.* (2016:1015-1017) found that teenage girls enter into relationships to pass time and fight boredom. It was discovered that both teenage boys and girls thought that it was fun to enter into casual relationships. The majority viewed entering into casual relationships as being morally responsible and smart as they were aware that a serious relationship might hamper their dreams of completing their schooling and securing a job.
Lack of recreational facilities thus influences learners or teenagers to engage in sexual activities. Some schools have not yet developed sport programmes such as soccer, rugby, cricket, netball or chess. Sex then becomes a way to alleviate boredom and it is used as a causal activity for the free time that the learners have (Tsebe, 2012:33). Such casual sexual encounters, however, lead to pregnancy and upheaval to the once normal lives of black teenage girls. Their dreams and aspirations are shattered or put on hold. Their circumstances make it at times difficult for them to pursue their goals and achieve their dreams.

A life of boredom is one of the devastating moral threats to the youth's successful abstinence from sex. Lack of employment, no means to meet essential needs, no sense of direction or future at times, the sight of uninteresting relatives and the daily frustrations of life all merge into a routine of boredom (Mbamalu, 2004:125). This state of affairs may leave some of these teenagers very depressed as they struggle to cope with life.

3.15 SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the factors that strongly contributes to the increased risk of early pregnancy is sexually orientated messages in the media (Mothiba & Maputle, 2012:4). Ebersöhn *et al.* (2017:213) emphasises that the social environment of teenagers has become digital and the time they spend on media and its content has an influence on their development, which has positive and negative outcomes. Consequently, parents and teachers need to know the social landscape their children are moving in and also understand technology in order to teach them to use it responsibly. According to Mesatywa *et al.* (2013:90) during the adolescent stage of growth, teenagers tend to be inquisitive about sexual topics. This inquisitiveness is intensified by the thoughtless

approach of the mass media and in turn teenagers indulge in sexual behaviour, that combined with a lack of adequate sex education results in teenage pregnancy.

Thobejane (2015:274) also mentions social media as a negative external influence that indirectly contributes to teenage pregnancy. The media influence sexual relationships amongst teenagers from an early age and they become overwhelmed of the abundance of sex information without the accompanying morals and principles. For instance, in 2014 explicit sex scenes made up 26% of the programming on television screens. This means that teenagers are exposed to television programmes displaying too much sex scenes, which can lead to teenage pregnancy.

Research by Nkwanyana (2011:27, 45) indicates that television programmes, films, videos, magazines, advertisements and novels have a way of influencing teenagers to engage in sex at an early age. Teenagers who watch a great number of movies with explicit sexual behaviour and sexual dialogues are likely to engage in sex and become pregnant. The content or messages in these movies are full of sex and gives the impression that abstinence is outdated. They portray the splendid side of sex in such a way that teenagers perceive sex as a phenomenon without vulnerabilities. Ultimately ignorance lead teenagers to imitate what they see and engage in unprotected sex, leading to unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Ncube (2009:10) as well as Muloongo and Tshuma (2012:71) add the youth use popular devices such as cell phones to access the Internet and download various forms of sexual information, including pornographic material free of charge. These forms of material could negatively contribute to early sex and unwanted teenage pregnancy.

3.16 FORCED SEX/COERCION/RAPE

One of the most disturbing matters in South Africa is the escalation of sex-related violations like rape, sexual harassment and sexual abuse (Baloyi, 2010:1). Several studies, according to Panday *et al.* (2009:66), have reported that women do not differentiate forced sex as rape when it involves a boyfriend. Some indicate that women are often forced or tricked into having sex for the first time through physical violence. This kind of sexual relationships is so widespread in some black communities that peers reinforce it as a good and recognised exercise. Such women believe that being beaten is a sign of love and proof their love to men through penetrative sex.

Mwinga (2012:29), Furniss (2013:23), Cherry and Dillon (2014:181) including Skobi and Makofane (2017:231, 232) likewise indicate that in African developing countries, forced sex

without protection is quite common. Adolescent girls are sexually exploited and physically intimidated by men in their homes and in schools and likely to become pregnant. These men overpower teenage girls and force to have sex with them, hence the fear to negotiate safe sex. Such relationships increase the risk of STIs and HIV infection among teenage girls. Some teachers also intimidate and use their power and authority to coerce learners to have sex with them. Besides, adolescent rapes are often intra-family and the perpetrators are sometimes the father, the stepfather or other relatives. Some stepfathers sexually abuse their teenage stepdaughters and their mother either does not believe them or is afraid to confront their husbands, as they are the breadwinners.

Saewyc *et al.* (2004: 98) concur with Sibanda and Mudhovozi (2012:324) that rape is a form of a sexual abuse that increases teenage pregnancy. Studies have shown that between 11% and 20% of pregnancies in teenagers are the direct result of rape, while about 60% of teenage mothers have had unwanted sexual experiences leading to pregnancy. Sixty percent (60%) of girls who were sexually active before the age 15 were forced by men who were on average six years their senior. One in five teenage fathers admitted to pressurising girls to have sex with them. Up to 70% of women who gave birth in their teens were molested as young girls; in contrast to the 25% of women who did not conceive as teens but were also molested.

Research by Muloonga and Tshumo (2012:15, 16) indicate that gender-based violence and coercion in sexual relationships are significant factors in explaining early unwanted pregnancy. Understanding the dynamics that underpin gender-related violence and coercion in sexual relationships is important as the nature of coercion in sexual relationships varies. Coercion can be verbal and emotional or it can be assault or threats of assault like forcing the legs of the girl apart, tearing off clothes, punching with fists and locking the door. Urgent intervention in the area of teenage sexuality, particularly focusing on violence, is needed to empower teenage girls on how to control their sexuality, sexual experiences and reproductive health.

Reece (2014:69,70) suggests that various organisations could possibly join together, such as the Rape Crisis and Life Choices, to develop incentives in order to assist in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy in the community. An increase in police presence, youth development programmes and schools should collaborate to help keep children in schools, off the streets and out of gangs. This could be seen as an effective method of reducing criminal activities.

3.17 SUBSTANCE AND ALCOHOL ABUSE BY TEENAGERS

Sibanda and Mudhovozi (2012:324) argue that the intake of drugs and alcohol contribute a lot to teenage pregnancy. Because sex under the influence can be less emotionally painful and

embarrassing, an intoxicated teenage girl is able to engage in intercourse when she is not yet ready to indulge in such an activity.

According to Cooper *et al.* (2015:61,62), South Africa's adolescents increasingly participate in harmful drinking and drug abuse that at times lead to sexual and intimate partner violence against teenage girls. Substance and alcohol abuse by teenagers affect the teenagers' mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and also lead to unwanted pregnancy, STIs, and HIV infection. The main steering of drinking includes peer pressure, boredom, high youth unemployment and cheap and easy access to alcohol.

A study conducted by Mothiba and Maputle (2012:4) shows alcohol to be one of the greatest health and social problems in South Africa, which result in teenage pregnancies. Teenagers engage in sexual intercourse because alcohol hampers their ability to make well-thought-out decisions. Additionally, drinking has become more common as young people move through their teenage years, rising to 45% amongst 15 year olds, which was proven to be a cause of teenage pregnancy.

Madumo *et al.* (2015:194) concur with Skobi and Makofane (2017:229) that abuse of alcohol lead teenagers to have unprotected sex or inappropriately or inconsistently use pregnancy prevention methods. Drugs and alcohol increase risk-taking sexual behaviour, indifferent attitude towards the use of contraceptives and the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy. Teenage girls go to taverns with men who buy alcohol and have sex with them. Once they are drunk, they forget to use condoms and only come to realise later that they are pregnant.

Mesatywa *et al.* (2013:91) point out that one of the ways teenagers relax and relieve stress is through alcohol and drugs. The teenagers are easily drunk and alcohol numbs part of their brain and thus cannot control their behaviour. An intoxicated young virgin may suddenly become loud, promiscuous, comfortable and relaxed. Because of alcohol, their controlled behaviour changes and expose them to unintended or unplanned and unguarded sex that can lead to pregnancy. Muloonga and Tshumo (2012:17) add that once the teenagers use drugs or alcohol the risk of having unprotected sex increases, and lead to accidental pregnancy.

3.18 CONSTITUTION

In terms of Section 2 of the Constitution (1996) the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic. Law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled. In terms of Section 7 (1) The Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. The Constitution (1996) enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

According to Mturi (2016:5, 6), there are policies and initiatives in South Africa which shows that the government is really dedicated to find solutions to teenage pregnancy. For example, "the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Department of Education, 1996) permits learners to stay in school while pregnant and to return to school after childbirth. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (4 of 2000), supporting SASA, stipulates that school learners who become pregnant should not be unfairly discriminated against" (Mturi, 2016:5).

Yet, one of the factors that can indirectly contribute to teenage pregnancy, and destroy good family structures in South Africa is our very own Constitution. For instance, Mturi (2016:5) states that "the South African Constitution (1996) protects the rights of all citizens, including children, to make decisions regarding reproduction and the right to access healthcare services. This means falling pregnant is legal even for teenage girls".

South Africa is a global leader in children's rights legislation; especially regulations relating to the provision of health services to minors and laws regarding sex and sexual health have changed substantially since the turn of the century. This can be seen in the legal age for consensual sex in South Africa, which was recently lowered to 12 years of age. However, it appears that South Africa's legal framework on sexual and reproductive healthcare for teenagers is complex. On the contrary, the law protects their right to make decisions regarding reproduction, e.g. giving girls of any age the right to terminate a pregnancy and allowing adolescents to receive contraception from age 12 without their parent's consent (Strauss, *et al.,* 2015:2; Müller *et.al.,* 2016:71).

Although the Constitution does not expressly deal with the "right to terminate a pregnancy", the Choice Act gives effect to numerous constitutional rights that can be grouped together as female reproductive rights. These rights include the right to life, privacy, bodily and psychological integrity, dignity, equality, access to information and healthcare, and pregnant children's rights, which affect the right to terminate a pregnancy in South Africa (Pickles, 2012:404, 638).

As an African researcher I am of the view that some of these policies in the Constitution have to be scrutinised, as they indirectly encourage and influence teenage pregnancy and impact negatively on the morals of society and the country at large. For instance, as Mturi (2016:5) states, the South African Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, allows a 12-year-old to access

contraceptives and termination of pregnancy without parental consent. It is unfair for the government to endorse such a law, as a 12-year-old is still a child that has to be guided by her parents and not have the right to engage in sex and terminate a pregnancy, since teens use termination as a form of prevention.

The researcher is of the view that as much as the rights were endorsed for the well-being of the children, they limit parents in exercising discipline fully on their children. Parents cannot control their children either, because the Constitution protects them with a variety of rights. This means children are indirectly allowed to date and become sexually active at an early stage of their lives.

3.19 PRELIMINARY SYNTHESIS

This chapter set out to explore the interpretive functions of practical theology according to Osmer (2008). It has indicated why there are prevalent sexual practices amongst black teenage girls in South Africa. Despite strict traditions, there has been a cultural shift, social transformation and sexual revolution taking place in countries. South Africa has not been the exception, as cultural values have changed amongst African families and it is no longer a shame for teenage girls to become pregnant. Premarital sex amongst black teenagers has become the norm and parents are no longer as strict, accommodating this phenomenon. Prevalent sexual practices leading to unwanted teenage pregnancy amongst black teenagers in South Africa are the result of a combination of factors.

Much as the African church addressed HIV/AIDs to empower the youth in South Africa, more teaching about sexuality are also required. The study pointed out that the main reason behind unwanted teenage pregnancies amongst black South African teenage girls was lack of proper parental guidance. This phenomenon was common, especially in single-parent households caused by divorce, absent fathers or child-headed households due to the death of both parents and extended families. Lack of sexual communication especially in rural areas, poverty stricken families and religious homes contributed to teenage pregnancy. Teenagers were misinformed or provided with vague information on sexual issues. Poor child monitoring abilities, especially by single parents and grandparents, regarding black teenagers contributed to unwanted teenage pregnancy. The study highlighted that there was a serious need and importance for African parents to communicate about sex and sex-related issues with their children at home. Sex education prepared teenagers for the realities of adult life, but was not the case for orphans. Hence the section included types of orphanages such as dual, maternal or paternal as a link to risky sexual behaviours, early pregnancy and risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted

infections. Other teenagers were encouraged and influenced by their families or peers to become pregnant. Discussion included absent father figures, in which African families were unfortunately most affected in South Africa. Teenagers who grew up in homes without a present father were more likely to engage in premarital sex, which could lead to pregnancy. As a result, some teenage girls in the quest for the love of a father, ended up in premarital sex with older men which led to teenage pregnancy. It may in some cases be regarded as transactional sex, however, father absenteeism contributed a great deal. In this chapter the study revealed that socio-economic conditions, such as poverty, became a pathway to teenage pregnancy, especially in rural areas, hence the reliance on child support government grants. The chapter showed that the need for learners to be educated about poverty eradication through proper conduct, overcoming peer pressure and not rushing into pregnancy to receive the Child Support Grant. Sex education should be offered from primary school up to secondary school level. Another disturbing point was gender inequality, whereby male domination over teenage girls contributes to unintended pregnancies. Teenage girls lacked the freedom to make decisions about sex among partners. They were hindered from practicing safe sex and as a result had to protect themselves against pregnancy, without the help of partners.

The discussion also revealed how social media, lack of recreation, behaviour change such as substance and alcohol abuse, rape or forced sex played a role in teenage pregnancy. This showed that the morals of the country were also at stake, given the excessive rights provided by the Constitution. Its policies had to be scrutinised, as they played a role in affecting the discipline of the youth with regard to reproduction, access to contraceptives and termination of pregnancy without parental consent. This is why some parents felt helpless in disciplining their children. Hence the need to revisit African culture and Christianity, as reviewed in Chapter 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE AFRICAN TRADITION FOR HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICES AMONGST BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN TEENAGE GIRLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The next two chapters (4 & 5) are dedicated to what Osmer (2008) regards as the normative task of practical theological research. This task is concerned with critical reflection on what the ideals regarding the topic under investigation are. With regards to the focus of this study, the research will thus have to reflect on the ideal when it comes to the sexual practices amongst black teenage girls. So far it has been shown that the prevailing sexual practices within the focus group are of great concern, as a high percentage of black teenage girls fall pregnant, leading to an array of subsequent challenges. As the study departs from the notion that good principles reside in African and Christian values, these values are now engaged in order to determine what their value would be for healthy sexual development that could challenge the prevalent sexual practices described thus far.

African culture is rich in rituals and beliefs that relate to the sexuality of humans. Mudhovozi *et al.* (2012:121) remind that part of the African culture is to prepare youth to become adults and experience life. This initiative is conducted through initiation school, and the curriculum include sexuality education, marriage and childbearing from an African worldview. Since sexual activities have the power to both cause good and harm, initiation schools are societal platform Africans use to communicate with the youth and establish regulations or guidelines to control when, where and with whom sexual relationships might take place. The African worldview and culture thus present a rich source that can be tapped into when the Church grapples with the issue of healthy sexual development amongst youths.

Consequently, this chapter engages traditional concepts such as the African worldview and culture; the African worldview culture vs. tradition; and African worldview and morality; the importance of sexuality within the African worldview and culture; sexual education among Africans; the role of initiation schools as part of sexual education and morality; sex before marriage; virginity; African methods of preventing teenage pregnancy; external intercourse as a form of contraception; marriage and family life in African tradition; the purpose of African marriage; the roles of husbands and wives; children born in marriage and outside marriage (i.e. inside the marriage home, but not the legitimate children of the husband); illegitimate children; barrenness; types of African marriages; choosing a marriage partner; courtship and dating; *lobola*; African traditional marriage; divorce and modernity.

4.1.1 African Worldview and Culture

Mashau and Ngcobo (2016:34) define African worldview as "the primal understanding of how Africans have viewed their world, commonly referred to in the literature as African Traditional Religions". Thabede (2014:233, 234) states that the African worldview is a worldview that has been used to describe the cultural values of people of African origin or descent. Hence the African worldview informs the way in which Africans relate to phenomena, including challenges that life presents to African people. Moreover, when dealing with Africans, the elements of the African worldview beliefs and practices such as belief in God, ancestors, witchcraft and traditional healing, polygamy, rites of passage, etc. have to be deliberated.

On the other hand, African culture refers to the "customs, beliefs, values, knowledge habits, skills, arts, values and a way of life of African people" (Thabede, 2014:234). Culture is often seen as the sum total of the customs shared by a people and, therefore, people's values can also be seen as part of their culture. However, this view does not mean that African culture and values have the same descriptions and clarification of doing things. It does not mean that all African societies have the same manner of approach in their culture such as language or dressing, etc. Rather, there are fundamental resemblances shared by many African societies which, when compared with other cultures, reveal a wide gap of difference (Idang, 2015:97). Another point is that culture, though passed from one generation to the next, is not solid or lasting. Each generation always contributes its experience of the world and change or eliminate things that are no longer useful to them (Muloongo & Tshuma, 2012:33).

According to Turaki (1997:40), the "African worldview is the embodiment of culture, religion, customs, values and traditions". Henry and Malan (2017:1, 2) indicate that all people or groups of people have a worldview and some of them overlap in various details. Studies have shown that there are many common elements in the worldviews of African groups, in South Africa, legitimately referred to as the African traditional worldview. A major part of this worldview is African Traditional Religion (ATR).

The origin of the African worldview is found in traditional Africa before the emergence of European influences and is based on African cultural beliefs, practices and values (Thabede, 2014:234, 236). Most Africans have lived in a traditional society in Africa and have been influenced by culture, irrespective of their Western exposure. No matter how educated they become, most still retain their cultural ties. Even Africans who live in cities maintain personal

contact with their rural homes in order to affirm their cultural and religious roots (Choabi, 2016:13; Henry & Malan, 2017:2).

Every nation or society has its own culture, be it Western or traditional. This means that culture is the way of life for people in every nation or society and no one can claim to live without a culture (Familusi, 2012:300; Idang, 2015:99; Choabi, 2016:13). As a result, every human being who grows up in a particular society is likely to become permeated with the culture of that society, whether knowingly or unknowingly, during the process of societal relations (Idang, 2015:99). Thus culture is customs, traditions, beliefs, behaviour, dress, language, works of art and crafts, attitude of life among others, which vary from society to society and suggests that cultural values are largely relative (Familusi, 2012:300).

Nevertheless, attitudes towards worldviews/culture have been influenced by significant change, like colonialisation. Authors, such as Delius and Glaser (2002:27), researched the position of the youth on sexual education and regulation in pre-colonial and early colonial African societies in Southern Africa. They tried to understand and explain how colonisation impacted on the earlier values and beliefs of Africans. They describe key elements in the processes of sexual socialisation that existed in African societies in South Africa in the past and explore the way these were changed under the impact of Christianity, conquest, migrant labour and urbanisation, which will be of importance for this chapter.

4.1.2 African worldview and morality

Morality is universal to all mankind. This means that morality is important to all human beings, no matter where they live or the kind of life they lead. Morality is what makes man different from the rest of creation. However, African morality seems to be misunderstood and Africans are regarded as lacking morality and moral consciousness. It is stated that Africans cannot distinguish between good and evil (Aden & Olira, 2017:57). The way in which ethnic people know what is morally right may not necessarily correlate with the way in which Western religious people understand what right is (Nel, 2008:33). African morality is simply "a synthesis of social values, norms, mores, and their authenticity in community from which they arise. African ethics is the conceptualization, appropriation, contextualization and analysis of African values within the African cultural experience" (Aden & Olira, 2017:58).

All human beings are sexual beginning at birth until they leave the planet. Sexuality is the total expression of who we are physically, emotionally, ethnically, spiritually and sexually. Sexuality is central to our being as women and men in Africa, as it influences our worldview

as spiritual and traditional people. It influences our conception of our body, ourselves and our relationships with others and with God through our ancestors. Sexuality is celebrated through rites of passage to mark each stage of development. Through sexual education, older women pass on culturally, acceptable norms of sexual behaviour and gender identity to girls and younger women (Moyo, 2004:72, 73).

Hence, according to Mudhovozi *et al.* (2012:119, 120), since there is a high level of sexual activity and high frequency of teenage pregnancy, including those teens who have already given birth in South Africa, it becomes imperative to scrutinise the cultural factors that may influence the attitudes of mothers in terms of the role they are expected to play as sexuality socialising mediators. It is culturally assumed that senior family members are the socialising agents of appropriate behaviours to children. Children learn appropriate behaviour and societal expectation at home. That is why it is expected of mothers to assume the role of teaching their daughters about sexual knowledge, so that they will be able to make informed decisions about when to start sexual activities and to take precautions to protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy.

However, it is important to note that in some African cultures sexual morality is very important. For example, both boys and girls are expected to exceedingly and tremendously treasure their virginity. It is also important to maintain it as it is regarded as a sign, indication or endorsement of sexual morality in that traditional community (Van Rooyen & Hartell, 2010:321).

4.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF SEXUALITY WITHIN THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW AND CULTURE

In this section the importance of sexuality within the African worldview and culture is discussed in order to show that sexuality plays an important role within the African worldview and culture and how it influenced sexuality amongst Africans in the past.

According to Hill (2008:4, 25), human sexuality refers to "the emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and physical experiences of human related to their sexual nature". It is essential to understand the monumental influence of sexual values and the study of sexuality in religion and culture. Greathead *et al.* (2008:88) explain that "sexuality is the total expression of who we are as human beings. It encompasses our whole psychosocial development i.e. our values, attitudes, physical appearance, beliefs, emotions, likes, dislikes, our spiritual selves and all the ways in which we have been socialised". Reddy (2015:18) refers to sexuality as "a human's capacity for sexual feelings and includes sexual orientation, sexual identity, social gender roles

and sexual activity. Sexuality is an integral part of all persons, a basic need, and an aspect of being human. Sexuality includes eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction".
Oloruntoba-Oju (2010:3) states that Africa has been shown to be a basis of sexual assortment and sexual disagreements. For example, in many parts of Africa, virginity and widowhood customs continue to place severe constraint on female sexual desire, while the man is not subject to such limitations.

Additionally, a man is not allowed to seduce a girl who is in her teenage years. A woman is not permitted to become pregnant before her circumcision ceremony has been performed. Among other tribes, pregnancy is an abomination if the puberty rites have not been performed and the prospective mother and father may be banished. Besides, girls' sexual activities are regarded as of capital importance. These activities include her sexuality upbringing, which is harshly and strictly regulated. It is important for her because if she fails, she risks remaining single for life and to be unmarried is shameful for the entire family; but is also and especially devastating for the personality of the ostracised girl. A girl is expected to come to her marriage a "perfect woman", in effective, relational as well as sexual terms (Kgabe, 2007:38). Therefore, the sexual development of teenagers is one of the most important areas of their journey into adulthood. Churches can become a more relevant and effective partner in fostering a theological understanding of sex and sexuality, especially to the youth. Sexual education without an accompanying moral education does not provide the desired and best outcome for the youth, and faith communities are perhaps best positioned to put sexual education within a moral context (Cloete, 2012:1).

Due to the uncertainty and ambiguity of beliefs and attitudes in traditional cultures and religions, the practice of sexuality in Africa presents many difficulties to researchers and scholars. Sexuality is even more problematic in the received world religions and global popular cultures of post-colonial African modernity. Practices constituting sexual abuse are the topics best known to scholars, researchers and activists that are concerned with social justice. Nonetheless, all cultures and religions regulate sex, yet permit some sexual freedom that can even be counter normative; some more so than others (Amadiume, 2006:1).

Another way of regulating sexuality in African societies was by observing physical contact between individuals. For example, in a family a man and his mother-in-law or wife and father-in-law or teenaged girl and older brothers and sister were not allowed to touch or hug one

another physically, protecting them from sexual encounters. Another point is sexual organs in African tradition were regarded as the gates of life and have to be covered to avoid nakedness. Sexual offences such as fornication, rape, seduction, adultery, homosexuality, children looking at the genitals of their parents were forbidden and punishable. Rituals were performed for cleansing, even if they were physically punished (Mbiti, 1975:146, 147).

Historically, from the onset of puberty, sexuality was not suffered in secluded discomfiture, but was openly acknowledged and even celebrated. For example, when a boy had his first nocturnal emission or wet dream, he rose early in the morning while it was still dark and drove all the cattle far away from the kraal. When the rest of the family awoke and realised what had happened, the boys who had already reached puberty were sent out to look for him. This was the beginning of the rite of transition that marked his new status as an adolescent. Girls followed a similar pattern at puberty, with the girl hiding away when she experienced her first menstruation and being sought by her friends. Her discovery was followed by a period of seclusion, which was in turn followed by incorporation into a new group of marriageable girls. The onset of puberty did present communities with the problem of how to cope with a rapidly developing adolescent sexuality, which could easily result in pregnancy. As we have seen, African communities recognised the power and centrality of sexuality in human experience and were acutely aware of the strong passions which swayed teenage hearts and minds. There were, however, in all communities, strong prohibitions and sanctions against pre-marital pregnancy (Delius & Glaser, 2002:31). The Church also has the power to battle teenage pregnancy by offering support to the youth and communicating with their parents. It can also help the youth to develop morally and spiritually, by teaching them about teenage sexuality within the framework of faith through sex and abstinence education, rite of passage observance, conducting workshop (Whitehead *et al.,* 2001:4).

However, each generation has its own specific regulations of sexuality, which they pass on to the next generation. A Venda child learn about sexuality at an early stage, even before puberty and understand it as an integral aspect of life. Children are aware that their parents engage in sex, therefore they will also be permitted to practise it (Masakona, 2000:11).

Delius and Glaser (2002:30-32) argue that some children from infancy, often slept in the same room with their parents and they became exposed to watching sexual activities between their

parents. These youths formed imaginary weddings as they grew up, which were enacted in ways similar to adult marriages. The girls would build durable tiny villages, where couples spent most of their time flirting. The couples met in the evenings with the boys bringing what meat they could and the girls bringing porridge. They would then feast and spend the evening together. These arrangements allowed considerable scope for learning about relationships and for sexual exploration.

In the following sections, the researcher engages with literature about nine ethnic groups in South Africa, namely the Batswana, Bapedi, Basotho, AmaNdebele, MaTsonga, VhaVhenda, AmaXhosa, AmaZulu and MaSwazi in terms of their thinking and practices regarding sexuality; some discarded and others still remaining. However, the ethnic groups are discussed in general as blacks or African, because the word "African" has become debatable in that a range of people also claim to be African. This has created real confusion as to what an African is. African in this context refers to African (black) people who are residents of South Africa and fall within the Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana, Pedi, Ndebele, Swazi and Venda ethnic groups. Furthermore, African in this context excludes the white, Coloured and Indian populations residing in South Africa. The exclusion of white, Coloured and Indian from the African worldview is based on the understanding that these racial groups have their own unique and distinct worldviews (Thabede, 2014:233).

4.2.1 Sexual education among Africans

Among some ethnic groups in South Africa, it is taboo for anyone to discuss sexuality in public or in the company of children. Parents prefer to send their children, upon sexual maturity, to the initiation school to receive training on matters of sexuality (Semenya, 2015:6).

Since African people could not read or write, they depended on verbal communication to hand their customs and traditions from one generation to the next. Mothers and grandmothers would impart their African customs and traditions to girls through storytelling around the fireplace after supper. Elderly men of upright moral character would informally teach boys at tribal courts, i.e. a place where men gather to discuss community issues. They would inculcate in them the skills of hunting and herding. These elders were regarded as the living dictionaries and encyclopaedia, to be consulted frequently (Molapo, 2004:50-54).

4.2.2 The role of Initiation schools as part of sexual education and morality

According to Van Rooyen *et al.* (2006:13-15), "initiation school refers to a type of school that was initially established as a secret rite that served as the teenager's transitional education or passport to adulthood and most importantly included sexuality education". For centuries these schools have been common throughout South Africa and still function amongst the different

cultural groups. Initially the initiation rites remained a well-kept secret and girls were warned that they would go insane if they told others about the secrets of initiation. Boys also had to keep the secret, specifically from their mothers, and they remained ill-informed and unaware about how boys become men. An uncircumcised man was unbefitting in the community and even before the initiation, young men and women were regarded as relatively unimportant and inferior in their families and community. It was even believed that before initiation, the man is not really human because he has not been united with his inner person or soul.

It has been the custom in African societies for teenagers to be well informed about sexuality, usually through initiation schools. Adults in a family played an important role in enlightening the youth about sexuality (Mudhovozi *et al.,* 2012:12). Customarily, the rationale for performing circumcision were cultural, religious, ethical, health and personal hygiene, among others. The practice was largely confined to specific ethnic groups, where it was done as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood (Maibvise *et al.,* 2017:1).

One of the traditional purposes of male initiation schools was to convert boys into men through circumcision and return to the community as adults. Boys had to spend time in the mountains to be taught about their culture, respect and, most importantly, about illnesses. The circumcision ceremonies were performed only at the end of the initiation process, when young men returned from the mountains to celebrate their manhood. With regard to initiation schools, they were given cultural instruction in relation to the roles and responsibilities of what is to be called a "man" (Rathebe, 2018:2, 3). At initiation schools, young men and women were circumcised and both received formal traditional education, teaching them about issues related to adult life. The educational curriculum would focus on traditions, customs, domestic life and parental responsibilities such as raising children; how a maiden would satisfy her husband in marriage; respect to the chief and community; and how to face and withstand the daily challenges of life in general (Molapo, 2004:51,52).

African cultures have used customary teachings as familiar ways of socialisation to teach children socially acceptable behaviour. For instance, Batswana parents used traditional spaces such as initiation schools in an attempt to convert teenage girls and boys in communities into accountable grown-ups. These initiation schools called *bojale* (for girls) and *bogwera* (for boys) had a lasting impact on the lives of young women and men (Katide, 2017:6, 7).

Children were taught sexual relations at the initiation school as well as the duty of procreation and other rules of conduct in married life. They were taught about the danger of having intercourse with "unclean" women. They were furthermore instructed on discipline, tribal

traditions and religious beliefs. As part of training they participated in strenuous hunting expeditions as a way of hardening them. They were taught rules of etiquette and correct behaviour regarding social life, hygiene and respect. The older children received some instructions on sexual matters in the prevailing moral code. They were duty bound to obey their parents and expected to save them from shame or disgrace (Schapera, 1977:106, 180).

Mbiti (1975:121, 122, 135) indicates that initiation of an adolescent is one of the key moments of the young individual. The initiation rites have a symbolic meaning and a religious impact, as the youth is introduced to the art of communal living. This happens as they withdraw from the village, society, absence from their families, living alone in the forest or special prepared huts. It is a symbolic process of dying, living in the spirit world and being reborn or resurrected. The rebirth is when they go back to their families and so this process symbolises that they are new in personality, they have lost their childhood. These rites introduce them to adulthood and they are now allowed to share in the full privileges, duties and responsibilities of the community. They inherit new rights and are introduced to the living dead and the lives of those yet to be born. The initiation rites also prepare youth in the matters of sexual life, marriage, procreation and family responsibilities. These rites have an educational purpose as they learn to endure hardships, learn to live with one another, to obey and the secrets and mysteries of the man and woman relationship. Girls are taught how to behave towards men, sex knowledge, care for children and prepare food, proper behaviour towards in-laws and other domestic affairs. Boys are taught about sex, looking after the cattle, how to acquire wealth as part of the engagement and marriage contract and how to be head of a family.

Sitole (2007:9, 12) also reports that initiation of male teenagers is a custom that safeguards the continuation of esteemed African beliefs, of which the respect of ancestors is central and valuable. It is where a young man receives advices in courtship and marriage practices, attain his manhood and become a respected member of society. Traditionally they are expected to be socially responsible and conduct themselves as real men in the community. Subsequent to initiation, men are afforded numerous privileges associated with their status. Initiates are identified by their behaviour and a particular terminology they learnt during the time they spent in the bush.

The initiates would sing the praises to ancestors thanking them for protecting them during seclusion. Thereafter they change into new suits that finally affirms their status as adults (Magubane, 2005:84). During the reign of King Dingiswayo, in the eighteenth century,

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circumcision was forbidden among the Zulu due to wars that were fought at that time. After his death, King Shaka did not revive the custom (Von Kapff, 2011:22).

4.3 SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE

Kroeker (2017:263, 264) emphasises that in the past, virginity was the norm and sex before marriage was discouraged among African girls. In the Basotho culture, in order to help girls to abstain and limit their sexual appetites, they were forbidden to eat eggs and animal intestines. This rule applied to girls only as a preventative measure to avoid raising illegitimate children. The notion was that such food would stimulate their sexuality and sheep intestines would cause heavy menstruation. It was believed that eggs resembled the amniotic sac and would burn the girl from inside.

Africans are known to be very authoritarian and traditional when it comes to sexual matters. Their traditional custom prohibits young, single girls engaging in any form of sexual activity for an indicated period. They only permit a minimal and controlled form of sexual activity among the young who have reached puberty (Van Rooyen & Hartell, 2010:319). Venda teenagers understood sexuality earlier and they were aware that lack of abstinence would expose the girls at the initiation schools and heavy fines would be paid by parents. Moreover, it was a shameful and humiliating experience to practise sex before marriage (Malisha, 2005:50).

Van Rooyen *et al.* (2006:28, 29) state that when an African girl menstruated for the first time, she had to report to her mother and the mother informed the father. She would be isolated and kept at home to be culturally prepared and taught by sisters, older women and aunts about the secrets of womanhood. Some of the teachings involved sexuality and relationship with boys. She was permitted to befriend males, to receive visits and to go out with them, but warned not to be tempted to partake in sexual actions, like caressing, as it could lead to sexual intercourse, which was forbidden before marriage. Delius and Glaser (2002:31) point out that teenage girls who had sex before marriage and became pregnant faced the wrath of their elders and ancestors and could suffer various forms of public humiliation. Pre-marital pregnancy could weaken a girl's chances of getting married. Therefore, some girls aborted their pregnancies or even committed infanticide. Van Rooyen *et al.* (2006:29, 30) contend that in some cultures a girl was warned that if she should conceive a child before marriage, she would be punished and forced to marry a widower; the oldest man in the village or community or a man with many wives where she will have the lowest status.

Nevertheless, in another study Ramathuba (2013:3) argues that nowadays casual sex and teenage pregnancy are no longer seen as immoral, because culturally it was frowned upon to have children out of wedlock. Some of the teenage girls even go to the extent of addressing each other by their children's names on school premises, thus making childbearing before marriage more acceptable.

4.3.1 Virginity

"The best marriage gift one can give to his or her future spouse is his or her virginity. It is a symbol that life has been preserved and the spring of life has not been flowing wastefully. It shows that the girl and her boy and his relatives have preserved the sanctity of human production. It is a symbol of purity for the body and moral life" (Mashau, 2005:8). This also brings self-respect to both men and women. Women in this regard will not be seen as sex objects, but will be treated as better halves of men within the marriage context who should complement one another (Mashau, 2005:8).

For example, in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, the high cultural value that honours virginity and female respectability among African teenage girls is still in place (Bhana, 2016:465). Any unmarried woman who engages in premarital sex risks immediate disapproval and denunciation from her family and perhaps prolonged ostracism. A girl who loses her virginity before marriage, knows that she will lose value when the amount of *lobola* is being arranged (Delius & Glaser, 2002:34).

Scorgie (2002:61) and Mhlongo (2009:42, 43) reveal that most young Africans associate the proof of a girl's virginity with the payment of a higher price of *lobola* and marriage than a non-virgin. In this study males argued that the prerequisite for girls to get married was to protect her virginity. This was vital as she would gain the respect not only of her husband, but also from society in general. Female respondents believed that even if a girl does not find someone to pay *lobola* for her, she must maintain her virginity. It was her pride and she may gain respect from her peers and also from the elders. It was believed that a virgin should bleed on the night of her marriage and the elders should remove the sheet after the couple have been together for the first time after their marriage, as proof of her virginity. If she was not a virgin, *lobola* could be returned to the groom's family. The girl's father has to pay a cow to the king as an apology that his daughter has not conducted herself in a culturally acceptable manner. Culturally it means the girl has shamed and wronged the whole nation and such a girl is ostracised and not supposed to marry. Any male marrying such a woman was a laughingstock and when there were male gatherings, his peers would never see him as a real man. They regarded him as one

who cannot propose love to a real woman and therefore would not listen to his views. The influence of peer pressure to marry virgins gave a man a sense of pride and respect to pay *lobola* in full to the virgin's family. Even at initiation schools the older girls taught the girls that the first person they engage in sexual intercourse with must pay *lobola.*

Virginity was taken very seriously, to the extent that in some ethnic groups the bridegroom was expected to perform the traditional ceremony thanking his in-laws that their child was a virgin after marriage has taken place. This ceremony of confirming virginity was very important, as it showed a token of appreciation from the bridegroom and that is why gifts such as blankets and pots were given to his in-laws (Mhlongo, 2009:46).

4.3.2 Virginity testing

Previously virginity testing was conducted amongst African teenage girls to prevent unwanted pregnancies. It was a very important tradition, which had to be substantiated with evidence (Mokoboto-Zwane, 2016:30, 31). The queen and the grownup girls taught maidens who went for virginity testing that they should abstain from premarital sex. It was also reported that when a girl loses her virginity, she should report it to the elders so that the boy who took away her virginity could make compensation. Older girls, aged between 18 and 21 years, were taught how to be a good wife and how to behave in the bridegroom's family. They were also taught to respect the elders in their husband's family and to treat their mother in-law as their own mother. In addition, virginity testing was seen as a means of preserving fruitfulness (Mhlongo, 2009:42, 43).

In South Africa, the practice of virginity testing was and still is most common among the Zulu and to a lesser extent the Xhosa. The girls would line up in a row on their backs on grass mats and be physically examined by older women, called *Umhloli*, who also went through the same procedure during their youth to determine if the girls' hymen was intact. Upon passing the test, each virgin was congratulated and given a certificate or smeared with white clay. Those who failed the test were questioned to find out whether they were molested or willing. They were advised on how to behave in future, i.e. to abstain from sex and be restored as second virgins. In the early twentieth century or before, the testing always took place at the residence of the local chief, where all the girls of the community were tested by old respected women of the village as well as by their mothers and grandmothers at home. If the girl was found not to be a virgin, her father had to pay a cow to the chief because the girl had disrespected both her parents and also the whole nation. In the past virginity testing in South Africa was conducted by the king's wives or other nominated women qualified to do so. Usually it was an older woman

who has already reached menopause, was no longer sexually active and who had herself undergone virginity testing (Scorgie, 2002:58,61).

Research has shown that the practice of virginity testing has come under heavy criticism. Some researchers argue that virginity testing is used as a means of exercising control over women and their sexuality. Some teenagers accept the practice as advantageous, because it is a cultural practice. Many girls feel that it gives them a reason to be proud of themselves. The responsibility of preserving virginity in younger girls rests on the older girls. Older girls (*amaqhikiza*) are the ones who teach younger girls how to protect their virginity. Sex education focuses on preserving virginity until marriage. Girls are taught and encouraged to engage in *ukusoma*, which means a non-penetrative form of sex (Mhlongo, 2009:2, 3, 10).

4.3.3 African Method of Preventing Teenage Pregnancy

In the past communities strived to balance between acknowledged teenage sexuality and the risk of pre-marital pregnancy and initiated a restricted forms of sexual release and effectively supervised these sexual encounters amongst youth. Teenagers were regulated at home and in the neighbourhood, including peer group organisation and peer pressure. The role of peer groups was most fully formalised and recognised in societies that practised male and female initiation (Delius & Glaser, 2002:31).

According to Mhlongo (2009:50), virginity testing was and is still a measure used to prevent young girls from engaging in sexual activity and reduce teenage pregnancy. In this research teenage girls opted for virginity testing as a good strategy for pregnancy prevention. They were of the opinion that if they did not undergo virginity testing, they would participate in sex without fear because no one would know they were no longer virgins. All participants felt that if all the girls in South Africa were encouraged to undergo virginity testing, the teenage pregnancy rate would decrease.

4.3.3.1 External intercourse as a form of contraception

Kroeker (2015:87) states that in precolonial times the African girls were not expected to have penetrative sex. Kroeker (2017:264) argues that despite encouragement towards virginity until marriage, girls and boys secretly engaged in premarital sex. A non-penetrative sexual contact occurred, to which parents turned a blind eye as long as there were no consequences. Parents also encouraged early marriage to avoid premarital pregnancy.

In order to avoid unwanted pregnancy among youth, a form of external sex or intercourse was permitted, but full penetration was forbidden. During courtship, a certain degree of contact was

acceptable. For example, on some occasions unmarried lovers were permitted to sleep together under certain conditions, because a girl was to remain a virgin until she married (Olisa, 2016:84).

Delius and Glaser (2002:33) concur with Mhlongo (2009:43) about external intercourse that occurred between black teenage girls and boys. Older girls taught young ones how to engage in a non-penetrative form of sex called thigh sex, where the girl was taught how to block a boy from penetrating her vagina. When the boy wanted to ejaculate, he placed his penis on her thighs and the girl folded them tightly and close to each other. Once a young man was accepted by a girl as a boyfriend, according to Delius and Glaser (2002:33, 34), he would approach the older girls to ask for their permission to have external intercourse, i.e. to *hlobonga*[8]. Zulu King Cetshwayo attempted in the 1870s to ban the practice, but failed. External intercourse was a universal custom, but it was to be done in secret. It was a well-known custom by society and families, but if a girl was caught by her elder brothers she would have to give account. Nonetheless, there were homestead elders who preferred that some sexual activity occur within their own homes to discourage more serious transgression. Consequently, a lover was permitted at the girl's home and a hut was set apart for the couples to use. One means used to ensure that young girls did not overstep the prescribed limits was examinations to ensure that they remained virgins. Some mothers regularly used to examine their girls' vaginas and supervised them against defloration.

Furthermore, despite the obvious temptations of the situation, boys and girls monitored each other's relationships and leaders reminded others of the limitations that had to be observed. Their peers would reprimand boys who were doubted of transgressing their boundaries. Some were given herbs that caused them to urinate blood and were threatened that if they had intercourse that even worse penalties would ensue. The main responsibility was, however, placed on girls to stay away from full intercourse and they were taught several methods to assist them in this. Should a girl become pregnant it was regarded as extremely shameful. Members who disobeyed this ruling were treated with excessive harshness and would be ridiculed and shunned by others. It seems to have been common practice to induce abortions in these circumstances (Delius & Glaser, 2002:32).

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[8]*Hlobonga* is when "a man begins intercourse just within the vagina, the girl having her legs crossed, and when he feels he is going to pass semen, he draws away and passes on the girl's thighs" (Delius & Glaser, 2002:33, 34).

4.4 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE AFRICAN TRADITION

In the past most marriages were arranged by the parents. The boy was only informed after all necessary arrangements had been made. He was called home from the cattle post and told that a wife had been found for him. It might even have been a girl he had never seen before and often a girl was betrothed while she was a child or even before she was born. The children had no right to choose their partners and were bound to comply with the wishes of their parents. If they refused they could be severely punished and in the case of a boy threatened to be disinherited. A father had the right to force his daughter to marry a particular man against her will (Schapera, 1977:128, 129).

Marriage was not an individual affair. Two groups of relatives met to legalise a relationship between the marrying couple. The relatives of the groom would publicly transfer certain marriage goods like *lobola* to the relatives of the bride, to make the marriage legal. In return for this presentation the bride would be publicly transferred by her relatives to the in-laws' place or to the place where the *lobola* came from (Bekker & Koyana, 2014:27, 28).

Previously people could not get married until they had passed through initiated ceremonies, which conferred on them the status of adulthood. African people took the notion of marriage and family life very seriously. A family was founded upon marriage. For a marriage to be regarded as lawful and carrying rights, the contracting parties had to comply with certain conditions before they could marry. Apart from various rules governing the selection of a wife, for an African marriage contract to be legal, there had to be a mutual agreement between the two families concerned, as reflected in the formalities of betrothal. Secondly livestock, generally cattle, had to be transferred by the family of the bridegroom to the bride's family. This cattle was the *lobola* or *bogadi* (bride-wealth), which is discussed in a subsequent section (Schapera, 1977:125, 127).

4.4.1 The purpose of African Marriage

In African traditions, large families are considered very important. Without offspring, the lineage comes to an end and the community dies out. Not only the living, but also the deceased are lost. For that reason, sexuality is highly treasured, as it fulfils the purpose and communicates the purpose of the life of the community. Puberty rites are taken seriously as they mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. Marriage seals the contract between two clans. However, it does not necessarily mean the marrying/married couple are in love with each other (Nürnberger, 2007:196, 197).

The main objective of an African marriage was to establish human relationships that led to procreation, which is why it was celebrated as an important rite of passage and one of the rites is the birth of a child for which a ceremony was held. African communities were largely agricultural, so marrying and having many children was to have the dependable labour force needed on farms. The author further states that marriage was a status symbol to adulthood and to show that one is a responsible member of the community. Couples behaved maturely and refrained from anti-social behaviour. After death a man became an ancestral spirit, who continuously watches over and protects the society which he belonged to before death. It was very rare to find an unmarried adult, whether male or female, since it was regarded as a sure sign of some social, psychological, mental or physical disorder in African society (Abimbola, 1995:54, 63, 64).

4.4.2 Roles of Husbands and Wives

Husbands were regarded as the heads or main leader of their families and very often included being the leader of the extended family. The extended family could include unmarried sisters and brothers and their children, widowed elders and any orphans in the family. The most senior male in the extended family would become the family patriarch. By its nature, it was never a nuclear family as we know it today. The patriarch was also a community leader and part of the tribal council. This meant a husband/father had to literally spend time with his children in order to exercise his moral authority, maintain family customs and laws and be a leader. Fathers had to be responsible, available and a good role model. This included providing for their families, guiding, organising and generally overseeing the management of their children's lives. They would be the key decision makers in the home, on behalf of children and the wife. For example, when a child went to initiation school or was to be married, the father played a major role in organising the event. It was important for fathers to interact with their families, be a good father by listening to members of the family, consult with other members of the clan and establish and uphold the values of the clan. Unfortunately, the position of fatherhood in South Africa has gone through a number of changes as a result of the historic changes in the country. A husband and a father who was once respected in African culture as a man of wisdom, good judgement, care and consideration has today become an object of mistrust (Lesejane, 2006:173, 175, 176, 178). A real husband and father is loving to his family and usually, as the head of the house, supports his wife and mother of his children (Ebila, 2015:147).

The role of a wife in the African tradition has always been imagined within the context of the family. She is expected to bear offspring and nurture them. She has to put the family interest

first, even before her own personal interest. She is to respect her husband by not talking back at men or arguing. Her silence is a sign of respect (Ebila, 2015:146, 147).

4.4.3 Sexual Intercourse in Marriage

In African society, the only place for sexual intercourse is in the marriage. It is used for procreation and pleasure. It is also sacred and respectable in the sense that there are certain times when married couple do not engage sexually. For example, during pregnancy or lactation, in some ethnic groups a husband cannot have sexual intercourse with his wife until the child is weaned (Mbiti, 1975:146) and hence the practice of polygamy.

Senekane (1995:15) concurs with Ngundu (2010:32) that polygamy acted as birth control, since a husband was culturally not authorised to have sexual relations with his wife who was breast feeding. In most African societies there was a traditional belief that the mother's milk would be affected and dry up if she engaged in sexual intercourse during lactation. Since baby cereals did not exist at that time, mothers breastfed for long period and it was usually two to three years before the baby was weaned. Consequently, this custom imposed a very long period of sexual abstinence on the husband. As a result, a monogamous husband who was not capable of self-discipline could only gratify his sexual needs outside his marriage. If, on the other hand, the husband was polygamous, he stood a greater chance of always having a valid sexual partner available.

Schapera (1977:154, 169) states that in some ethnic groups only external intercourse that prevented the semen from reaching the womb was practised, when the wife was breastfeeding, as a means of contraception among married couples. This continued until the child was weaned.

4.4.4 Children born in marriage

Children are the flowers/buds of society and concern both the living and the dead. The pregnant mother receives special attention from family. Hence, the first pregnancy becomes the final seal of marriage and a complete integration of a woman into her husband's family and clan (Mbiti, 1975:110).

A man could, therefore, not break the chain by refusing to have children. It was a cultural belief that an African man would in death "live through his own blood" by leaving behind a child of his own who must also have children of his own and through his children, his grandparents as well as those who lived before his grandparents would never perish, but would life forever. It was a natural insurance policy in African psychology that a child was a mirror on the past in which a son is a reflection of yourself and in whom you see, study, understand and realise yourself (Ngundu, 2010:31, 32).

If the wife was barren, the husband could ask the wife's family to provide him with another woman to bear children in her house. It was the wife's duty to find a substitute. When the husband was impotent, he could secretly allow a relative or a friend to sleep with his wife. The husband would inform his wife that during his absence this man would be free to go to his house to sleep with her and the woman had no right to object. In compensation this man would give her husband an ox, because it goes "to the woman who gives her food". In this case he was not regarded as an adulterer and the husband could put an end to the relationship if he chose. Any children born out of this relationship belonged to the husband and could not be claimed by the real father. The wife could also take the initiative and find a lover (Schapera, 1977:155, 156).

4.4.5 Children born outside of marriage

Children born outside marriage could be the result of adultery. Schapera (1977:157) reveals that in the past children outside marriage occurred when parties were unfaithful. If the husband refused to cohabit with his wife or was adulterous, the wife was justified to be unfaithful even if the husband objects. In the case of impotency, a woman was free to bear a child with any man she chose. Prolonged absences of men working in towns contributed to births of children outside marriage. Many men came back to find that wives bore children of whom they were not fathers. Legally the children were his and often no action was taken, since he was blamed for such a long absence by the court. It was believed that the wife's procreative power should not be allowed to lie dormant if her husband stayed away too long. She was justified to cohabit with other men for this purpose. The woman had the right to refuse to sleep with her husband during pregnancy, because it was believed that a woman must not sleep with any man except the father of the child lest they fall ill and die.

Children born out of marriage belonged to the men who impregnated their mothers. These men had first right to their children, but unless they bought them the children belonged to their maternal grandfathers (Russell, 1993:54).

4.4.6 Illegitimate children

Research has revealed that in the 1930s, illegitimate children amongst blacks were rare. Nevertheless, it was estimated few years later that one third of black girls living in Johannesburg and Pretoria over the age of 16 had had illegitimate children. By the late 1950s the problem seemed to be increasing on the Rand and almost two thirds of all first-born babies in the black township was outside of marriage (Delius & Glaser, 2002:33, 40, 41).

In the past an unmarried girl who became pregnant was humiliated publicly and became the object of human scorn. If her child was not killed at birth, he or she would often be insulted and socially stigmatised and universally termed *ngwana wa dikgora*[9]. The mother would not be regarded as potential wife material, because she was already spoiled. An illegitimate child was no longer killed, but belongs to the maternal family (Schapera, 1977:171).

Illegitimate children were strongly condemned because of the disruptive effect they would have in the African community. Being illegitimate was especially painful for a man. One of the reasons was that there would not be a father to pay the *lobola* at his wedding. Another challenge was that there would be no ancestral spirit on the paternal side to worship in the kraal of the bridal couple, which is why the father of the pregnant girl forced the responsible man to marry his daughter and thereby solve the problem of illegitimacy (Kies, 1987:16, 17).

The parents of the teenage mother were blamed for the birth of their illegitimate grandchild. Her upbringing was questioned and she was regarded as someone reared from low morals. Such children were given bad names, which enabled society to discern that they were illegitimate (Kroeker, 2015:87). The naming of an illegitimate child in other cultures was just to humiliate a girl who has given birth outside of marriage. The reason given for this treatment was to uphold the traditional view of a woman's morality and yet the man was free to behave as he pleased (Moyo, 2007:352).

Teenagers knew that sex before marriage was forbidden. Nevertheless, the changes in their bodies and hormones overwhelmed them to the extent that they engaged in sex. As a result, illegitimate children were born when they least expected them (Ramalebana, 1995:25, 27).

4.4.7 Barrenness

Children are ranked very high in African marriage. According to African custom, a woman's glory is crowned in childbirth and this pressurises African women to go to great lengths to conceive a child of their own. Usually women are traditionally held accountable for barrenness and unprotected in this burden, which is why most childless marriages have only a slim chance of survival. Most Africans believe that every new-born is an ancestor returned, a belief reflected in the principles of naming the new-born child (Baloyi, 2017:1, 2).

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[9]*Ngwana wa dikgora* is a child whose father crept in through the fence, i.e. no legal right or in short an illegitimate child (Schapera, 1977:171).

African tradition held that a woman who is barren is the most unhappy person, regardless of the good qualities she may have possessed. Her failure to conceive and bear children was worse than committing genocide. She was regarded as lifeless to human life, not only to herself but the whole genealogical line. When she died, there would be nobody in her immediate family to remember her and keep her in the state of immortality. She would bear a lifetime scar that cannot be erased and suffer irreparable humiliation along with her family. There would be no source of comfort and she would simply be forgotten (Mbiti, 2008:107).

Barrenness was perceived as a curse and very abnormal. It was seen as a sign of witchcraft and evil magic, with the ancestral spirits of the girl's family as the cause. A childless marriage was a waste of time, since the main objective of marriage was procreation. That is why impotent men and barren women were called degrading names that made them feel worthless in society (Masakona, 2000:71).

4.5 TYPES OF AFRICAN MARRIAGES

In Africa there are many customs when it comes to traditional wedding ceremonies among African people. In some societies the ceremony lasts many days and is full of rituals. In this study, the marriage ceremony will be discussed within the South African context (Mbiti, 2008:135).

4.5.1 Monogamous

Monogamy is "the institution of marriage in which a husband and wife may have only one marital partner who is still living" (Senekane, 1995:16). In most African societies or culture marriage is more than a union of two individuals, but usually the unification of two families (Abimbola, 1995:54).

4.5.2 Polygamy

In the past polygamy was an important cultural custom where certain men had more than one wife. This custom was seen mostly among the chiefs, their relatives, important headmen and other prominent or wealthy people. The main aim of polygamy was not only to have many wives, according to African culture, but also to increase the family (Schapera, 1977:13, 14; Pilane, 2002:41, 42).

Apart from raising the social status of the family concerned, the purpose of polygamy was to help prevent unfaithfulness and engaging in prostitution on the part of the husband. If the husband had several wives, he could go to the city to work and live with one of the wives and could alternate, whilst the others remained behind and took care of the children and family property in the rural areas (Mbiti, 2008:139). The practical reason was more of a moral one

that allowed a man to have a sexual release within a marriage relationship, instead of finding release elsewhere (Ngundu, 2010:32). In the end polygamy caused jealousy and conflict, because wives were not treated equally (Pilane, 2002:41). Advocates of polygamy believe that the more wives a man has, the more children he is likely to have and the family will enjoy and experience greater chances of immortality (Baloyi, 2013:164).

A husband could take an additional wife if the first was barren or only had daughters. It was partly to solve the problem of sterility and partly to remove the shame and anxiety of unproductivity. Apart from childlessness, Ngundu (2010:31) adds that single girls of marriageable age would not fit anywhere in the social structure of African life. Traditionally the main topics of discussion of married women when they came together were their husbands and children. A single woman would be a misfit and to correct this phenomenon, older women would see to it that a single girl of marriageable age get married by becoming a second or third wife (Schapera, 1977:155; Mbiti, 2008:139).

Moreover, the wives of a polygamous household are normally ranked in order of priority of marriage. The first wife was the great wife, the next wife simply called second wife and so on. A junior wife was usually affiliated to the eldest wife. The arrangement of wives was sometimes the responsibility of the first if she had no sons, by bringing *seantlo* (one who enters the hut) to bear sons for her (Schapera, 1977:14). Additionally, more wives could be taken in the event of the death of an elder brother. According to African tradition, the junior brother inherited his brother's widow if she agreed, but if she refused, she lost her children (Ngundu, 2010:33).

Polygamy was a way of solving the problem of the ageing, unattractive or sick wife (Senekane, 1995:15). Another point raised was that once a wife menopaused, she was not supposed to have any sexual intercourse with her husband. If couples by mistake engaged sexually, they had to take special herbs to remove any risk of falling sick (Ngundu, 2010:32, 33). Polygamy used to be common amongst Zulus, but nowadays it is less prevalent. Traditionally a man could marry as many wives as he wished, as long as he had cattle to pay *lobola* to his in-laws. The more wives he had, the greater his reputation and influence in society. If a man had many heads of cattle but only one wife, his manhood was questioned (Von Kapff, 2011:60).

4.5.3 Levirate

In many African communities a woman became part of the husband's family upon marriage. She moved out of her father's house and relocated to her husband, her mother-in-law and the head of her husband's family. Her husband was free to marry additional women, but she was

not free to marry additional men. If the husband died, the wife now a widow was expected to marry another male member of her husband's family, especially if she had not yet borne any children. The levirate custom allowed a man to marry the widow of his deceased brother. The children born out of that union would be considered to be of the deceased brother, which enabled them to remain part of the deceased man's lineage (Chambers, 2000:104; Bekker & Buchner-Eveleigh, 2017:91).

Levirate marriage is an age-old practice and it is still prevalent. Nonetheless, in South Africa levirate marriage is on the decline due to increasing awareness of women's rights. Women are no longer obliged to enter into such a marriage (Baloyi, 2015:484). The study by Gwarinda (2013:37) states that some levirate unions give a widow options after the death of a husband. She may be required to choose one of the deceased's brothers to become her new husband or simply remain in her home with her youngest son. If she opts to return to her parents' home, she would be free to marry anyone she desired. On the third day, according to custom, the widow is given a spear and asked to give it to whoever she chooses to look after her. She will either choose a husband among the next of kin or give the spear to her son, if she does not want a levirate union.

4.5.4 Abduction

Traditional bridal abduction or *ukuthwala*[10] is a global practice and a custom in many African tribes. The study also revealed that different aspects of bride abduction and attempts at abductions have been carried out in different parts of the world and the nature and causes of bride abduction cases vary depending on the context where it occurs (Nkosi & Buthelezi, 2013:161, 162).

Ukuthwala is described as "a form of abduction marriage that is primarily practiced in some Zulu and Xhosa communities. It is an irregular form of marriage, generally prompted to force marriage negotiations that have either broken down or proved difficult to initiate. A prospective groom and his male allies will seize an unmarried girl or woman and will forcibly bring her to the prospective groom's family home. Although the women fight to escape, these abductions entail roughness sufficient to overcome this resistance. Word is then sent to the young woman's family informing them that their daughter has been taken by *ukuthwala* and that the abductor

[10] *Ukuthwala* is an abduction marriage or bride abduction (Rice, 2018:1) or to carry away with intent to marry (Nkosi & Buthelezi, 2013:161).

and his family hope to make her a wife in their home. Her parents are given the choice of entering into bride wealth negotiations with the abductor's kin or of demanding their daughter's return" (Rice, 2018:2). Consequently, when a man abducts a young girl by force, with the intension to marry her, it puts the girl in an awkward position, as it is against her will and consent of her parents. In most cases, because she faces abuse, rape, violence, torture or sometimes death (Molapo, 2004:74).

4.5.5 Elopement

Karimakwenda (2013:342) asserts that elopement with intention to marry is a precolonial custom and girls were not raped or beaten into submission. This practise or custom exist also in other parts of Africa. Ndindwa (2014:20, 21) reports that when a young couple eloped, the girl was aware of the intention and had conspired with her suitor. The force used was just for the sake of performance. The girl gave consent and there had to be preliminary negotiations to make the customary marriage legal. If the parents refused, there could be no valid customary marriage. Phaswana (2000:15) indicates that as with regular marriage, she was compelled to reside with her mother-in-law and watched very carefully for a month or more to ascertain whether she possessed the essential character of a virtuous wife. Molapo (2004:73) points out that some couples eloped due to unexpected pregnancy and feared informing their parents about their intention to marry. Schapera (1977:129) stresses that in the olden days the girl's parents had the right to kill the boy if he eloped with their daughter without their consent. Alternatively, the chief could request the tribal authorities to severely beat and torture the young couple.

The custom did not contemplate sexual intercourse until the status of the bride had been fixed and traditionally she would stay with women of that homestead until negotiations were completed. If both families agreed, *lobola* would be paid in the form of cattle (Bennett, 2010:8).

4.5.6 Informal marriage

Senekane (1995:18, 19) explains that informal marriages occurred amongst the poor classes of society who could not afford *lobola*. They were allowed by traditional African society, but never fully recognised or endorsed. The couple was free to choose each other without any aid from the family members, as there was no marriage arrangements or celebration. On the other hand, after marriage, when it was possible, the wife would assist the husband and also raise payment for *lobola*. The husband was able to spend his money on himself or his wife, instead of giving it to the in-laws. On the other hand, the woman could walk out, reject the husband anytime and she was not protected by the usual marital structures that operated subsequent to the paying of *lobola*.

4.6 CHOOSING A MARRIAGE PARTNER IN AFRICAN TRADITION

According to Mbiti (1975:135) and Kyalo (2012:214), different customs are observed when it comes to choosing a marriage partner. In some parts of Africa, the choice for partners is made by parents, even before their children are born, or by their relatives. In other customs, the young people choose the person they wish to marry and then inform their parents or other relatives. This is to ensure that they do get someone to marry. Other opportunities to meet partners are provided in social gatherings, communal work and by their knowing other people in the neighbourhood. Mphahlele (2010:98) maintains that traditionally the majority of African weddings were arranged and in most cases, they married their cousins. It was rare for a young man to meet a maiden and propose love to her, because girls used to walk in groups. He would rather tell his mother and if she was impressed, she would approach the mother of the maiden first. If they both agreed to the marriage and she was a virgin, they would clinch a deal and husbands would be informed later.

Previously in African society girls married at the early age of 14 years and hardly made a contribution to the decision. The family decided who married their daughter. There were some children who were lucky enough to choose their own spouses, but had to go through the rite of courtship. The man was regarded as a provider and once he decided to marry, he was capable of providing for his wife. However, in the 21st century where women have access to education and the business environment, the choice of marriage lies solely with them. Women are delaying the marriage process for various reasons (Siziba & Wood, 2015:19).

In the past a boy had to get married after finishing at initiation school. The family would suggest that if there was a brother in the group that had recently completed initiation school, he must marry before the next brother was sent to initiation school. If he did not succeed in marrying within four years of completion, his parents together with his school teachers would choose a wife for him (Van Rooyen *et al.*, 2006:29, 30, 37).

Another form of selecting a bride was choosing the most suitable cousin from the paternal aunt or especially the maternal uncle of the man. If no suitable cousin could be found, the family would seek a bride from remote cousins or a non-relative from the same tribe. Qualities sought in the bride to be was a good character, obedience, modesty, hard-working and originating from good ancestry. Her parents or family could not be practicing any form of witchcraft (Schapera, 1977:128, 130).

In the past, the death of an engaged person did not necessarily break the bond between the two families. If the girl died, her parents were expected to give her fiancé a younger sister or some

other relative to marry instead and if the boy died, the girl would be married to his younger brother and the children she bore him were considered to be the legal offspring of her original fiancé (Pilane, 2002:37).

The end of puberty was marked by a ceremony, which was the beginning of betrothals or courtship with intention to marry. Traditionally, marriage was arranged by parents even before children were born or immediately after birth. At times an infant could be engaged and the prospective in-laws would present a bull to show their intent. Intermediaries were delegated to negotiate the process of matchmaking. In royal families such practices were compulsory, as they were not supposed to marry commoners. They chose partners for their children at infancy into another royal kraal in advance and ensured that it occurred in future (Mokwana, 2009:71).

4.6.1 African Courtship and Dating

Mashau (2005:37) argues that courtship is a stage in between the time when two young people, male and female, agree to be in love with the intension to marry. It is an opportunity for young couple to learn and understand each other better and learn the basics of marriage. This is a new phenomenon within the African culture.

Olisa (2016:83, 84) defines courtship as "a waiting period between the time a man and a woman agree to marry each other, to the time of the performance of joining of marriage rituals, either traditionally by the elders in the couple's family". It is the preparation ground or platform for a good marriage and gives the man time to save money for *lobola*.

In Africa, courtship and romantic love were not considered a requirement for a marital covenant. Marriage was regarded as an institution where love and warmth for the spouse were expected to grow and mature over a period of time or years after the wedding (Senekane, 1995:21). In the past, parents would seek a wife for their son whilst the girl was still very young or was not yet born. This was known as *go tlhoma letlhokwa* (to place a stalk of grass) or *go baya monwana*, i.e. "to put down a finger". In the case of an unborn girl, *go opa mpa* (to strike a womb) was practised, especially between close relatives. If the girl's parents agreed to the match, the boy's father would send them a beast. Once slaughtered, the peritoneum (*lomipi*) would be hung round the neck of the girl or around the neck of the woman whose unborn daughter was being bespoken. The boy's people would then from time to time send various gifts to the girl and her people, such as clothing, milk and meat. The engagement ceremony would then indicate the formal approval of the betrothal (Schapera, 1977:130).

The purpose of male initiation among the ethnic groups mentioned earlier was to prepare young boys for manhood through cultural teachings, such as courtship, marriage, social responsibility and how to conduct themselves as men in the community (Miti *et al.,* 2012:12). A man was only allowed to court a girl after his circumcision, when he became fit to be a member of the warrior class. The young man made a series of indirect approaches, often through his sisters. The girl would indicate her acceptance by sending the young man a gift of betrothal beads. If her family was approving, the young man went ahead to erect a white flag outside his hut, as a symbol of his intention to marry soon (Gwarinda, 2013:32).

Traditionally, when a boy was ready to get married, he would act in a way that would make his parents aware of his readiness to form a family of his own. One such act would be to wake up very early and take all the cattle with their calves out for grazing. This was an important sign that alerted the parents of his readiness for marriage. When his parents woke up and discovered that he had taken the cattle out for grazing, they immediately knew that he wished them to dowry a wife for him. They would wait for the boy to come back from the pastures so that they can talk about his action. Normally, when the boy returned from his grazing exercise, he would not enter the house until his parents, who already know his intentions, talked to him. His father would approach him at the kraal, where he would be waiting, and ask him if he was attracted to a specific girl. If the answer was yes, the parents would look into the girl's family and make inquiries about the family so as to know whether the girl came from a suitable family (Ekanjume & Kolobe, 2012:2, 3). Futhermore, if the boy had not identified a particular girl, which was the case in the past, then his father would inform his family members that their son was ready for marriage. The family members on their part would start looking for a suitable girl from prospective families. When they agreed on a particular family, they would delegate the most elderly member of the family, usually a male because women were not involved in marriage agreements, to go to that household and request for the hand in marriage of the girl they had identified (Ekanjume & Kolobe, 2012:2, 3).

The man proposes marriage to the girl who accepted his proposal and established a love relationship. Thereafter the man would assign a delegation to ask for the girl's hand in marriage from her father (Mkhabela, 2017:3).

4.6.2 Lobola

According to the researcher, the practice of paying *lobola* is part of the cultural marriage process of many blacks in South Africa. There are stages and formalities families follow before a customary or traditional marriage can take place. Each African family, clan or ethnic group has their way of negotiating *lobola*, dowry, *bogadi* or bride price.

Kalule-Sabiti *et al.* (2007) state that *lobola* is an age-old African custom, which comes in the form of cattle. It is a gift from the man's family, to symbolise their commitment to the family of the bridegroom. Pilane (2002:37) concurs that *lobola* is regarded as a symbol of thanksgiving and registration of the marriage. Von Kapff (2011:50, 51) argues that in African tradition, it can be an insult to be married without *lobola*. Hence the bridegroom has to give *lobola* in the form of cattle, as he is not buying a wife but compensating the father for his trouble of bringing up his daughter and the loss of her labour. Moreover, he is continuing his bloodline. The more cattle paid, the more the marriage seems to work and traditionally, no wife dare oppose her husband or else she could be sent home and her father forced to return the cattle.

There is even more to *lobola* in the African marriage than just two families joining their children together as husband and wife. The union entails a ritual of slaughtering beasts, during the negotiations and after, in order to appease ancestors and inform them of the marriage. Some Christians also do it in the belief that without the blessing and goodwill of ancestors, the marriage union would not be successful. This is still so strong in the minds and emotions of some African people that responsible parents will risk a dishonest attitude to the requirements of the Church in order to be in good relationship with the ancestors (Setiloane, 1978:32).

Africans have always used *lobola* as a sign of the degree of wealth or a means to ensure that a husband has the ability to take care of a wife financially. It is a symbol of gratitude a man shows to his in-laws, to prove that he is serious about the marriage and capable of taking care of his wife. *Lobola* gives the husband and his family an opportunity to offer their appreciation to the girl's family, which is why in African culture marriage without lobola is not considered marriage at all (Baloyi, 2013:4).

This shows that *lobola* has an extremely positive impact on communities, as it brings two families together. It is a token that unites two families whose son and daughter are coming together in marriage. Marriage is therefore not just between two people, but between two families and even clans (Smith, 2011:4; Olisa, 2016:3). In addition, *lobola* help family structures to legitimise the children and confer marriage status to women. It may also be understood as a guarantee of good faith on the part of both families. It acts as an insurance or surety to demonstrate that the man is capable of providing for his wife in the marriage. In addition, *lobola* gives the man exclusive sexual rights to his wife and thus helps promote faithfulness within the marriage (Smith, 2011:4).

However, Mphahlele (2010:104) and Olisa (2016:109, 110) argue that *lobola* has become commercialised, as parents ask too much money. Smith (2011:6) indicates that in Southern Africa the original purpose of *lobola* has been misapprehended, distorted and often manipulated in modern society. The high price of lobola has shifted from a formality to a major financial transaction. It has contributed to social and family degeneration. Olisa (2016:110) suggests that the reduction of *lobola* will help men to settle, get married and solve the problem of cohabitation.

Additionally, Olisa (2016:116) mentions that as lobola continues to be supported or even endorsed by the Church in Africa, consequently pastors should mediate between the two families. This would bring fairness and stability and discourage commercialisation. Pastors should teach and educate the Church and families about:

- The purpose of lobola
- What is love
- Two families coming together
- The risks and consequences of paying too much *lobola*

4.6.3 African Traditional Marriage/customary marriage

Traditional marriage is defined as "a marriage that was sanctioned by parents of both parties without the knowledge of the Church and the blessing in the Church thereof. In African tradition marriage was viewed as the centre around which all lives revolved. It was through marriage that the life of the community was continued through procreation" (Mashau, 2005:53). Every member of the African community is expected to marry. Matrimony for African people and societies is the centre of life. It is an obligation, a prerequisite from corporate society and a sequence of life in which everyone must take part. It is the point where all members of the community meet: the deceased, the living and those yet to be born. Anyone who does not partake is like a rebel, a curse or a lawbreaker. Anyone who does not want to get married, under normal circumstances, is rejected by society (Mbiti, 2008:130).

Once *lobola* processes are finalised, the marriage ceremony can occur. Most African communities view marriage as the centre of existence. It is a drama in which everyone must perform and anyone who does not conform to societal expectations is reprimanded. For example, if one deliberately refused to get married, it meant that one was cutting off the vital link between life and death, thereby destroying the buds that would sprout on the human tree of life. Therefore, it was expected that every girl child would marry as a measure to ensure that

every woman had a provider. Selection of marriage partners depended very much on the parents, choosing a spouse was a family affair. Both the families of the bride and groom to be, study each other before an association was approved. This careful study took place because it addressed the differences in values, expectations and lifestyles (Siziba & Wood, 2015:16).

4.7 DIVORCE

Divorce is regarded as a delicate accident in marital relationships. From an African traditional perspective, marriage is a process and involves many people, not just husband and wife or *lobola*, therefore it's extremely hard to dissolve it. In some African communities it was completely unknown or very rare, such as when the wife was barren. This was not really the case either, because the husband could take another wife and still keep the first wife. If it was the husband who is impotent, his brother could fertilise his wife sexually for him and save the marriage from breaking down. Temporary separation was more common than divorce (Mbiti, 2008:141).

In the past divorce was not frequent amongst Blacks. A man would rather resort to a concubine or additional wife to humble, sort out and annoy the wife. The main grounds of divorce were abuse, excessive cruelty, lack of support from the husband, sorcery, adultery, non-performance of domestic duties or barrenness. A husband seeking to divorce his wife would neglect her, not eat her food, not sleep with her, not buy her clothes or plough for her. She would go back to her parents' home to report the matter. The parents and relatives of both families would meet to restore peace between them. If they failed, the matter would be sent to the ward for reconciliation which in turn referred the matter to the chief. If the tribal court failed to reconcile them, the chief would declare them divorced. The Chief would decide over the children, *bogadi* and property of the couple. The guilty party would be penalised: if it was the man, he would pay damages of cattle to the parents of the girl and if it was the wife, she would be thrashed. The huts would be left to the man, but utensils and clothes were given to the wife. The husband was requested to continue to support her, unless she was found guilty (Schapera, 1977:159, 160).

Masakona (2000:32) alludes that divorce is unusual in African society and signifies the death of a marital relationship and the marriage itself. A man cannot send his wife back to her parents and be recompensed, unless she had several miscarriages, committed incest, was a habitual cheater, a witch or a crook. Witchcraft and wizardry were the most wicked of all evils and such allegations could be traditional grounds for divorce and punishable by death. Excessive wife beating and maltreatment made some wives run away and desert their homes, especially if the

husband did not take care of her during illness or provide food or proper habitation for her. A man could divorce his wife when she neglected household duties, such as refusing to cook for him, laziness and disrespecting him and his parents.

Usually divorce proceedings involved the couple's respective families. The belief was that the marriage was not brought about by the husband and wife on their own. The husband had to consult his relatives and inform them about their marital problems. If neither family was able to reconcile the partners, the woman was sent back to her father's home. She would be formally escorted back home (Phaswana, 2000:124, 125).

4.8 MODERNITY

Nürnberger (2007:10, 218, 256, 257) mentions that emancipation came with modernity and radical changes took place. The cultural atmosphere of some African communities was transformed as certain traditional values, norms and communal structures were dissolved. They rejected all authority be it some traditional beliefs and practices, the Church, the Bible, the State, the family, the parents or the ancestors. Individuals lived their own lives, made their own decisions and employed their own means to pursue their own goals and interests or satisfy their desires. Modernity has affected the traditional norms of African communities to the extent that teenagers could no longer be controlled. This caused a great deal of tension in traditional families, as the offices of the African parents were challenged. The question is what went wrong with black teenagers? Were they taught to discover their limits before puberty, did they internalise the cultural assumptions of their society? When black teenagers reached puberty, were they given freedom to discover themselves, their identities or their potential and limitations within their cultural, social and natural context? Maybe too much freedom has replaced responsibility.

Below are some examples on how modernity affected tradition, customs and beliefs of Africans.

Today's generation is no longer interested in initiation schools. They don't see its importance and refuse to attend it. They consider it a waste of time and enter into marriage without being taught about married life. Unfortunately, this has led to a high rate of divorce, as they are very impatient and don't know how to handle their marriage. Most blacks have changed and prefer to send their children to hospitals to be circumcised. Initiation school and involvement in the regiment were the first prerequisites before a young man could tell his parents that he wants to marry. Young women, however, are no longer bound to wait for the husband to go there first. They are both free to marry when they feel the time is right (Pilane, 2002:25, 34). The weakening of traditional educative systems, such as initiation schools, may be why sexual

morals among the youth have become loose and uncontrollable. Such cultural structures served as platform for parents and the whole community to provide sexual education and supervise teenagers (Kroeker, 2015:88).

Nowadays the process of courtship and marriage has changed remarkably. Exactly how young adults search for a potential spouse and find it is poorly understood. Relationships undoubtedly involve a degree of trial and error. Some courtships proceed almost immediately to marriage, others evolve steadily from a casual relationship into a more permanent union and others totally dissolve (Clark *et al.,* 2009:1, 3).

Modernisation and globalisation has affected all cultures, especially the African culture. Payment of *lobola* was destroyed by the white settlers. *Lobola* was a practice frowned upon by the missionaries, because it was tantamount to buying a wife. The African people preferred cattle as a symbol of life and fertility not money. Commercialisation of *lobola* is a mistake in the African society. Mphahlele is of the view that the system of *lobola* may disappear at one point, due to economic factors and assertion of women as equals, especially if women can occupy positions of leadership in the Church and state (Mphahlele, 2010:104, 106).

Marriage rates in South Africa, particularly among young Africans, are very low and have declined even further during the post-apartheid period. A possible reason could be the high rates of male unemployment in the post-apartheid period and the financial burden of some marriage procedures (*lobola*) for young African couples (Posel *et al.,* 2011:102).

It should be noted that the Christian tradition does not accept levirate marriage, where a widow is taken into the household of a brother of the deceased. The doctrine totally rejects a widow marrying her brother-in-law to honour her potential fertility and bear children. The Bible states that widows should be taken care of and encourages widows and widowers to remarry after the death of their spouse (1 Tim. 5:3-16), but the African tradition disputes this view and believes that a widow cannot remarry, because she is still married. Remarrying into a different kinship group means two things, namely: the widow's family has to return the bride wealth as a sign of divorce and secondly she is not allowed to depart with her children. On the other hand, Western tradition deems it an unfair outdated social practice that deprives the woman of her freedom, while it leaves a man free to marry if his wife dies. Polygamy also lost its value in the African traditional marriage, as Christianity became more dominant (Senekane, 1995:24, 86-88).

Molapo (2004:17) challenges the Church, traditional leaders and government of appropriating the position of condemning all customs/cultural practices, which deprive women of their respect and their fundamental basic rights and human dignity. The young generation needs to be educated and understand the value marriage as a special calling from God, based on agape love and complete faithfulness between the partners. The youth should know that it is God who choose men and women to respond and enter into marriage with freedom, personal consent, and they should have full knowledge of its seriousness and permanence. The Church should provide moral and spiritual support to the victims of abductions who might have suppressed anger and are suffering arising from this abusive and oppressive practice of some African men against defenceless African women.

Marriage rates have declined in South Africa and cohabitation rates have risen. A large share of African women currently cohabits with a partner. Traditionally, in the event of pregnancy before marriage, the father of the child would have been expected to marry the mother and the rights to the child would be transferred to the father's lineage through the payment of *lobola*. However, a number of ethnographic studies describe a growing acceptance of non-marital childbirth. Cohabitation without the payment of *lobola* would undermine one of the original functions of *lobola* payments, which is to compensate parents for the loss of their daughter's productive and reproductive labour power, and would signal profound disrespect for the custom of *lobola* (Posel & Rudwick, 2015:178, 179). In South Africa, the Church also faces a profound and urgent challenge to find a voice about sexuality and a practice of sexuality that is both relevant and transforming. The theology of "no sex before marriage" dominates our churches, yet many Christians do not take the message seriously or conform to it. Statistics have shown many teenagers in the churches are sexually active and our churches are filled with people who are cohabiting. Therefore, to adhere to biblical principles, the Church needs to work very hard at convincing people of the value and importance of the ethic of no pre-marital sex. The first position is the traditional understanding and practice of sex and sexuality- "sex is designed only for marriage". Adopting this position has a number of strengths. It affirms and stands within the traditions of the Church. Faced with a world that has narrowed sex to the expression of appetite, much work will need to be done in Sunday school, confirmation classes, sermons, marriage preparation, divorce counselling, etc., to abstain from sex outside of marriage and to help people practice a healthy sexual life. Equipping people to live faithfully to this ethic of sexuality will entail defining what kind of sex is reserved for marriage, e.g. penetrative sex, mutual masturbation, kissing, petting, self-masturbation, holding hands, etc. and how to grow

up with and embrace one's sexuality. The Church needs to help adolescents understand sexual feelings, sexual arousal, sexual fantasy and how these can become part of their spirituality, their relationship with God. The challenges are endless and the Church has to assist married couples deal with sexual difficulties that they face, while at the same time assisting the single to mature and cope with their sexuality and build quality relationships with God and others (Germond, 2004: 64-67).

Nürnberger (2007:212) emphasises that whether people are Christian or not, they are aware that modernity has dismantled the foundations of cultures including the indigenous culture and the notions of Africans.

Eventually the challenge is for African tradition to meet somewhere with Christianity. What seems to be lacking is, according to Mokhoathi (2017:1), how Christianity can fully be communicated or consummated within the cultural context. Africans seemingly yearn to experience Christianity within their traditional setting, yet it still remains to be established how Christianity can best be communicated within an African cultural context. So far, the contextualisation of Christianity seems to have permitted a merger of a form of syncretism.

In conclusion, much as traditional culture has changed through the impact of modernity and Christianity, Chapter 5 will outline African Christianity as a form of syncretism and also address the Osmer model on the same normative task of "what ought to be going on" from the Christian perspective.

4.9 PRELIMINARY SYNTHESIS

This chapter engaged African worldview and culture with regards to sexuality. It articulated values and practices that challenged the prevalent sexual practices among black teenage girls in South Africa. It interpreted the normative task of "what should be going on" in the African worldview, culture and tradition. It differentiated between the African worldview, culture and tradition in a South African context, which was mostly classified as African Traditional Religion.

The study concluded that every nation and society had its own culture be it Western or traditional. It also touched on how sexual colonisation transformed African culture through Christianity, migrant labour and urbanisation. The African worldview and morality were discussed and the notion about morality was its universality to all mankind. However, it highlighted the challenge of African morality being misunderstood and Africans regarded as

lacking morality and moral consciousness. The section gave an overview of African sexuality and the importance of morality, and how through oral education older women passed cultural norms of sexual behaviour and gender identity to girls and younger women. The study indicated the sexual controversies and restrictions in Africa when it came to women, e.g. virginity and widowhood. African sexuality presented many difficulties for researchers and scholars in terms of beliefs and attitudes in traditional cultures and religions. The chapter pointed out how African cultures regulated sexual relations, which included strict upbringing and mostly of girls. Sexual development of teenagers was cited as very important, even for the Church, in their journey to adulthood. The study cited platforms such as youth groups, catechesis and sermons that the Church could use to teach youth about sex and sexuality from the biblical point of view. The study highlighted the fact that sexuality was never a private affair. From onset of puberty, it showed how the family and community assisted the youth in terms of transitions that took place in the body, the rite of passage to adolescents and how it assisted them in avoiding premarital teen pregnancies.

To understand sexual socialisation from a cultural perspective, the researcher examined nine ethnic groups namely, Batswana, Bapedi, Basotho, AmaNdebele, Matsonga, VhaVhenda, AmaXhosa, AmaZulu and MaSwati in South Africa. The study discovered that it was taboo to discuss sexuality, especially in the presence of children, hence initiation school was used for sexual instruction and a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. The syllabus of the initiation school included traditions, customs, acceptable behaviours, domestic life and parental responsibilities of raising children, sex, marriage, respect of the chief and community as well as how to face challenges.

The study emphasised sex before marriage was discouraged and virginity as key to marriage. Virginity was the symbol of purity for the body and moral life, hence virginity testing under the supervision of older maidens, mother and grandmother was utilised to prevent unwanted pregnancy amongst African teenage girls. The chapter indicated how values have changed, casual sex and teenage pregnancy were no longer regarded as culturally immoral. The study pointed out that external intercourse was permitted and used as a form of contraception amongst the youth. The researcher gave an overview of marriage and family life in the African tradition, stating that marriages were arranged by parents and to be legal it involved two families and the transaction of *lobola*. Children had no say, some were even betrothed before they were born. The subdivision discussed the purpose of African marriage as ancestral and for procreation, including the roles of husband and wives. Husbands were regarded as heads of families

including extended family. Fathers had to be responsible, available and good role models. Wives had to bear children, nurture them, and respect their husbands.

The chapter indicated that sexual intercourse was sacred and mainly reserved for marriage. Children born in a marriage were deliberated, as they concerned both the living and the dead. Hence, pregnancy was a seal of marriage and complete integration of the woman into her husband's family and clan. The section involved children born outside marriage, i.e. through adultery and those born outside marriage but as a result of the husband neglecting and ill-treating the wife or in case of impotent husband (in this case arranged). Illegitimate children were included in the study and described as very rare amongst blacks in the past, but on the increase due to modernisation. The sub-division reflected on barrenness and how such women were stigmatised. Failure to bear children in African society was regarded as a curse and abnormal. The marriage was a waste of time.

The study discussed types of marriages in the African context and summarised as monogamy, a union of one husband and one wife only. Polygamy involved a husband with many wives, an important aspect of African customs and culture. The main aim was to remedy the situation of barrenness of the first wife and remove the shame and anxiety of being unproductive as well as offer legal sexual relief to the husband when his wife was breastfeeding. The section described levirate marriage, whereby a widow had to marry the brother of the deceased and the children born would be regarded as those of the deceased. Abduction involved forced marriage and *lobola* negotiation occurred afterwards. The study highlighted elopement as a mutual agreement between a boy and girl that did not include any ill-treatment or sexual abuse. Informal marriage occurred amongst the poor classes of society who could not afford *lobola*. They were tolerated by traditional African society, but never fully accepted or supported.

When it came to the choice of marriage partner, the study explained that the majority of African marriages were arranged by parents and in most cases, they married their cousins. African courtship and dating were reviewed and did not occur as it does today. Courtship and romantic love were not considered a prerequisite for a marriage agreement. Both the girl and boy must have attended initiation school to qualify for a marriage partner. Should an engaged person die, the bond of the two families were not broken. The study explained *lobola* as a token of appreciation that a man showed to his in-laws to prove that he is serious about the marriage and capable of taking care of his wife. It discouraged the present commercialisation of *lobola*.

The section included the customary marriage and anyone who did not marry was rejected by society. The study showed that traditional marriages declined after modernity. The study

expounded on divorce as an accident in marital relationship. Divorce was very rare amongst blacks and conditions of separation were indicated.

The chapter cited modernity being responsible for the cultural transformation in African society, as Africans rejected all authority of their traditions, beliefs, customs, parents and ancestors. The study showed remarkable changes, such as parents preferring to send their children to hospitals rather than to initiation schools and people choosing their own partners. The chapter stated that polygamy was still practised among certain ethnic groups, which became a problem when men passed away. Levirate marriages became less common, since widows and widowers sought out their own partners. Commercialisation defeated the purpose of *lobola*. Marriage rates declined, due to male unemployment. The sectioned mentioned that Christian tradition freed widows from levirate marriage; divorce rates escalated; and norms and values changed, as children born out of wedlock increased and had the right to be associated with their biological parents.

It seemed then that the African worldview and culture inherently propagated that marriage was the space for healthy sexuality and bearing and nurturing children. It placed a high value on virginity and sexual ethics, which seemed to be in conflict with the prevalent sexual behaviour and attitudes of black teenage girls. While it is true that the way in which Africans viewed their own culture may have changed over time, these values seemed to hold valuable principles that could help to mend the broken ways that are currently destroying many young lives and futures, and therefore, needs to be revisited and rekindled. Making it part of the Church's ministry and mission may be one way to challenge societal ills, like teenage pregnancies.

The next chapter reviews Christian values in order to uncover the Christian principles for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls, to challenge prevalent sexual practices leading to unwanted pregnancies.

CHAPTER 5: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICES AMONGST BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN TEENAGE GIRLS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter forms the second part to the third movement of Osmer regarding the normative task of Practical Theology, namely "what should be going on". As African tradition and culture suggest a certain way of doing things in term of sexual relationships and marriage, this chapter provides Christian perspectives for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to challenge prevalent sexual practices.

In order to do so, this chapter describes how African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity merged in order to produce a unique value system that guides marriage and family life amongst African Christians. The chapter discusses the purpose of marriage by looking at companionship between families, the building of a family by having children within the bond of marriage and thereby avoiding immorality. The study includes the topic of the duties of a husband and wife, mutual love. A biblical view of choosing a partner is deliberated on as well as courtship and dating, premarital sex and the risks involved, premarital counselling, the wedding ceremony itself and the honeymoon. An overview of Christian ethics in terms of sexuality is also discussed intensively, marrying an unbeliever, being single and divorce.

5.1.1 African Christianity

Christianity was introduced to Africa by the early missionaries, mostly as part of colonial enterprise. It was transplanted into African soil, accepted by most Africans and is continuing to grow in numbers. Its curriculum included education and mission work that saw the Church seeking to teach Africans how to read, write and think from a Western perspective. As such they have to be appreciated for educating Africans and liberating Africa. Education became the gateway through which Christian faith was introduced. The arrival of Christianity was, however, a mixed blessing that brought the Good News and on the other hand, in spite of the good intention, disrupted and dislocated African society and its values. The traditional way of life, perceived as uncivilised by missionaries, came under pressure for being in conflict with the Western worldview. Missionaries and Western powers strategically replaced the indigenous culture with the Western culture, which was regarded as superior. They sought to transform Africans and saw little need to engage in traditional social structures, as they regarded them as primitive and inferior. So the traditional social order had to be replaced to provide the missionaries with a satisfactory social environment for Christian living. For

example, the ways of worshipping, songs and content of doctrines like creation, sin, salvation, etc. introduced were totally strange to Africans in their Western form. This is not new, however, as transcultural communication of the gospel occurred in the New Testament when Paul brought the Gospel from its Hebrew origins to the Greeks. As missionaries did not take African culture and its social order serious, the impact of Christianity was weakened. They did not distinguish between Western civilisation and Christian civilisation. As such, the Gospel was not sufficient for African converts as they were expected to reject or renounce their traditional social structures. Africans could instead have been encouraged to reform the traditional patterns of Africans according to the Gospel. Since Western Christianity could not address certain complex issues, Africans reverted to their traditional culture for solutions. Whilst Christianity is based on faith and hope, African religion is principally practical. There are problem-solving sets of beliefs and rituals that provide immediate solutions. As a result, many Christians in Africa are living in two worlds, i.e. the traditional and the Christian, (Van der Walt, 1994:5, 10, 13, 15, 16; Grebe & Fon, 1997:9, 21; Van der Walt, 2003:23, 24, 27; Mokotso, 2015:160).

The way in which the Gospel was presented in Africa created complications for Christianity. The problem of transmitting the Gospel of Christ was created by how Africans saw, understood, interpreted and constructed Christianity within their traditional religious worldview and context. The Western nature of the missionary model motivated the African search for an African theology and identity. Though the Gospel was translated into the local vernacular, the missionaries refrained from using the traditional African worldview to transmit the Gospel. African theologians and scholars felt that the African pre-Christian religious cultural heritage could have been used by the Western missionaries as a means of presenting the Gospel. They believed that the biblical and Christian concept of salvation in Jesus the Messiah, is equally found in the African traditional religion (ATR). African theology claimed that God has "intermediaries" or "mediators" between Him and man just as in the case of Jesus in Christianity. The question is: Are those "intermediaries" comparable or equal to Jesus Christ of Christianity? Historically Christianity has been accused by world religions and cultures of teaching and preaching conversion, which means to change or abandon one's religion and culture for a new one. Conversion to "Christianity" raises issues of religious and cultural pluralism, but conversion to Jesus Christ raises personal and existential questions. On the other hand, African theology believes in equality of religions and this view leads to pluralism and parity. It believes in the universal salvation and grace without Christ of

Christianity and not reserved for Christians only. According to their beliefs, universal grace is not found in Jewish religion alone. Furthermore, Christ who is claimed by Christians does not make sense to them as they believe in God alone, meaning the Father who is the God of all religions and cultures of all people in the world. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ the Messiah, the Lord and Saviour of the whole world, cannot be made to be of a particular religion or culture. He is the Lord of all races Jews, Africans, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, etc. (Turaki, 1997:114, 115; Turaki 1999:11-13, 16, 17, 26, 29, 30).

It should be noted that most African Christians have grown up in societies that are complexly intertwined with the long established doctrines of that ethnic group. These indigenous African doctrines or religions differ in detail, but they concur in the rudiments of the spiritual nature of the world; the existence and remoteness of God; the role of spirits and mystical powers; and the way man relates to his world and to God. Moreover, ethnographic studies have shown that African people love their culture wholeheartedly. It is their main source of power that regulates matters relating to the land and the weather, on which most Africans depend for their survival. ATR acknowledges the existence of the Supreme God, hence Christianity experienced phenomenal growth in Africa among believers in ATR. The challenge is that African culture has to meet somewhere with Christianity. This appeal of Christianity to the traditional African is basically due to the fact that the Gospel message provides the answer to a big emptiness that ATR leaves in the hearts of its followers, namely the relationship of man to the Supreme God. Becoming a Christian does not automatically change one's worldview completely nor does it need to change completely. Conversion is first and foremost a switch of commitment from whatever one trusted in before, to Christ and the Word of God. In the African setting this usually means abandoning and disowning the ancestor cult and all dealings with the spirit world and trusting Christ. From there follows a new purpose in life and a new way of dealing with life's problems, whatever they may be in light of the worldview of one's culture (Grebe & Fon, 1997:9, 21).

Adamo (2011:1-3) refers to ATR as "the inborn and aboriginal religion of Africans, embraced by the forefathers of the present generations. It is described as the religion that emerged from the sustaining faith of the forebears of the present generation of Africans passed from generation to generation and still practiced today by the present generation of Africans". The crucial characteristics of ATR is the belief of the predecessors in the existence of the Supreme God, divinities, spirit beings, ancestors and mysterious powers, good and evil and the afterlife. The author further states that the situation of the encounter of Christianity and ATR is not all

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that different in South Africa. During the Apartheid era in South Africa, ATR was extensively practised, although it was underground. The reason for the secret practice was that the missionaries, by the 19th century, 'whether they were Congregational, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran or Catholic, were aggressively opposed to traditional African practices that they considered barbaric and based on superstition' (Adamo, 2011:1). However, since the birth of democracy in South Africa, ATR practices have occupied an important position in public life. This is also visible daily on certain television channels.

Africans have also merged ATR and Christianity by including their cultural rituals, such as animal sacrifices for ancestors, which is prevalent in indigenous religion. From a theological perspective, syncretism thus comprises a spiritual unfaithfulness to Christianity. It means a forged basis of combining bits of various beliefs, ideologies and views including the contradictory in order to formulate a doctrine that is completely new (Mokotso, 2015:158).

Africans are rooted in their culture, irrespective of their Western exposure or educational background. Most of them believe in dual practices, namely the African and Christian, but still retain their cultural ties (Choabi, 2016:13, 14). In the same way Christians, especially certain intellectuals, consciously attempt to combine their faith with some aspects of an animistic religion. They argue that all the spiritual doctrines of their predecessors were part of God's revelation to man. Christianity has only added certain aspects to their customary way of worship. This phenomenon contributes to most people slipping into syncretism unintentionally. They worship God as Christians and do not intend to worship other deities or spirits. However, as soon as they find themselves confronted in everyday life with many problems and fears, they revert to the traditional home solutions obtained through divination, sacrifices and charms (Grebe & Fon, 1997:25, 26).

Evidently different Church structures and traditions have been imported from abroad and African Christians have inherited them without even understanding their meaning. Much as the missionaries were sincere and dedicated together with their African helpers to organisations and ministries, such as Bible translations, building schools, etc., they were not theologians. Some of the African evangelists and catechists were illiterate or had little formal education. They could not address theological or academic issues that might arise from the presence of Christianity in Africa. Mission Christianity has come to mean for some Africans a mere set of rules, rhythmless hymns and other rituals. It is a Christianity that is locked up for six days a week and only practiced on Sundays. It is a Christianity that operates in a building and the rest of the week it is empty. For Africans it is not enough as they want to

worship, dance, clap hands and do bodily movements in line with powerful hymns, shed tears and voice their sorrows when the moment arises. Hence the birth of African traditional independent churches that have incorporated culture in order to expresses themselves, feel at home, empty themselves before God and glorify Him in that fashion (Mbiti, 1975:226, 228).

Nevertheless, authors, such as Schineller (1992:1); Oleska (1995:388); Grebe and Fon (1997:26) and Mokotso (2015:159) argue that inculturation of the Gospel should be examined and judged whether it is acceptable and authentic. They argue that syncretism must at all costs be avoided, because it distorts and corrupts the Gospel message, while inculturation to some extent is inevitable and necessary. Syncretism replaces critical and basic elements of the Gospel and introduces irreconcilable elements of culture, mingling authentic beliefs and realities of the revealed faith with other spiritual worlds. In this process, elements of another religion are borrowed without being critically scrutinised through Christian lenses. In the end, the basic Christian teachings are often weakened or totally destroyed. As a result, many turn to the indigenous practices for help and start to live double lives. They look to their Christian faith for final salvation, but look to those practices for answers to their difficult circumstances. They are not aware that by taking this route they endanger their faith and their hearts will struggle to surrender completely to God (2 Cor. 4:4). Christian leaders need to recognise the strategy the enemy is using and to fight the Christians. They need to awaken and realise the opponent's purpose is always "to steal, kill and to destroy the sheep" (John 10:10).

No matter how loudly the Gospel is preached, Africans believe in testing its message in the light of its own culture. The African can no longer accept wholesome condemnation of his culture, regardless of how dissatisfied the Church could be. The spirit world in which Africans believe is a reality. Having recognised this reality, the practical step is to show African Christians that "real power is not in the hands of these spirits, but in the hands of Jesus Christ" (Desai, 1962:29, 110, 134). Turaki (1997:146) also challenges the Church to address syncretism. Since the Church was founded upon the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross, it has the spiritual and moral responsibility to tackle the issue of syncretism. The Church is the representation of God's reign and commissioned by Christ to preach and teach the truth (Matt. 28:18-20).

It is clear from the above views that the transformation that occurred in African society was as a result of colonialism. Although there are differences between the traditional and modern forms of family life in Africa, much has changed and in both instances family lives and marriages need urgent attention. Family as the foundation of traditional African society is in

a crisis. Before the disruption of African culture, family life embedded in African culture and beliefs, gave the individual an identity, a sense of belonging and security. An African home was a human being's first school; a school of life and for life and a centre of both formal and informal education. Marriage as well as family life within the African context, as a mystery to those who are looking forward to it and to those who want to know about it, is discussed from a theological perspective below (Van der Walt, 1994:252, 259; Melgosa & Melgosa, 2007:24).

5.2 THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE WITHIN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Marriage is an institution of God (Gen. 2:24) and an intimate, lifetime unification between a man and a woman (Matt. 19:5). The Christian marriage can only be meaningful if it represents Christ's relationship with the Church (Eph. 5:22-33) (De Bruyn, 2008:145). Marriage as an institution ordained by God, between a man and a woman, is a social structure that brings two families together. When a man and a woman marry, in other words, it should be by mutual consent that they are going to live together permanently (Arugu, 2014:374).

5.2.1 Biblical view of marriage (Gen. 2:18-24)

In a marital relationship God makes two people, i.e. a man and a woman, into one person. They will share a life, with no boundaries between them. As one flesh they will endure as long as they live, with love, harmony and trust that cannot be dissolved (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6). Marriage involves an oath, a vow or a pledge that is witnessed by God. God also wants a man to only have one wife so that families may raise godly children (Mal. 2:14-15) (Adeyemo, 2006:14, 1095, 1148).

5.2.2 Monogamy

The marriage God has presented from the beginning is a monogamous one. The first marriage in Genesis 2:18-23 was God creating a helper for the man as his partner (Gen. 2:18), because in the process of naming animals he did not find a helper as his partner (Gen. 2:20). God took one of the man's ribs, to fashion a woman, and brought her to him (Gen. 2:21-22). After seeing what God brought to him, he exclaimed: "this one shall be called 'woman' for out of 'man' this one was taken" (Gen. 2:23). This form of language pronounces a marriage between a man and a woman. This clarifies that the sexual union was monogamous and to be shared between two marriage partners. The couple became one flesh and this monogamy is clear in Genesis 2:24. This first marriage indicates a heterosexual relationship between a man and a woman (Davidson, 2007:21).

5.3 THE BIBLICAL INTENTION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a holy institution ordained by God. He designed it for companionship, intimacy, procreation, sheltering of the family and the socialising of the children. Hence, in Genesis 2:24, God instructed the man to leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife: and become one flesh (Ekpendu, 2016:39).

This section outlines the three pillars of marriage, namely leaving, cleaving and becoming one.

5.3.1 Leaving

"Leaving a paternal home to another place is a significant and symbolic gesture which might not be taken in its face value. It entails most certainly a necessary separation which is required for a new life with another person" (Jerome, 2016:526, 527). The question is what are those things which couples ought to leave when they are married and those lifestyles that cause distractions and interference with spouses that have to be avoided (Ekpendu, 2016:44).

God's plan for marriage first involves leaving. Leaving parents means recognising that a new marriage is the formation of a new family. This new family must be a higher importance than the former family of parents, which is why the denial of partners to truthfully leave their parents causes arguments and emotional strain. Couples should take into consideration that leaving to cleave is crucial to reinforce a marriage that will survive in hard times and be the excellent relationship that God intends it to be (Ekpendu, 2016:40, 41).

In the beginning God set up an institution for the human race and all cultures. Since Adam had no father and mother, "leaving" in Genesis 2:24 was meant for every human being. The emphasis was not on who leaves, male or female, but on the act of leaving. Therefore, leaving is meant for all members of the human race; everybody with a father and mother. Firstly, the man separates from his father and his mother in order to cling/cleave to his wife. Secondly, he separates so that they may become one flesh. This leaving means that the man cannot hold tightly or stick to his wife unless he leaves father and mother. Again, they cannot become one flesh unless he leaves father and mother and cling to his wife. The sense of leaving in this context is deeper than physical separation from the parents. By the leaving of father and mother, the marital union is shown to be a spiritual oneness. Thus leaving applies to the woman as well as to the man, a vital communion of heart as well as of body in which it finds its consummation. A man leaves his parents to start the new responsibilities of establishing his own household. He does not violate his commitment of natural unity and harmony towards his parents, but has to leave them in order to begin a new life in a new relationship. As vital

and permanent as the child-parent relationship is, a proper husband-wife relationship requires leaving the earlier relationship. The bridegroom cannot be both a dependent child and an independent husband in the same home. By detaching himself from his parents, it empties him and enables him to be filled in the new relationship. Achieving this new state must make him exclaim like Adam, "This is now bone of my bones" (Gen. 2:23) (Jerome, 2016:528, 529).

Baloyi (2013:50) contends from an African perspective that leaving one's parents does not necessarily mean to move geographically from one place to another. Leaving means, a man must put the interest of his wife first above all others, including his parents. Couples who do not acknowledge that they are grown and still consult their parents struggle to cut the umbilical cord. Being too dependent makes it difficult for them to leave their parents and cleave together. This affects their love and joy in the union (Mashau, 2005:14).
Partners remain children and dependent, as long as one of them does not leave his or her family. As long as they bypass one another to discuss their crucial matrimonial issues with their parents, ring their homes often and spend more time with their original families, they will bring tension to their matrimonial home (Dominian, 2001:168).

5.3.2 Cleaving

To cleave means to "stick to", "join together" or to "cling to". A man discontinues with the past, leaves his parents, empties self and becomes receptive to start a new life. The specific purpose of cleaving in Genesis 2:24 is for a man to cling to his wife. It is a passionate relationship between two persons, who detached themselves from previous relationships in order to create something new. The idea of clinging is a total pledge and loyalty to another in an inseparable and intimate matrimony. In order to attain this indissoluble union, it is necessary that couples separate from previous strong relationships, like with their parents. In conjunction with this natural tie, all other acquired relationships should be sacrificed for this (Jerome, 2016:529).

Although God instructed men to leave, women should motivate their spouse in the cleaving process. God made man and woman to leave their parents with the view to establish an own family. No marriage can be fully happy and achieve its purpose, without this first expected step. Moreover, as the baby cannot grow and mature without the cutting of the umbilical cord from his or her mother, so is marriage. No marriage can progress, develop or mature until the man and woman separate from their parents and establish their new home. Marriages fail

because couples stumble on the action of leaving and this phenomenon applies to men. A man should leave his parents and find employment and care for the wife. He should provide clothing and shelter and value this new independence away from his parents. He needs to leave his friends, solitary way of living and other pastimes and disruptions and cleave to his wife. This implies that in marriage a wife is superior to the other earthly relationships of the man (Ekpendu, 2016:40, 44).

Cleaving is the love corner in which the husband and wife are glued to each other and emotionally bond together. God blesses the union and when the couple remains faithful, strong in love, they become unbreakable and committed and are able to share their whole life together. Love which cleaves, matures and there is no place for divorce in that marriage (Mashau, 2005:14, 15).

The Omniscient God counsels the man, who is usually so dearly attached to his loved ones, to leave every diversions and cleave to his helpmeet. The present-day married man and those who are still to marry need to heed God's command "to cleave" (Gen. 2:24). Most marriages cannot experience full enjoyment, because many no longer view marriage as an institution of God at Eden. They are influenced and carried away by societal forces that are against the Word of God. Marriage is now viewed as a treaty and a union that can dwindle and die off with little or no challenge, thus its existence becomes slim (Ekpendu, 2016:40, 44). For example, in African villages there is no such concept as divided, differentiated and segmented space. The young men build their houses close to their parental homes and all have to be close to their ancestral land and graves. The new bride would be expected to live with the mother-in-law for a specified period of time, particularly when the husband is working far from home. When her husband returns, he would discuss and give money to his mother for the provision of all the children that by the way includes his new wife. This is compounded by the fact that young African women marry very young to men much older than them. This is clearly a lack of differentiation by the newly wed African man and it is contrary to what Genesis 2:24 states in presenting the union between a married man and his wife as the relationship that should take precedence over all other relationships (Gannon, 2004:427). Hence, the husband must not live with his wife in the house of his parents. He should have his own flat/home and be self-standing from the rule of his parents. An effective bonding depends on the couple separating themselves from all other and every other worldly attachment and cleave to each other, only then can the marriage survive (Ekpendu, 2016:40, 44).

Additionally, a man should leave old relationships in order to join or cleave to this new relationship and hold fast to his wife. He should be committed to her and be faithful to that commitment, and the wife must do likewise (Brown, 2014:15). Finally, leaving to cleave is not only at the commencement of the marriage, but a way of life. Throughout the marriage a couple has to leave all kinds of immaterial relationships and cleave to one another forever. The inability to leave and cleave is one of the root causes of marital stress, which forces marriages to break or impact negatively on society. Marriage, family and society can be a better place for all if everybody adhered to God's command "to cleave". The concept of "leaving to cleave" must be taught at schools, in churches and to society, as it is the bedrock of a successful home (Ekpendu, 2016:44).

5.3.3 Becoming one flesh

According to Genesis 2:24, the precise purpose is for a man to cleave to the partner in marriage is for the two to become one flesh. The woman and the man form one identity or sameness. This sets their union on the highest and most integral plane. The woman was created from a significant part of the man and when they become one flesh, according to Genesis 2:24, they become what they were in the beginning. Becoming one flesh is a result of the leaving and clinging together of the two partners and is more than physically uniting. It also involves union of their personal characters and sharing common moral values. They become one in their being on account of their original common elements: bone and flesh (Jerome, 2016:530). Becoming one flesh in marriage unites a man and woman in sexual intercourse, willingly. That consummation becomes a seal of commitment between the man and woman (Brown, 2014:60).

Marriage is one of the most intimate of all human relationships, because they become one flesh. The main objective of marriage is to be fertile and multiple and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28) and for companionship (Gen. 2:18). It is by implication to have children and gratify sexual needs. Sexual intercourse is the way that the couple can demonstrate their love for each other, but it is also the way that they can protect themselves against seduction and immorality. One flesh shows the deep attachment man has with his wife and it is the deepest and most complete surrender of one person to another. Similarly, sexuality is much more than mere physical intimacy. It is also about emotional security and mutual completion. In 1 Corinthians 6:16 the union is not only a legal and sexual union, it is the full joining of two persons in their totality, a spirit-to-spirit unity, a soul-to-soul inner disclosure and openness. The sexual act is more than just a flesh-to-flesh union. It is a connection of person-with-

person. It has an eternal, creative and transcendent quality, a spiritual nature, because the innermost soul of the one partner is joined with the innermost soul of the other partner (Theron, 2004:13, 14).

Sex is a good gift from God in marriage and strengthens the union of married men and women. It makes the bond unbreakable and strengthens the marriage commitment, love, loyalty, trust, fidelity, honesty and respect (Mashau, 2005:15, 16). However, teenagers should be made aware and taught that sex outside marriage is a sin before God (Gen. 39:9) and invites the wrath of God (Mashau, 2006:47).

5.4 MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT WITH GOD

"The biblical idea of marriage as a covenant is still a powerful and solid foundation for Christian marriages in a time when a new ethic of marriage has arisen due to the postmodern, post-secular and post-ecclesiastical paradigms" (Vorster, 2016:7). Marriage is covenantal and spiritual in nature and prepare the married couple freedom to walk together as equal partners in Christ. This means that in this marital journey, neither husband nor wife is superior or inferior. They are naturally joined together on an equal basis, with their gifts to serve God in a permanent marriage, with mutual trust, care and guidance as well as love (Vorster, 2016:7). Marriage is a deep spiritual relationship, because it is a three-sided bond between man, wife and Christ (Eph. 5:21-33). It is a covenant between man and wife before God. Therefore, this covenantal character of marriage makes it a sacred bond that is characterised by permanence, sacredness, intimacy, mutuality and exclusiveness (Vorster, 2008:467).

The Christian marriage is a reflection of a loving covenant uniting Christ with the Church and the participation in that covenant. It is a covenant of love and loyalty, through which God made Himself present to His people. Covenants are witnessed by God and He becomes the guarantor. Christian marriage is a graced covenant or sacrament. It is a sign of Christ's covenant of love and fidelity with His bride the Church. The grace of Christ perfects the natural love, strengthens the indissoluble unity and sanctifies the spouses. The blessing of a covenant marriage is a seal in which angels are also present as witnesses and to which the Father in heaven gives His consent. The sacrament is found in the covenant agreement or consent of bride and groom. The groom takes his bride to himself to love and to cherish, to form a partnership of life and love with her, in which there will not be any limit to their giving of self. That is why God becomes the author, witness and guarantor of that marriage (Paul & Palmer, 1975:27-30).

5.5 THE PURPOSE OF BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

From the beginning, God had a purpose with instituting marriage (Gen. 2:18-25). In African society once a girl or boy reaches a certain age, for example over 30, he or she is pressurised into marrying. Some unmarried Christian girls even leave the Church and engage in sexual relationships just to have children and curb the stigma of being overage and childless. For that reason, it is imperative for the present generation and African youth and families to discover God's purpose with regard to marriage (Mashau, 2006:13, 17).

5.5.1 Mutual Help and Companionship

One of the objectives of marriage is that a husband and a wife should be each other's helpers. Genesis 2:18 states that a man should not be alone, he must have a suitable helper, a companion. Mutual help is both physical and spiritual and both man and woman differ in that regard. It is in this manner that they complement and enrich each other as human beings (De Bruyn, 2008:149).

Husbands and wives are reminded to be both friends and lovers to one another, as Jesus in His redemptive work is our Friend and Lover (1 John 3:2). Both husband and wife must be friends and counsellors and trust one another deeply. They complement each other and this involves listening and loving, sharpening (Prov. 27:17) and enhancing each other with loving affection (Prov. 17:17a) (Keller & Keller, 2011:130, 277, 278)).

5.5.2 Building a family/Children in marriage

God commanded man to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis 1:28. God gives fertility and fruitfulness to human beings. He also gives them the desire to be sexually intimate in order to give them children. God intended children to be born in marriage and through sexual union (Gen. 2:24). Husbands and wives should raise their children to the glory of God (Tit. 2:4; Prov. 1:8). It also serves to enlarge the human race and maintain the Church of Christ (De Bruyn, 2008:150). Children are also a blessing and a gift from God and improve a status of a woman as she is promoted to motherhood (Steele, 2011:16).

Research has shown that a mother and a father together are able to raise their children better than relatives can. To support this view, the burden of raising children is evident amongst most mothers in the context of a stable two parent family (Post, 1998:21). It is important to know how to raise godly children (Prov. 22:6). It is imperative that parents set goals and is not for the government, school, church, babysitter or day-care centre to assume that responsibility. Parents should provide in their children's physical needs (1 Tim. 5:18), recreation, enjoyment, good education and most of all prepare them for life that they may

grow up to be happy in their marriages and be good citizens and neighbours. They should be trained to serve God that they may receive eternal life. Regardless of the challenges, if parents take their rightful positions, their children will be saved (Pratte, 2013:82-88).

Parents need to see their children in light of the Gospel. They need to find out who their children really are by spending quality time with them. They need to see them not only as their sons and daughters, but also as actual brothers and sisters in Christ. They should train their children to avoid evil by appropriating godly discipline (Prov. 19:18; 13:24; Heb. 12:5-9) (Jones, 2011:70, 71, 73). A home should also provide morals for children. The discipline the parents give their children allows them to escape destruction (Perdue, 2000:185).

In line with Strong and Cohen (2017:6,390), marriage as a socially and legally recognised union between two people is expected to be permanent. They are united sexually, to cooperate economically and give birth to, adopt or rear children together. There are parents who are unconcerned, passive and indifferent to their children and teenagers' needs. They do not discipline or instil good moral values such as respect and obedience or train equip them with correct behaviours either. Such children suffer consequences, such as deteriorating socially and academically, and their psychosocial development and behaviour is affected.

Parents must have clear parenting objectives or a plan when it comes to discipline, spiritual growth, homework hassles, etc. They should not adjust their good parenting values by compromising and making minor adjustments. For example: neglecting faith areas in the family, like a specified prayer time, because parents are too busy at that time and postpone it. Good parenting requires couples who will persevere and fix their eyes continually on Christ (Heb. 12:1-3). The family should also have recreation time together, i.e. playing together and having fun, building lifelong traditions and keeping a family very close, healthy and stress free. It is the duty of parents to create a positive atmosphere in their home, especially for teenagers, and show them affection, warmth and encouragement. Parents should persevere and raise children who love God and aid them to love themselves (Burns, 2007:24, 27, 93, 100).

Mutual submission (Eph. 5:21-25) also applies to the relationship between children and their parents (Eph. 6:1-4) (Burge & Hill, 2012:1369). Children are gifts from God and ought to be loved. Their role is to obey and respect their parents. Parents should model mature Christian behaviour by not abusing them or neglecting them physically or spiritually (Eph. 6:4). Parents

should also listen to their children, teaching them to fear and love God by doing the same (Collins, 2007:215).

Parents are urged to teach their children Christian values. They should realise that their parents' faith is an essential part of their lives. Prayers, Bible studies and worship should be an integral part of their lives too. They should be guided, disciplined and taught things by their own parents (Prov. 22:6), rather than through television or the Internet. The teenage years can be difficult for them, as they go through a stage of change and growth. Some may be rebellious, coming home late, engaging in drugs or leaving the Christian faith. Parents should continue to pray for them support them and request guidance from God (Brown, 2014:117, 120).

5.5.3 To guard against Immorality

God created marriage as a monogamous institution i.e. relationship between one male and one female. Monogamy was the creational order and the perfect will of God. The aim of marriage is mainly for mutual help and guidance (Eph. 5:23-25), physical and spiritual fulfilment and to thwart immorality (Vorster, 2008:466).

One of the ways a husband and wife can show love to one another is through sexual intimacy. Since there is so much immorality, married couples must engage in sexual intercourse frequently to avoid temptation (1 Cor. 7:2). They must fulfil they marital duty, unless they mutually agree to abstain for some time in order to pray and then continue to be sexually intimate again (1 Cor. 7:2, 3, 5) (De Bruyn, 2008:149).

In traditional Christianity, sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage. Christians believe in chastity before marriage and fidelity in marriage. The Bible speaks of sexual intercourse within the context of marriage. Prostitution was prohibited and a man who had sex with an unmarried woman was required to marry her. Anyone who had intercourse with a married woman was executed (Crook, 2013:125).

Moreover, sex outside marriage is sinful and affects the body where the Spirit of God lives. Sexual immorality is a sin against our own bodies (1 Cor. 6:18-19) and, therefore, better to marry than to burn with sexual desire (1 Cor. 7:9). Christians should avoid immoral sinful sexual talking and jokes (Collins, 2007:341, 342).

It is for this reason that it is the right time for the African church to stand up fearlessly and preach against sexual immorality. The Church needs to take a strong stand on the word of

God concerning marriage, sex and family. It must demand sexual purity and faithfulness of its members and leaders before and during marriage (O' Donovan, 2000:85, 86).

5.5.4 Barrenness/impotence or childlessness in marriage

Infertility is defined as "a failure to conceive a child after twelve months or more of exposure to regular unprotected sexual intercourse" (Mben, 2018:21). Although children are primarily perceived as a gift from God, there is a deafening silence within the local churches about barrenness and impotence. There are also no specific pastoral programmes in churches aimed at addressing childless and infertile couples and their condition tends to be overlooked. Infertility equally affects men and women, but the latter is most often blamed. Instead there are celebrations of families with children; Mother's and Father's Day; and representations of Mary chiefly within her role as the mother of Jesus (Mben, 2018:19-21). In patriarchal contexts, women often bear the brunt of childlessness or "sonlessness" and are branded "unfruitful". As a result, they run the risk of either losing their marriage or sharing their husband in a polygamous family with a "fruitful" co-wife (Abasili, 2015:588).

Children are a blessing from God (Ps. 127:3). If the Maker does not give couples any, they should accept His will and realise that children do not complete a marriage. The couple should pray to God for the gift of children, as Hannah did whom the Lord answered (1 Sam. 1:27). They can either seek medical help and if it's an incurable situation, they should accept it and/or opt for adoption (Masakona, 2000:70, 71; Mashau, 2011:67, 68). It is a fact that there are unions that will never be fruitful, where either the wife or husband has a medical condition. They may never conceive and hard as it may be, they should not blame themselves (Gen. 30:1-2). They should rather walk in mutual support and comfort. Couples who have children need to be empathetic towards those who do not have children (Brown, 2014:114).

African men must first acknowledge that children are gifts and favour from God. Therefore, during premarital counselling and through sermons, marriage seminars, the Church should emphasize and teach that children are not the only basis for a marriage. With or without children, a husband must love his wife and his family should also support the marriage, regardless of the circumstances. Husbands should also bear in mind that they are just as responsible for barrenness as their partners, until the facts are medically proven. They must be protective and supportive towards their wives, following the loving example of Elkanah towards his barren wife in 1 Samuel 1:5, 8. The Church should also assist barren women who live with an inferiority complex and help them to regain their self-esteem, dignity and respect of her husband, the family and the community. Spiritual caregivers should remind and teach

such couples not to judge one another, but should instead medically consult with a doctor who can advise them with a way forward. The couple should always remember even though they consummate, it is God who creates human beings. They should know that marriage is not only joyful, but that sorrow is also a part of life and that they need to be ready to deal with challenging situations such as barrenness (Baloyi, 2017:4).

5.6 THE ROLE OF SPOUSES

The Bible encourages married couples to mutually submit to one another. Husbands have to die to themselves for the sake of their wives and likewise wives must also die to themselves for the sake of their husbands. This promotes the unity of spirit through the bond of peace (Eph. 5:21-24, 33) (Burge & Hill, 2012:1369). Couples who love and submit to one another and also find common ground communicate better (Oom-Dove, 2018:123). After all, neither husband nor wife is perfect and on this marriage expedition they should not expect perfection. They should work together in their respective roles to make their relationship the best it can be and grow in love and holiness. They should build a home together and have a time for devotion, to pray together and also separately. They should belong to a church where they worship together. They should have the right attitude towards money, by being good stewards and using it wisely (Brown, 2014:104, 110).

5.6.1 Duties of a husband

Marriage was instituted by God and by the Christian standard is strictly between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:18-25). A family is a social system that has its own unique rules, gender roles and power structure (Nartey, 2014:41).

In African families the husband is the head of the family and should lead through servanthood, imitating Christ (Phil. 2:6-8). He must be a good role model by praying with his family, be devoted to God, lead a holy life and be a good companion to his wife (Mashau, 2006:54). It should be clear from the beginning of marriage that a husband's headship and authority is not about pleasing himself (Rom. 15:2-3). He has a duty to serve the interests of his wife and being the head does not mean he will make all the decisions or get his way in every disagreement. His role is to be a servant leader and sacrifice his wants and needs to please and build up his wife (Eph. 5:21) (Keller & Keller, 2011:277).

A good man provides for his family, balances work and home life, and takes care of his family. Children whose fathers are involved in their lives grow up being more compassionate towards others, socially competent and more persistent in problem solving. Nurturing of sons by their fathers create functional adult men with secure masculine identities. The most precious gift a

father can give to his children is to help them visualise a future for themselves and guide them to feel connected to eternity by helping them to be acquainted with spiritual values (Stoneberg, 1998:72-74).

Nartey (2014:41-42) highlights that the chief role of a Christian husband is to leadership or heading the family. As the head of his wife and family (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23), the following is expected from the husband:

- He is to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be a servant leader like Jesus (Matt. 20:26-28), providing good governance and leading by example. A husband does not control, but stands for what is right.
- He is to sacrifice for his family, just as Christ did for the Church (Eph. 5:25). The husband is to reside with his wife with divine wisdom (1 Pet. 3:7).
- He is to impart spiritual knowledge to his wife at home (1 Cor. 14:35). The husband must love, esteem and respect his wife (Eph. 5:25).
- He must make quality time to enjoy love, good sex and companionship with his wife only (Prov. 5:18; 1 Cor. 7:3-4). He must love her selflessly and unconditionally, as he loves his own body (Eph. 5:28-29).
- He should not be hostile towards his wife (Col. 3:19), nor abuse her in any form i.e. physically, emotionally, sexually, financially, verbally or otherwise. He must honour his wife so that his prayers are not delayed and protect her as a weaker vessel, both spiritually and physically (1 Pet. 3:7).
- He is to pray for his wife and family, just as Christ continues to intercede for His Church (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 6:10-18).
- He must assist his wife with housework and not overload her with too much work, but also rest when tired.
- He is to provide clothes, food and shelter for his family and other needs such as healthcare and education. He must be faithful to his wife (Mal. 2:15). He must share with his wife the caring and training of the children and be a good and available father (Prov. 22:6).

As can be seen a husband who loves his wife will use his authority with love and not to get his own way and please himself. That is why it is important for a man to marry someone who he is truly convinced will practice biblical principles (Pratte, 2013:46).

5.6.2 Duties of a wife

Nartey (2014:42) refers to a Christian wife as a noble woman, who has to depend on God for help. Her major role is to support her husband in all things, as she is his helper and companion (Gen. 2:18). The manner in which she supports her husband is as follows:

- Morally (1 Kgs. 21:5-7)
- Intellectually (1 Sam. 25:3-38)
- Emotionally (Rom. 12:15)
- Spiritually (Rom. 16:3; Acts 18:26)
- Financially (Prov. 31:13-25), including following a budget
- Submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22-24, 33), also as an act of obedience (1 Pet. 3:5-6) and holiness (1 Pet. 3:5)
- Love her husband and children, striking a balance between them
- Refrain from nagging or using abusive language
- Remain faithful and diligent and keep the home in order, cleaning, washing, etc.
- Protect her husband (Ex. 4:24-25), also from strange women (Prov. 5:3)

Maisiri (2015:33, 34, 70) explored Ephesians 5:22-24 and Colossians 3:18 exegetically on the subtopics of "male headship" and "female submission" in marital relations. Since Christians are informed by the Bible, the author argues that African culture and some African Christian families have abused the concepts of male headship and female submission. This has led to abuse of some women and misinterpretation and distortion of the Bible. Much as a woman has to submit to her husband in everything, Scripture does not mean she cannot question any wrongdoing in marriage. Male headship and female submission are necessary, but the challenge is how the marriage is perceived, understood and practiced by the married couple and their attitude in general. Additionally, it is correct to apply the Word of God in our daily life, however before we can implement it in our lives, we should analyse the context, situation and the circumstances of the original readers. The word "submit" in Ephesians 5:21-22 is binding to everyone, including men and women, husbands as well as wives (Baloyi, 2008:5, 8).

This is why a wife must not give her husband unconditional obedience. No human being should do so, because as Acts 5:29 states: "We must obey God rather than men". A woman must not support a husband in unbiblical deeds in the name of submission and love, for

example, pleasing the husband by watching pornography together, gambling, selling drugs, etc. (Keller & Keller, 2011:278).

5.6.3 Mutual Love

It is the responsibility of a husband to love and care for his wife. Ephesians 5:25, 28 instructs the husband to love his wife just as Christ loved the Church. It is a higher calling and the husband is also to love his wife as he loves himself. He should love her unconditionally, unselfishly, sacrifice for her and take care of her. He must communicate this love through words, gifts and dating her, which bring healing and confirmation that love is still alive in that marriage. The husband should provide for his wife's needs: physically, emotionally, sexually, recreationally, socially and spiritually. The husband should assist in household chores and responsibilities. He should protect his wife and communicate with her in a gentle manner, i.e. being respectful in speech towards her and never comparing her with other women in any respect (Mashau, 2006:52-54).

5.7 CHOOSING A PARTNER

In biblical times marriages were arranged by family patriarchs, centred on the relationship between families. The main concern was economic, as the groom's family would bestow gifts upon the bride's family. Once the agreements were completed, the couple would be united in marriage and the sexual relationship would follow. The love between a husband and wife developed within the marriage. The normal order was marriage, sex and then love (Crook, 2013:117).

The above view is supported by Genesis 24:1-67, which reveals the biblical type of arranged marriage. Adeyemo (2006:44) indicates that Abraham arranged a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:2a) and assigned his chief servant under an oath, specifying the place and the family of a close relative (Gen. 24:2b, 3a). Marriage also involved the family and their approval to the marriage was very important. Abraham's servant explained his mission, how God had blessed Abraham and his wish for Isaac to have a wife (Gen. 24:35-49). After relating the story, he distributed the gifts to bless the family (Gen. 24:53) as was custom. The author highlights that family consent is very important, not just that of the couple. Marriage involves parents giving their daughter in marriage, just as God gave Eve to Adam in Genesis 2:22. Rebecca agreed and committed herself to the marriage (Gen. 24:58). Parents should also listen to their children when arranging a marriage. It should not be forced, otherwise it would be a sin before God. It should be noted that Isaac and Rebecca never engaged in premarital sex. They married and Isaac loved her (Gen. 24:65-67).

Scripture explains in Isaiah 34:16 that it is the mouth of God that calls the mates/partners out and His spirit gathers them together. God also use attraction and emotions as a medium to draw mates together. It is thought-provoking to note that since the husband is a picture of Christ, he ought to be the one who makes the first step to approach a woman or seek out his bride. Christ took the first step to seek out His beloved, as evidenced in Luke 19:10 and Romans 10:20 (Njoroge, 2009:23-25).

One of the most difficult tasks in life is choosing a life partner. It is a step that should be done through prayer and with complete trust in God. Christians are expected to marry believers only (2 Cor. 6:14). They must choose partners whose love is sincere and unconditional, taking time to know the other person before committing to him or her as well as knowing the Christian lifestyle and commitment of a person to church life. One must look beyond physical appearance and beauty. There should be mutual attraction, communication, respect, trustworthiness, someone to care for, a companion to support one another and a willingness to accept one another's weaknesses before marriage. It is also best to choose a partner with the advice of parents (Mashau, 2005:25, 26).

Children must be prepared for marriage when they are small. Home is a better environment to learn about marriage, where children see their parents in love, working together and having fun. Marriage is not always smooth, they should be able to see challenges that their parents face and combat. It could be illness, finances, sorrow, and disagreement. Whatever the problem, it should be shared as a family. It should be up to the parents how they share information or present it to their children. Children should grow up in a home where there is genuine love between parents and where reality is not hidden, but faced by all the members of a family as a unit. The day-to-day living in a family is the best tutoring for marriage. If parents teach children consistently and diligently, with love, they will be ready to begin their own marriage on a firm base (Schreiber, 1975:45, 46).

In Christian tradition, a man must take the initiative to propose to a woman. A woman must freely and willingly consent to enter into a binding marital relationship. For example, Rebecca willingly and publicly agreed to marry Isaac (Gen. 24:58). The parents or guardians of both the bride and bridegroom are also important. Marriage is a holy institution and that is why in the Jewish culture a man would betroth a woman, set her apart and make her off limits to others, like in the case of Joseph and Mary (Matt. 1:18). A woman willingly set herself apart for one man (Ngundu, 2010:190).

When choosing a partner, the Bible does not provide a clear answer regarding the age difference between the man and the woman. Therefore, it is better to focus on love and respect for one another. Age difference must be overlooked and a woman must submit to her husband, as commanded by God. Where God is the centre of marriage, the question of age will not be a crucial one (Mashau, 2005:35).

Although cohabitation and divorce is increasing at an alarming rate, some people prefer marriage and family life. For them marriage provides intimacy, security, faithfulness and a sense of spiritual stability. Family is a viable structure for religious and spiritual growth. Christian spouses live a religious committed life throughout with their families. They transmit and intensify Christian values and attitudes. Their faith and prayers develop their families. Marriage is a mystery, but not beyond human understanding. Marriage endures and children are born and grow in relation to God's love and providence. Scripture tells us little about the holy family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus. It is, however, clear how close-knit the family was. Even when they couldn't find Jesus, they went back to Jerusalem as a family to look for Him (McHugh, 1975:13-15).

Christian marriage must not be confused with white weddings, where the bride and the groom are dressed specifically in wedding gowns or clothes for that day. Marriage in the Christian light has its origin from God and can only be called marriage when God has blessed the couple. Once united, they are not allowed to divorce because it's a lifetime commitment and not a contract. The only exit is natural death, making marriage indissoluble and permanent. Hence, the Scripture command that what God has joined together let no man put asunder (cf. Matt. 19:6-9) (Mashau, 2011:54,55).

5.7.1 Courtship and dating

Dating is defined as "a form of courtship, in that it encompasses the social activities of a man and a woman to assess the possibility of deepening their relationship over time. Dating includes a variety of symbolic activities that communicate attraction to the other person, suggesting a potential relationship status and expectations" (Jackson *et al.,* 2011:630).

Courtship refers to "a period during which a young man or woman finds a companion for life. Courtship gives the two people an opportunity to study one another closely in their attitudes, conduct and the true worth of their friendship" (Martin, 1982). Proverbs 18:22 says "whosoever findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour from the Lord". As a result, it would be foolish for people to suddenly marry without getting to know each other or being mutually attracted or happy together. Beginning of courtship should start with being

sanctified as a child of God, a new creation, a true Christian and not only a church member. One must have opened one's heart to the crucified Christ. One must have prayed for God to lead one, to know whether it's the right partner and an unbeliever or not (Deut. 7:3). God always guides one to the best to ensure happiness. One must look for qualities of kindness, cheerfulness, patience and industriousness. When in courtship attend church services, Bible studies, prayer meetings or other special church services together; read and discuss the Bible together; visiting the sick and old-age homes; and have hobbies and enjoy good music together. It helps the couple to avoid the pitfalls and dangers of dating, such as fornication outside marriage, and not honourable before God (Heb. 13:4) (Martin, 1982).

In courtship and dating seeking the face of God in prayer is very important. The objective of Christian dating and courtship is to seek the will of God in prayer for a marriage partner. Couples should know it is a test, because not all dates end in marriage. For example, God had already chosen Rebecca for Isaac (Gen. 24:12-15). It is also a time to learn social skills in dealing with the opposite gender. For instance, in courtship, a man should learn how to communicate meaningfully and how to sacrifice for the woman. On the other hand, a woman must learn to respect the man, be supportive and draw the best out of him. They should both focus on spiritual growth and attend church activities. They should not date different partners, thinking that they will be able to make the right selection easier (Brown, 2005:1-7).

Rather than rushing and making hasty choices, couples should call on the Lord to lead them to the right person (Gen. 24:11-15). The servant's prayer is a model for all who are single and longing to get married. Single individuals should pray to God with confidence and ask for him for guidance and a sign. The Lord answers all prayers and fulfils His promises (Jer. 33:3; Is. 65:24) (Adeyemo, 2006:45).

Prayer is a gift of eternal life that allows a believer to come directly before God with boldness and confidence, He hears and answers (1 John 5:14) (Akin, 2001:205). For example, the servant of Abraham showed the wisdom of placing everything in God's hands, rather than manipulating events (Gen. 24:14) (Burge & Hill, 2012:33). Abraham's servant prayed for a sign from God (Gen. 24:11-15). Christians should pray earnestly to be able to choose the right partner and don't need any special signs from God. Love for the other that is more than sexual attraction, will guide them. In a culture that knows nothing about arranged marriage, He alludes that it would be a mistake to marry without love (Brown, 2014:94, 95).

5.7.2 Premarital sex

Whilst the institution of marriage is under attack in African society in South Africa, the rate of premarital sex and cohabitation is escalating among the youth (Baloyi, 2013:62). Premarital sex is defined as "sexual intercourse engaged in by a person or persons who are not yet married. It is generally used in reference to young people who are presumed to be of marriageable age, or will one day be married, but who are engaging in sexual practices prior to their being sanctioned within a marriage" (Mashau, 2011:02).

Sex before marriage, even when there is mutual consent, is wrong. It was something that was even forbidden in the olden biblical times. For example: Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was dishonoured/raped by Sechem who then fell in love with her and wanted to marry her. There was nothing wrong in loving her, but to sleep with her before she became his wife was wrong. Such humiliation and disgrace was not only on Dinah, but affected the whole family. It was also a barrier to the real marriage celebration (Gen. 34:1-7; 13, 31) (Adeyemo, 2006:63)

It is a concern that very few young men and women in South Africa are virgins when they marry as a result of premarital sex. Teenagers wrongly believe that having sex before marriage is a helpful way to prepare for marriage. However, very often the sexual encounter occurs with a person they will never marry. In addition to violating the word and the will of God (1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Thess. 4:3-6), there is a risk of unwanted pregnancy and of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases, which can lead to lifelong illness and even death. Hence, the need for urgent divine intervention for black teenagers in South Africa in the area of premarital sex (O' Donovan, 2000:79; Mulovhedzi 2004:4).

5.7.2.1 Dangers/risks of premarital sex

Studies have shown that many forces are undermining the biblical concept of marriage and family. Teenagers revolt against the moral and religious standards taught by parents. Fornication and infidelity are commonly accepted. For that reason, it is important that those who intend to marry take into account how to prepare for marriage (Pratte, 2013:7). Sexual intercourse has become an acceptable part of dating among teenagers and young adults. They deliberately engage in premarital sex and this phenomenon delays marriage (Strong & Cohen, 2017:224).

Premarital sex is sinful before God, because sexual intercourse may only occur within marriage. For example: No matter how much Jacob loved Rachel,, he spent seven years working for her father and never had intimate relations with her (Gen. 29:20-21). Premarital sexual relations was regarded as fornication during Old Testament times and heavily

condemned and punished. If a man had sexual relations with someone he had not married, he had to pay *lobola* and if the father consented, marry the girl (Deut. 22:28-29) (De Bruyn, 2008:132-135).

De Bruyn (2008:134) adds that a girl who engaged in premarital sex may later suffer harmful consequences such as:

- Cervix cancer
- Psychological disadvantages, like fear of pregnancy
- Emotional disruption
- Feelings of inferiority, guilt, uncertainty
- Sexual frigidity and aloofness
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Even if the couple was forced to marry, premarital sex will still impact negatively on their marriage. For example, it hinders their normal sex life as couple, they are never satisfied. It could lead to divorce if they realise they never belonged together (De Bruyn, 2008:135). Some forced marriages resulting from teenage pregnancy are never successful. In most cases the teenage couple never had time to know each other or bond closely. They are unable to cope as parents and do not have the right parental skills. They become easily irritated, impatient with their children and are unable to play with them or to show them love and thus resort to corporal punishment (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017:186).

During coitus the couple become united in a permanent and unbreakable relationship, referred in the Bible "one flesh". This leads to the assumption that sex before marriage is biblically wrong. Pre-marital sex denotes that ethically, morally and physically it is not acceptable nor legitimate before God (Mulovhedzi, 2004:3).

5.7.2.2 Prevention is better than cure

Unmarried Christians or betrothed partners who are still abstinent, must be careful where they meet, refraining from kissing one another in a secret place and caressing each other's private parts. Couples must learn to abstain from watching any of the abundance of sexual material in the world today, because it will affect their sexual lives. Sex materials will never develop or improve courtship, it will only break it. In fact, courtship grows better when couples abstain and do not fondle each other. They must learn to control their sexual feelings and not have sex until marriage, in obedience to God's Word that says "run from sex sin" (1 Cor. 6:18). Even if they know that they are going to marry, they must avoid sexual temptations as much

as possible and should not indulge until they are married (1 Cor. 6:13) (Mulovhedzi, 2004:72, 76).

Biblically, the youth must follow the example of Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1:18-19, 23. Mary must have been a young teenager and Joseph older at the time of their engagement, nonetheless, Mary was a virgin. Though the law of betrothal was binding, as if they were husband and wife, they never had any sexual relations or lived together. It was not permitted (Blomberg, 1992:57).

African youth is cautioned against premarital sex and teenage pregnancy. Moreover, it is a sin to choose to be sexually active and want to satisfy lust by sexually test-driving a future spouse. Teenagers should be taught that sex is meant for marriage only, which is something that African traditional families and societies have professed. The problem is some couples marry just because of unexpected pregnancy, in a bid to legalise the child, without knowing what marriage is. Consequently, couples must be made aware that if they become involved in premarital sex, they sin against their bodies, which are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:18-19) (Mashau, 2006:43, 47).

Abstaining from sex shows respect for oneself and for one's partner as well as God's precious gift of marriage (Adeyemo, 2006:63). Black teenagers should be discouraged from marrying because of having children, since they may not be compatible and base their marriage on the wrong foundation (Mashau, 2006:18). There is the shallow reasoning amongst youth that premarital sex is right as long as it does not lead to pregnancy. Virginity is still as important today as it was in the Old Testament. The truth is, premarital sex is biblically and ethically wrong (Ash, 2003:213).

5.7.3. Premarital counselling

Premarital counselling has become accepted as a way of assisting couples prior to the wedding and help them create a healthy marriage. It is a means of decreasing marital discord and harmful effects that can lead to divorce. Premarital counselling is very important and pastoral counsellors must choose and address topics that are most appropriate and flexible. They must be relevant and meet the needs of the couples, as they are intended to bring positive changes in the premarital relationship and enhance the marriage. Cultural issues have to be addressed in terms of their impact on expectations, roles, communication, problem solving, parenting and rituals within the marriage (Murray, 2006:69, 79; Stutzman, 2011:1, 2).

Mashau (2006:6-7, 10-12) states that through premarital counselling, the marriage counsellor must help the couple to:

- understand the purpose of God for their marriage: they must be born-again Christians who are committed to Christ and also love one another;
- find out the involvement of the couple in the Kingdom of God, i.e. their role in the Church (Matt. 6:33): knowledge of Biblical principles about marriage and Christian family;
- pave a lasting and healthy marriage through good communication;
- plan their marriage according to their financial standing so that they should not incur great debt: assist in conflict over finances and friends; and
- help solve problems of divorce and other marriage-related setbacks, such as infidelity: The counsellor must make couples aware that there is no smooth sailing in marriage.

In the process of dating, a couple may discover that their friendship is not going to lead to marriage. Counselling helps to break such a relationship graciously should the other party may not be ready (Collins, 2007:516).

5.8 WEDDING CEREMONY

A wedding ceremony is a very important day in the lives of the engaged couple. In the midst of preparations, the couple should make appropriate prayers to the Lord that the marriage service, Scripture, Hymns and refreshments may be memorable (Brown, 2014:100).

Marriage is a social, religious and spiritual union of individual people. Usually couples meet from time to time until they mutually decide to become engaged and marry. They make a commitment to each other for the rest of their lives. They mark the beginning of their marriage by holding a wedding ceremony (Gilbride, 2009:9).

A wedding ceremony is referred to as "a public declaration of a lifelong commitment to each other, which offers the couple an event to remember" (Tukker, 2013:67). In difficult times when temptation to walk out on the marriage is looming, it helps the couple to remember themselves, their inward commitment and the vows they made in the presence of witnesses (Tukker, 2013:66, 67).

A church marriage is a form of marriage, but is only legally recognised by the authorities of the state if it is carried out by a legal marriage officer. In order to obtain a legal marriage certificate, the couple should make sure they choose an authorised minister to get married or

after the marriage, verify and legalise their marriage at the Department of Home Affairs (Senekane, 1995:37).

Couples in Africa are alerted to be careful about unnecessary financial expenditures regarding wedding ceremonies. God was central to the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, yet there were no unneeded expenses or ceremony involved (Gen. 24:67) (Adeyemo, 2006:46).

5.8.1 Honeymoon

The honeymoon is referred to as a period after the wedding ceremony in which two married people are left in the company of each other to learn to do things together. Mostly they go to a private place, where they cannot be disturbed by anyone. It is then that they adjust, express their love romantically and plan how they want to build their new marriage and family (Mashau, 2011:65).

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God provided for newly married couples in Deuteronomy 24:5. For instance, when a man was newly married, the Law of Moses forbade him to go to war. He was to be joyful at home with his wife for one year. The couple needed time to spend together and adjust. It was sort of a honeymoon or holiday to know one another deeper and better. Even today a honeymoon or holiday is important for the new couple, as it gives them time and space to express their love and recover from all the pressures. This is the right time to start sexual intercourse and treat each other with love and tenderness, relaxing in each other's company. It is also time to build their spiritual life by attending church services and Christian witnessing (Brown, 2014:101).

5.9 A BIBLICAL VALUE SYSTEM: CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SEXUALITY

In the light of Christian ethics and African values, the space for sexuality is inside the bond of marriage.

The Church is presently challenged with different beliefs and viewpoints on sexual relationships and marriage. Much as the Bible still present us with guiding principle for healthy relationships, it is argued that it does not give us all the answers for ethical questions. Nonetheless, the Church and Christians are often silent on matters pertaining to sex, premarital sex and sex outside of marriage. Despite God and sex rarely mentioned in the same sentence, yet people still yearn to experience and understand the mind of God on sexual matters and be spiritually guided. It becomes difficult to answer question such as where sexuality and spirituality meet. One way to address the question is to try to find a link between spirituality and sexuality. In this way, spirituality could gain relevance and expressing one's sexuality could find a moral foundation. All human beings are both spiritual and sexual beings. As a

result, they all require to express their spirituality and sexuality in a moral, and dauntlessly natural way (Tukker, 2013:1).

Christian ethics is defined as the "critical evaluation of human conduct from a Christian perspective" (Crook, 2013:30). Another description of Christian ethics is "a form of the divine command position" (Geisler, 2010:15). It's a divine prescription, something we ought to do. Christian ethics deals with what is morally right and wrong for a Christian. Since we live in a sex-saturated society, we must be aware that the secular view of sexual license has penetrated the Christian church, regardless that Scripture says: "Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world" (Rom. 12:2) (Geisler, 2010:15, 260).

Creation was not complete until God formed man and woman and united the couple. In Genesis 1:26 God commanded the couple to be fruitful and multiply. Sexuality is God-given and a normal part of human life. It is good and not evil, because all God's work is good. Despite the guilt many people experience about their normal and legitimate sexual feelings or despite the damage caused by the use of sex in the power struggle between men and women, jealousies, insecurities and fru strations, sex is morally good. Sexual intercourse is best understood as a relationship rather than something two people do. Sex between married couples is communion that is far more than physical. In 1 Corinthians 7:2-4 the mutuality of that relationship is of major importance. The aim of sexual union is for reproduction of the human race and to preserve the relationship of the couple. Unless the sex drive is regulated, it can turn into sin and so sex drive has to be channelled positively by good decisions to avoid promiscuity or any forced relationship that could violate another person and the will of God (Crook, 2013:121-123).

Human beings are sexual beings and sexuality is a gift from God. When a person accepts Christ, the Holy Spirit sanctifies him or her. Through sanctification he or she becomes holy in all conduct, including his or her moral life (1 Pet. 1:15-16). In a special sense, the human body and sexuality also become purified. Sexuality is included in the new life and the new person has sexual desires and has to glorify God in body and soul, as they both belong to God (1 Cor. 6:20). Sanctification labels people as moral beings who has to respond to salvation (Louw, 2012:179, 180).

Sexuality affects all aspects of life. God created a complementary difference between men and women. Men are spiritually and physically created to fulfil the role of male, husband and fathers. Women are created spiritually and physically to fulfil the role of female, wife and

mother. God instituted marriage and sex was created to reproduce the race, but limited to marriage (Geisler, 2010:263).

5.9.1 Sexuality and Marriage

In traditional Christianity, sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage. Christians believe in chastity before marriage and fidelity in marriage. The Bible speaks of intercourse within the context of marriage. Prostitution was prohibited and a man who had sex with an unmarried woman was required to marry her (Deut. 22:28-29). Anyone who had intercourse with a married woman was executed (Deut. 22:22) (Crook, 2013:125). For sexuality to be healthy and unpretentious in marriage, couples should be intimate, by mutual agreement (1 Cor. 7:4-5). Husband and wife should openly and verbally communicate their feelings and desires, be playful, in order to bring their enjoyment to the fullest. They should not be spectators, but both give and receive and encounter each other. They should be committed to each other in a warm spirit of grace rather than blame one another, as each one is unique. They must know one another deeply and understand their strengths and limitations (Balswick & Balswick, 2014:235-237).

5.9.2 Sexuality and Freedom

The objective of sexual intercourse is not only for gratification, but to enrich our lives through it. This is achieved if people can liberally engage in a sexual relationship, without anxiety about the possibility of pregnancy and that is why the retaining of the traditional pattern of relationship within the family was transformed by the inception of contraceptives. This method of planning became the most safe and reliable way to prevent the possibility of an undesired pregnancy. Moral issues were overshadowed by the fact that unplanned pregnancy, within or outside marriage, would seriously complicate the life of both the man and woman (Crook, 2013:123, 124).

According to Louw (2008:354), all human beings are sexual, intimate or passionate from birth to death. Sexual love sets free or gives us self confidence or a choice or liberty to value ourselves and desire for growth. It increases positiveness or high self-esteem in a person and assist one to mature in life, and open doors for genuine intimacy. Intimacy depends upon each person's sense of self-worth, emotional and spiritual maturity.

5.9.3 Sexuality and Love/Intimacy

Coitus is the most intimate way for a couple to express their love for each other. Circumstances may prohibit them from marrying, like parental objection or financial constraints, but nothing else matter when a couple is in love and think about sex. Many

engagements are broken, because love does not always lead to marriage. Another point is that when children of God and Disciples of Christ are in love, they should not think of having extra-marital relationships as it would also affect other Christians (Crook, 2013:124, 125).

Sexuality and intimacy are important in all divine marriages (Gen. 2:24). The man and woman become one flesh and this shows that lovemaking belongs within the context of a marriage covenant. The physical act of sex is the beginning of the innermost mystery of oneness, which is experienced in a monogamous or heterosexual relationship. The one flesh is not only limited to mating, but to human relationship, psychological gift of loyalty and exchange, eros and agape love, the deepest harmonious community that exists between two people, which is the unity between the husband and wife in all dimensions, including the emotional, spiritual, and physical. Oneness is not instantly achieved, it develops and grow deeply with intensity over a period of time. There is a forbidden degree of intimacy which mean a man is to leave his father man, and marry another partner not his mother, or a woman marry his father (Gen 2vs.24). Intimacy includes total transparency between the couple, man and woman are naked and not ashamed before each other (Gen 2vs.25), (Davidson, 2007:46-48).

Love-centred sexuality is spiritual and aware of our human quest for meaning and dignity. Hence, marriage as a covenant of love is centred in faithfulness. Sexual love includes mutuality, honesty and convey trust, mutual care, responsibility as well as social responsibility. Social responsibility means this sexual love should express value that enhances the larger community and is sensitive to cultural values. These features, when expressed truthfully, bring out the meaning of the relationship between partners. Sexuality then becomes a search for completion of the human person through the intimate personal union of love, expressed by bodily union. This love becomes both enriching and empowering for both partners, displaying a genuine concern for the well-being and growth of partner or spouse. Sexual love means committing faithfully to an ongoing relationship. This healthy sexuality brings tenderness and affection, life fulfilment and healing of life that in return prevents rejection, estrangement and isolation. This is reason enough for spouses to love each other as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her (Eph. 5:25) (Louw, 2008:354-356).

5.9.4 Sexuality as beautiful and holy

God created male and female and sexuality (including the act of sexual intercourse) as part of God's creation, part of God's crowning act of creating humans. Everything God created was and still is very good and beautiful, and so is sex. It is not a mistake, a shameful experience or a regret, as it is at times depicted by Christians and unbelievers. It was part of God's perfect

design from the beginning. This shows that a human being is a sexual creature and his or her sexuality is manifested in every aspect of his or her human existence (Davidson, 2007:50-52). Since sex is holy and beautiful (Davidson, 2007), it should be wonderful, sexually gratifying and pleasing, thus releasing bodily and emotional pressures (Louw, 2008:354).

5.9.5 Sexuality and Wholeness

The meaning of wholeness is intensified in Genesis 2 regarding the difference between the two main categories of gender. God created male and female to equally participate in this wholeness. Both man and the woman are made in the image of God and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26). The image and likeness of God in the man and woman indicate that God made them perfect, whole, both spiritually and physically. The image of God in a person means he or she is whole both bodily and mentally. The human being is a sexual creature and the one flesh experience of husband and wife involves not only the sex act, but also a wholeness in all the physical, sensual, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions of life. It is equally important to seek a religious marriage partner for harmony will reign between the two. In Genesis 2 God also emphasises the hunger for wholeness in a man and woman. This quest is instilled by God in creative complementariness and shows that man alone is incomplete and that it is not good for him to be that way (Gen. 2:18). The creative sexual being God has created for a man, i.e. woman, has to be alongside him as his complement. They are both bone of each other and one flesh, but each is an individual with differences, oneness without opposition. The man is whole only in his complementarity with another being who is like himself. Their wholeness is also detected in their personal relationship. They are in a mutual communion, fellowship that clearly reveals the image of God in them, they are not to separate. Together in intimate relationship and fellowship with each other and with God, man procreates (Gen. 1:28). Man is a social being and not meant to be alone, therefore sexuality is for sociality, relationship, companionship and partnership (Davidson, 2007:35-42).

5.9.6 Sexuality and Communication

Sexual intercourse is viewed as and mutual acknowledgement between husband and wife. On a deep personal communication level, it is meant to establish commitment towards one another that enriches. In this regard sexual relations is meant to disclose personal knowledge, spiritual knowledge, in the sense that it joins the body personal communication and soul together. The sexual relationship becomes more than gratification. It now becomes an expression of validation, love, commitment and personal affirmation (Louw, 2008:355, 356).

Conversely, Huong (2010:25, 27) argues that positive, intimate, sexual communication within marriage is very important. Nonetheless in some marriages, the arrival of children negatively affects romance and passion in sexual life. A husband and wife at times struggle to balance work and home, as they are faced with many responsibilities. They become too physically worn out to communicate sexually. Health problems or changes in their bodies, also contribute to their lack of sexual appetite.

5.9.7 The image of God/*imago Dei* and Sexuality

Imago Dei is "the doctrine that men and women are created in the image of God" (Waldron, 2010:216). According to Sands (2010:29, 30, 31, 37, 38), the image of God and sexuality are interwoven and he clarifies the bond in Genesis 1:26-28 as follows:

- "The words image 'selem' and likeness 'demut' are essentially synonymous. They indicate that human beings resemble God but do not themselves specify the precise nature of the resemblance" (Sands, 2010:29).
- The prepositions governing "image" and "likeness" are interchangeable. Human beings are created as the image of God rather than after the image of God.
- All mankind, male and female, bear the divine image, as well as dominion and dignity of God. This dominion is bestowed on humanity in Genesis 1:26, 28 and Psalm 8:6. Man is the only creature who was given the status dignity and dominion, Genesis 1:26 "Let us make". God speaks directly in Genesis 1:28, "be fruitful and multiply", and the only one said to be "a little lower than God" and crowned with "glory and honour" (Ps. 8:5). Psalm 8:5-6 says that human beings have been "crowned with glory and honor" (a majestic inauguration) and given dominion over creation. Human beings, as the image of God, fulfil their kingly vocation to mediate God's rule on the earth.
- The image was not lost in the "fall". In this view, *imago Dei* remains the basis for human dignity (Gen. 9:6; Jam. 3:9). In royal-functional terms, one might say that in spite of sin, humanity's God-given vocation has not been revoked. On the other hand, sin has certainly affected how human beings pursue their vocation.

Christ is the *imago Dei*. Human beings share in the image of God to the extent that their lives imitate and obey Christ. The *imago Dei* is a dynamic and communal reality rooted in redemption. Since complete conformity to Christ must await the new age, the *imago Dei* is an eschatological truth (Sands, 2010:30, 31).

Christian interpretations of the *imago Dei* have fallen largely into two camps, namely substantial and relational. "The substantial form of human nature distinguishes man from physical nature and from other animals or some faculty or capacity man possesses and

identifies within as the image of God. The second, relational approach implies that humans being in the image of God cannot be separate entities that can be examined on their own. Humans only exist as human in their relationship to God and others" (Miller, 2011:325).

Imago Dei is relational, substantial and vocational. Nevertheless, the *imago Dei* is best understood as a God-given vocation. The language of vocation is functional, which correlates well with the "royal-functional" view of the *imago Dei* favoured by most Old Testament scholars. As divine image bearers, human beings represent God in a way similar to kings representing deity/idols and statues/effigies representing kings. The *imago Dei* designates a royal office or calling on human beings as God's representatives and agents in the world, granted authorised power to share in God's rule or administration of the earth's resources and creatures. In keeping with this royal vocation, human beings have been granted "dominion" over the earth (Sands, 2010:36, 37, 38).

According to Genesis, human beings are made in the image of God. It must be understood that this image of God does not have gender that is why it exist in both men and women. The man and woman both possesses the quality of the image of God through their soul. Souls have no sex, hence women as images of God are equal to men. They are equally gifted and have potential and talents. Humanity cannot reveal God's image and likeness apart from a relationship with Him. God created humanity to reflect His character and personality (Baloyi, 2012:1, 3).

Towner (2005:348, 349) indicates that Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 5:1-2 and Genesis 9:6 point human relationships in three directions. Human beings are connected to their Maker, God, who placed the godly image in them. This is communicated in worship, reverence and in submission to the covenant will of God for our lives. Secondly, we relate to each other, commencing with the humble companionship of male and female. This we express in love and loyalty and often do so sexually. Accordingly, there is a relationship of human sexuality to the image of God in us. God created Adam in the dualistic form of male and female (Gen. 1:27; 5:3) and awarded/imparted sexuality on humankind as a separate blessing (Gen. 1:28; 9:7). Sexuality was granted as a kind of separate implementing action necessary to give humans authority or dominion. Genesis 5:1-3 underscores this understanding: there, the dual nature of the Adam created in the "likeness" of God is reiterated, but the transmission of the "image" of Adam to Seth occurs as a separate event of sexual generation.

Being created in the image of God, Cochrane (2000:10) states that we have God's ways and principles written in our hearts. We may choose to follow His way or our own ways. As a result, He does not force us to follow his sexual plans.

5.9.8 Sexuality and healing

God's perfect plan for our sexuality is for us to remain sexually pure before marriage. When we get married, we are to remain monogamous and faithful to our partners. His plan is for married couples to have sex without cheating one another. When we sin sexually, we sin against our own bodies. For example, sexual abuse, rape, homosexuality, etc. have spiritual consequences that affect the soul extensively. Sexual sins leave darkened spots of guilt on the innocent soul. The person feels ashamed to stand in the presence of God and the self-confidence of victims often collapses. This is why the unmarried must abstain from sex, because sexual sins impact negatively on the soul. However, the remedy is Christ who forgives and heals. God wants our sexuality to reflect His presence in our lives. The goal is to open the window of our soul and surrender all its pain and impurities to God. God longs to heal our wounds and purify our defilements. Both single and married people's thoughts, attitudes and actions must be pleasing to God. God sees our sexual expression in marriage as a serious commitment and wants to deepen our love and affection for our spouses as we grow older. Sexual union is an act of worship to God. Consequently, our thoughts must line up with God's thought, otherwise we cannot have true sexual healing apart from having the mind of Christ. God transforms us into something new by changing our sexuality into something beautiful for Him, a sweet fragrance of His glory (Cochrane, 2000:9-11).

One of the purpose of sexual love is to achieve life fulfilment that will brings healing of life and prevent hostility, breaking up, low self-esteem, rejection and loneliness (Louw, 2008:354).

5.9.9 The sacramental nature of sexuality

Within a Christian perspective, sexuality in marriage is sacramental. It is a gift of God, an expression and symbol of the peace of God's presence and sacrificial grace. It is the most unique, private, intimate and sacramental outward expression of the inner physical and spiritual love God has given us. In this regard sexual intercourse becomes the uppermost symbolic act that our physical bodies are capable of performing and as such represents worship, devotion/reverence and thanksgiving to the God of love who created us. It becomes

an expression of unity that clothes us with God's grace in such a way that the mutual love in the sexual act constitutes a bond of fidelity and trust (Louw, 2008:355, 356).

In conclusion, sex is for marriage alone and it can only be moral within marriage. Sex between a man and woman carries with it the "inescapable God's calling to public lifelong faithfulness". Unmarried people are called to abstain from sex (Ash, 2003:211).

5.9.10 Sexuality and the moral development of teenagers

Parents have attitudes about sexuality. The nature of their intimacy, whether in guilt or with pleasure, and sex roles and in the way they relate, communicate, make decisions and behave together is influential in how boys and girls develop sexually. Hence it is imperative that parents become effective in communicating with their children sexually. They should be open without being intrusive. They should assist their teenagers to delay sexual activities by monitoring and supervising them. The more they openly and honestly communicate with their teenagers about sex, will assist their children to delay sexual activities (Coleman, 2011:138, 139).

Parental warmth and trust, their frequent and intense interaction with their teenagers, and the type of discipline and being role models, play an important part on adolescent moral development. From infancy, children are raised with norms. Through learning and teaching, as they grow into "teenagehood", they now become familiar with those norms and gain moral freedom and thus learn to be responsible. Through conscience, they start to choose between right and wrong, good or evil, proper and improper. They begin to accept responsibility for their choices and become more comfortable in making their own decisions and less dependent on parents. For example, they are able to admit their mistakes and apologise for any wrong doing. It is very important for parents to have disciple techniques that are most effective in teaching teenagers morality and ultimately help them to control their own behaviour. Parents have to be rational and communicate positively, as opposed to being hostile. Obedience to rules is encouraged by praising teenagers. Parents should balance and treat their children alike. For example, they should not be stricter on girls and lenient on boys. Much as media is exposing teenagers to sexuality, both visually and verbally in a form of "love", parents who morally and emotionally support their children, through right guidance and teaching, are able to win the hearts of their children through proper behaviour. Parents have to restrict their children sexually and teach them that sex is lovely, but reserved by God for a monogamous marriage only. No matter how much sex they watch on television, parental values can influence teenagers to abstain (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017:118, 119, 123, 124, 126, 127).

Once parents openly include sex education in their curriculum at home, teenagers will be able to overcome their sexual struggles that are enhanced by contemporary society and a decline in moral standards. They do not know how to deal with their body changes, feelings, fear and desire to date. As teenagers grow older, they at times question religion and see it as boring or irrelevant and do not want to participate in church activities (Collins, 2007:240, 241).

Moral conflicts are normal within society. The normative values of society are changing as people are becoming tolerant and liberal to sexual behaviours, such as sexual intercourse. Teenagers are struggling to reconcile parental beliefs and the values they have held since childhood. Teenagers who are not guided at home by responsible parents, copy the sexual behaviours they see on television. On spirituality, teenagers can start to question their parents' religious convictions that they used to accept without questioning. However, sooner or later they start to realise that they need religious commitment in their lives and so there is a need to revive teenagers spiritually. Research has suggested that religion has a positive effect on teenagers. For example, they are less likely to use drugs or engage in premarital sex. They attend church and are more responsible and committed to God. Consequently, teenagers need faith that can saturate their lives with meaning (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017:126, 132, 136).

According to 1 Corinthians 6:18, Christians (including teenagers) are to have no part in sexual immorality, even if it is acceptable or popular in today's culture. God created sex to be beautiful, but only for marriage. Sex outside marriage is likely to hurt someone. It hurts God, as we do follow our own desires instead of being led by the Holy Spirit (Bible, 2005:1921).

5.10 MARRYING AN UNBELIEVER

There are some matters where it is not necessary to seek God's direction, because the question has already been clearly explained in the holy Bible. A believer and unbeliever cannot marry and a believer must tremble at the thought of entering into a covenant with someone who does not love or fear God. John Wesley was against such marriages, as they are contrary to the will of God and weaken one's faith (Bufford, 1996:87, 88).

2 Corinthians 6:14 cautions believers not to be yoked with unbelievers, which in this context means not entering into marriage with unbelievers. Such marriages cannot be fully committed and obedient to God. Believers should not allow emotion to bind them to unbelievers. They should at all cost avoid situations that could force them to have divided loyalty, where faith becomes an issue and one believer compromises beliefs for the sake of unity (Bible, 2005:1952).

Believers in Christ should avoid marrying unbelievers, because they will influence them to be unfaithful to God. If both partners were unbelievers when they married and one subsequently becomes a Christian, they should not separate as they are sanctified and their children are holy. Should one partner insist on divorce, however, he or she must not be forced to stay (1 Cor. 7:10-17). If they do stay together, the believing partner must set a good example as God-fearing Christian (1 Pet. 3:1-7) (De Bruyn, 2008:176).

5.11 SINGLENESS/BEING SINGLE

One method of approach the Church uses to build marriages and families is through workshops, seminars or counselling etc. While churches run such programmes, nothing is being done in the African church to address single people and challenges they encounter. As a result, singles often regard themselves as insignificant and of little value in the Church and community. In African tradition, when people reach a certain age, they are expected to get married. That is why lack of marriage or delay put some singles in a predicament and they find it extremely disgraceful to be without a sexual partner. If they choose to remain single they are classified as abnormal. This puts a lot of pressure on them and the Bible clarify that there is nothing wrong in staying single (1 Cor. 7:7-8), particularly if such a person has the gift of being single. This means that being single is not just a wish, but also a gift from God. Most women are more likely than men to be single, as a result of divorce, widowhood or separation. One of the challenges of being single is loneliness. Much as Genesis 2:18 indicate how to overcome loneliness, but that does not mean marriage solve loneliness. One has to be focused and fulfilled by God to overcome such emotions i.e. be complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). Therefore, the Church as an institution must organise recreational outings, seminars, retreats, classes, workshops, small groups for counselling and single parenting programmes to help teen mothers to cope. It should identify these families and also attempt to learn the causes of the parent being single, as there are many different causes. It should help them to develop a variety of sharing and growth groups for singles. Preachers should also learn to accommodate all church members, singles included. For example, much as it is good for a man to have a suitable helpmate, they should also preach that it was good for Jesus and Paul to be single (1 Cor. 7:1) (Baloyi, 2010:723, 726, 727, 730, 739, 740).

Similarly, single Christians need to live a well-balanced life and be informed on marriage. If they are not educated on marriage, they will either be obsessed about marriage or be negative towards it (1 Cor. 7:27-28) (Keller & Keller, 2011:220). A truly single person must be content and complete physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually without depending on

anyone else. To be single and prosperous, a person must find his or her personal identity and sense of wholeness within him- or herself and in relationship with God (Munroe, 2004:18).

5.12 DIVORCE

Research by Dominian (2001:163-165) reveals that social factors influence the life and relationships of men and women. The age at which couples marry can affect the relationship. For example: If the bride is under the age of 20, there is a likelihood of divorce later as the couple mature. Premarital pregnancy and youthful marriage, premarital cohabitation, stormy courtships and hasty marriages are likely to lead to divorce.

It appears that teenagers in families where parents have divorced or separated tend to engage in sex earlier than those living with both parents. At times it is influenced by teenagers being unable to adjust to their parents' new partners (Coleman, 2011:138, 139). Furthermore, divorce and parental separation are damaging to children, families, the economy and society at large. Each family is unique and despite different family conflicts, personalities and temperaments, strength and weaknesses, emotions, economic resources, the effects of divorce on children have shown to diminish their future competence in all areas of life, including family relationships, education and emotional wellbeing. They lose time with each parent, lose economic and emotional security and show a decrease in social and psychological maturity. The child may change his or her outlook on sexual behaviour, he or she may lose religious faith and practice, lose cognitive and academic stimulation, have health challenges and emotional distress (Anderson, 2014:379-383).

Divorce is only acceptable on the grounds of marital unfaithfulness (Matt. 5:32) or if the unbelieving partner chooses to separate (1 Cor. 7:1). Although there are some cases of reconciliation, in circumstances of adultery, desertion or extreme cruelty, there seem to be no point in upholding a deontological view of marriage, because many believe that it has died and is irretrievable (Wells & Quash, 2010:290, 291).

Furthermore, divorce harmfully affects society by weakening the children's future competences, dwindling family structures, contributing to early sexual practices and experimentations among the youth. Divorce affects society negatively and decreases the frequency of religious worship in the community. It escalates crime and substance use, which in return cost society and government. It increases school suspensions, emotional and psychological health risks, including suicide, lowers the aptitude and educational achievement and reduces the family earning. Divorce affects children, parents, and society as all suffer. Research reveals that "many children never full "recover", as each special event, holiday or

celebration reminds the child of the loss. Given these tremendous costs borne by all individuals affected by divorce as well as the cost to society, it is the responsibility of physicians, especially paediatricians and other relevant stakeholders, who care for children in the context of their families to advocate for public health policies that promote marriage and decrease the likelihood of divorce" (Anderson, 2014:384). Divorce also destroy families in the sense that affected children often carry that emotional pain into their marriages. Therefore, the Church needs to recognise the special needs of those who come from broken homes and provide ministry through support and fellowship groups (O' Donovan, 2000:88, 89).

5.13 PRELIMINARY SYNTHESIS

The chapter engaged the normative function of practical theological research, namely "what should be going on". It attempted to provide a Christian perspective on healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to challenge prevalent sexual practices with an African perspective in mind. It described how Christianity came to Africa and the role of missionaries as protagonists of colonialism. It highlighted how Christianity was a mixed blessing in that it both brought Good News, but also disrupted and dislocated African society and its values. It also emphasised one of the greatest oversights of mission work as it perceived ATR as inferior and primitive and wanted Africans to renounce their traditional social structures, thus weakening the impact of African beliefs and values. Africans had to merge Christianity and their traditional beliefs to form a unique African strand of Christianity. It was also indicated how Africans remained faithful to their culture, irrespective of their educational background.

The chapter henceforth discussed the theological perspectives on marriage and family life within the African context. It beheld a monogamous marriage as an institution ordained by God, between a man and a woman, from Genesis 2:18-24. The biblical intention of marriage was discussed and included the three pillars of marriage and the importance of couples leaving their parents, cleaving and becoming one flesh. The chapter indicated how difficult it was for African sons to leave and discouraged couples who lived in their parents' household, as it brought tension between the bride and her in-laws. Cleaving was regarded as an emotional bonding between husband and wife, and becoming one flesh united a man and woman in sexual intercourse. The section explained that sex was a good gift from God and strengthened the union, but preserved for marriage only.

The biblical idea of marriage as a covenant was argued as a reflection of a loving covenant that united Christ and the Church, including the participation in the covenant. It showed God as the author, witness and guarantor of that marriage. The dialogue included the purpose or objectives of marriage, mutual help and companionship, building a family that included children as a blessing from God, to be raised and trained in a godly manner and prepared for life by both parents. Monogamy safeguarded couples against immorality. The study emphasised that it was time the African church took a strong stand on the Word of God concerning marriage, sex and family and demanded sexual purity and faithfulness of its members and leaders, before and during marriage, as well as fearlessly preach against sexual immorality. Barrenness was addressed, as some marriages do not receive the privilege of having children, and in the African context women are blamed and some lose their marital homes. Barren Christians were urged to pray and also seek medical assistance. The study stressed the importance of premarital counselling and Church teaching, which prepared couples to know that with or without children the marriage was still blessed. It was God who created human beings.

The role of spouses was discussed and submission was key to marriage for both partners. The subsection engaged the duties of a husband in African families, which entailed headship, a personal relationship with Christ, being a provider, loving his wife unconditionally and caring for his family spiritually and physically. The duties of a wife were addressed as helper in all things and companion of husband. Discussion covered African men who misinterpreted male headship and female submission and distorted the Bible, thereby abusing women in marital relations. The subdivisions covered the biblical choice of a partner, similar to the African context of parents arranging partners for their children, and that the normal order was marriage, sex and then love. The chapter highlighted choosing a partner as very difficult and that prayer was key, as it was God who connected people together. It indicated the importance of man proposing to a woman, not vice versa, and that woman had to be willing to marry, e.g. Isaac and Rebecca. Courtship and dating were defined and couples urged to seek the face of God in prayer. Once the couple determined to marry, they had to go for premarital counselling as it helped to decrease marital discord and harmful effects that could lead to divorce. Advantages of premarital counselling were highlighted, as they assisted couples in discovering whether their friendship was going to lead to marriage or not. Counselling helped to break such a relationship graciously, should one of the parties not be ready.

The division included premarital sex as wrong and prevalent in South Africa and the urgent need for divine intervention for black teenagers, as few couples married as virgins. The example of Joseph and Mary in the Bible served to show that it was possible for youth to abstain. The subdivision included the risks of premarital sex, teenage pregnancies and how sinful it was before God as well as ethically, morally and physically wrong. The study gave tips on how to refrain from premarital sex, such as avoid meeting in secret places, caressing, etc. The section also included the dangers of premarital sex as sinful, delayed marriages and its harmful consequences not only in unwanted pregnancies, but also with cervix cancer, sexual frigidity, psychosocial problems and aloofness.

The wedding ceremony and church marriage were described and couples cautioned about unnecessary financial expenditure incurred at wedding ceremonies. The section indicated the importance of a honeymoon as biblically allowed period of adjustment, intimacy and bonding of the couple, even spiritually by attending church together and Christian witnessing. Christian ethics and sexuality were included for deliberation. Human beings as sexual beings was debated, where it was emphasised that sex was to be practised within marriage. The sub-topics discussed were sexuality and marriage, sexuality and freedom, sexuality, love and intimacy, sex as beautiful and holy, sexuality and wholeness, sexuality and communion, the image of God and sexuality and how sex brought healing to a couple, the sacramental nature of sexuality as well as sexuality and the moral development of teenagers. The study engaged sex education, i.e. that it started at home and teenagers were to be taught that sex was for marriage only.

The chapter deliberated on marrying an unbeliever and the associated spiritual dangers. Christians were cautioned not to marry unbelievers, because they influenced them to be unfaithful to God. The study urged churches to run programmes for singles and teach them that being single was a gift from God (whether divorced, widowed or separated). The section gave an overview of divorce as unacceptable before God, unless an unbelieving partner decided to leave. It discussed how parental separation damaged children, families, the economy and society at large. The sections showed that premarital pregnancy and youthful marriage, premarital cohabitation, stormy courtships and hasty marriages were likely to lead to divorce. As divorce destroys families and children, the study urged the Church to provide ministry through support and fellowship groups.

A contextual analysis of "what should be going on" from Osmer's model was provided from the African tradition in Chapter 4 and from the Christian tradition in Chapter 5, for healthy

sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenagers. In chapter 6 the study designs a strategy, based on Osmer's model of "how are we going to respond" for coaching youths and families within Christian African faith communities, the objective being to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies.

CHAPTER 6: PASTORAL GUIDANCE OF YOUTHS AND FAMILIES WITHIN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES TO CHALLENGE PREVALENT SEXUAL PRACTICES AMONGST BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN TEENAGE GIRLS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates on Osmer's fourth and final question of "how are we going to respond". The objective of this chapter is to formulate a strategy for pastoral guidance of the youth and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls.

When the study attended to the interpretive function of the study, by searching for reasons of the current state of affairs regarding teenage pregnancy, it revealed the crisis of sexuality facing the African church and the imbalances in disciplining boys and girls in terms of pregnancy as well as the lack of proper parental guidance on sexuality matters. Much as there are policies and initiatives in the Constitution of South Africa, which are positive and show signs of the government's commitment to find solutions to teenage pregnancy, there are those (issuing of contraceptives to minors and termination of pregnancy without parental consent) that indirectly contribute to teenage pregnancy. Although termination of pregnancy may now be lawful in South Africa, according to Sekhaulelo (2007:69, 71, 72), it is still ethically incorrect and God's law is immutable and forbid the taking of an innocent human life. On the other hand, the government has offered an attractive child support grant to young mothers. In other words, boys can just impregnate young girls and then leave the responsibility of raising those children to the Department of Health and Social Welfare. While it is true that condoms minimise the spread of the virus, it is also true that condoms give adolescents a false sense of safety and invites them to have sex more often and with multiple partners. Because this is a practical theological study, this chapter will now speak to the things the Church can do to set things right - or to challenge the problem.

Within the framework of this practical theological study, markers for the pastoral guidance of the youth are suggested, which include the role of families that are members of the faith community.

In this regard, the following themes come into the focus of this chapter: the local congregation is discussed as moral agent that can challenge the problem through its prophetic voice by means of activities such as preaching, catechesis and confirmation classes and youth ministry. In order to achieve this effectively, the church will need to be mindful of all stakeholders involved in the youth's life, such as parents, siblings, grandparents and partners. The Church will also need to be mindful of the most appropriate age and places to influence the youth

regarding sexuality education. Hence, partnerships with schools, conducting outreach programmes, workshops, youth retreats, Bible studies and the like are also considered here.

6.1.1 MARKERS FOR THE PASTORAL GUIDANCE OF BLACK TEENAGE GIRLS REGARDING HEALTHY SEXUALITY

6.1.1.1 THE LOCAL CONGREGATION AS A MORAL AGENT

One of the most important development in the stages of adolescence is on sex and sexuality. Throughout this journey to adulthood many mediums can easily challenge the youth's sexual growth. Their sexual behaviour demonstrates a lack of understanding on sex and sexuality. Congregations, as the custodians of the Biblical message regarding God's will about sexuality, can become an appropriate and effective partner in promoting a scriptural understanding of sex and sexuality, especially to teenagers (Cloete, 2012:1). African Christians bear within themselves the particular African value system that pertains to healthy sexuality, the Church becomes the place where these two values systems can merge to challenge the prevalent sexual practices amongst black teenage girls described in this research.

Unfortunately, the African Church is uncomfortable and reluctant to speak on sexual matters and break the silence, as there are many difficult matters in this regard. Some of them include the sexuality of single people, the growing diversity of marital and family styles and the high rate of teenage pregnancy. Additionally, the inconsistency between Church teaching and the sexual practices of priests, lead the youth to confusion and discredit the Church in society. Despite the silence, it is necessary for congregations to participate and contribute in this sexual dialogue and offer guidance to the youth from a biblical perspective (Cloete, 2012:4).

The question is how can the Church/Congregation serve as moral agents to assist teenagers against premarital sex, unwanted pregnancy and help them to obey God's word of abstinence? For example, in some black churches pregnant teenagers are rejected and congregants make them feel as if they do not belong. It is very painful to be rejected by people you worship with. It is like being refused the grace of God. Such teenagers when they hear the Gospel being preached, it does not bring Good News to them. The point is congregants make them feel as because of the sin they committed, they are not worthy to receive the grace of God that Christ has shown to all. They find it difficult to deal with this kind of rejection, whereas the men who impregnated them suffer no consequences. They are able to continue with their lives as if nothing has happened or marry someone who does not have a child. They start families,

easily forgetting that they left other women with children; whereas, from the African traditional point of view, the teenage mother may be rejected within her own community and have no man to marry, as she is already spoiled. Research has shown that in Christianity, many teenagers rarely have a chance to deliberate on subjects or concerns of sexual and reproductive health with a considerate and well-informed adult. They are often confronted with indifferent health services, which poses the question that "with the church being a subsystem of society, how should a constructive engagement between church and society regarding youth sexual reproductive health be done?" (Makhudu, 2010:33, 34)

Consequently, the Church and its congregations are an important part of society. The interaction and communication between congregation and the public cannot be disregarded in the search to describe the involvement of the Church in a changing society (Schoeman, 2012:1). "Congregations have the calling to serve society; the *missio Dei* becomes the *missiones ecclesiae*" (Schoeman, 2012:1). The Church is supposed to cultivate and encourage distinctive forms of moral consciousness and behaviour and as a congregation, shapes the lives of its people. The moral education of members in one generation, becomes the formation of the congregation for the next generation. The heart of Christian moral formation lies in worship and salvation enacted in prayer, proclamation and sacrament (Mudge, 1998:76,81). Prayer is talking to God one on one or in community. No matter the format it takes, be it the Lord's Prayer, open conversation or meditation, it is intended to connect us with God. It allows us to tell God what is going on, to practise reflection on our lives and build relationship with Him and others. As a child and teenager, prayer helps to turn their problems or joys to God in prayer, no matter how small (Ott, 2013:16).

Most African parents find it difficult to open up on topics of sexuality. They grew up during a period when culturally, sex and sexuality were not openly discussed by their parents. They are also uncertain and unconfident on how to have this dialogue with their children. Therefore, the Church and congregations can assist parents to be more comfortable with their own sexuality and learn skills on how to be open and have that kind of conversation with their children. Nonetheless, it is impossible for the Church to assume total control on the role and responsibility of the parents. They can only assist and support the parents' role as primary educators of the youth. A partnership between faith communities and family is required to address the moral education of the youth (Cloete, 2012:6).

The Church provides one of the intergenerational learning places for children. As they hear messages about God, they will understand the great purpose God have for their lives. This

will contribute positively to their decision making and they are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours. Christians are not perfect, which can be seen in church scandals, and so congregations also have to protect children from sexual abuses of any kind and provide sex education for them (Ott, 2013:15, 16).

Congregations as moral agents should take up the role of assisting parents to carry out their God-given role of passing on their faith. Parents in turn should look to congregations to aid in giving church creed and knowledgeable structure to the faith they are seeking, to nurture in their children. In this partnership, "the congregation as communal church, form a community of faith. Together the home and the congregation seek to affect, and transform their community, culture and creation through acts of service and love" (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:338). This partnership will help the youth to be more committed to faith in Christ and live a life of witness and service to God. Additionally, congregations must support the youth ministry, encourage social and moral responsibility. The authors further argue that the congregation should engage youth in congregational relationship and practices, equip and affirm them for leadership in congregational activities, and help them to possess a vibrant faith in Christ. They should also engage members and youth in Bible study, in faith, daily life and prayer. Congregations are able to offer programmes that assist parents and youth to communicate with one another on moral issues. They can also train the youth for peer-support programmes that engage youth to assist also in the Church and community in case of crisis and emergency. By creating inspirational worship, congregations are able to transform the youth to be committed to Christ. When they arrive at such worship services, they feel a sense of hospitality and belonging. Contemporary and liturgical music reach them emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and relationally. They connect to the sermon, prayers and communion. This environment helps them to transform and give their lives to Jesus and be committed to Him all their lives (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:234, 235, 252).

Recognising the local congregation as moral agent, Whitehead *et al.* (2001:5) suggest that:

- "It will help young people develop morally and spiritually by transmitting the teachings and observances of their faith.
- It will engage youth in activities that will guide and protect them and give them hope for the future, including offering education, youth groups, summer camps, youth sports leagues, tutoring programs, rites-of passage observances, mentoring and after school programmes. These youth development activities give teenagers productive

things to do, offer them opportunities to gain knowledge, skills and confidence, and, perhaps most importantly, connect them to caring adults.

- Some faith organisations explicitly address the issue of teenage sexuality within the context of faith through sex and abstinence education, parent/child communication workshops, crisis pregnancy counseling and referrals to family planning services" (Whitehead *et al.,* 2001:5).

The congregation also has to mentor the youth. It should be a surrogate family to help teenagers who are lonely, as others come from dysfunctional families. Some youth do not know family life or the security of being loved and cared for. For that reason, a congregation must act as a family and provide them with additional adult faith mentors and love. Through intergenerational activities, a congregation can become a surrogate faith family to those teenagers and encourage Christian faith and loyalty (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:166, 177, 178).

As children and youth are influenced by their parents, congregational parents should therefore be trained to deal with youth and children, as they form part of the faith community (Steenburg, 2010:53, 55).

6.1.1.2 The congregation as a medium of Communication

Communication is the key to close family relationships and needs to be improved. Congregations can improve communication between parents and their teenagers by discussing adolescent issues with the youth. These kind of meetings in the congregation improve the relationships of adolescents with their parents at home. Communication also involves ministry of presence when parents and children spend time together. As part of coaching, the Church also has to provide classes for parents on how to communicate effectively with their children and develop caring skills for their home setting (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:55, 56).

Presently the African congregation, as a moral agent, needs relevant material to assist and restore the youth on sexuality and aid them to lead a holy Christian life through biblical teaching and principles.

6.1.1.3 Catechesis

An effective Christian education ministry that is beginning to appear in congregations, commence with catechesis. The approach is not to use a series of books, like a classroom, but rather to prepare children to know God, be familiar with Scripture and the liturgy of the Church. The congregation journeys with the children in listening and praying with them. This caring attitude gives parents and educators a gentle way to honour and enter into the spiritual

life of the children. It also nurtures the children's faith and opens their hearts to the wonderful presence of God. Congregational leaders can aid teenagers from 14 to 18 years when they go through the transition to adulthood. The process involves rituals and catechesis that will provide a learning experience that engages the senses, imagination and intellect (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:161, 162).

A catechism is a resourceful guideline in congregational worship. It has questions and answers that teach children key Christian beliefs. The older youth can be used by congregations to lead in several catechism question-and-answer sessions and also participate (Renfro *et al.,* 2009:58). For instance, catechism also teaches about sexual purity. The question put forward about forbidden sins is in the seventh commandment (Ex. 20:14). The answer entails sexual issues and the catechism encourages Christians to purify their hearts in sexual matters and avoid all temptations. The commandment already teaches the youth that sex is for marriage (Heb. 13:4) and that we must all be faithful to God as our Holy Husband and Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church (Frame, 2008:747, 850). As fornication is part of sexual sin, this commandment (Ex. 20:14) does not only refer to adultery, but to people regardless of their marital status. God's will is that sex should be practised within marriage, making adultery and fornication sinful before God (Adeyemo, 2006:112).

To many Christians, catechism may seem like a set of abstract questions and important sounding answers. Yet, the purpose of a catechesis is to form new believers into the people of God. It transforms new believers into discoverers and helps believers of all ages to endure a consistent commitment in prayer and to live in the Spirit. On the other hand, its aim is to assist new Christians to hold on to authentic practices of devotion and service and express their developing discipleship in fitting words, art and music. Christians enter a spiritual friendship that introduces them to practices like repentance, prayer, worship, loving service, mutual correction and forgiveness. It assists them to enter God's story, learn and joyfully and intimately build their personal faith. This question-and-answer method of catechism helps the youth to frame their faith and understand the history of the Church. Through learning, the answers are planted in the hearts of the children and guide them to be able to communicate faithfully with one another, their teachers and God (Kruschwitz, 2007:8-10).

Even if parents attend church and catechesis with their children, they should be exemplary in their Christian living so as to develop and inspire the faith of their kids positively. As part of faith development process, parents should debate on matters of faith at home with their

youngsters according to their level and circumstances. They should also deliberate on catechesis with their children, and work together with the ministers of children ministry (Van Niekerk & Breed, 2018:10).

6.1.1.4 Confirmation Classes

In some African churches "children are groomed from baptism through Sunday School and Confirmation Classes, to membership in full communion" (Masondo, 2014:189). Infant baptism is a way of claiming children for God and a sign that he or she belongs to the family of God. In Sunday school children make friendships and are taught the basics of Christian faith. Confirmation classes are held for a year to develop the child's faith through teaching from the Bible, constitution and structure of the Church. The aim is to build the youth spiritually and morally from a Christian background, teach them to pray, worship God, lead a holy life and be good citizens. They are then publicly accepted as a full member of the Church and the congregation becomes witnesses (Masondo, 2014:194-196).

6.1.1.5 Sermons/Preaching

This study indicates that the sexual pursuit of teenagers attending church does not differ much from those not attending church. Many teenagers are aware of the teachings of the Church regarding the importance of abstinence and sex reserved for the marriage union only (Mash, 2006:42, 59). It is thus crucial to find the right topics for the youth. The Church, through youth ministry, must identify the needs of the youth and be faithful in helping them drink true living water (Trimmer, 1994:81).

Inadequate information about sex place the youth in great danger of being absorbed by a culture that disagrees with the dogma they were taught in faith communities. Much as churches discourage the use of condoms and insist on abstinence, they need to preserve the sacredness of matrimony by providing people with adequate knowledge of their sexuality (Kangara, 2007:3).

The above point surfaces in the form of some of the youth who have grown up in Church, silently leaving both their home churches and also their Christian faith. Many church-raised adolescents have found their family churches unconnected, traditionally uninteresting and unsuitable to develop them spiritually. They feel spiritually dormant and unenthusiastic about anything. The problem is listening to the sermon in a service with the whole congregation does not much help in learning about the Bible and Christianity (Song, 2017:97, 98).

Therefore, it is important to address sex from the pulpit. During the sermon the minister must discuss the advantages of sex in marriage and disadvantages of sex outside marriage. He should enlighten the youth on early romance vs a long-term commitment in marriage, family planning and romantic expression. The entire sermon cannot cover all issues related to teenage pregnancy prevention. However, this type of approach may result in raising consciousness of these important issues on a very basic level. It can be a comprehensive engagement strategy needed to initiate transformative change within the congregation. This can be an introduction or a platform to create opportunities of abstinence for the youth (Esperanza, s.a.:19).

6.2 TARGETING ALL STAKEHOLDERS

6.2.1 The role of a family within the Church

A family is a gift from God and no one can choose his or her family, one is born into it. Families can be complicated especially for the youth. Pressures, tension and expectations from family can be overwhelming. Our family norms influence and shape us positively or negatively (Moser & Fankhauser, 2018:127, 129-132). Sex plays a pivotal role in our lives. Nevertheless, some teenagers misuse it and undermine God's Word concerning sex and destroying our African tradition and notions. Sexual morality is still essential today, just as it was to African Tradition and the Church. It holds the family's fidelity, responsibilities, accountability and assures secured moral backgrounds (Matsane, 2004:54, 55).

All who have faith in God and in the work of Jesus Christ is called family and is part of the household of God (Heb. 2:11). The desire of God for families is to be in a loving and close-knit relationship; firstly, with Him and then also with one another (Strong, 2014:2).

A family is a complex organism in which attitudes, values and actions of each member interact with one another. Changes do not come easily, because of the unpredictable reaction of different members to any proposed change. Each individual family and congregational family is unique, but change is possible where there is both intention and willingness to live by God's promises in the Bible. God's desire for families is to have a strong relationship with him and have a strong family relationship. The gracious God is concerned with how His being and love is passed on from parents to children, whether it is a single-parent household, blended family, mentor, friends, relatives or any unit that makes up a family. Exodus 20:12 tells children to "honor your father and mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your

God is giving you", while Ephesians 6:4 urges parents "fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in discipline and instructions of the Lord". Mutual love and respect is pivotal in the family relationship between parents and children, as God is love and wants us to love one another (John 15:12). God requires that families should put Him first (Matt. 6:33). Families should bond with Christ as Saviour in a relationship that enables the Gospel of grace and forgiveness to be lived (Strommen & Hadel, 2008:17, 18, 20, 38).

As outlined in Chapter 4, Mumo (2016:28) argues that families in modern Africa have changed and are not as united, strong and principled as in African traditional society. In the past, the rites of passage or initiation schools equipped their youth on sexual education and imparted discipline and responsibility in African youth. They acted as vehicles of communicating African ethics and passed them on to coming generations. They inspired the adolescents and presented them with role models. Young people were drilled to be innovative and have a positive attitude.

6.2.2 Parents/Family

The discussion will be based on the role of family life in youth ministry, and the integration of the family into youth ministry.

A family is everything to a child. It is where he or she experiences love, intimacy, forgiveness and physical care. A family leaves a permanent mark on our lives and affect everything we do. It develops us spiritually and cared for our souls. A family is where God's love is understood best and parents model for the child how to follow Jesus, and so the Church should take the importance of the family seriously in the spiritual nurturing of their children. Churches have to work hard to empower parents to model faith at home and teach their children positively in spirituality. The fact is, however, most children ministries do not involve the parents/family (Beckwith, 2004:101-103).

Many parents struggle to raise their children when they reach puberty. There are biological changes in the teenager's body and as such they tend to experience mood swings and sexual struggles. Some engage in high-risk behaviour and parents wonder where they went wrong in the upbringing of their child. Parents need to offer grace to their children and to themselves (Balswick & Balswick, 2014:116).

Consequently, if parents do not teach their children about God, those children will not know God or consider God unimportant. Unless God intervene, children who are not taught and and trained in Christian education, pose a great threat to society, their family and future generation. They become exposed to negative societal influences and are unable to control

themselves on addiction to illegal drugs, sexual promiscuity and alcoholism and they are likely to live an unfulfilled transitory life (Makinwa, 2012:87).

Christian parenting involves parents empowering their children to reach maturity, which entails parental control and socio-emotional support. Styles of parenting include telling, teaching, modelling and delegating. All this involves communication between parents and children, mostly done by the parents especially through telling, teaching and modelling. The delegating style is for highly matured children who are willing to take responsibility. Increased responsibility and freedom, go hand in hand with competency and respect. It is a stage where teenagers are empowered and receive parental blessing for their efforts. This is not easy, as teenagers with this added measure of freedom make independent choices and express opinions different from those of their parents. Parents should also transform their style of parenting to meet the progressing needs of their children and accelerate their growth. They should have discernment on employing appropriate parenting style to each situation (Balswick & Balswick, 2014:119-122).

I concur with Melluish and Melluish (2007:44, 48, 49, 174-178) that children who are assured of their parents love for each other will have great confidence in their parents' love for them, which in turn it will enhance and strengthen them. Love is a choice (Col. 3:14) and parents must affirm it with words of encouragement and action to their children and spend quality time with them. They must show their children how to love God by being familiar with the Bible, teaching them to pray, take them to church and worshipping together, reminding them that they are gifts from God and everything they have is from Him. Parents must be friends to their children and they will reap the rewards when their children become adults and realise their values. They should also teach their children to value and respect other people.

Parents should be good moral influences on their children. For example: Absent father who do not offer financial assistance have a negative effect on their children that leads to anger. Regardless of how inspirational their mothers may be, fathers with sinful sexual habits and substance abuse problems have an adverse moral influence on their children (Swartz, 2009:109, 118).

To live zealously is the mission of the youth and almost everything they do is wired with emotions, great passion and enthusiasm. God wants us to love Him passionately with all our hearts, souls and minds. The youth do not want to suffer, but desperately wants to love something or someone worth suffering for and also to be loved. They yearn for experiences

that will channel their love. They may not be aware that it is God's gift of passion that compels them to search for Him. Christ died for all and he is eternally relevant to save the youth and reciprocate agape love back to them. Furthermore, by acknowledging the passion of Christ, their passion will give way to faith in Christ and be fuelled by the energy of fierce love for Him. Therefore, it is important to guide and direct the hunger and desires of the teenagers in the right direction so that it can glorify God (Strong, 2014:6, 7).

From an African point of view, "it takes a village to raise a child and the first village for every human being is the family of origin" (Strong, 2014:3). The Scriptures indicates that parents are the main intermediaries in a covenant relationship with God and families. In Deuteronomy 11:19 God instruct parents to teach and train their children the Scriptures in the Bible. The responsibility of raising children to mature spiritually lies with the parents. God has handed children to their parents, therefore it is their duty to help develop, sustain and pass on a Gospel-oriented faith. They have to protect their children and guarantee that they are safe physically, emotionally and spiritually. Children are a special gift from God to their parents and a sign of favour. God values children, thus need to be raised by their parents as people serving God with all their hearts, souls, strength and minds (Strong, 2014:3). In the researcher's view they also have to be trained to not depart from the Word (Prov. 22:6).

Parents have to find out who their children are first. They need to see their children in the light of the Gospel and channel their responsibilities in light of the story of God. They have to apply creation and fall, redemption and consummation in their household. Children are a gift from God and sinners yet to be trained. When Jesus died, he redeemed and resurrected us now as a guarantee of the consummation of God's kingdom in the future. Children, therefore, need Jesus as their Saviour. Parents need to make time and be told that God has called them to play a crucial role in their spiritual development. The activity-driven approach attempts to bridge the gap between the Church and family by adding family-based activities (Jones, 2011:70-75).

Communication is the heart of the family. With the ability to communicate effectively, the family can become a vibrant system who integrates meaningfully. It has the power to give freedom and deepens the relationship, lessen conflicts and families learn to respect one another's style (Balswick & Balswick, 2014:239, 240).

Parents and youth leaders need to work together and communicate effectively to the youth about the dangers of promiscuity. Parents have to set boundaries with love at their homes and

explain them to their children. Therefore, the home and the Church has to prepare the youth for godly marriages and communicate to the youth the importance of sexual abstinence before marriage and give them guidelines. Through teaching, those who are sexually active can be able to control themselves and mend their ways (Borgman, 2013:140, 141).

6.2.3 Siblings

The size of the family can determine and affect the children's sexual behaviours, including the area or location in which they live; the stage of development of their brethren and their level of sexual interest; along with parental, religious, societal, and cultural norms and values regarding sex and sexuality. When children are repeatedly exposed to incomprehensible sexual stimuli, such as confusing sexual images in media, they are likely act out what they have observed. Culture can also influence children's sexual behaviour (Wurtele & Kenny, 2011:3).

If the youth engage in risky sexual behaviour, such as early sexual intercourse (12 years or before), and having multiple sexual partners, it gives the impression that teenagers are misinformed on sexual matters including the dangers of premarital sex (Cloete, 2012:5).

6.2.4 Grandparents

Some grandparents have a good moral influence on their grandchildren. In this research, Swartz revealed that the teenagers attended church through the encouragement of their grandparents. They recognised church as strengthening their Christian faith. Yet despite their faith and church attendance, very few abstained from sex. They believed in God but their faith exerted little moral power (Swartz, 2009:120).

This highlights that grandparents can play a positive role in the life of a teenager. They are a link between the past and present and can develop a better relationship by transmitting cultural values and biblical knowledge to teenagers. Grandparents can be better confidantes to adolescents when they are in conflict with their parents. As some are actively raising their grandchildren, it can benefit the teenager psychologically, physically, academically and his or her wellbeing (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017:88). When relationships between parents and teenagers become strained, grandparents can be sensitive and non-judgemental listeners. It is very important for grandparents to listen to teenagers when they talk about low self-esteem, in order to strengthen and affirm them and demonstrate their care by attending to their needs (Balswick & Balswick, 2014:178).

Although a high percentage of the respondents in the study attended church with their families on a regular basis, a much smaller number indicated that their parents spoke to them about

their faith. Grandparents were indicated to play a larger role in faith development of children, more than siblings and other family members (Van Niekerk & Breed, 2018:2, 3).

As there are grandparent-headed households, the Church needs to be a source of support and encouragement to these intergenerational caregivers. Through their Christian faith, grandparents are able to add value to their grandchildren and become surrogate parents to them. The grandchildren in return are able to experience mutual love, as they lead them to Jesus and Scripture and show them how to pray. They become role models and once equipped with biblical information can make a difference in the lives of teenagers (Coulter, 2011:145, 147, 153, 154).

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6.2.5 Partners/boys as stakeholders

One of the factors that contribute towards high teenage pregnancy rate in South Africa is adolescent men or boys. The strategy to be used in reducing teenage pregnancies in South Africa, is to locally initiate programmes that will partner with men and boys, simply because pregnancy involves both the girl and her male companion. Much as the government try to support by establishing paternity tests and maintenance, child support and gender equality, etc., there is no procedure to date regarding young men who may be the drivers of teenage pregnancy. There has been no visible enterprise to sensitise young men about the implications of impregnating girls. However, any man who engage in a sexual relationship with a teenage girl, is at risk to pregnant her. In this study by Odimegwu *et al.* (2018) young men between the ages of 12-22 years were interviewed in the nine provinces to learn their sexual involvement with teenage girls and/or causing at least one teenage pregnancy. Despite numerous earlier initiatives to address the high rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa, if young men's involvement is ignored, it may prevent a holistic approach to addressing this challenge (Odimegwu *et al.,* 2018:44-45, 49). Therefore, the Church must offer programmes to assist boys to abstain and live a holy life and show them that it is possible to live a pure life in Christ.

6.3 DETERMINING THE BEST AGES TO INFLUENCE YOUTH: The role of developmental theory

As Mbiti (1975:121, 122) indicates in chapter 4 how educative and important the rite of passage is for an African child, in transitioning from childhood to adulthood, how it prepares the teenagers in sexual education, marriage, procreation and family responsibilities. Ott (2013:17) conveys that the rite of passage is also celebrated amongst Christians, in the form of baptism, sacraments, confirmation, communion or marriage. These rites take place around

key transitions in one's sexual and relational development. They communicate to a child or youth that they have reached a different level in their relationship to God. As we are sexual beings from birth to death, these rites of passage help us to honour how our sexuality and relationship change over time. Parents want their children to share the same faith with them and should explain to them the tenets of Christian faith concerning sexuality and relationships and allow them to ask questions and lead by example.

It is faith that helps children to deal with developmental changes in their bodies and their relationships. For Christians, faith includes believing in Christ and that God loves us and we trust in His will. Even though we have not seen Him, we believe He exists and our belief is true because of what we read in the Bible. We engage in doctrines and practices like prayer, sacraments and rites of passage. Our faith influences our lives, friendships, romance, parenting and values. These values become our source of strength, direction and comfort to our children as they pass through life. Being a Christian and belonging to a specific denomination can aid and inform parents and children on sexuality (Ott, 2013:12, 13).

As the study is investigating how to educate and train teenagers and families to challenge sexual practices leading to unwanted pregnancy amongst black teenage girls, Clouse (1991:205) suggests that it is very important to target the age and the place where children can be taught sex education. It can be at school, church or home at prepuberty, puberty, post-puberty and can be conveyed by parents, siblings, teachers, ministers or youth workers within the Church. Whoever facilitates the process has to be a good role model and the content of that information must be valuable. For example: Sex education is about character and issues of right and wrong should be emphasised strongly. The children should be taught sexual restraint and made aware that it is not just a physical act and also that it should only occur within marriage. Sex education programmes should include abstinence to encourage the youth to wait until marriage. They should be encouraged to say no and concentrate on their studies. An abstinence programme can be less effective to a sexually active teenager, however, especially if the family is dysfunctional. God's plan should still be conveyed no matter the family background. According to the researcher, patience is the key if we seek to win teenagers back to Christ and set a good example.

An infant's interaction with his or her parents, forms the basis on which he or she will build their developing faith. If this foundation is not placed down correctly, problems might arise later in the child's faith development (Van Niekerk & Breed, 2018:1).

Children grow up with the religious belief of their parents, which teaches what is right and wrong, good or evil, valuable or worthless. The spiritual development starts in early adolescence when thoughts are becoming abstract and the teenager conforms to the religious beliefs of others. From late adolescence to early adulthood, they explore their own values, beliefs and take responsibility for their own religious beliefs (Ebersöhn *et al.,* 2017:132, 133).

Van Niekerk and Breed (2018:9) researched the role parents have to play in the development of faith from infancy to seven years and used Osmer's model, suggesting that this is how parents should respond:

- The child should grow in a safe atmosphere from birth, where all basic needs are met. This will ensure a strong basis of trust for faith to develop.
- Parents should practise what they preach i.e. the child should see his or her parents interact with their faith. They should be faithful in attending church, Bible study, and in dialog about faith and their relationships with other people and be given the opportunity to react to this.
- Parents should love God and present a loving God to their children. Continuously and frequently educate their children about their faith in Almighty God, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. There should be conducted debates of biblical topics that will enhance their lives. Bible study topics should be repeated, so that the child may grasp the subject and understand.
- When children are being told stories from the Bible, parents should bring that context to the present life, and use vivid images as children at this age are stimulated through the things they can see. As part of development, they should stimulate their child's imaginations through relevant info and knowledge. These could include puppets, songs with movements and activities that present the stories in a concrete way, such as building Noah's ark from clay.
- As the child is still egocentric, they should develop his/her personal needs. This can be done by addressing difficult areas in his/her life and or communicating to an interest that the child has at that time. For example: if a young child is fascinated by animals, it would be a good time to tell them the story of how the world was created or about Noah's ark. A fearful child can be taught about a God who is always there, whatever the circumstances.

6.3.1 Sexuality Education

One of the needs of youth ministry is to help the youth to see the value and benefit of waiting until marriage to engage in sex. Sex is a mystery and a wonder. Black teenage Christians need to know the mind of God on the subject, as most think that God opposes it. Some engage in masturbation and oral sex and do not see any harm in that. The Church has to come up with healthy value-centred programmes of sex education that will help the youth abstain from sexual promiscuity and prevent unplanned and unwanted teenage pregnancies. They need educators who would be open and honest about sexuality and its Creator and teach it from the Christian perspective. They also need to know that it is God who created sex and it is good (Gen. 2:18) and integrate their sexuality with God (Burns, 2001:227, 228).

Ott (2013:18-20) highlights that sexuality education means learning about all aspects of sexuality throughout life. Sexuality is a very complex part of who we are. Faith beliefs and teachings shape how we think about our bodies and how we act in our relationships. This learning process begins early in life and helps us to understand ourselves in terms of sexual health and wholeness. We need to care for and respect our bodies, whatever our age, and practise building and maintaining relationships. For example: Children learn at age two to wash their hands, ask for something, hug gently, etc. At age 11 children learn to wash frequently, have friendships with other people, demonstrate respect towards their parents, etc. In later years as youth they enter into romantic relationships, communicate openly with partners about sexual pleasure and have mutual communication with their parents. The author further cites five categories of holistic sexuality as:

- **Sexual health and reproduction**, which relate to the biological and physiological part of our bodies and sexual reproductive system. This includes sexual behaviours, such as changes in puberty or menopause, sexual dysfunctions, contraceptives, etc.
- **Sensuality** is how our bodies respond to pleasure.
- **Intimacy** is emotional closeness to another person or God and having it reciprocated.
- **Sexual identity** includes who we are male or female, what quality we have and how we fit into society and whom we are attracted to.
- **Sexualisation** is the use of sexual behaviours to influence or control, for example flirting vs. bullying.

As a result, sex is a very complex subject and in the Church the senior reverend must communicate the mind and design of God for sex to the youth ministry leadership. He must ensure that the youth pastor and other volunteers involved in the ministry tackle this with

reverence, discipline and with openness and honesty. He should prepare church leaders to create an environment of trust, by engaging responsible and respectful youth leaders from the congregation who have an opportunity to directly influence teenagers. The role of the youth leader will be to strengthen spiritual principles and assist youth in making these principles meaningful in their everyday lives. He should be available to youth and develop creative ways to address the specific sexuality topics that involves delaying teenage sex, pregnancy and parenthood (Esperanza, s.a.:11,12).

For sexuality education to produce the best outcome for the youth, it must be balanced by merging it with moral education. The congregation should assist in stationing sexual education within a moral context. The Church as an institution can use several programmes such as youth groups, catechesis and sermons in which a space can be created for youngsters to discover biblical guidelines and gain an understanding about sex and sexuality. The Church can be an informative space, where youths can come to an understanding of God, themselves and others. It can be a safe place where life issues, such as sexuality, can be deliberated in a responsible manner. In order to become a successful informative space, the Church should not be judgemental on the physical observable behaviour of teenagers with regards to sex, but make an effort and the time to gain an understanding of the worldview that constitutes the norms and values behind such behaviour. They should facilitate this meeting effectually with youth through dialogue (Cloete, 2012:4).

Parents are further advised to discuss sexuality with their children. The Church can help the family to deal with the topic together, but cannot take the place of a parent. The youth need to know that God created sex to be enjoyed within marriage and it is very good (Gen. 2:18-25). As Christians we belong to Christ and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Topics such as lust, premarital sex, homosexuality, forgiveness, dating, relationship and intimacy need to be discussed from a biblical point of view. The youth need to know the consequences of being sexually active before marriage and its negative impact on future relationships. They should learn to say "no to sex before marriage", which is a good choice. They should not fall for the claim that sex helps partners to find out if they are compatible for marriage or not. Treating each other with respect and honour should also be deliberated, as it would help the youth to refrain from premarital sex. Those who have been sexually active have to see a forgiving God who restores, even heals the pain and anger of negative sexual experiences. The parents should also be kept informed on the topics so that

they can take it further at home. A one-day conference can be held by the Church on sexuality to promote purity. Testimonies on real life issues from the youth can build their faith. To assist and encourage the teenagers, the Church programme can include various teaching methods like small-group discussions, movies, dramas, etc. and different venues to discover what God says about sexuality. They could invite experts from the community or a group of churches to brainstorm on sexuality (Burns, 2001:229-236).

6.3.2 Age categories

Sexual development begins at birth and includes the physiological changes that occur as children grow. This comprise also of the sexual awareness and views they come to learn and the behaviours they show. A child's sexual knowledge and behaviour is influenced by his/her age, what he or she observes and the sexual behaviours of family and friends. This includes what the parents imparted through culture and religion concerning sexuality and physical boundaries (Coleman & Charles, 2009:1).

Parents should not feel uncomfortable to discuss sexuality with their children. They should continually answer questions of where babies come from or discuss menstruation or nocturnal emission. They should help their children develop relationship skills that can promote loving healthy relationship. They should nurture their self-confidence that they are not easily swayed. Sexuality is unique and from God, parents should communicate it positively in a way that will also help them understand their body language and provide the information about sex that will help them make right decisions. Moreover, parents should learn to be patient (Ott, 2013:20-22).

6.3.3 Grade level categories

From birth to 5 years

Research by Wurtele and Kenny (2011:3, 6) indicate that through touch and body contact, human beings learn to love from a very early age. When babies are touched, kissed, hugged, and snuggled, they experience positive physical sensations associated with being loved. During the first few months of life, infants begin to realise their physiques. This type of closeness and emotive attachment between infants and parents can be the early basis of more mature forms of physical closeness that will develop later as part of healthy sexuality. Boys and girls are especially interested in their physical differences in preschool. Given the opportunity, they will play games that allow for sexual exploration with other children. These sexual plays are quite common in children between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

At this age the foundation of sexuality is covered. Children's sexuality develop from the time we name them, hold and love them. At that moment sexuality education about relationships, bodies and faith values starts. An infant's sexuality is shaped by touch, exploration and relationship. They need cuddling and body warmth to grow well. Infants discover their body parts, including genitals. They experience erection and vaginal lubrication, which is natural and the way God created us. At preschool they will touch and show one another's private out of curiosity and a parent should be calm and teach them that God gave human beings good bodies, but they belong to us and, therefore, our genitals are private. As children learn from parents, they develop trust and express emotions. Parents should connect children to God through worship. Showing them affection through hugging and kissing them shows them a loving God. Sharing worship, prayers and singing with them develop their faith. Sunday school will also help them to become sexuality educated, teaching them good morals from the Bible (Gen. 37:1-28) (Ott, 2013:39-57).

As children grow older approximately ages 4-6, they interact more with other children. They become aware of the different structures between their genders, i.e. boys and girls, and more social in their investigation. They start to explore their own bodies through touching or rubbing their private parts. They enjoy copying adult behaviours, such as kissing and holding hands. They become increasingly aware of the social rules governing sexual behaviour and language such as the importance of modesty or which words are considered "naughty". It's a stage where they may try to test these rules by using naughty words, even if they don't understand the meaning. They ask more questions about sexual matters, such as where babies come from and why boys and girls are physically different (Coleman & Charles, 2009:2).

Elementary School Years (6-10 years)

At this stage, parents should help their children understand that physical differences are part of God's creation. Parents should have positive comments on their children's body type, dress and physical ability. It will help a child develop a positive image through the teenage years. Children start to be shy and want privacy when dressing or bathing and this stage will depend on how nudity is handled at home. They should be taught that their bodies are beautiful and created by God and they should take care of them. They should also be taught about puberty and sex, i.e. how babies are made. It will make them more comfortable, than learning from the media. Sexual education can, therefore, prepare them better and help them to understand changes in their bodies (Ott, 2013:64-66, 68-70).

It is vital for parents to provide their children with accurate, age-appropriate information. No matter how awkward they may feel in talking with children about bodily changes and sexual matters, they should communicate with them in order to ensure that their children grow up safe, healthy and secure in their bodies. Once children enter grade school, approximately around seven years, their awareness of social rules increases and they become shy and want more privacy especially around adults. Although self-touch and sexual play continue, children at this age are discreet and likely to hide these activities from adults. As adolescence approaches, they become interested in adult sexual behaviour, and begin to search for sexual material on television, movies and printed material (Coleman & Charles, 2009:1, 3).

Middle School Years (11-13 years)

Children approaching adolescence are likely to start displaying romantic and sexual interest in their peers. These behaviours are common in growing children and parents should not panic when a child shows sexual behaviour, such as touching another child's private parts. Parents should not panic when these actions as most sexual play is an expression of children's natural curiosity (Coleman & Charles, 2009:3).

It is very important that the family assists teens as they go through major transitions, since some are comfortable with their sexuality and others are not. Private parts start growing and mood swings increase. Parents should teach their children about menarche, erection and ejaculation as part of God's creation and not to be humiliated. As they begin to feel sexually attracted, a parent can share their own experiences. This means that soon the teens may date and it's important to teach them about God's view on sex and the dangers, such as sexually transmitted diseases. This is a stage when some teenagers do not pray or when they distance themselves from God. Parents should repeat messages of God's blessings on their children's bodies, teach them to respect and have a positive image as their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. They should emphasise that sex is for marriage and can lead to pregnancy and goes with responsibility. They must discuss marriage with their children, as it is based on love and support, and parents should be role models (Ott, 2013:86, 90-112).

High School Years (14-18 years)

Most teenagers know that they are sexual beings. Some engage in a variety of sexual behaviours, others in penetrative intercourse. They need information and an understanding of contraceptives, STDs, media's influence on sexuality, dating, abstinence, etc. They should

know about sexual reproduction and pregnancy so as to avoid teenage pregnancy. No matter how disappointed parents may be, they must show the character of a forgiving God to their teens. They should be taught how to avoid temptation by parents and the Church. Churches must have programmes that can support teenagers into adulthood. They should participate in congregational teaching and learn Scripture that will influence their decisions positively by avoiding oral sex and external intercourse, in the name of being technical virgins. The parents and youth ministry can aid teenagers balance a relationship by setting limits on dating. Non-parental mentors are essential in the faith journey, as they encourage commitment (Ott, 2013:120-140).

6.4 DETERMINING THE BEST PLACES TO INFLUENCE YOUTH:

6.4.1 Youth ministry

Youth Ministry is defined as "a discipline within practical theology that attempts to cultivate a relationship with God, by listening to the one and only unique God in Christ and talking to Him, calling Him Father. Youth Ministry is a spiritual ministry of leading young people who find themselves in this transition period from childhood to adulthood" (Strong, 2014:1).

Youth ministry is very important in South Africa. Most of the youth are interested in getting involved in Christian youth groups and practices that are most relevant to their lifestyles in terms of socialisation and time. The youth urgently needs to take ownership of what they believe in. As a result, they need activities that are connected to Christian and moral values that they can understand. Similarly, most of them desire genuine and consistent relationships with their peers, parents, youth leaders and pastors. One of their challenges is that they struggle to articulate their faith from a cultural context. This is because the Church tends to use Christian language around the youth without explaining it to them. For example, terms like salvation, redemption, righteousness, etc. become difficult for them to understand. In order to avoid risking African youth's faith from relapsing, according to life circumstances, there is a need for the Church to build their faith in Christ by giving them a space to express themselves culturally through the youth ministry (Weber, 2015: 2, 4, 6).

The youth in African churches, like any other in the world, are passionate, energetic and outgoing in many ways. They have a lot of energy, talents, and gifts and always love to express new ways of exercising their talents in ministry. African youth ministries emphasize the practices of fellowships, rallies, Bible study, seminars, crusades, camps, retreats, morning glory, overnight prayer meetings, and to some extent fasting. These practices nurture teens in their spiritual faith formation (Maiko, 2004:15).

Parents, extended family and the community must also carry out their evangelistic responsibility by preparing children and the youth to grow physically, spiritually and socially and aid them to mature into adulthood. The Church and family must navigate young people through the passage to adulthood, i.e. matured Christian adults. The Church and family must show the youth the love of God and teach them the way of life that includes habits, discipline and a pattern of life through which Christians seek communion with Christ and unity with others. This begins with prayer, personal confessions and communion with the Holy Spirit (Willemse, 2007:12, 13). Helping Christians develop habits of prayer is like teaching a child to talk. Teenagers also hunger for God and one way is to teach them how to communicate with God is through prayer. Develop habits of prayer through elementary strategies that can make them confident and feel at home in the presence of God (Robbins, 2011:207, 208).

Another point the youth should be taught is leadership, interpersonal influences of friendships and how they can positively impact on one another and have a constructive and optimistic influence on their peers (Willemse, 2007:13).

Teenagers are faced with many developmental tasks during adolescence. As members of society, they are confronted with values, norms, traditions, customs and religious beliefs. Churches can do the right thing for the youth to liberate them from their circumstances, by preaching a new life and lifestyle to African families and youth. This can help them to adapt socially, make moral decisions and decide whose values are right or wrong. Furthermore, African family and youth ministry must participate in the *missio Dei* by sitting with families and youth, listening and discovering the presence of God in their midst and discern His will in their specific context (Knoetze, 2015:3; Ebersöhn *et al.*, 2017:119).

Cloete (2012:5) indicates that once adolescents learn to be accountable for their lives, congregations can lend support in this regard. The congregants should uproot out of the youth messages of personal pleasure and fulfilment, and teach them to convey that of sacrifice, discipline and love for the neighbour. This is important to sexuality, as we need to esteem ourselves and others in expressing and enjoying our sexuality. Sex is not just an act for pleasure without commitment and love, as is sometimes portrayed by the media. It is a matter of positive and constructive relationships that benefit all. They must be taught that sex and love are both from the heart of God. Healthy human sex and love are always intimately connected. Such teachings on sexuality will help teenagers avoid engaging in very risky sexual behaviour without understanding the consequences.

6.4.1.1 Aims of Youth Ministry

One of the objectives of youth ministry is to help teenagers put their faith in God into practice. Once faith is embedded in them, it would build their character that will be realised through faith character studies and discipleship. In other words, they will be accountable in daily prayer, Bible study, academic work, family time and social time. However, African youth in churches struggle to be part of the larger worshipping community in their churches. The Church, on the other hand, struggles to accept them too, in the way they are with their problems and then tries to nurture them in a Christian way (Maiko, 2004:16).

The main aim of youth ministry is to make people Disciples of Christ (Clark, 2016:1). The youth worker's duty is also to help teenagers to grow in faith and mature into disciples who will follow Jesus faithfully into their hearts. The aim is to help the youth to stand in the faith and keep walking with Christ on a daily basis, helping them cling to the Vine (John 15:5). The youth ministry is to help teenagers become Christians, build them into disciples and help them to survive. It is also to build faith that will last and make them committed disciples of Christ (Matt. 28:19) (Robbins, 2011:15).

6.4.2 Faith development

Teenagers may start with their parents and church on faith. The youth ministry supports them until they are able to move outside other people's faith. The Church has to help them grow spiritually to a point where should their prayers go unanswered, they still remain committed to God. As they mature they develop a world vision about their lives, a calling from God. This is a lifelong process whereby parents, ministry and other adults play an important role in their faith development (Burns, 2001:60, 61).

Faith is what gives purpose to morality. It is impossible to please God without faith and we have to depend on Him (Heb.11:6). Faith is a gift from God and just as people grow physically and emotionally, faith grows spiritually inside children and adults. Parents can assist in developing the faith of their children by teaching them the Word of God and introducing characters of committed people of faith. Parents become fearful when teenagers doubt their faith and what they were taught from childhood. They often mistake it as a rejection of faith. It is important to allow them to wrestle with questions of faith and claim it as theirs and not become dependent on their parents. All have to depend on the Holy Spirit (Anthony & Anthony, 2011:35, 38, 39).

6.4.3 Identity and Self-Esteem

Chapter 3 has already indicated factors such as divorce, family conflict and the high occurrence of absent fathers that have a particularly negative impact on children. The effects cause children to experience an increased rate of emotional problems, including early pregnancy (Van Niekerk & Breed, 2018:2).

Teenagers who experience physical, emotional, relational and spiritual changes that affect their identity are likely to experience low self-esteem and be easily seduced sexually. They feel more loved and accepted when they engage in sex. Much as some youth are active in church they are not committed to the Christian faith. Consequently, the Church and the youth ministry should assist them to engage in a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ that will alter their lives and enable them to make good decisions with an eternal mind (Burns, 2001:242-244, 246).

Nevertheless, the Church should insist on no sex before marriage. It should address the traumas caused by outside influences, such as peer pressure, youth culture and popular media. It should inspire adolescents on how to confront issues of self-esteem and support them in improving their decision-making, learning and coping skills. Coordinate and host youth activities that support positive messages, for example, it can organise abstinence parties, youth fellowship, educational forums and invite youth from other churches. It can also educate teenagers on how to spread the messages they have learned (Esperanza, s.a.:19).

6.4.4 Evangelism

Evangelistic preaching is defined as "the public proclamation of the Good News of eternal salvation found in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ so that any unbeliever may embrace him as the only one who saves sinners" (Ramesh, 2005:73). Being an evangelist is a sacred calling from God and reveals our love for Jesus Christ. This becomes a passion of our lives and compelling, as we call people to Jesus Christ. Evangelistic preaching must be driven by the internal conviction to save human lives, even if circumstances are not favourable (2 Tim. 4:2). The author further adds that an evangelist is a mouthpiece of God and motivates the inner being of a person. Evangelistic preaching is for the glory of God and He is the one who saves people from eternal lostness. Some individuals do not know Jesus Christ as Personal Saviour, hence we must be willing to be sent by Him. The willingness shows that as servants of God, we give Him permission to do so. The aim is to present Jesus Christ's salvation to people, proclaim His work to unbelievers. "The mystery of ministry extends from the Trinity, by the incarnation, to us. In some mysterious sense, God rests the administering

of his Good News on our integrity and faithfulness with omnipotent confidence and expectation" (Ramesh, 2005:22, 23, 26, 31, 32).

Jesus Christ gave His Church the Great Commission, which is to evangelise (Matt. 28:18-20). When the youth evangelises, they are able to touch other youth in the Church and also those who are outside the Church. Through evangelism, our Lord Jesus Christ uses the youth to win the lost. Evangelism draws adolescents together and enables them to merge into effective discipleship, which involves learning. It cultivates them to put into practice everything they have mentally absorbed. This phenomenon impacts on their lifestyle in a way and instils in them love for both God and man, which is the greatest commandment (Matt. 22:36-40). Effective discipleship somehow affects the adolescent's personality, i.e. the mind, will and emotions. Evangelism can also help Christian families that are experiencing difficulties and have disintegrated to turn to Christ. Not all church members have accepted Christ nor living the Christian life. It is only God who knows the difference between the faith community and the world. Pastors and youth ministers may not be able to make that distinction. Consequently, youth ministers will have to prayerfully and wisely seek to evangelise the whole family in order to make an impact on a disintegrating family (Makinwa, 2012:125). Meaningful prayer is a partnership, as the Gospel message is taken beyond the local church (Bridges, 2012:78).

The youth must help others understand the Gospel's nature, impact and the manner in which to biblically convey it to others. They must be taught and hence teach others on solid biblical theology. The youth ministry must also help the youth to grow socially, spiritually and emotionally. Young Christians must help others see that their faith is beyond superficial and not just about entertainment crowds. They must develop disciples and help the Church to grow. They should stay focused on the Word of God and unite the Church. Besides showing each other *agape* love as a church, they must be sanctified. They should work closely with parents in laying a holy biblical foundation and bring the Church together. When the youth are prevented from fulfilling such callings, they usually leave the Church to seek such opportunities elsewhere. The youth in the Church therefore, combined with elderly church leaders, must do enough to engage youth in the mission and make them feeling that the Church offers them the services and responsibilities they require to be active disciples (Ragira *et al.*, 2017:51).

The Church is encouraged to evangelise, as it is a necessity. It builds bridges of friendship with people outside the Church. The main aim of evangelism is to tell others about Jesus

Christ. Faith without passion is worthless, it needs to be shared. There should be special services to attract non-members and people should be baptised (Beasley-Murray, 2005:113-116). Teenagers in particular like to hide from God (Gen. 3:8-9). Research has shown that at some stage, some teenagers end up not attending church or praying or studying the Bible and hence, the importance of evangelism and discipleship. Discipleship without evangelism is like farming without sowing seeds (Robbins, 2011:17, 19).

The African church is reminded that God has called the youth to be His faithful servants in transforming the world. This ministry is an office Jesus Christ faithfully uses to reach out to those not yet saved. Through evangelism (Matt. 28:19-20) the African church must nurture their young people in a Christian way, by sending their teenage evangelists to go out and reach the lost youth wherever they are and make them part of the body of Christ (Maiko, 2004:17-19). It is the Holy Spirit who calls people to preach the Good News (Is. 6, 61). It is also the Holy Spirit who convicts people of sin, guides people into all truth and makes God known (John 16). It is the Spirit who strengthens believers and reveals the richness of the love of Christ known to them (Eph. 3). The Holy Spirit makes God known to people through the fullness of God's Word. According to Romans 10:9-13, believers may confess that they live from hearing the Word. The Spirit, who goes out from the Father and the Son, gives families and youth a new life through the truth, the Word. The Holy Spirit as he was from the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:2) still lives in the life of believers, in their thinking, their convictions and their behaviour (Knoetze, 2015:7).

The Great Commission is God's call to the Church to share His love with the world (Matt. 28:19). Children also play an important part in this calling to be evangelised and also for them to go out and preach to others. Parents and the Church should lead them into personal relationship with God and help them to share this love with other children. It will help them to have compassion on others, treat elders with respect and verbally share their salvation by inviting their friends to church (Blanchette Jr., 2011:132, 133).

As part of evangelism, Esperanza (s.a.:19) adds that in the spirit of grace and discipline, the youth should intentionally reach out to sexually active teenagers and engage them without condemnation. Today's youth are multicultural, therefore, they should specifically target their message to the audience be it gender and/or cultural background, so that it may be more readily received.

6.4.4.1 Forms of Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is not confined to the boundaries of the local congregation, but can be taken to the community through evangelism in different and many ways, as it will be deliberated below.

6.4.4.1.1 School Evangelism/Partnerships with schools

There is a need for the Word of God to be preached in black South African schools. It is essential for schools and communities to be in partnership and minister the Gospel. Pastors and religious leaders must be invited to black South African schools to offer learners Christian values they learnt in their childhood (Ntho-Ntho, 2013:188).

Educators are challenged to help students flourish, practice an ethic of care empowered by the love of God. They want to teach and model Godly values and morals and pray for their students, making evangelism necessary in public schools. It must coexist with role-based professional obligations to students, staff and the school community. Public schools seek evangelists who will faithfully carry out the Great Commission to learners to know Christ (Sehorn, 2017:5, 6).

6.4.4.1.2 Sports Evangelism

It is very rare in South Africa to find a church with a dedicated sports ministry department. One of the reasons is that many pastors and church leaders view sports involvement as being in competition to church involvement. They think sports will dampen their members' commitment to the Church. However, sports ministry is effective in evangelism. The Good News can still be preached in the sports ministry as an effective vehicle for evangelism. The aim of sports ministry is to glorify God using sports as a gift and an act of worship. Those partaking have the opportunity to share their faith with those in the world of sport, thereby proclaiming the Gospel and expanding Christ's kingdom on earth. A church that organises matches and includes non-Christians in its social match in order to build relationships with them is definitely involved in sports ministry. In this context sports is used as a prophetic voice and God's mouthpiece within a world that does not recognise His kingdom rule's (Tucker, 2011:16-18, 85, 90).

Yet recreation is regarded as a way of bringing youth closer to the Church. It keeps them active within the Church and also fulfils the mission of the Church. The original mission of recreation is "Liturgia (worship), Koinonia (fellowship), Diakonia (service), and Martyria (witness)" (Karlis *et al.*, 2014:24, 28).

Sports activities improve the youth spiritually and intellectually, develop their sense of belonging and build a spirit of sportsmanship and patience. As Christians we serve God, the

Church and the unsaved. We can serve God when we learn that we have been created to bring glory to God and that our life is to be a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) (Ray, 2006:15, 16). Likewise, the unbelievers or the lost can be saved when we as individuals see every activity as an opening to model Christ and to look for opportune moments to share about His grace (Ndlovu, 2002:147).

6.4.5 Worship

The Church has an obligation to teach children to worship God. Some choirs involve very young children and develop their talents on music. As they grow older the opportunity for public participation in worship and the development of their talents expand (Gilkes, 2009:90).

6.4.6 Bible Studies

Congregations should encourage the youth to attend Bible studies with a Bible and locate references to teach. It is a platform the Church uses to teach Scripture. It is an exegetical journey of the Old Testament and the New Testament, where deep revelation about God and our lives are intertwined. It is imperative for both the youth and adults to attend, as it also becomes a basis for a strong prayer life that bonds us to God (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:130, 131). The only source and norm of Christian knowledge is the Holy Scripture. The Bible is *Sola Scriptura,* which means it is the infallible authority of the Church. As we pray and become obedient, the Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Word of God and find divine revelation in the Bible (Sproul, 2005:15, 17, 31, 131). The Word of God is God Himself. Through the Bible, God eternally communicates His love and purpose to us within the Trinity, i.e. Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Frame, 2010:48).

According to the researcher, since the study involved challenging sexual practices amongst black teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies, Bible study should cover topics that can help to prevent teenage pregnancy. It will be very significant for teenagers to know what God says about family and its values, including sex and abstinence, from the Biblical point of view. The Scripture is God-breathed and able to correct and convict of sin, training us to live in holiness and righteousness and obey God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Chapter 5 can be a guide on topics to share about sexuality based on Genesis 1 and 2, Matthew 19:3-8, 1 Corinthians 7, etc.

6.4.7 Sunday school/Children's Ministry (Events)

In the black community it has happened that biological parents who do not attend church may send their children to Sunday school with a neighbour's children or relatives. This is to show that children are the most important, they are our future, and those children present in the Church are the core of every generation of effective black leadership. They are the Church and Sunday school is still the most important ministry involving children. Even at Christmas

and in other selected events, Sunday school children provide a programme to which the entire church is invited (Gilkes, 2009:86, 87, 89, 98).

The greatest challenge facing many African societies is moral or ethical. In many African communities there are many acts of negligence and lack of adequate social control on moral issues and thus destabilise societies. The mass media in Africa has also promoted violence, covetousness, cruelty, selfishness and sexual immorality. Many African youths have been attracted to negative or harmful practices, such as drug and substance abuse as well as sexual promiscuity. Sunday schools were introduced to teach children about the God and His Word, including conversion to Christianity. Mumo (2016) states that Sunday schools are now church schools, which organise Bible studies for all members of the Church. The objective is to bring children to Christ. Sunday schools are intended to provide an atmosphere in which individuals will come to accept Christ as their personal Saviour and help in preparing children for Church membership. Apart from the teachings of the Church, Sunday schools are meant to help children/youth relate the Bible to daily life. The stories found in the Bible took place many centuries ago and from a different culture. Therefore, Sunday school assist children in understanding the meaning of the stories and events in the Bible by relating them to African background. After that the teacher is supposed to show the students how to behave when confronted by similar situations (Mumo, 2016:49, 51).

The youth in Sunday school class must take a break each year and meet with their parents. Issues such as sexuality, community building, drugs and alcohol, decision-making, communication and independence in Christ are addressed. Each youth should have prayer partners. As part of mentoring, a teenager is partnered with an adult who will pray for him or her. There should be church retreats that the youth and parents attend together. The aim of these retreats is to give the parents and their children a chance to learn to laugh and be joyful together, learn from each other and bless one another. There should also be parent-equipping classes, to create the opportunity for parents to learn together how to be more effective in nurturing their children from a Christian point of view (De Vries, 2004:178, 179).

Parents are cautioned not to send their children to Sunday school and hand the responsibility of faith education to the teachers only. They should also take responsibility for religious instruction of their children, as the home is also a domestic church. Strommen and Hardel (2008) argue that parents who believe that their responsibilities have ended when they bring their children to Sunday school are not bad parents, but do not know how to nurture faith. For

those parents who want to participate, the family-congregational partnership is relevant (Strommen & Hardel, 2008:19, 20).

Sunday schools offer children of different age groups the opportunity to meet, socialise and build friendships amongst themselves. It keeps children occupied for some part of the weekend, as they are taught to love one another, being truthful and help one another as brother and sister, etc. Through Sunday school lessons, children deepen their understanding of Christianity and morality. They also learn the difference between right and wrong and to avoid the wrong ones. The teachers provide children with role models to imitate. Observing teachers and Christians with good behaviour, helps Sunday school pupils to mould their characters. Disciplined children are a great treasure to the family and society at large. Most schools engage children from as early as three years and provide weekly lessons that champion Christian virtues. The challenge is to equip the school with basic facilities such as classrooms, learning materials, teaching aids and stationery. This means the Church should budget for it and request Church members to provide facilities to enhance effective learning. Due to the advancing methods in learning and teaching, Sunday school teachers should be trained as facilitators. Children should be involved in the learning processes and Sunday school teachers should be selected from different occupations such as teaching, nursing, social work and even housewives. There should be a mixture of young and old men and women, from 18 years of age and above (Mumo, 2016:54-56).

Moreover, Sunday school teachings emphasise the importance of having a heart relationship with the Lord Jesus. It gives the Church the opportunity to focus on the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:19-20), to introduce children to Christianity and also teach them how to live by faith through appropriate, practical and continuous teachings. There is seemingly a lack of shepherding within our churches and not only of the adult members, but also of the children. The role of shepherding, leading and searching for "lost sheep" must start from infancy (Gurney, 2007:97).

6.4.8 Youth Camps/Retreats

According to Burns (2001:119-121), camps and retreats have an incredible spiritual impact on the youth. They instil excitement and refresh the youth, placing them in a relaxed atmosphere to hear the voice of God more clearly. They are more casual and it gives them a sense of freedom and time to develop new friendships. The teenagers become more spiritually open as they meet God face to face and surrender their lives to Christ. Some make meaningful decisions over the sinful lives they previously led. They allow God to rebuild their lives. They may look simple, but camps and retreats have a deep spiritual effect on the lives of

adolescents. They enable them to develop a sense of who God is and what he has done in their lives. They become like markers or altars where they meet God for positive change in their lives.

There is nothing wrong with camps, retreats or gathering of believers to study the Word of God. The problem is parents are not acknowledged or equipped as the primary disciple-makers of their children's lives. They remain untrained to discipline their children or even if they know how, they do not have enough time (Jones, 2011:126).

In addition, for a camp or retreat to be valuable and successful, the planning of the programme and activities should revolve around a clearly stated purpose. There should be a flow chart, to help with delegation and a better understanding of the event and the allocated responsibilities (Burns, 2001:122, 123). For example: at a camp meeting, the youth should be taught about the cost of what happens after hearing what the Gospel is and lastly, make a decision to follow Jesus Christ (Makinwa, 2012:126).

6.4.9 Outreach Programmes

"Outreach as a ministry is easily fulfilled when young people together with adults opt to be missionaries, educators, evangelists, social workers, medical specialists, agriculturists, and charity directors" (Maiko, 2004:20). Our churches are called to design and lay strategies for nurturing adolescents at schools, social gatherings and churches, challenging them to specialise in areas that will shape their call for missionary endeavour. The African churches in this sense need the right strategy of reaching out to other people. Youth fellowship will help in this ministry, once the Church is ready to effectively prepare them and use their gifts. They can visit the sick at homes and hospitals as well as witness at schools, places of work and other social gatherings. The youth in African churches are part of this commission and church leaders must strategise on how best to engage them. It will be the duty of youth leaders to plan how to do this. Witnessing must be a continuous affair that teenagers do by planning with their youth pastors when and where to reach other unsaved youth (Maiko, 2004:22).

6.4.10 Workshops

Churches should conduct workshops that will provide parents with guidelines and recommendations on when and how best to deliberate on sex and related issues with teenagers and pre-teens. They should inspire communication between parents and their children by demonstrating open conversation techniques. The Church should also support and equip parents with information, but it is the parents' responsibility to be engaged in the development of their teenagers' lives. Furthermore, the workshop should include male involvement

programmes to promote responsible fatherhood as a strategy to reduce teen pregnancy. It has been noted that too many young men are not waiting until they are ready emotionally and financially to become fathers. Regrettably, children born to teenage parents are often denied a close connection with their fathers. This occurs because in most cases the relationship between the teen and parents often dissolve over time. The Church should teach adolescent boys and young men the importance of waiting or postponing fatherhood, until they are ready to have a lasting ideally married relationship with the mother of their children. The church should ensure that they also understand the financial and emotional responsibilities of being a father to their children. This can be achieved by having churches explore ways to reach out to boys and young men to participate in the programme. Additionally, the Church should stress the important role that fathers can play in helping their own sons and daughters avoid becoming teenage parents (Esperanza, s.a:10, 11, 19). Much as a child is raised by the community, the Church should also be an adoption centre of the fatherless children and nurture them. God is the Father of the fatherless (Ps. 68:5). For that reason, fathers in the Church should be true fathers to the fatherless youth and bring healing to their situations. Godly fathers become fathers in their communities (Munroe, 2008:186-188).

6.5 IDENTIFYING ROLE MODELS AND OTHER WITNESSES IN FAITH COMMUNITIES

Parents and mentors are advised to change the lives of their children, by taking responsibility. Be closer to them through inspiration and make a difference in the lives of the adolescents around us, so that they can become mature men and women of God. They must be able to stand their ground and serve God wholeheartedly as Samuel did (Botma, 2012:30). One of the roles of parenting is to teach children to fear God, treasure His Word and follow Jesus Christ with passion. Most of parents never or rarely engage in any sort of family devotion time. They discuss the Word of God or spiritual matters or pray with their children on a minimal basis (Jones, 2011:27).

Parents can be good role models to their children. Nonetheless, they have to be moralistic and very positive for their children to walk in their footsteps. Parents who model proper moral behaviour, are able to influence their children to value and identify with them. Such children rarely become delinquent or cheat (Gouws *et al.*, 2000:109).

Studies have indicated that some celebrities can also be good role models and motivate teenagers positively. They can help teenagers make valuable decisions and are worth

imitating in certain areas of life. For example, top athletes who appear frequently in the media can influence positive sporting habits for the youth (Gergely, 2017:93, 95).

6.6 PASTORAL CARE FOR PREGNANT TEENAGERS/TEEN MOTHERS AND TEEN FATHERS

Premarital sex still occurs and is widely accepted, even if the Bible condemns intercourse outside marriage. Unwanted and unplanned pregnancies may occur and at times create sorrow and stress. Since there is no physical evidence, some teenage fathers disappear or in some cases their identity is unknown. The teen mother, including her own family, would not give her support. The teen father would not take responsibility and she has to cope with the problem of raising the child alone. Subsequently, pastoral or Christian counselling is necessary for these teens (still expectant, mother and father), because when the pregnancy is confirmed, it gives rise to multiple reactions such as shock, fear of parental reaction, anger, disappointment, stigmatisation and self-condemnation, etc. Despite the counsellor's personal feelings about the pregnancy, the emphasis should not be on the moral and theological debates related to the pregnancy. He or she should help the teen mother/father cope with the crisis and help her make immediate and long-term decisions (Collins, 2007:570, 571, 574).

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Pastoral counselling for teens in this condition is necessary, as human suffering is universal and no one can escape it. Counselling teens and every form of soul care ministry begin with the God of Comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-4), who cares and comforts us in our troubles and suffering as we search for meaning. When the teens become healed and redeemed, they will be able to help others in the same position. Counselling that involves the Church becomes Christ-centred and cares for the soul (Clinton & Ohlschlager, 2011:20, 23, 31). Louw (2008:11) terms care of souls as *Cura Vitae*, as it heals the soul, gives hope, care and meaning in the midst of suffering. The authors further explain that the Church becomes a central place for healing, growth and rich relationship with God. Consequently, the Church must become therapeutic in the sense of being the place where the teens feel wanted, accepted and valued despite their challenges. This step can usher teens into a new relationship with Jesus Christ.

The story of Abraham and Ishmael (Gen. 16:11; 21:17-20) is an example to show that although sex outside marriage is a sin, God is merciful towards illegitimate children. Nevertheless, despite Christian doctrine that forbids one to have children before and outside marriage (Deut. 23:2), God's grace is seen both in the Old and New Testaments. They describe God as One who hears the cries and tends the needs of the "poor" and "fatherless," just as he heard and tended Ishmael. God's people are repeatedly enjoined to do likewise for the bastards and

orphans in their midst (Ps. 68:2; Job 29:12; Jam. 1:27). God kept His promise and blessed Ishmael, despite his illegitimacy, and he lived a full life of 137 years (Witte, 2003:330, 333).

"Teen pregnancy is 100% preventable" (Esperanza, s.a.:8). According to the researcher, it is also possible for teenagers to abstain by the grace of God. This can be seen in Matthew 1:25, when Joseph abstained from any sexual relations with Mary until after the birth of Jesus. Teenage mothers and fathers should not be discouraged, but believe God will heal and help them to raise their children in a godly manner. God also blessed Jephthah and raised him to be a leader of Israel, irrespective of his illegitimate background and rejection from his half-brothers (Judg. 11:1-10, 29; 12:7). For that reason, there is still room for improvement in life (Esperanza, s.a.:8). Teenagers need to see that they are not the Church of tomorrow. Instead their gifts, abilities and services are presently required (Burns, 2001:131).

Proverbs 1-9 is one of the sections of Scripture fathers can study to impart knowledge and moral guidance on their sons. In these chapters the father repeatedly instructs the son to live a meaningful life (Prov. 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:20-35). In Proverbs 5:15-23 the father seeks to convince his son that genuine sexual satisfaction comes only within the context of marriage. The father's informative technique is instructive and relevant even for today's youth, to fear God and shun sex before marriage (Chisholm Jr., 2000:397).

6.6.1 Coaching within Pastoral Counselling

Collins (2009:14, 84, 362, 363) defines coaching as "the art and practice of enabling individuals and groups to move from where they are, to where they want to be. Coaching helps people expand their visions, build their confidence, unlock their potential, increase their skills, and take practical steps towards their goals". Coaching is for people who want to make changes in their lives. It involves helping clients to articulate their dreams, desires and aspirations. It helps to clarify their mission, purpose, goals and help them to achieve the outcome. A trusting relationship, mutual respect and commitment are developed. A Christian coach is an honest, unswerving and faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Coaching adolescents during the teenage years is not something new. According to Puri (2011:57, 63), adolescence is a stage when teenagers are concerned about how they appear to others and how they perceive themselves to be. They want to belong and be accepted. They start to question their upbringing, religion or values they used to hold. Coaching is essential, as parents also have to be trained to help and groom the behaviour of their children at home.

The Church, through effective youth ministry, must assist and support parents to take responsibility for their children's spiritual growth. However, one of the challenges is the crisis

in the youth ministry and the inefficiency in leading young people to Christian maturity (Strong, 2014:1).

Consequently, coaching within the Church will assist the youth to grow spiritually and personally. They will have clear and specific goals that they want to achieve in the future. Coaching in a biblical context will also help the youth to be accountable (Viljoen, 2017:4, 6).

In conclusion, the researcher's view is that it is time the Church stops operating like the world and fervently intercede for families, the unsaved and the government. The Church is the wife of Christ and has to know what the Husband wants. Parents should teach their children to love and fear God and fathers should educate the boys on how to be men. Most of teenage boys I counselled in prison cited poor family background or upbringing (single parenting) and lack of parental guidance, especially from their fathers (absent), as the cause of their problems. Mothers can influence their daughters positively by modelling godly character. As part of healing, the Church should encourage teen parents to forgive one another, no matter how the unplanned and unwanted pregnancy occurred. They should surrender to God and he will help them to succeed in life.

6.7. PRELIMINARY SYNTHESIS

This chapter outlined Osmer's model of "how are we going to respond" by grounding and merging the arguments from Chapter 4 and 5. It proposed a strategy for pastoral guidance for youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies. The study explained the sexuality crisis in African churches, as prevention of teen pregnancy was a huge challenge in the Church and country and church discipline on teenage pregnancy was unbalanced, as women were the only ones who sought forgiveness, whilst men were free. The Church must be urged to revisit and address teenage sex and pregnancy.

The study gave an overview of local congregations as a moral agent, which could build the morality of the youth and assist teenagers against premarital sex and unwanted pregnancy. It elaborated on how the African Church was afraid to break the silence and speak about sexual matters and how the sexual practices of priests confused the youth. Additionally, the subsection indicated that congregations were important and had the calling to serve and that the heart of Christian moral formation relied on worship, salvation, prayer, proclamation and sacrament. The congregation as a moral agent assisted parents to pass their faith to children, helped them develop spiritually and morally, by addressing sexuality within the context of

faith e.g. abstinence. The home and congregation served as partners, which helped the youth to be more committed to Christ. The subdivision discussed congregation as a medium of communication on ministry of presence and coaching of teenagers on sexuality to develop them. Catechesis was deliberated as an effective education ministry that prepared the youth from childhood to adulthood by transforming them to know and love God, worship, lead a life of abstinence and purity, know sex is for marriage, to be faithful to God and know Jesus as the Bridegroom of the Church. The study included parental involvement in teaching their children God's will for sex to be practised in marriage only. Confirmation classes were considered as good to build the youth spiritually, taught them to pray, lead a holy life and become good citizens. The section incorporated sermons that had to include sexual information from the pulpit and addressed by senior pastors.

The chapter reflected on the topic of targeting all stakeholders involved in the youth's life, i.e. parents, siblings, grandparents and partners/boys as stakeholders. The section highlighted how most parents struggle to raise teenagers and have to teach their children about God. Single parents and absent fathers were also addressed. As it took a village to raise a child, parents had to communicate with their children about God, wherein the right style of parenting was also necessary as it assisted parents to empower, assure and love their children. Culture played a role in sexual behaviours and cautioned the youth against risky sexual behaviours whilst young. Grandparents were discussed as mediators in families, a link between the past and present, non-judgemental listeners, playing a larger role in the faith development of children and good moral influence on their grandchildren, though few of the teenagers they raised abstained from sex.

The study determined the best age and places to influence the youth and how to educate and train teenagers on sexuality and black families to challenge prevalent sexual practices leading to unwanted pregnancies. Parents have to develop their children in faith from infancy to seven years and Osmer's model was used. The topic of sexuality education was discussed and the value of waiting until marriage to engage in sex. Sex was a mystery and wonder and sexuality education took a lifetime, as one learned about all its aspects. Parents were also advised to teach their children about sex from a biblical perspective, in order to know the mind of God. Age categories and grade level categories were discussed and parents urged to be open about sexual topics to their children. In this study the categories entailed sexual development from birth to 18 years. The chapter determined the best way to influence the youth was with youth ministry that has a definition and aimed to coach the youth and to develop their faith,

especially in terms of identity and self-esteem. As teenagers hunger for God, youth ministries in African churches have to be revisited. The practices of fellowship, Bible study, prayer, rallies, crusades, camps, retreats, outreach programmes and evangelism were deliberated. Evangelism was defined and the Church encouraged to use the youth to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ i.e. the Great Commission to share the love of God to people outside the Church. School evangelism and sports evangelism (which was rare in South Africa) were discussed as other forms of youth ministry. Both ministries developed youth spiritually and morally and churches could invite non-Christians to play. Worship was included as church obligation; Bible study as a platform for the Church used to teach Scripture (*Sola Scriptura*). Sunday school was highlighted as helpful to black community and brought children to God. The section also indicated that even if biological parents were not church-goers, they sent their children with neighbours or relatives to Sunday school. It helped children to have a personal relationship with Jesus. The study debated youth camps, workshops and outreach programmes as spiritual platforms the Church used for youth to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and be taught about sexuality and topics that impacted them spiritually. These programmes had to have a clear stated purpose and parents had to be involved. The study identified role models for the youth as their parents and celebrities who influence youth positively or negatively.

The chapter closed on the topic of pastoral care as unwanted and unplanned pregnancies still occurred. Some teenage fathers disappear, while teen mothers were unable to take responsibility and had to raise their children alone, as their families refused to give them support. The study urged counsellors to assist the teen mother to cope with the crisis and aid her to make immediate and long-term decisions. As counselling from the Church is Christ-centred and cared for the soul, it healed, gave hope and meaning in the midst of suffering. As a result, the Church became therapeutic in the sense of being the place where teens could feel wanted, accepted and valued despite their challenges. This step ushered teens into a new relationship with Jesus Christ. Coaching was also discussed as a way of helping the affected youth to articulate their dreams, desires and aspirations as well as help them to be accountable, grow personally and spiritually.

The chapter revealed God as merciful towards illegitimate children. The story of Ishmael and Jephthah was cited and although sex outside marriage is a sin, the Bible described God as One who cared for the poor and fatherless. Nevertheless, this section argued that teen pregnancy was 100% preventable and abstinence was possible, in regard to which Joseph's actions when

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1, the focus of the study was stated as to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies from a Christian theological perspective. Numerous studies in South Africa are finding that teenagers, mostly learners, are frequently engaging in premarital sexual activity at an early age, without the knowledge of their parents, and result in unwanted pregnancies. As a growing phenomenon, unwanted teenage pregnancies present a wide array of concerns. Some of the most obvious concerns are the social, economic and the personal wellbeing of the teenage girl, e.g. spiritual and physical. Too many rights have opened doors for promiscuity amongst teenagers. The biggest challenge is that sex before marriage undermines the morality, dignity, tradition and customs of Africans and it is not wise for teenage girls to fall pregnant at that tender age. Children's sex education needs to be shaped by African customs and traditions and the whole community should ensure that African teenagers conform to good morals. Various intervention programmes, such as life orientation programmes in schools, are not having the desired effects. The main aim of the research was to address prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies and challenge them from a practical theological perspective. The objectives of the research are the following:

- Objective 1: To engage in an in-depth literature study of prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

- Objective 2: To investigate and articulate the main reasons for the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

- Objective 3: To articulate principles based on the African tradition and Christian texts for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to empower the Church to challenge prevalent sexual practices

- Objective 4: To propose a strategy for pastoral guidance of youths and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies

As it is a practical theological study, the aim and objectives of the study were integrated with the Osmer's movements of practical theology namely:

- "What is going on?
- Why is it going on?
- What out to be going on?
- How might we respond?"

These movements were aimed at helping spiritual leaders to empower the African Church and communities in dealing with prevalent teenage pregnancy and issues of sexuality, through more effective preaching, pastoral care, evangelism, spirituality, Christian education and other ministerial practices by analysing and understanding faith challenges in the light of the Word.

7.2 OBJECTIVE 1

Chapter 2 was descriptive in nature as it attempted to indicate some of the crucial realities regarding unwanted pregnancy amongst black teenage girls in South Africa. The objective was to find answers to the question of "what is going on". This chapter presented the epidemiology of black South African unwanted teenage pregnancy as compared to other ethnic groups in South Africa from a statistical point of view and the most prominent was the black population in terms of numbers.

The section also described some of the consequences of teenage pregnancy, especially within the educative framework of someone who is still in school. These included aspects such as irregular school attendance and how it affected their academic performance, due to absenteeism. It provided information about premature school leaving and inadequate mothering. Their social life is compromised and dating becomes a challenge, as they have to care for their babies and no longer have freedom of movement. The change in the family relationship due to pregnancy is visible as some parents reject their daughters, African fathers blame their wives for being lenient and siblings become negative towards their sisters. This negative attitude and rejection include some partners, resulting in poor communication between the two parties. Rejection also stems from peers, teachers, community and the Church. It also indicated the health risks and stress encountered by pregnant teenagers, especially those who lack support from their families and teachers. The study revealed how teenagers from low-income families are becoming pregnant at a higher rate than middle-income families. The study further indicated that teenagers who have low self-esteem engage in early sexual activities, which makes them vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy. They compensate for their feeling of rejection by engaging in sex.

Despite clinics offering free contraceptives and family planning services in South Africa, some teenage girls still terminate pregnancy either legally or illegally. Lack of sex education from parents and also ignorant boys when it comes to contraception, encourage risky sexual relationships. The chapter revealed that the government initiatives to educate learners on sex in order to reduce teenage pregnancy through relevant programmes are not effective. However, it is still committed to reviving or improving Youth Friendly Services that can assist teenagers in sex education effectively. The Church was also engaged to reflect on what is going on as it faithfully participates in God's redemptive work of saving the African youth from challenging sexual practices. The study underlined that sex before marriage remains a problem in South Africa and that no effective wellness programmes have yet been implemented in African churches to reduce teenage pregnancy. The section mentioned that some churches view teenage pregnancy as a disgrace to the Church and parents, hence the rejection and expulsion of the pregnant youth.

7.2.1 Conclusion

The study emphasised that most churches seem to lack youth programmes and trained leaders that could also engage schools, social workers or counsellors to work together. Programmes, such as LIFEPLAN®, to be implemented and ministries that could cultivate healthy sexual development are urgently required as some of the youth are involved in Satanism.

7.3 OBJECTIVE 2

Chapter 3 explored the interpretive functions of practical theology, the "why is it going on" of Osmer (2008). The study investigated and articulated the main reasons for the prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies. It described an African church (AIC) being more friendly to African tradition and culture than the mainline churches. However, the focus of this study was on mainline churches as the African church and explored their role regarding sexual education and its stance on teenage pregnancy in South Africa. The African churches are caught up in a dilemma when it comes to upholding the teachings of the biblical moral values of abstinence and engagement of youth in sex. Lack of proper parental guidance amongst black parents and limited communication regarding sex education at home contributes to unwanted pregnancies. A combination of factors, such as changed cultural values amongst African families and premarital sex amongst black teenagers as a norm, lead to unwanted teenage pregnancy amongst black teenagers in South Africa. It is no longer a shame for black teenage girls to become pregnant. Unfortunately, African families are the most affected by absent father figures in South Africa. Orphanhood, single-headed families caused by divorce or child-headed households, due to the

death of both parents and extended families all expose black teenage girls to sex. Lack of sexual communication especially in rural areas; poverty-stricken families and religious homes; misinformed or poorly informed teenagers; poor child monitoring abilities, especially by single parents and grandparents, on black teenagers; contribute to unwanted teenage pregnancy. Family and peer pressure towards teenage pregnancy, poverty and the child support grant lead youth to risky sexual behaviours. Gender inequality, as teenage girls lack the freedom to make decisions about sex among partners who take advantage of teenage girls through transactional sex, is a problem in the country. In the quest for the love of a father, older men take advantage of girls and this leads to teenage pregnancy. Lack of recreation, social media, rape or forced sex, substance abuse and some of the rights in the Constitution of South Africa contribute to unwanted teenage pregnancy.

7.3.1 Conclusion

The study highlighted that there is a serious need and importance for African parents to communicate about sex and other sex-related issues with their children at home. Sex education is important to prepare teenagers for the realities of adult life. Some policies and acts in the Constitution of South Africa have to be scrutinized as they play a role in affecting the discipline of the youth with regard to reproduction, access to contraceptives and termination of pregnancy without parental consent. That is why some parents felt helpless in disciplining their children. Hence the need to revisit African culture and Christianity.

7.4 OBJECTIVE 3(a)

Chapter 4 articulated principles based on the African tradition for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to empower the Church to challenge prevalent sexual practices. It centred on what Osmer (2008) regards as the normative task of practical theological research "why is it going on". It engaged traditional concepts such as the African worldview and culture, the African worldview and morality and highlighted that morality is universality to all mankind. However, it underlined the challenge of African morality being misunderstood and Africans regarded as lacking morality and moral consciousness. To understand sexual socialisation from a cultural perspective, nine ethnic groups in South Africa were examined namely, Batswana, Bapedi, Basotho, AmaNdebele, Matsonga, VhaVhenda, AmaXhosa, AmaZulu and MaSwati. The study discovered that among Africans it is taboo to discuss sexuality, especially in the presence of children, hence initiation school is compulsory and used for morality, sexual instructions and a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood.

The study further explained virginity as the best gift one could give to his or her partner in marriage, as a result virginity testing was compulsory for girls. African methods of preventing teenage pregnancy occur in the form of external intercourse. Marriage and family life in African tradition are very important and the purpose of African marriage is procreation and companionship. The roles of husbands and wives were discussed, indicating that husbands are regarded as the heads of families including extended family. Fathers have to be responsible, available and good role models. Wives have to bear children, nurture them and respect their husbands. The study also specified categories of children born in marriage and outside marriage, i.e. inside the marriage home, but not the legitimate children of the husband. In the past illegitimate children were rare and stigmatised and barrenness was regarded as a curse. The types of African marriages such as monogamy, polygamy, levirate, abduction, elopement and informal marriage were brainstormed. The study indicated that choosing a marriage partner was out of question for African children, as most parents did the selection. Courtship and dating was a Western idea and *lobola* higher for a virgin, followed by African traditional marriage. Divorce was also rare unless in the case of abuse and sometimes barrenness. Modernity affected traditional norms that existed in African communities to the point that teenagers could no longer be sexually controlled.

7.4.1 Conclusion

The study indicated how African cultures regulate sexual relations, which included strict upbringing and mostly on girls. The sexual development of teenagers was cited as very important, even for the Church, in their journey to adulthood.

7.5 OBJECTIVE 3(b)

Chapter 5 engaged the normative function of practical theological research, namely "what should be going on". It attempted to provide a Christian perspective for healthy sexual development and practices amongst black South African teenage girls to challenge prevalent sexual practices with an African perspective in mind. It therefore described how Christianity came to Africa and the role of missionaries as protagonists of colonialism. It highlighted how Christianity was a mixed blessing in that it brought both the Good News, but also disrupted and dislocated African society and its values. It also emphasised one of the greatest oversights of mission work in that it perceived ATR as inferior and primitive, wanting Africans to renounce their traditional social structures, thus weakening the impact of African beliefs and values. This forced Africans to merge Christianity and their traditional beliefs to form a

unique African strand of Christianity. It was also indicated how Africans remained faithful to their culture, irrespective of their educational background.

The chapter, furthermore, discussed the theological perspectives on marriage and family life within the African context. It beheld a monogamous marriage as an institution ordained by God, between a man and a woman as described in Genesis 2:18-24. The biblical intention of marriage was discussed and included the three pillars of marriage and the importance of couples leaving their parents, cleaving and becoming one flesh. The chapter indicated the difficulty for African sons to leave and discouraged couples who lived in their parents' household, as it brings tension between the bride and her in-laws. Cleaving was regarded as an emotional bonding between husband and wife to become one flesh, uniting a man and woman in sexual intercourse. The section explained that sex is a good gift from God and strengthens the union, but is preserved for marriage only.

The chapter discussed the purpose of marriage by looking at companionship between families, the building of a family and having children as a bond of marriage and thereby avoiding immorality. The study included topics like the duties of a husband as head who has a personal relationship with Christ, as the provider, who loves his wife unconditionally and cares for his family spiritually and physically and as his wife's helper that their mutual love may show the love of Christ. The discussion covered African men who misinterpret male headship and female submission, distorting the Bible, to abuse women in marital relations. Barrenness was addressed, as some marriages do not receive the privilege of having children, for which women are blamed in the African context and sometimes lose their marital homes. Barren Christians were urged to pray and also seek medical assistance. A biblical view of choosing a partner is very difficult, since it is God who connects people together, and prayer is key. Deliberations included courtship and dating, whereby premarital sex is forbidden in Christian tradition, and the risks involved were highlighted. Premarital counselling is necessary to prepare the couple for marriage, including the wedding ceremony itself, and the honeymoon cited as a form of bonding for the couple. An overview of Christian ethics in terms of sexuality was discussed extensively. Human beings as sexual beings was debated, where it was once again emphasised that sex is to be practised within marriage. The sub-topics discussed were sexuality and marriage; sexuality and freedom; sexuality and love/intimacy; sex as beautiful and holy; sexuality and wholeness; sexuality and communication; the image of God and sexuality; how sex brings healing to a couple; the sacramental nature of sexuality; and sexuality and the moral development of teenagers.

The study engaged sex education, which should start at home and teenagers must be taught that sex is for marriage only. The subdivision included the risks of premarital sex, including teenage pregnancy, and how sinful it is before God as well as ethically, morally and physically wrong. It made suggestions on how to refrain from premarital sex and explained the dangers of premarital sex in that it is sinful, delays marriages and has other harmful consequences such as unwanted pregnancy, cervix cancer, sexual frigidity, psychosocial problems and aloofness.

Marrying an unbeliever is unacceptable in Christian faith and dangerous, but the Church could offer programmes to teach about the positive side of being single. Joseph and Mary served to show that it is possible for youth to abstain. Teenagers in families where parents have divorced or separated are more likely to become sexually active earlier and become pregnant than those living with both parents.

7.5.1 Conclusion

Due to prevalent premarital sex amongst the youth in the black community in South Africa, it is time the African church takes a strong stand on the Word of God concerning marriage, sex and family and demand sexual purity, faithfulness of its members and leaders before and during marriage, fearlessly preaching against sexual immorality. Divine intervention and sex education are urgently needed for black teenagers, as few couples marry as virgins.

7.6 OBJECTIVE 4

Chapter 6 elaborated on the "how are we going to respond" of Osmer's model. The objective was to design a strategy for pastoral guidance of the youth and families within Christian African faith communities to challenge prevalent sexual practices amongst black South African teenage girls leading to unwanted pregnancies. Therefore, the study explained the sexuality crisis in African churches, since prevention of teen pregnancy is a huge challenge in the Church and country. It indicated that church discipline of teenage pregnancy is unbalanced, as only women seek forgiveness and men are free to do as they please. The Church needs to revisit and address teenage sex and pregnancy.

The chapter highlighted some policies and initiatives of the Constitution of South Africa, such as issuing of contraceptives to minors and termination of pregnancy without parental consent, which indirectly contribute to teenage pregnancy. They are still morally wrong and against the law of God. On the other hand, the child support grant to young mothers encourages pregnancy and makes the raising of those children the financial responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Welfare. Condoms give adolescents a false sense of safety

and invite them to have sex more often and with multiple partners. The Church could challenge the problem through biblical principles.

Within the framework of this practical theological study, markers for the pastoral guidance of the youth included the local congregation as moral agents and indicated that congregations are important and have a calling to serve. The heart of Christian moral formation relies on worship, salvation, prayer, proclamation and sacrament. They assist parents to pass their faith on to their children, help them develop spiritually and morally, and address sexuality within the context of faith, e.g. abstinence. The home and congregation serve as partners to help the youth be more committed to Christ. The subdivision discussed the congregation as a medium of communication on ministry of presence and to coach teenagers on sexuality to bolster their development. The congregations as a medium of communication assist families in educating the youth to know the loving God and learn about sexuality from a biblical perspective. The study discussed spiritual platforms the Church could use to teach the youth, such as catechesis that could offer an effective education ministry to prepare the youth from childhood to adulthood, to know and love God, to be faithful to God, to worship, to lead a life of abstinence and purity in which sex is for marriage and to know Jesus as the Bridegroom of the Church. Confirmation classes could teach them to be spiritual, prayerful, lead a holy life and become good citizens. Sermons have to include sexual information from the pulpit, delivered by senior pastors.

It further elaborated on how parents struggle to raise their children in a godly way, siblings are at risk in early sexual engagement and grandparents are mediators and instrumental in bringing the youth closer to God. The relevant stakeholders must, therefore, be involved through the role they play in the youth's life. The section included boys/men as partners and stakeholders to help prevent teenage pregnancy. The chapter identified the best age and places to influence the youth in terms of sexuality education, in reference to age categories and grade level categories. The section identified the best way to influence the youth, is the youth ministry and its aim is to coach them and develop their faith. Identity and self-esteem was discussed as well as how the Church could use the youth to become Disciples of Christ through evangelism in sports and also partnerships with schools, conducting outreach programmes, workshops, youth retreats and Bible studies. Parents and celebrities were identified as role models and other witnesses in the faith communities. There is a need for pastoral care, given that premarital sex and unplanned pregnancies still occur and are widely accepted, despite the

Bible condemning intercourse outside marriage. Teenage mothers and fathers have to know that God's mercy is unlimited to illegitimate children as He is the Father of the fatherless.

7.6.1 Conclusion

The African Church has to break the silence and speak on sexual matters, because there are very many complex matters in this regard. Some of them include the sexuality of single people, the increasing diversity of marital and family styles and the high rate of teenage pregnancy. The Church must launch programmes to assist boys to abstain and live a holy life and show them that it is possible to live a pure life in Christ. Parents should also teach their children to love and fear God and instil Christian principles and morals, such as abstinence from sex before marriage. Fathers should educate their boys on how to be men and mothers could influence their daughters positively by modelling a godly character. As part of healing, the Church should encourage teen parents to forgive one another no matter how the pregnancy occurred. They should surrender to God and he will help them to succeed as there was still room for improvement in life.

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