Jesuit School of Theology Dissertations   Student Scholarship

4-2018

Marriage as a Covenant: Towards an in Culturated Pastoral Approach on Marriage and Family in Mozambique Today

Virgílio Arimateia Domingos

MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT:

TOWARDS AN INCULTURATED PASTORAL APPROACH

ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN MOZAMBIQUE TODAY

A dissertation by

Virgílio Arimateia Domingos, SJ

Presented to

The Faculty of the

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

In partial fulfillment of the
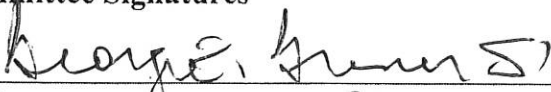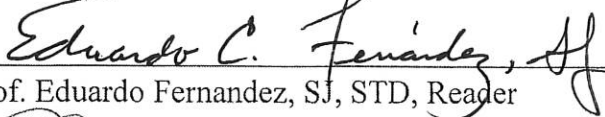
Requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD)

Berkeley, California

April 2018

Committee Signatures

George Griener SJ   April 30, 2018

Prof. George Griener, SJ, ThD, Director   Date

Eduardo C. Fernández, SJ   April 30, 2018

Prof. Eduardo Fernandez, SJ, STD, Reader   Date

Thawale   April 30, 2018

Prof. Patrick Thawale, PhD, Reader   Date

Abstract

MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT:

TOWARDS AN INCULTURATED PASTORAL APPROACH ON

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN MOZAMBIQUE TODAY

Virgilio Arimateia Domingos, SJ

It is striking that "Mozambican societies considered marriage to be one of the most important stages in an individual's life."[1] *Amoris Laetitia* reminds us that "the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people."[2] Yet, the percentage of marri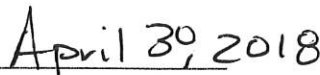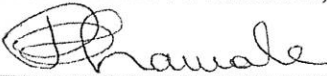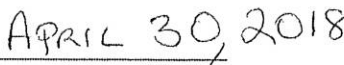age in the Church is declining as showed in Chapter One. The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar admitted that the multilayered challenges "destabilize the life of couples and families" because of inadequate pastoral approaches.[3] On the other hand, *Amoris Laetitia* recognizes, "In some countries, especially in various parts of Africa, secularism has not weakened certain traditional values, and marriages forge a strong bond between two wider families, with clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and conflicts."[4]

This dissertation underscores the traditional values that enhance marriage and family (Chapter Three), such as the interdependence between community, marriage,

---

[1] George Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, *Culture and Customs of Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2007), 77.

[2] Pope Francis, "*Amoris Laetitia*, Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Joy of Love in the Family," 1, accessed May 10, 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf. Henceforth, cited as AL.

[3] SECAM, "Final Message of 17th Plenary Assembly of Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, n. 8," accessed August 15, 2016. https://secam.org/final-message-17th-secam-plenary/.
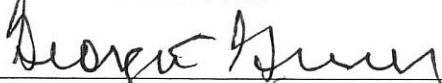
[4] AL 38.

family, and life; the keen sense of belonging; respect for elders and ancestors; and a formation to adulthood with an effective preparation for marriage and family. The dissertation shows that those values are covenantal (Chapter Two), compatible with the Christian faith (Chapter Four), and foundational for an inculturated pastoral approach.

Such an approach integrates the covenantal and Mozambican values in the preparation, celebration, and ongoing support of marriage (Chapter Five). It encompasses a formation of young adults modeled on the retreats of initiation. It recognizes Small Christian Communities and marriage groups as supportive structures for marital life. It permeates the covenantal values in every aspect of the life of the community.
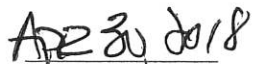
This research joins the conversation the Mozambican Church has already begun through Theological-Pastoral Weeks on Matrimony in 2000 and 2001 and through her effort in preparing a National Directory for marriage and family. It responds to the recent invitation of *Amoris Laetitia* to "reach the hearts of young people...inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage."[5]

My methodology follows the four steps of the pastoral circle as described by Peter Henriot and Joe Holland: insertion and analysis (to understand what is happening and why) and theological reflection and pastoral planning (to look at the context in the light of the Christian faith and respond through an inculturated pastoral approach).

Dissertation Director

_____   APR 30 2018
Prof. George Griener, SJ, ThD, Director   Date

---

[5] AL 40.

To my parents and family,
my first formators in life.

To Fr. Manuel Rodrigues Sequeira, SJ,
my novice master.

To Fr. Domingos Ferrão of the Diocese of Tete,
Fr. Cirilo Moises Mateus, SJ,
Fr. Ezequiel Pedro Gwembe, SJ, and
Archbishop Jaime Pedro Gonçalves, Archbishop of Beira,
who helped me to love our Mozambican people and cultures and
bring such richness at the service of the Church.

To Sr. Gabriel Maestro of the Missionary Daughters of Calvary,
who, as a missionary at my hometown of Tete, represented
how important the presence of women is in our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I say *muito obrigado* to the Brazilian community in the Bay Area. The Brazilians provided me with a warm and rich environment to do pastoral fieldwork, which is an integral element to studies for the service of the Church, the People of God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

MOZAMBICAN CONTEXT AFFECTING MARRIAGE AND FAMILY TODAY

CHAPTER TWO

COVENANT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IN THE SCRIPTURE, AND IN THE

CATHOLIC TRADITION

CHAPTER THREE

MOZAMBICAN VALUES ENHANCING MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

CHAPTER FIVE

ABBREVIATIONS

AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CWR	The Catholic World Report (online news magazine)
CEM	Episcopal Conference of Mozambique
CROIMIA	Church's Research on Marriage in Africa
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique [Mozambique Liberation Front]
FWI	Family Watch International (USA)
HLI	Human Life International (USA)
IMBISA	Inter-regional Meeting of Bishops in Southern Africa
NCR	National Catholic Report (The Independent News Source, Online)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas [Mozambican National Institute of Statistics]
PRC	Pew Research Center (USA)
PRI	Population Research Institute (USA)
SCCs	Small Christian Communities
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
SGCs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institution and Gender Index [Mozambican]
SLU	Saint Luis University (Missouri, USA)

TAG	Theological Advisory Group of the Department of the Institute for Church Renewal, Scott Theological College in Kenya
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAREMO	Union of Mozambican Religions and Priests

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. **What is the Dissertation All About?**

This introduction has three parts. The first part will present an overview of the questions, what does it mean that marriage is a covenant in the context of Mozambique? How can the covenantal elements in the Mozambican conception of marriage provide a basis for a pastoral approach consistent with the Catholic tradition and in a way that responds to the current challenges marriage and family face? This part will also explain how these questions will be addressed and the assumptions that undergird this project (method). Then, I will give an outline of the dissertation, showing the main aspects of each of the five chapters.

The second part will provide a literature review, showing what has been written so far on marriage and family as affected by the context of Mozambique, on African and Mozambican values that shape people's views and lives on marriage, and on the biblical notion of covenant and how it best conveys the reality of marriage.

The third part will clarify the meaning of marriage (and polygamy), family, and sacrament. At first glance, these expressions seem well known. However, marriage and family may have one meaning in Mozambique but another meaning in other parts of the world. Therefore, any pastoral approach that is meaningful and relevant to Mozambique will have to consider the way Mozambicans understand marriage and family in order to grasp the challenges they face and the opportunities and possibilities they have to face those challenges.

a. **Overview of the Dissertation**

Pope Francis's post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laeitia* (AL). *Amoris Laetitia* begins by reaffirming, "The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church."[6] The reason for that is because "the well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family."[7] Therefore, the current growing crisis in marriage is of great concern for the Church, which is called to be prophetic and pastoral.

AL does not only acknowledge and reiterate the difficulties regarding marriage already mentioned in other ecclesial documents such as *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), *Familiaris Consortio* (FC), *Ecclesia in Africa* (EIA), *African Munus* (AM), just to mention the most significant, but also underscores their consequences and, above all, their impact in the views and decisions of young people on marriage and family. Pope Francis emphasizes that those difficult and problematic "factors militate against permanent decisions… foster attitudes of constant suspicion, fear of commitment, self-centeredness, and arrogance."[8] They "pressure young people not to start a family," to postpone, cohabitate, or just give up altogether because they consider marriage and family "a lifelong burden" that they are not prepared to face.[9]

---

[6] Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 1. Henceforth, *Amoris Laetitia* will be cited as AL.

[7] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes,* "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"," (December 7, 1965): 47, accessed February 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. Also, *Gaudium et Spes* 1 says that the Church participates in the joys and the anxieties of this age. Henceforth, *Gaudium et Spes* will be cited as GS.

[8] AL 40. AL 38 speaks "of the fears associated with the [marital] permanent commitment."

[9] AL 32, 37, 40. In Mozambique, 78% of the population is below 34 years of old. Young people refers to the roughly 30% whose age range from 18 to 35. However, the traditional preparation for adulthood begins as early as 12-14 years with the rites of initiation, although the entire process of socialization from childhood is taken as part of education. People marry legally as early as 18. See Instituto Nacional Estatística,

However, refreshingly, "The Synod Fathers noted, for all the many signs of crisis in the institution of marriage, 'the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people, and this is an inspiration to the Church.'"[10] Furthermore, Pope Francis encourages us to look at marriage and family not as a problem but primarily as an opportunity.[11] Concurring with *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus* and with many African scholars and leaders, *Amoris Laetitia* rightly underscores the importance of marriage and family in African society when reaffirming, "In some countries, especially in various parts of Africa, secularism has not weakened certain traditional values, and marriages forge a strong bond between two wider families, with clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and conflicts."[12] This dissertation purports to use Mozambican structures and values towards an approach that will prepare young adults to deal with conflicts in their marital lives. This joins the conversation the Mozambican Episcopal Conference (CEM) has already begun through Theological-Pastoral Seminars in 2000 and 2001, and through her effort in preparing a National Directory for marriage and family.[13]

"Relatório de Indicadores Distritais," 2007, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-demograficas-e-indicadores-sociais/populacao/relatorio-de-indicadores-distritais-2007.

[10] AL 1.

[11] Cf. AL 7.

[12] AL 38.

[13] Cf. Centro de Formação de Nazaré, ed., *O Matrimónio: Actas da V Semana Teológico-Pastoral (Arquidiocese da Beira, 26-30 Junho 2000)* (Maputo: Paulinas, 2000); and Centro de Formação de Nazaré, ed., *O Matrimónio em África: Aspetos Pastorais: Actas da VI Semana Teológica (Arquidiocese da Beira, 18-22 Junho 2001)* (Maputo: Paulinas, 2001). These will also be referred to as the Reports of 2000 and 2001 of the Theological-Pastoral Week on Marriage in Mozambique, respectively.

My basic assumption in this dissertation is that, in general, Mozambicans appreciate marriage and family life.[14] "In African culture and tradition, the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental."[15] In Mozambique, the entire process of socialization/education aims at preparing people for maturity and adulthood, of which marriage and family are integral aspects.[16] The African communitarian worldview and keen sense of belonging, the strong bonds of solidarity and interdependence, the urge to keep their "word of honor," and the personal drive to do whatever it takes to succeed in life are all values that recognize the challenges of marriage and family. Above all, they support marriage and family as an alliance that "binds together" not only the two individuals but their respective families and communities.[17]

When it comes to birth, marriage, and death, Mozambicans, regardless of their social status, education, political affiliation, or religious faith, respect in some way their traditional values. In marriage, couples and their respective families perform certain traditional practices to ensure stability, call for personal and communal commitment to make responsibly their marriage succeed. Furthermore, according to Mozambican

---

[14] See John Kumado, "Bishops of Ghana Explore Ways to Promote Marriage and Christian Family Life." Vatican Radio, 2014. Accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.news.va/en/news/bishops-of-ghana-explore-ways-to-promote-marriage>. "The African person cherishes the family as the fundamental base for humanity and society."

[15] John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission Toward the Year 2000, September 14, 1995, no. 43, accessed December 8, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html. Henceforth, *Ecclesia in Africa* will be cited as EIA.

[16] Most of the proverbs, songs, stories, and jokes help to shape character and motivate the young to acquire the necessary qualities of adulthood, which are also conditions *sine qua non* for a happy, faithful and lasting marriage.

[17] See M. Hata, "African Marriage: Personal and Communitarian." *African Ecclesial Review* 23 (1981): 35-37. See more on communitarian aspect in Bono Lorenzo, "*L'idea di Persona nella Filosofia Africana Contemporanea*" (PhD diss., Università Degli Studi di Bergamo, 2011), 64-71, accessed December 10, 2016. https://tinyurl.com/Bono-persona-africana.

traditional education, respecting a woman is a sign of virility and maturity. In one of the Mozambican languages (*chinyungwe*), the word for 'sister' is 'princess, queen' (*mphumakazi*). This means that one looks at a woman as one's sister, mother, wife. These expressions convey respect and honor. The more people forget these values, the more violence against women and children increases, as it is happening now.

Thus, the Church in Mozambique realized that blessing a marriage where certain traditional ceremonies were not performed can indicate pastoral carelessness because such a marriage will not endure for lacking some traditional structures to support it. Currently, two distinct ceremonies take place: one in the traditional setting and another in the Church. An inculturated approach will avoid such divisiveness. It will incorporate whatever is good in Mozambican society and strengthen stability, cohesion, responsibility, solidarity, and respect.

Strikingly, the biblical 'metaphor of covenant' expresses one of the best and most comprehensive analogies for conveying the Christian understanding of marriage as mutual agreement and trust, togetherness, loyalty, faithfulness, exclusivity, and "interdependence and stability."[18] It "involves several generations."[19] This dissertation argues that a strong strategic approach will only be relevant, realistic, and effective when keeping an ongoing dialogue between the Christian tradition and Mozambican values.

Moreover, the metaphor of covenant favors a common ground for conversing about the joys, sorrows, and opportunities of marriage and family in a way that is interdisciplinary, ecumenical/interreligious, transcultural, and sympathetic for both

---

[18] Steven Nock, and Margaret Brinig, "Covenant and Contract" (1999). *Scholarly Works*. Paper 262, 14. The two authors explain that "biblical covenant relationships promote interdependence and stability."

[19] Ibid.

religious and secular/civil sensibilities. During this research, I was gladly surprised that since 1997, USA legislation of three States introduced the option of "covenant marriage" as distinct from "standard marriage."[20]

b. The Question of the Situation

After listing multilayered difficulties that African families face, the document of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) makes a striking point relevant to our reflection for Mozambique: These "different challenges destabilize life especially when there is no strong pastoral strategy in place."[21] Given the fact that supportive traditional structures are diminishing, young people feel unprepared, scared, and reluctant to begin a family.[22] This dissertation aims at contributing towards a pastoral approach that will "help us reach the hearts of young people, appealing to their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage."[23]

c. Thesis Statement

This dissertation argues that the metaphor of covenant paves a way for a dialogue between Christian faith and sound Mozambican values on marriage and family, as a ground for an inculturated pastoral approach that motivates, and prepares youth for a "covenant of

---

[20] Cf. Katherine Spaht, "The Modern American Covenant Marriage Movement: Its Origin and Future," *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective*, ed. John Witte and Eliza Ellison (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 239-64; and Peter Hay, "The American 'Covenant Marriage' in Conflict of Laws." *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective*, 294-316.

[21] Gabriel Mbilingi, "Final Message of 17th Plenary Assembly of Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar," July 24, 2016, no. 8, accessed August 15, 2016. https://secam.org/final-message-17th-secam-plenary.

[22] Cf. AL 32, 40. Cf. Reports of 2000 and 2001 of the Theological-Pastoral Week on Marriage in Mozambique.

[23] AL 40.

love", and to accompany their marriage.[24] This will address the decline in marital commitments, how to foster a fulfilling marital life, and how to empower couples to face the challenges of Mozambican families today.

d. <u>Methodology</u>

My methodology follows the four steps of the pastoral circle: insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning.[25] The first chapter will focus on the first step, discussing what is happening in Mozambique, why it is occurring, and the way it affects marriage and family. The second and third chapters will analyze the context through the lens of the biblical notion of covenant and through the lens of Mozambican values on marriage and family during the country's colonization and after its independence. The fourth chapter will provide a theological reflection on a dialogue between covenant and Mozambican values. The fifth chapter follows the fourth step of the pastoral circle and will offer a pastoral approach for strengthening marriage and family life in Mozambique. The section on "chapter outline" will give further details on each chapter.

e. <u>My Contribution to the Conversation</u>

My contribution makes explicit that Mozambican values that enhance marriage and family bear similarities with the biblical metaphor of covenant. It also stresses that an inculturated pastoral approach will interweave authentic Mozambican values with key

---

[24] This thesis concurs with Pope Francis's recognition that in Africa, there are "certain traditional values" that strengthen families and help them to deal with problems and conflicts. AL 38. It is also consistent with Pope Francis's appeal for a "generous and responsible effort" to find the "right language and arguments" to motivate young people "to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage." AL 40. See also AL 35.

[25] Cf. Peter Henriot and Joe Holland, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 8; and Frans Wijsen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia, eds. *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 229-230.

features of covenantal relationship in a way that bridges the urgent challenges destabilizing marriages today. Thus, this will be a contribution to the Mozambican Church asking for and willing to accept such aid. The Mozambican Church encourages research on the inculturation of marriage and manifest openness to initiatives that will lead to a national pastoral approach that respects the best insights of Christian and Mozambican traditions.

As I will show in Chapter Three, most writers highlight one or another value, such as *lobola* (bride wealth), rites of initiation, communitarian aspect, respect for elders, veneration of ancestors, and so on. However, they do not necessarily present these elements in a way that underscores wittingly their role in strengthening marriage. Even when they do, they do not underline their compatibility with gospel values or with the metaphor of covenant, which, according to Christian tradition, is the best analogy for the relationship between God and God's chosen people, as I will show in Chapter Two.

This dissertation moves towards integrating sound Mozambican values and rituals that bear similarity with key features of the marital covenant of love in a unified, coherent approach that encompasses preparation, celebration, support for living together, and periodic renewal initiatives, as I will show in Chapter Five. Such an integrated approach respects what is truly Christian and truly Mozambican and will equip couples and families to address the "urgent challenges that destabilize marriage and family" in Mozambique and elsewhere.[26]

Pope Francis states, "In some countries, especially in various parts of Africa, secularism has not weakened certain traditional values, and marriages forge a strong bond

---

[26] Mbilingi, "Final Message," no. 8. The Catholic bishops met in Luanda (Angola) from the 18th to 25th of July 2016 to reflect on the theme "The African Family, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow in the light of the Gospel." Cf. Ibid., no. 1.

between two wider families, with clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and conflicts."[27] My contribution purports to continue the work already began of making those structures part of the Mozambican Christian marriage. Furthermore, the inculturated pastoral approach will answer Francis's appeal to offer "a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them."[28] This thesis will respond to the "need to find the right language, arguments and forms of witness that can help us reach the hearts of young people, appealing to their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage." [29]

f. **Chapter Outline**

Chapter One will address the Mozambican context affecting marriage and family today in light of the social, cultural, political, and religious situations of Mozambique. It will show how they shape the way people view and live marriage. It will also show how the same situations create challenges, opportunities, and an invitation to look anew at marriage and family today.

Chapter Two, entitled "Covenant in the Middle East, in the Scriptures, and in the Catholic Tradition," will analyze the key features of a covenantal relationship not only in the Scriptures but also in the societies of the Middle East that influenced the Hebrew Scriptures. This chapter will also analyze the metaphor of covenant in our Christian faith

---

[27] AL 38.

[28] AL 35.

[29] AL 40.

throughout history, including *Gaudium et Spes* and in posterior documents such as the recent apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

Chapter Three will focus on Mozambican values that enhance marriage and family. It will present values specific to Mozambique due to its unique colonial and postcolonial history and those values common to other African countries.

Chapter Four will highlight key elements of covenant in dialogue with Mozambican values. It will underscore similarities and differences between key features of the covenant and Mozambican values. It will also show their compatibility with gospel values and how they can strengthen marriage and family.

Chapter Five will point towards an inculturated pastoral approach by integrating elements of covenant and Mozambican values that are compatible with the Gospel in a unified, coherent approach that encompasses motivation, preparation, accompaniment, and support of marriage and family. This approach will help people face the challenges destabilizing marriages today.

2. Literature Review

a. <u>On Mozambican Context</u>

The basic assumption is that the current situation that marriage and family faces in Mozambique cannot be adequately comprehended nor addressed without acknowledging its close connection with the recent past colonization and the post-independence policies from the government and the Church. However, scholars such as Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, Carlos Arnaldo and the Reports from the Theological-Pastoral Seminars in 2000 and 2001 acknowledged that no study has been done on the impact of

colonization on marriage and family.[30] Equally, no study has been done on the influence of government and Church policies on marriage and family after independence.

Wherefore, to grasp the context of marriage and family, I will resort to the relevant literature on the socio-history of the country written in different perspectives by scholars of different political backgrounds, before and after independence.[31] Some of the most relevant sources on colonial mentality and its policies are Teixeira Silva (1927), Dhaka Mustafah (1964 and 2016), Marcelo Caetano (1997), Herb Shore (1974), Luis Serapiao (1972, 1979, 2002), Luis Serapiao and El-Kahawas (1979), Hans Abrahasson and Anders Nilsson (1995), UEM (1982), Joseph Hanlon (1990), and Alexandre Cancelas (2004).[32]

Additionally, Barry Munslow's *Selected Speeches of Samora Machel* (1985) and the writings of Eduardo Mondlane (1969) and other liberationists help underscore that the struggle for independence went hand in hand with the building of national identity and a Mozambican culture, which are aspects that will influence the life of the Church in Mozambique and her stand on traditional practices on marriage and family.[33]

The writings of Church leaders with their ambiguous position before independence and with their prophetic voice after independence along with the writings of dedicated missionaries, such as Henri Junod (1974), Francisco Teixeira (1992), José Augusto de

---

[30] Cf. Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900 - 1882* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press & Gower, 1983), 53-54.

[31] Cf. Laurenti Magesa, "Reconstructing the African Family," in *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, ed. Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 9. Magesa argues, "I must insist that some sociological groundwork is necessary if any theological reflection on the family is to be realistic and make sense at all. Such groundwork is ignored at great cost."

[32] UEM, *Moçambique no auge do colonialismo, 1930-1961* [Mozambique in the height of colonization], vol. 3 (Maputo: Impressa da UEM, 1993).

[33] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, ix.

Sousa, SJ (1991, 2015), Francisco Correia, SJ (1992), and the works of artists, give further insights for understanding the current situation affecting marriage and family.[34] Additional insights came from recent works of George Ndege (2007), Hernâni Caniço (2015), and the Demographic Indicators of 1997, 2003, 2007, 2014 from National Institute of Statistics (INE).

Drawing from these sources, I will give two contributions to the current literature. First, I will show that the crisis marriage and family face today relate to the country's recent past colonization, which led native people to disregard their own cultures and condone shameful behaviors in a traditional setting, behaviors that still disrupt marriages and families. Second, I will contribute to the current literature by uncovering new forms of colonization that have coerced Mozambicans to adopt behaviors and lifestyles that disregard traditional wisdom, which prepared, strengthened, and supported marriage and family.

b. **On African and Mozambican Values**

Prominent African scholars, such as John Mbiti (1973), Mulago Gua Cikala Musharhamina (1983), Bénézet Bujo (1992, 1998, 2004, 2009, 2010), Kyomo and Selvan (2004, Mercy Oduyoye (2005), Khofi Phiri (2011), Paul Kyalo (2012), Laurenti Magesa (2014), Charles Nyamiti (1984, 2006), have written on one or another traditional African practice mentioned above. African Church leaders individually or collectively, as in

---

[34] Cf. Some of the relevant sources include the already mentioned Reports of 2000 and 2001; CEM. *Carta dos bispos de Moçambique aos seus presbíteros* [A letter to the bishops of Mozambique to their presbyters]. Lourenço Marques, MZ: Secretariado Episcopal de Coordenação Pastoral, 1971. CEM, *A família cristã na igreja de Moçambique* [A Christian family in the Church of Mozambique]. Porto, PT: Tipografia do Carvalhido, 1981. Francisco Teixeira, *Presença De Justiça*. Porto, PT: 1958. The pastoral letter of Bishop Teixeira deplores abuses against marriage and family.

SECAM (2016) and AMECEA (1982 and 1986), have shown appreciation for certain traditional African practices.[35] However, both writings do not necessarily and always present traditional practices in a way that underscore clearly and wittingly their role in strengthening marriage and family.

Even when these writings cautiously praise some aspects of those practices, they have not yet shown the compatibility of these traditional practices with the gospel and specifically with the metaphor of covenant. While relying heavily on these writings, this work contributes to the current literature by underscoring not only the values but their compatibility with the gospel and, therefore, the possibility of using them in preparing, strengthening, and supporting marriage and family.

Two breakthroughs hold a special place in African literature on marriage. One is the Church's Research on Marriage in Africa (CROMIA), a five-year ecumenical project whose findings were collected in a 1977 book entitled *African Christian Marriage*. This project made clear that there are certain presuppositions in life that are specific to Africa.[36] Any pastoral approach that ignores those assumptions risks being irrelevant. The second work is entitled *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa* (1994), an ecumenical initiative from the Theological Advisory Group (TAG) of the Department of the Institute for Church Renewal, Scott Theological College in Kenya. These two

---

[35] Mbilingi, "Final Message," no. 7. See also SECAM, "Recommendations and Conclusions on Christian Family and Marriage in Africa Today," SECAM, "Recomendations on Christian Family and Marriage in Africa Today," June 29 - July 5 1981, 171, no. 1.5. The themes of the 8th and 9th Plenary Assembly in 1982 and 1986 respectively was "Families: Truly Christian and Truly African." In 1980, AMECEA had a consultation meeting on the theme "Family Life."

[36] Cf. Benezeri Kisembo, Laurenti Magesa, and Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Marriage* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 14.

initiatives challenge the Church to an ongoing process of listening, conversing, learning, and ministering contextually.

c. **On Covenant**

Recent scholarship has facilitated the study of the notion of covenant by organizing the relevant literature of the last 25 years, according to McCarthy (1972), Busenitz (1999), Jones and John Tarwater (2004) and Tarwater (2004). Scholars have used different approaches to grasp the meaning of covenant, as shown in Hillers (1973), Hugenberger (1994), Tarwater (2004). However, a growing number of other scholars, among them Busenitz (1999), Hugenberber, and Tarwater, have demonstrated the inadequacies of the previous attempts to understand the meaning of covenant. Consequently, Hugenberger and Tarwater rightly opted for a biblical-concept approach.

Previous studies by leading scholars, such as McCarthy (1972), Hillers (1973), Walton (1994), Thompson (1999), Scott Hahn (2005), René Lopez (2003), Bautch and Knoppers (2016), and Beacham (2017), have shown similarities between ANE treaties and Old Testament covenants. In continuing with these studies, scholars like Hugenberger, Tarwater, Nock and Brinig (1999), the married couple John Witte Jr. and Eliza Ellison (2005), and John Witte Jr. (2012) have shown that the Scriptures present marriage as a covenant and sketched the implications of marriage in real life.

Drawing from these insights, I will underscore not only the key features of a covenant as these scholars have suggested, with different nuances, but above all I will stress the covenantal elements that, though not given prominence, nevertheless strengthen the marital bond and the alliances between families. An overview on how the Church evolved in her understanding of marriage from the renown works of E. Schilebeeckx (1965), T.

Mackin (1982), J. Martos (1998/2001), Lawler (1985, 1993, 2002), Bulman (2006), and Reynolds (1994, 2016) shows that "the covenant metaphor is a better conceptual bridge builder in discussing marriage historically and today," as John Witter Jr. reiterated, concuring with a growing number of other scholars, such as Palmer (1972), and Ponzetti and Mutch (2006).[37]

3. Clarifications on Key Concepts: Marriage, Family, Sacrament

a. Marriage in Mozambique

> Mozambican societies considered marriage to be one of the most important stages in an individual's life. It has far-reaching repercussions on the future of not only the individuals concerned, but also for the extended family, lineage, and wider community. Through marriage and procreation, the family and society are assured of a future beyond the present generation.
>
> — George Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*

The above quote from George Ndege gives a glimpse into a Mozambican understanding of marriage, which is clearly distinct from that of Western societies but similar in many aspects to that of other African communities.[38] For the sake of clarity, aware that the same expressions may bear a different meaning in different contexts, I will specify the sense I am using the expressions 'marriage' and 'family'.[39]

---

[37] John Witte, "The Covenant of Marriage: Its Biblical Roots, Historical Influence, and Modern Uses," *Review on Marriage and Spirituality* 18 (2012): 163, accessed October 15, 2017, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2705616.

[38] Bénézet Bujo, "Distinctives of African Ethics," in *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*, ed. Stinton Diane (London: SPCK Publishing, 2010), 79-80. According to Bujo, "There is a great affinity of religious thought throughout all of Black Africa… African thought centers on life."

[39] The following sources give a comprehensive understanding of the debate and show clearly that the concern for redefining marriage and family is more heated in Europe and North America than elsewhere: Julie Hanlon Rubio, *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 3-24;

Edward Vacek, "The Meaning of Marriage: Of Two Minds," in *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, ed. Kieran Scott and Michael Warren (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007);

Evelyn Whitehead and James Whitehead, "The Meaning of Marriage," in *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, ed. Kieran Scott and Michael Warren (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 124-133;

When I speak of marriage here, I am speaking of marriage and family in a Mozambican context where people understand marriage as a union between one man and one woman (monogamy) or a union between one man and more than one woman simultaneously (polygamy). After a long and extensive discussion with the wider society, the New Mozambican Law of the family (published in 2004) defines marriage as "a voluntary union of one man and one woman, in view of constituting a family, in a full communion of life."[40] This is a revision of the Law of 1966, inherited from the colonial Portuguese Regime.[41]

From the outset, one realizes that this definition gives a civil and juridical status only to monogamous unions; whereas, in a traditional setting, polygamy is also one form of marriage. Article 16 of the New Law of the Family recognizes three kinds of marriage: civil, religious, and traditional when they are monogamous. Hence, article 18 establishes

Hernâni Pombas Caniço, "Os novos tipos de família e novo método de avaliação em saúde da pessoa - apgar saudável," vol. 1 (PhD diss., University of Coimbra, 2015), accessed September 22, 2017, https://estudogeral.sib.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/25995/2/VOL%20I.pdf.

Linda Waite, "Marriage and Family," in *Handbook of Population*, ed. Dudley Poston and Michael Micklin (New York: Springer, 2005), 87-108.

Paul Taylor, "The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families," Pew Research Center, 2010, accessed August 10, 2017, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/11/18/the-decline-of-marriage-and-rise-of-new-families/2/#ii-overview.

Scott Taylor, *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, *Culture and Customs of Africa* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006).

[40] "O casamento é a união voluntária e singular entre um homem e uma mulher, com o propósito de constituir família, mediante comunhão plena de vida." Cf. Maria José Arthur, et al., "Lei Da Família: Antecedentes E Contextos Da Sua Aprovação," [Law of the Family: Background and Context of its Approval] *Outras Vozes, nº 35-36*, no. 35-36 (Agosto-Novembro 2011), accessed December 10, 2016. http://www.wlsa.org.mz/artigo/lei-da-familia-1-antecedentes-e-contextos/. In this chapter, all translations from any Portuguese text are my own.

[41] Elias Sande, "Conceito de família: Perspectiva Africana," Olhos do Psicologo, 2011, accessed August 4, 2017, http://eliassantaylor85.blogspot.nl/2011/11/conceito-de-familia-perspectiva.html.

that polygamy has no juridical recognition.[42] "It is not allowed a civil marriage of two people united in religious or traditional marriage properly registered," as legislated in the articles 79-92 and 25 and 51 for traditional marriage and in articles 26 and 50 for religious marriage.[43] The Church could not but support the move from both the colonial regime and the FRELIMO ruling in discouraging polygamy and traditional practices that demean women, marriage, and family.[44]

i. Polygamy

Carlos Arnaldo, an outspoken sociologist from the Department of Population Studies of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, relying on the 2007 census, contends that "the practice of polygyny is fairly common in Mozambique," with 28% of women being in a polygamous relationship.[45] Polygamy, here, means a union between one man with more than one woman at the same time. I have seen no report of a marriage between one woman with more than one man (polyandry).

Polygyny is declining gradually as a rebuke against such unions grows steadily. Mozambicans may tolerate but not encourage it. Indeed, young women today are unwilling to be the second or third wife of anybody as the 28-year-old Mozambican singer Liloca

---

[42] Cf. Ximena Andrade, et al., "Porque é que a poligamia é inaceitável na lei de família, à luz dos direitos humanos," *Outras Vozes*, no. 4 (2013), accessed August 4, 2017, http://www.wlsa.org.mz/artigo/por-que-e-que-a-poligamia-e-inaceitavel-na-lei-de-familia-a-luz-dos-direitos-humanos.

[43] The New Mozambican Law of Family, art. 18, 2 says, "Não é permitido o casamento civil de duas pessoas ligadas por casamento religioso ou tradicional devidamente transcrito no registo civil."

[44] See Yolanda Sithoe, "Opinião: Poligamia - Tudo em nome da 'tradição' [Opinion: Polygamy - All in the name of 'tradition']," *Outras Vozes* 26 (March 2009), accessed June 6, 2017. The author explains how some members of Parliament attempted to use tradition to legitimize polygamy. At the end, Parliament ruled against polygamy, arguing that if our New Law allowed polygeny, then it should also allow polyandry.

[45] Cf. Carlos Arnaldo, "Ethnicity and Marriage Patterns in Mozambique," *African Population Studies* 19, no. 1 (2004), acessed September 21, 2016. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/3518/1/ep04008.pdf.

expressed clearly in her music, "A Segunda," meaning the second wife.[46] She sings, "I can't bear, and I don't want any longer to be the second wife."[47] Without oversimplification, the song is representative of women and men in Mozambique. The Mozambican history contributes to the way Mozambicans decry polygyny today. One cannot stress enough that polygyny is declining even in rural areas, which still preserves the traditional values related to marriage and family more than in towns. Such a trend concurs with Bujo's contention about Africa in general.

> I distance myself from those… who place polygamy with monogamy at the same level and propose its institutionalization. Even if polygamy is still relatively widespread, there are indications that monogamy is becoming the preferred form more and more… If there are current demands for its official recognition, then women are not represented in this movement, as far as I can see.[48]

The chart below comparing the available data on polygamy evinces the decline.

Table 1: *Percentage of Polygamy in Mozambique*								
1997			2003			2007		
Rural	Urban	Average	Rural	Urban	Average	Rural	Urban	Average
18.6	8.1	**13.3**	16.4	9.3	**12.9**	-	-	**11**
Monogamy								
1997			2003			2011		
Rural	Urban	Average	Rural	Urban	Average	Rural	Urban	Average
81.4	91.8	**86.6**	83.7	91.0	**87.4**	-	-	**89**

---

[46] Liloca, "A segunda mulher [The second wife]," (music video), September 6, 2010, accessed August 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWzcHNulCJ4.

[47] "Já não aguento mais; e já não quero mais ser a segunda mulher."

[48] Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 119. See the opinion of five prominent Mozambican women rejecting polygamy in Andrade, et al., "Porque poligamia é inaceitável."

ii. Types of Marriage

As previously mentioned, Mozambican legislation recognizes three types of marriage: civil, religious, traditional. The traditional marriage can be a monogamous and a *de facto* union.[49] Religious and traditional (monogamous) marriages have civil and juridical recognition after fulfilling certain bureaucratic formalities. Many traditional marriages are not registered, which accounts for the lack of an accurate figure. *De facto* unions have juridical status after providing evidence of cohabitation for more than two years and, thereafter, registering civilly.

iii. Civil State

The Mozambican National Institute of Statistics (INE) recognizes five categories to describe a person's marital status: single, married, widowed, separated, and divorced. (Recall that 'married' implies a monogamous union which is either traditional, civil, and/or religious.) The Constitution of the Republic and the 2004 New Law of the Family (NLF) clarify the distinctive features of each of these five civil states. The NLF states, "A separation of people and goods does not dissolve the marriage," even though none of the spouses already living separately intends to resume living with the other.[50] That said, the statistics combine the numbers of the separated and divorced. The graph below gives an

---

[49] According to a group of five women lawyers, "O pleno reconhecimento das uniões de facto é fundamental para a garantia dos direitos das mulheres, principalmente em países em que a frequência do casamento civil é pequena ou está em decréscimo." [The full recognition of *de facto* unions is fundamental for guaranteeing the rights of women, principally in countries where the rate of civil marriages is low or declining.] See Andrade, et al., "Porque poligamia é inaceitável."

[50] Civil Code, art. 177, 1. Cf. Civil Code, art. 195, 3.

overview of the civil status of the Mozambican population. It was taken from the National

Institute of Statistics based on the results of the 2007 census.[51]

Table 2: Civil Status in the 2007 Census					
Percentage of the population who are equal to or older than 12 years old					
Marital Union	Single	Married	Widow	Divorced/Separated	Unknown
43	31.1	15.1	5.1	4.5	1.2

b. A Family in Mozambique

> The concept of family in African scope goes beyond the nuclear family of mother, father, and children. Arinze takes the composition of the family membership in a wide sense and defines it as a '…much wide circle of members… In traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children and immediate relatives.
>
> —Khofi Arthur Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*

iv. What is a Family?

What Phiri speaks about Africa in general is applicable to Mozambique as well.[52]

According to the first paragraph of Article 2 of the Mozambican Law of Family, "The

family is a community where members related among themselves through blood, marriage,

affinity, and adoption."[53] Article 6 adds procreation as an important element in a family:

"The sources of juridical family relationships are procreation, parenthood, marriage,

affinity, and adoption."[54] Even when family members do not live together because of

inadequate work arrangements, studies, work in a distant location, lack of proper housing

---

[51] INE, "Apresentação Dos Resultados Definitivos Do Censo 2007," 2009, accessed August 4, 2017, http://italcoop.org.mz/Allegati/Censo%202007%20NACIONAL.pdf.

[52] Cf. Khofi Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage: A Christian Theological Appraisal* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011), 24.

[53] Thereafter, quoting as art. 2, 1. The text reads, "A família é a comunidade de membros ligados entre si pelo parentesco, casamento, afinidade e adopção."

[54] "São fontes das relações jurídicas familiares a procriação, o parentesco, o casamento, a afinidade e a adopção."

facilities to accommodate everybody, or because of financial constraints, relatives perceive themselves as an extended family, which is reinforced through special gatherings, ceremonies, regular visits, and correspondences in moments of birth, rites of passage, marriage, sickness, and death.[55]

George Ndege captured, in a satisfactory way, the meaning of family in the Mozambican context and its connection to marriage when he stated, "Members of a family may be related to by blood; marriage and adoption are two other significant ways by which family members are related. Belonging to a family brings shared benefits and responsibilities."[56] Furthermore, Ndege sees not only the meaning of family but also how Mozambicans attach procreation and the education of children to marriage in the context of the family. He states, "The family is a very important institution in Mozambican society. It is where the child is born, nurtured, and sensitized to social mores as well as aspects of education before being initiated into adulthood."[57]

According to Ndege, "A society that is unable to reproduce itself cannot guarantee its survival beyond the next couple of generations."[58] For Mozambicans, bearing, nurturing, and educating children are integral to the growth and wellbeing of the family and of society in general. In Mozambique, there are no 'unwanted children.' Rather, marriage, family, and procreation are interconnected, even when confronted with infertility. Such a

---

[55] Cf. Alice Mabota, "Alice Mabota na cadeira do boss," (video), April 20 2017, accessed August 24, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeHzJp9LD3E. In national TV, Mabota shares the way she could not participate in all these important moments because of family greivances for the fact that her father had not given *lobola* to her mother's family.

[56] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 77.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

Mozambican way of looking at marriage, family, and children form part of the education to adulthood, which the rites of initiation provide, and the society supports.

One cannot underscore enough that this understanding of marriage and family is ingrained into Mozambican consciousness. More than ever, Mozambicans are proud to live accordingly, although the current pastoral approach on marriage and family has not yet succeeded in presenting an inculturated approach that would encompass that consciousness as a value to cherish. The following quote from Taylor shows how conceptions of marriage elsewhere may differ from the one that Mozambican societies in general cherish and promote.

> By emphatic margins, the public does not see marriage as the only path to family formation. Fully 86% say a single parent and child constitute a family; nearly as many (80%) say an unmarried couple living together with a child is a family; and 63% say a gay or lesbian couple raising a child is a family. The presence of children clearly matters in these definitions. If a cohabiting couple has no children, a majority of the public says they are not a family. Marriage matters, too. If a childless couple is married, 88% consider them to be a family.[59]

Hernâni Pombas Caniço, in his 2014 doctoral dissertation "The New Types of Family and the New Methods of Evaluation," summarizes various authors' definitions of the concept of family and the importance of family in the health of the person.[60] Of our interest is the World Health Organization's view that, as Caniço presents it, "the concept of family cannot be limited to the bonds of blood, marriage, sexual partnership or adoption. Any group whose bonds are based on trust, mutual support and common destiny, must be taken as a family."[61] This reasoning cannot but underscore the point the final report of the

---

[59] Cf. Taylor, "The Decline of Marriage. "

[60] Cf. Caniço, "Os Novos Tipos De Família" (2015).

[61] Ibid., 49. The text reads, "O conceito de família não pode ser limitado a laços de sangue, casamento, parceria sexual ou adopção. Qualquer grupo cujas ligações sejam baseadas na confiança, suporte mútuo e um destino comum, deve ser encarado como família."

Church's Research on Marriage in Africa found out that "there are concepts and presuppositions about marriage, which are particular to the cultures of Africa."[62]

v. Family Members

There is one more element in the Mozambican conception of family, which is common in most parts of Africa as African scholars John Mbiti, Charles Nyamiti, and Bénézet Bujo remind us. The family is constituted not only by the living but also by those who have gone before us. Bujo explains, "The African person lives within an extended family. This togetherness is based on a common ancestor who founded the community of the clan or tribe, which is composed of the living as well as the dead. The latter are indeed not dead; the dead are not really dead but are to be regarded rather as the 'living dead."[63]

Ecclesia in Africa says,

> The sons and daughters of Africa love life. It is precisely this love for life that leads them to give such great importance to the veneration of their ancestors. They believe intuitively that the dead continue to live and remain in communion with them. Is this not in some way a preparation for belief in the Communion of the Saints? The peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life.[64]

The third component of an African family is the yet-to-be-born, one expression of the actualization of the life of the ancestor in the community. This understanding of family is specifically African, and it will make a difference when reflecting on any pastoral approach that is relevant to Africa. For example, discussions on abortion will have a Mozambican/African focus and will not be the blueprint of the European and North

---

[62] Benezeri Kizembo, Laurenti Magesa, and Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Marriage* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 14.

[63] Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 15.

[64] EIA 43.

American, which may be relevant for those societies but completely inadequate to the Mozambican mentality. Bujo's reflection underscores the significance of the yet-to-be-born in a context of marriage and family, giving a clue that this African understanding can help in ministering to married couples and family.

> Stormy debates on the status of the embryo reveal many divergent opinions on the determination of the precise moment at which one can refer to it as being a person… In African tradition, it would be futile to have such a debate since the embryo, or foetus, belong to the world of the yet-to-be-born and is fully integrated into the community of the living and the dead.[65]

The importance of each member in strengthening family and marriage will be explored further in Chapter Three when dealing with Mozambican values. Chapter Five will deal with its pastoral application. Bujo articulates the significance of the three components of an African family in the first chapter, entitled "Family Conception According to Tradition," of his book *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage*.[66] The chart below illustrates the Mozambican understanding of family.

Table 3: Members of an African/Mozambican Family		
Living	Dead ("the living-dead")	Yet-to-be Born
Extended family (*father, mother, children, cousins, nephews, aunts/uncles, grandparents*)		

The Episcopal Conference of Mozambique (CEM), in its first post-independence official document on family, says, "In a broad sense, the family is every group of close and distant relatives. It is a large family from the common root. In a more restricted sense, family it is a group of people born from the same marriage and who live in a communion

---

[65] Bénézet Bujo, "Distinctives of African Ethics," in *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*, ed. Stinton Diane (London: SPCK Publishing, 2010), 87-88.

[66] Bénézet Bujo, *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009). See Bujo's assessment of Mercy Amba Oduyoye's critique of Mbiti's notion of "not-yet-born" in Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 28-29.

of conjugal, filial, fraternal."[67] At the same time, the CEM points out strengths and weaknesses of families in Mozambican society.[68]

c. **Sacrament of Marriage**

> For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband.
>
> —1 Corinthians 7, 14

CROMIA's Five Year Project of the 1970s speaks of "natural sacraments," marriage being one of them. "Basically, marriage is called a sacrament because it is part of the created order, and the whole of this created order is sacramental."[69] However, Christian marriage is comprised of more than what is in natural sacraments.

i. **An Insight from St. Paul**

St. Paul exhorts us to understand that in a marriage, a spouse who believes in Christ and lives according to her/his faith can help sanctify the other. When both are committed believers, it is even better because they can help each other grow in the discipleship of Christ through their marital love. Jerome O'Connor, commenting on that passage, explains, "Paul considered the unbeliever holy because, by deciding to maintain the marriage, he or she is acting in conformity with the divine plan (Gen 2:24 =1 Cor 6:17) and the dominical directive in 7:10-11."[70] By sanctifying each other as they journey together in faith, their marriage becomes a sacrament.

---

[67] CEM, *Carta dos bispos de Moçambique aos seus presbíteros* (Lourenço Marques, MZ: 1971), no. 4.

[68] Cf. ibid., nos. 8-10.

[69] Kisembo, et al., *African Christian Marriage*, 41.

[70] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 805.

The sacramentality of their marriage becomes evident as they deepen their faith in Christ and love for one another. When they grow in their self-giving to one another and in their solidarity with the needy, they render a service to the world by reminding it that God is love. Thus, marriage shines forth as one of the two sacraments of service. This explanation is ecumenical and faithful to the Catholic tradition.

ii. John Bosio, Joseph Champlin and Michael Lawler

John Bosio points out these aspects when commenting on the Nuptial Blessing during Mass by saying, "The sacrament of Marriage is more than the wedding."[71]

> You and all spouse will live the sacrament the rest of your lives together. In good times, your love for each other will remind all of us of the goodness and tenderness of God's love. In moments of difficult, your sacrifices and struggles will speak to us of God's self-giving love and care. In moments of hurt and forgiveness, your actions will tell of God's mercy. In moments of distance, physical or emotional, your faithful commitment to each other will proclaim God's enduring faithfulness and love for us.[72]

Joseph Champlin makes the same point: "Christ will continue to be present in a unique way whenever husband and wife carry out those mutual promises – whenever they serve one another, make love together, forgive each other, or reach out to others, including and especially their children."[73] Thus, marriage becomes a symbol of God's love to God's people.

According to Michael Lawler, marriage is a "prophetic symbol" in the sense that "it is a human action which proclaims, makes explicit and celebrates in representation the

---

[71] John Bosio, *Why Get Married in the Church? The Life Long Blessings of a Catholic Wedding* (New London, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 2013), 15.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Joseph Champlin, *Special Signs of Grace: The Sacraments and Sacramentals* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 101.

action of God"[74] Thus, marriage is a sacrament if we understand "a sacrament a prophetic

symbol in and through which the Church, the Body of Christ, proclaims, reveals and

celebrates in representation that presence and action of God which is called grace."[75]

Lawler is down-to-earth in exclaiming that which makes a marriage Christian and

sacramental:

> A couple entering any marriage say to one another, before the society in which they live, "I love you and I give myself to and for you." A Christian couple entering a specifically sacramental marriage say that, too, but they also say more. They say, "I love you as Christ loves his Church, steadfastly and faithfully." From the first, therefore, a Christian marriage is intentionally more than just the communion for the whole life of this man and this woman. It is more than just human covenant; it is also a religious covenant. It is more than law and obligations; it is also grace. From the first, God and God's Christ are present as third partners in it, modeling it, gracing it and guaranteeing it.[76]

iii. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

This explains how marriage is a sacrament according to the Vatican II document

Sacrosanctum Concilium. Marriage becomes a "means of sanctification" for the couple. It

helps to build the body of Christ; it presupposes faith, but at the same time, it nourishes,

strengthens, and expresses the faith of the couple and the faith of the Church. By doing so,

marriage glorifies God.[77] As John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* reminds us that "marriage,

like every sacrament, is a memorial, actuation, and prophecy."[78]

---

[74] Michael Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament: A Theology of Christian Marriage* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 12.

[75] Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament,* 14.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963, no. 59, accessed August 30, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html. Henceforth, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* will be cited as SC.

[78] John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World, November 21, 1981, no. 13, accessed August 30, 2016,

In Mozambican culture, by bringing to the world those yet-to-be-born, a couple shares in the fulness of life that God desires, through the ancestors, for the community. Marriage and family have their origin in God and find strength, support, and meaning when lived in God through the ancestors. This background favors understanding the sacramentality of marriage. However, as David Thomas, the co-director of Bethany Family Institute in the UK and USA, says, for Christian Marriage, "The search for ever deeper insight into its meaning is very much an ongoing process."[79]

---

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html. Henceforth, *Familiaris Consortio* will be cited as FC.

[79] David Thomas, "What Makes Marriage a Sacrament," *Family and Community Ministries* (2007): 5.

CHAPTER ONE

MOZAMBICAN CONTEXT AFFECTING MARRIAGE AND FAMILY TODAY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will underscore how the Mozambican past, from the time of the struggle for national independence until the present, and the role of the Church before and after independence shape the way the Mozambican people understand and live marriage and family. I will present nine aspects that helps to understand the situation of marriage and family in Mozambique today. It will also be noted that the present situation creates challenges and opportunities, and it offers an invitation to think anew the Church's pastoral approach on marriage and family.

The nine sections of this chapter are as follows. First, I will present graphically an overview of the "**The Impact of Major Events of the Country in Marriage and Family.**" Second, I will show a profile of the Mozambican population. Third, I will describe how derogatory views about native people and their cultures unsettled the traditional structures that supported marriage and family. Fourth, I will show that the struggle for independence and the building of national identity created a basis for a common identity which is reflected in today's interregional marriages and in the desire for a unified and nationwide approach to marriage in the Church. There is a great awareness that Mozambique is diverse but at the same time has a unique identity. This view affects marriage and family.[80]

The fifth and sixth sections show that one cannot understand the situation of marriage in Mozambique without acknowledging that national independence paved the

---

[80] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, ix.

way for Mozambicans to be in positions of leadership, a factor that favored organizing the Church in ministries based on Small Christian Communities and prioritizing inculturation.

Sections seven to nine will show that those communities acted as surrogates to the weakened traditional structures and became a support against foreign (seveth section) as well as internal forces (eight section) that disrupt marriages. They also mitigated the damages from the "urgent challenges destabilizing families," as SECAM called them (night section).

The tenth and last section will present Mozambican society as advocating a distinct kind of emancipation of women, because it values marriage, family, and motherhood alongside equal opportunity to education, carrier advancement, and active participation in various sectors of the society.

1. Overview of Major Events of the Country in Marriage and Family

This section will give a foretaste of the chapter by highlighting four periods of the country which influenced differently people's experiences and views on marriage and family. The first period is from 1498 to 1917 when Portugal administrated Mozambique through the government of India (1498 - 1758) and then, through *prazos* (1758 to 1917), a leasing of land to individuals or companies for a specific time (*prazo* in Portuguese).[81] The second period is from 1932 to 1975 when "Portugal breaks up trading companies and imposes direct rule, especially after World War II."[82] This was the peak of colorization in Mozambique, with derogatory views on the native people and culture. The third period is from 1975 to the promulgation of the new constitution in 1990. The fourth period was from 1992 up this date.

Thus, the Portuguese colonial power in Mozambique lasted almost five hundred years, from March 1498 to June 25, 1975. As Serapiao put, "Vasco da Gama reached the land known today as Mozambique in March of 1498, laying claim to it as Portuguese territory."[83] Only forty-three years ago, painfully Mozambique conquered its national independence. Therefore, the aftermaths of the recent colonization in family and marriage are vivid though the long Portuguese presence influenced differently in each of the four periods as the Table 4 below shows.

---

[81] Cf. Joseph Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire* (London: Zed Books, 1990), 15. About the numbers of the slave trade, see more in Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 16-19.

[82] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 15.

[83] Luis Serapiao and Mohamed El-Khawas, *Mozambique in the Twentieth Centurty: From Colonialism to Independence* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1979), 20.

From 1498 to 1561, there was somehow a friendly and respectful relationship. The Portuguese received a warm welcoming to the point that they named one of the places, Inhambane, meaning, "land of good people." Missionaries baptized, a leader of the great Southern empire Monomotapa. However, the situation changed dramatically, after the Arabic and Muslim traders, fearing the increasing Portuguese and Christian influence among the natives, instigated the assassination of a Jesuit Missionary, Goncalo da Silveira (1526 - 1561).

Thereafter, the animosity increased as Portugal forcefully attempted to control the Arabic trade market and explore the natural resources of the land. The couple Isaacman explain, "From sixteenth century onward, Lisbon periodically attempted to impose its political hegemony. Time and again the indigenous societies blunted Portuguese military advances. Not until the beginning of the twentieth century did Portugal finally prevail[ed], but only after thirty years of overcoming stiff local resistance."[84] Ndege gives an insightful overview of Portuguese presence from 1498 to 1917, a period which Portugal administrated the land through proxy.

> The Portuguese control of the territory of what is today Mozambique was anything but effective, particularly from 1600s well into the first half of the twentieth century. Their control was fragile and mainly confined to forts and trading posts along the costs of the Indian Ocean and the Zambezi River, which was their main route to the interior.[85]

After 1752, the Portuguese administered the native land though *prazos*, which strictly speaking began by 1629 when "Portugal had gained sufficient military control in

---

[84] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 11. See also Ibid., 19.

[85] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 14-15.

Zambezia."[86] This period (1629/1752-1917/1932) created demographic imbalance, depopulation and separation of family members. Hanlon argues, "during this time, however, the *prazo* holder had unlimited feudal power in his territory. Profits were made from ivory and gold, from taxes on the African population, and increasingly from the slave trade."[87] Halon explains that "a post-independent oral history project found reports of the slave trade continuing at least until 1912. Thus, Mozambique probably lost two million people to slavery" and ten thousand killed in World War I.[88] "The effects of this forced depopulation are still apparent today – vast areas of Mozambique are virtually empty."[89] Hanlon is adamant is stressing that "Colonial Mozambique's biggest export was people. As well as the officially contracted miners, *literally hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring countries… to escape the brutality of forced labor: beatings, imprisonment, starvation and sometimes even death.*"[90]

Following this period of administration though proxy, after "four hundred years of ineffectual rule and thirty years of pacification had convinced Lisbon of the need to impose a highly structured, centralized system on the newly conquered colony."[91] Such kind of rule occurred during Salazar's regime from 1928 to 1974. To legitimize his colonial policy, Salazar allied himself to the Church, and propelled the ideology of the backwardness of native people and their cultures.

---

[86] Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 15.

[87] Ibid. About the numbers of the slave trade see more in Isaacman, 16-19.

[88] Hanlon, *Mozambique,* 16.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., 23. Emphasis added.

[91] Isaacman and Isaccman, *Mozambique*, 29.

Salazar's regime skillfully intensified the fight against traditional practices, languages, structures. It tried to make native people ashamed of themselves and their culture. The regime fought traditional structures that valued and supported marriage and family and, unwittingly, promoted intolerable behaviors such as concubinage, prostitution, promiscuity and abuse of minors, just to name few. These behaviors facilitated the rise of dysfunctional families whose consequences persists up today.

The third period, which comprises the first fifteen years after independence (1975-1990), saw a government that, though recognizing some cultural manifestations, continued to fight against most of the practices that valued and strengthened marriage and family. Fortunately, the situation was reversed. The new face of the Catholic Church helped to create a structure which counterbalanced some of the negative effects of the former and the new forms of colonization as well as the abuses from the communist-oriented government. The section after Table 4 will present a general profile of Mozambican population today.

See in the Table 4 an historical overview of marriage in Mozambique.

	Timeline	Event	Impact on Family
Administration through Proxy (Goa and *Prazos*)	1498	Vasco da Gama in Mozambique	• Colonization begins • Warm relationships, Some cooperation
	1561	Gonçalo da Silveira, Protomartyr	
	1498 - 1752	"Mozambique administered by the governor general of God (India)"	• Derogatory views of native people and their cultures. • Weakening of traditional structures • Tolerance on promiscuity
	1878	Administration through proxy: "Portugal leases large tracts of territory to trading companies"	
	1895 -1917	Portuguese pacification wars	
Direct Administration During Salazar's Regime (1928 - 1974)	1932	"Portugal breaks up trading companies and imposes direct rule, especially after World War II."[92]	• Demographic imbalance
	1940/1	Concordat and Missionary Agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and Portugal.	• Ambiguous position of the Church • Leadership subservient to colonial policies • Valuing Monogamy • Fighting traditional practices: polygamy, rites of passage, dances…
	1950s-1960s	Arrival of new Portuguese settlers.	
	1962	Foundation of FRELIMO	
	1964	Beginning of Armed war for independence	
	1974	In April, Military coup in Portugal and overthrown of Salazar Regine. In September, Lusaka agreement and the formation of Transition Government.	
Socialist Government	1975	National Independence	• Prophetic Church, with SCCs, Lay Ministries and Inculturation as priority. • Government against traditional practices • Fight against prostitution • Boast on marriage
	1976	Mozambican Leadership in Church	
	1977	Marxist-Leninist Government	
	1977	National Assembly of Pastoral	
	1989	FRELIMO officially abandons Marxist-Leninist ideology.	
Multi-Party System	1990	New Constitution: Beginning of multiparty elections and a free market economy."	
	1992	Peace Agreement and end of the civil war in Mozambique.	• New Family Law • Encouraging sound traditional values • Emancipation
	1994 - 2017	Every five years, there is elections to choose a new president.	

Table 4: The Impact of Major Events of the Country in Marriage and Family

Source: Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique, xiii-xiv.*

2. Profile of the Mozambican Population

As an introduction to the many elements that provide the context for marriage and family in Mozambique with its challenges and opportunities, it will be necessary to present some general information about the country. Mozambique is a young country, having become independent in 1975 from the Portuguese colonial regime that most Mozambicans considered to be imperialist. The 2014 *Estatísticas e Indicadores Sociais* (Statistics and Social Indicators) from the National Institute of Statistics shows that Mozambique's population was 25,041,922, of which 87.5% were below 50 years of age, as shown below.[93] The rural population was 68.4%, whereas the urban was 32.6%, underscoring the importance of agriculture for the development of the country.[94]

Table 5: Percentage of Mozambican Population According to Group Ages			
0 – 34	35 – 49	50 – 69	70 – 80+
78.3%	18.6%	7.3%	1.8%.

The school-age population, ages 5 to 29, consisted of 61.2% of the population with 47.5% of them living in rural areas and 39.9% in urban areas. However, there are fewer high schools in rural areas than in urban.[95] For example, in 2013, 312 teenagers finished primary education in the Lifidzi (Mission) School, but only 100 had high school

---

[92] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 15.

[93] INE, "Mozambique in Figures 2014," 2014, 13, accessed September 20, 2016, http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/publicacoes/mocambique-em-numeros/mocambique-em-numeros_final_net.pdf/view.

[94] INE, "Estatísticas E Indicadores Sociais 2013-2014," 2015, 13, accessed September 20, 2016, http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-demograficas-e-indicadores-sociais/estatisticas-e-indicadores-sociais.

[95] INE, "Mozambique in Figures 2014," 13.

placements. And in 2014, when more than 200 finished their primary education, once again fewer than 100 had access to a high school education and half of them were girls ages 14-16. Most of the girls ended up in early marriages for lack of opportunities. Much about these problems has been publicized in the local and international press, but not enough has been done to build enough high schools and professional centers. The aid the country gets from most foreign agents does not address the issue. In 2012, the Jesuits began building in this area a school with a capacity for 1,200 students and a boarding facility for 300 girls and 300 boys. It is a modest contribution.

As a way of comparison, Mozambique has an area of 309,496 square miles (801,590 km^2), 1.89 times larger than California, which is 163,696 square miles (423,970 km^2). Mozambique has a population of 28 million and California has 39 million. Mozambique has a density of 74.3/square miles (28.7/km^2), whereas California has 246 square miles (95.0/km^2). The point is that Mozambique has a vast amount of fertile land, but it also has a high degree of chronic corruption and still imports legumes and fruits from South Africa. Because of an insufficient transportation infrastructure, products often rot in one part of the country while people starve or import the same products in another.

Mozambique is not poor because of overpopulation, as many ideological groups have claimed, nor is it poor for a lack of natural or human resources. It is poor, rather, because of corruption, inadequate technology, and an unwillingness on the part of the government and its allies to implement sustainable policies toward human development.[96]

---

[96] I understand human development in the way the Holy See delegate to the UN explained it:

It must be able to address the spiritual, social, environmental and physical needs of people. It is a model that cannot be imposed from the outside; rather it must be built from within communities and societies that invest in and provide the structures necessary to allow their members adequately to

NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) impose on Mozambique what they think is needed, not listening to nor providing what we ask for. I will reflect on this topic when discussing the unsettling "foreign policies" on families. The next section deals with the impact of certain derogatory views about Mozambican people and their traditions on marriage and family today.

3. Derogatory Views of the Native People and Their Traditions

a. <u>Colonization: Replacing Native Tradition with Portuguese Civilization</u>

i. Portugal's Reluctance to Give up Colonial Power

Salazar was a Prime Minister of Portugal from 1932 to 1968. His regime, which lasted until April 1974, promoted Portuguese national identity and pride by boasting to the grandiosity of its maritime "discoveries" and its "humanitarian vocation" of civilizing and Christianizing the savage and dissolute people of Africa (and Asia), those who were devoid of any political organization or culture.[97]

The Salazar propaganda machine presented to the Portuguese people and to the world that Portugal was building a peaceful, multiracial, and just society while hiding the forced labor, the massacres of innocent people, the growing resistance against colonial exploitation, and the expulsion of those missionaries who objected to the atrocities of the colonial regime.[98] The colonial regime legitimized their plundering of native resources by

---

satisfy their basic needs such as food, housing, health care and work, and enjoy less tangible yet fundamental rights such as education, freedom of expression and religious freedom.

Bernardito Auza's address the UN in "Human Person Isn't an Obstacle to Development," Zenit, October 7, 2016, accessed October 7, 2016, https://zenit.org/articles/human-person-isnt-an-obstacle-to-development-holy-see-tells-un.

[97] Marcelo Caetano, *Portugal's Reasons for Remaining in the Overseas Provinces: Excerpts from the Speeches Made by the Primer Minister Marcelo Caetano* (Queluz de Baixo, PT: Imprimarte, 1970), 36.

[98] See in Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique,* 57-58. See clear-cut policy of racial segregation in habitations, use of public places (restaurants, theaters, and bathrooms), constant harassment by the policy,

portraying Africans as savages in dire need of a civilized and superior culture, which Portugal magnanimously was willing to offer.

ii. Derogatory Views about the Mozambican Population

1st. Lieutenant Silva's Attitude: Grown-up Child, Bushy, Lazy

Lieutenant Colonel Sousa e Silva, Governor of Tete (the central-west part of Mozambique) from 1924 to 1927, described the black (*o preto*) "as a grown-up child… without any understanding of ones' duties."[99] Silva spoke of black people as lazy and irresponsible, though recognizing their good character ("*boa índole*").[100] They were "indigenous of the bush, savage in every essence."[101] However, Silva conceded that they can acquire the "habit of hardworking" if taught using good sense and after gaining their sympathy.[102]

2nd. António Salazar's Views: Indolent, Incapable, Wicked

Allen and Barbara Isaacman point out that "'indolent,' 'incapable,' and 'incompetent,' are typical adjectives both colonial planners and local officials used to characterize Mozambique's African population."[103] Salazar was the key figure who constructed the policies of the colonial regime before its collapse in April 1974.

---

and unjust payments. For example, "By the early 1960s it was estimated that white workers, regardless of their qualifications earned fourteen times as much."

[99] Pedro Augusto de Sousa e Silva, *Distrito de Tete, alta Zambézia: Característicos, história, fomento* [District of Tete, high Zambeze: Characteristics, history, development] (Lisboa: Livraria Portugalia Editora, 1927), 142.

[100] Cf. Ibid.

[101] Cf. Ibid.

[102] Cf. Ibid.

[103] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique* 61.

Salazar accomplished such policies first by promulgating the Colonial Act of 1930.[104] This act turned the colonies into "oversees provinces" of Portugal. The hidden agenda of this policy was to avoid the international community from pressing Portugal to allow the independence of the colonies. In practice, only a small percentage of natives, the *assimilados* (assimilated), had Portuguese citizenship with restricted rights.

The second measure that Salazar took was to put skillfully the Church under the thumb of the State through the Concordat and the Missionary Accord with the Holy See in 1940 and the Missionary Statutes in 1941. Having been expelled from Portugal and its colonies with the coup of 1910 and with the establishment of the anti-religious Republican Government, the Church was eager for any agreement to facilitate good relationship and freedom of religion in Portugal and the colonies.[105] However, the Church paid the high price of subservience and gained an ambiguous position towards the state.

Third, Salazar portrayed Africans in a derogatory way as strongly as possible. For him, it was nonsense for Mozambicans to ask for independence because they were Portuguese citizens and, as such, should make every effort to defend their Portuguese country from communist interference and embrace the Portuguese civilization while abandoning all backwardness, primitivism, and immorality proper to the African way of life. The Bishop of Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) expressed this mentality in a letter

---

[104] Cf. Paulo Polanah, "The Zenith of Our National History! National Identity, Colonial Empire, and the Promotion of the Portuguese Discoveries: Portugal 1930s," *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 9, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 56, accessed August 17, 2017, http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue17/pdf/v9n1a03.pdf.

[105] Cf. Éric Morier-Genoud, *The Vatican Vs. Lisbon : The Relaunching of the Catholic Church in Mozambique, Ca. 1875-1940* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2002), 11-14, 16.

to his seminarians.[106] The colonial ideology from Salazar continued under his successor Marcelo Caetano from 1968 up to April 1974.

3rd.　Marcelo Caetano's Views: Backward, Primitive, Brute

According to Luis Serapiao and Mohamed El-Khawas, "In his evaluation of African culture, Marcelo Caetano summarized by saying that Africans were the most backward people on the earth. He talked about the primitive observances and brutal customs of Africans and insisted that Portugal had delivered Africans from savages."[107] Marcelo went as far as to forbid learning and speaking local languages, because he believed that "the Portuguese language should be the only vehicle of communication and civilization in the whole Portuguese empire."[108]

People were aware of the fallacies of colonization. Eduardo Mondlane, Founder of FRELIMO in 1962 and its first president until his assassination in 1968, speaks of such awareness as expressed in Josina Muthemba, the wife of Samora Machel, before her death in the guerrilla fight on April 7, 1971. She gave a stunning witness with a deep sense of dignity and resistance, stating,

> The colonialists wanted to deceive us with their teaching; they taught us only the history of Portugal, the geography of Portugal; they wanted to form in us a passive mentality to make us resigned to their domination. We couldn't react openly, but we were aware of their lie; we knew that what they said was false; that we were Mozambicans and we could never be Portuguese.[109]

---

[106] Cf. Serapiao and El-Khawas, *Mozambique in Twentieth Century*, 71-73. See the same point in Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique,* 61.

[107] Serapiao and El-Khawas, *Mozambique in the Twentieth Centurty*, 81.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique,* 113.

Liberationist leaders had to deconstruct the colonial Eurocentric ideology to allow people to stand up and fight against the invaders. Serapiao and Mohamed El-Khawas explain, "Mozambican leaders, particularly Uria Simango and Eduardo Mondlane, insisted that Mozambicans not only had a civilization before the coming of the Portuguese but still maintained a culturally distinct civilization."[110]

It took long years of interaction before some missionaries began to appreciate aspects of native culture and see them as signs of God's active presence. However, missionaries, like other Europeans, were sons and daughters of their own time. Despite their good will, they were Portuguese, from a colonial country, where colonialism and Christianism became part of their Portuguese national identity and pride. Francisco Correia explained rightly, "This way of looking at the African was part of the context and the general opinion of the XIX century in Europe. The missionaries, except rare exceptions, though we do not think they were malicious, did not overcome the mentality of their time. In general, the Europeans saw Africans as depraved."[111]

iii. Criticism of Colonization for Weakening Family

Among many collateral damages of colonization in Mozambique and elsewhere, those directly related to marriage and family should be underscored. Samora Moises Machel, the first president of an independent Mozambique (1975-1986), rightly criticized colonization as having promoted promiscuity, prostitution, and destroying a sense of

---

[110] Serapiao and El-Khawas, *Mozambique in the Twentieth Centurty*, 81-82.

[111] Francisco Correia, *O método missionário dos jesuítas em Mocambique de 1881-1910: Um contributo para a história da missão da Zambézia* (Braga: Livraria AI, 1992), 339. The text reads, "Toda essa maneira de olhar o africano fazia parte do contexto geral da opinião que no seculo XIX se tinha dele na Europa. Os missionários, salvo raras exceções, neste particular, embora não pensemos que fossem maldosos, não ultrapassaram o seu seculo. Em geral, os africanos eram vistos como pessoas depravadas."

modesty and self-respect in the native women. Samora emphatically mocked the attitudes of the colonizers who boosted of bringing civilization to the native people but instead created toleration of shameful behaviors which traditional societies abhorred. At the same time, Samora attacked polygamy and the objectivation of Mozambican women through prostitution, concubinage, and rape. He contended, "The assimilated man will replace traditional polygamy with promiscuity, eventually marrying one woman, the most polished, but not giving up the others."[112] The colonial system tolerated prostitution and having mistresses but condemned polygyny. Prostitution became a tolerable commodity in Mozambican society. According to the Issacmans, "Prostitution flourished in the urban centers and was probably the major source of income for most women, who found few other possibilities for employment."[113]

For Samora, an authentic Mozambican revolution had to restore the sense of dignity that Mozambican women had been forced to lose as well as reappraise the value of marriage and family that had been undermined with the colonial proliferation of prostitution, forced labor, and the separation of family members that occurred for a long time. Colonization created demographic imbalance caused by taking young and strong members of the family and unwittingly encouraging polygamy and the merchandizing *lobolo* (so-called bride-price). The number of unassisted (older) women increased due to the prolonged absence or death of husbands in forced labor in plantations or in the mines. Few men were available for marriage. According to the Isaacmans,

> The sustained absence of men also altered the nature and structure of the family all over Mozambique. Women had to assume most of the socializing functions and to

---

[112] Barry Munslow, *Samora Machel: An African Revoluctionary; Selected Speeches and Writings* (London: Zed Books, 1985), 131.

[113] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 59.

supply almost all the productive labor. A 1941 survey in Gaza (South part) revealed that women, many of whom were elderly, represented 80 percent of the agricultural labor force.[114]

b. <u>Christianization: Monogamy and Salvation for the Wicked Native</u>

i. The Views of European Missionaries on Native People

Marime Benedito, a committed Christian of the Cathedral parish in Maputo, wrote about the positive contributions of Teodósio Clemente de Gouveia, the Archbishop of Maputo (from 1941 to 1962), recognizing "that Cardinal Gouveia was a man of his own time and stiff defender of European colonization in Africa, in general, and particularly in Mozambique."[115] The same was true of most Portuguese citizens.

1st. Etterle's Views: Permissiveness, Drunkenness, and Stealing

Missionaries, through their communications, contributed in negatively portraying Mozambicans and Africans in general, as Francisco Correia, SJ, acknowledged in his book *O Método Missionário dos Jesuítas em Moçambique (1881-1910)*.[116] In general, the Europeans portrayed Africans in a very pejorative manner. They attributed to the black people the most despicable vices and weakness of the humanity. Any shortcoming was presented in a superlative and absolute degree and taken as representing the natural weakness of the native people. As their default attitude, the Europeans looked at natives with conspicuous contempt and suspicion.

> As far as their defects, it is said that they are drunkards, lazy, indifferent, so indolent to the point of preferring the most horrible tortures of hunger and even death than work to sustain their lives. They have no affection for their family and no gratitude

---

[114] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 54.

[115] Benedito Marime, *Arquidiocese de Maputo: Sessenta anos de história (1940 a 2000)* (Maputo: CEGRAF, 2002), 127. The Portuguese text reads, "É verdade que o Cardeal Gouveia foi um Homem do seu tempo e convicto defensor da colonização Europeia em Africa, em geral, e da Portuguesa em Moçambique, em particular."

[116] Correia, *O Método missionário dos jesuítas*, 335-40.

to their benefactors. They are, above all, thieves, stealing not only money but also cloths and food. [117]

Correia continues in pointing out that even those regarded as great missionaries, such as Fr. Etterle, were impatient with the natives. Etterle wrote in March of 1894, "We have to fight against the most horrendous passions, because the life of the black can be summed in three words: permissiveness, drunkenness, and stealing. As far as the first vice is concerned, the blacks do not feel compelled to repent from the example of the civilized Europeans."[118] Which kind of example could a civilized European give to the native people apart from destroying their morality?

ii. Lamenting on the Woes of Colonization

1st. Degradation of Family Morals

In the first decade of 1900s, Henri Alexandre Junod, a Swedish Protestant Missionary in southern Mozambique, in his two-volume contribution *Usos e Costumes dos Bantu,* assesses the gains and losses that the so-called civilization brought to the native people. His insight is relevant to this topic. He rightly argues, "the bad aspects of the civilization outnumber too far the good ones. One can say that the indigenous African lost more than gained in interacting with the civilization."[119] Junod continues in indicating many problems and dysfunctionalities the colonial civilization brought to the native people. Many of those problems directly affect marriage, the life of the family, and the stability of the community.

---

[117] Ibid., 336. "…quanto aos seus defeitos diz que "são bebedores, preguiçosos, indiferentes, indolentes a tal ponto que prefeririam as mais horríveis torturas da fome e mesmo da morte que trabalhar para ganhar de que viver. Não tem afeição a família, nem reconhecimento aos seus benfeitores. São sobretudo ladroes, roubando não só dinheiro, mas também roupa e comida."

[118] Correia, *Método missionário dos jesuítas*, 336.

[119] Henri Junod, *Usos e costumes dos Bantu*, vol. 2 (Maputo: Impressa da UEM, 1996), 550.

It is painful to notice with which regrettable facility these primitives embraced the vices of civilization: alcoholism of the most depraved (on the coast), onanism, sodomy (in the 'compounds'), relaxation in their costumes. These vices are causing new and dangerous diseases that are spreading rapidly…. Increase in the cases of TB… rape (named Black Danger which was unknown in the primitive populations). The tribe lost its rules of life and its traditions. The outcome is a rapid physic and moral decay.[120]

Four years after national independence, on July 29, 1979, the Isaacman couple interviewed Pruan Hassan. Hassan testified about his frustration and shame regarding the atrocities he and his family had suffered: "I was in my village at Nawana quite ill. The *sipais* entered my hut and beat me because I had not completed planting my cotton field. One raped my wife."[121] The Isaacmans reported other cases of abuse, which had a tremendous effect on the family. "An American sociologist visiting Mozambique in 1924 observed: 'women, even pregnant or with a nursling are taken for road work by cipaes…. Girls as young as fifteen are taken and some are made to submit sexually to those in charge…. There are some miscarriages from heavy work."[122]

2nd. Toleration of Cohabitation and Concubinage

As part of the degradation of morals, people gradually began to tolerate cohabitation and concubinage. Indeed, after World War II, with Salazar's policy of effective and direct management of the "oversee provinces," and not through proxy companies as it used to be, new colonizers arrived in Mozambique.[123] Most of them were single or had left their wives in Portugal. They opted for cohabitation with black women

---

[120] Junod, *Usos e costumes dos Bantu*, vol. 2, 550-51.

[121] Cf. Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 42. The correct Portuguese expression is *sipaios*.

[122] Ibid., 34.

[123] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, xiv. In xii-xv, Ndege presents a brief chronology of the history of Mozambique.

of the land but refused to marry them officially and criticized those who were doing so. Children from those unions, the *mixtos* or *mulatos*, were easily abandoned and left with their mothers without the support of the traditional family, given the fact that their mothers had been taken without respecting the traditional ceremonies. The Church missions cared for those abandoned children.

Francisco Teixeira, the bishop of Quelimane, a diocese in the central-east coast from 1955 to 1975, deplored the behavior of the colonizers.[124] In his pastoral letter, he rebukes that hypocrisy: "Not few people deplore, when they do not prevent, legitimate marriage between white men and black women; at the same time, they do not condemn, with excuse, the most abject promiscuity between white men and black and brown women."[125] He continues, "Missionary activity faces this scandalous block and is impaired by the bad behavior of those with the responsibility of civilizing the most backward people."[126] Benedito Marime, in his book *Arquidiocese do Maputo, Sessenta Anos de História (1940 a 2000)*, also speaks of the growing "problem of sexual promiscuity of white men with the indigenous women whom they leave with abandoned brown children, whom the mission was taking care of."[127]

---

[124] Cf. David Cheney, "Diocese of Quelimane: Affiliated Bishops, Deceased," The Hierarchy of the Church, March 16, 2013, accessed August 31, 2017, http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dquel.html.

[125] Francisco Teixeira, *Presença de Justiça* (Porto, PT: 1978), 36.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Marime, *Arquidiocese do Maputo,* 117. The text in Portuguese reads, "Já na cidade, a acrescer a quanto foi dito, havia ainda o problema da promiscuidade sexual dos Brancos com as Mulheres Indígenas, a quem deixavam os Filhos Mestiços abandonados, que depois as Missões acolhiam."

3rd.   Outsourcing Promiscuity and Prostitution as Commodities

Apart from tolerating marital cohabitation and concubinage, the Portuguese system opened houses of prostitution in the Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) for the service of Portuguese settlers, miner workers, and tourists from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa who wanted to sleep with Mozambican women. Colonizers, who regarded black women as easy prey commodities, officially tolerated the practice. Black women, without any academic or professional training and who left rural areas in search of jobs in town, ended up in houses of prostitution. This egregious situation for families created precedence in the country: toleration of prostitution as a means for survival.

4th.   Dysfunctional Families: Polygamy and Abandoned Elders and Children

The Isaacmans point out that forced labor created a demographic, economic, and social imbalance in the communities. "Whether the migration was individual or by family, the migrants tended to be the younger and stronger, precisely those members of rural society who were responsible for much of agricultural production. Left behind were the children, the crippled, the elderly, and most women."[128] In 1941, in the southern province of Gaza, 80% of agricultural workers were elderly women.[129]

This situation provoked a food shortage as well as many abandoned children and elderly.[130] The male and female ratio became disproportional with many elderly women taking care of the households. This situation boosted the tendency toward polygyny and "strengthened the exploitative *lobolo* system (bride-price), and fathers greatly inflated the

---

[128] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 54.

[129] Cf, Ibid., 54. Text quoted in full above.

[130] Cf. Ibid., 53.

amount that had to be paid for their daughters."[131] The "social cost of colonial-capitalism" was the creation of dysfunctional marriages and families, which "will take generations to overcome."[132] Therefore, we cannot dissociate the current situation from the recent colonial past.

5th.   Daylight Churchgoers but Hidden Veneration of Ancestors

Ancestors here stand for all that relates to the Mozambican tradition, that is, performing the rites of passage, although now in its simplified versions. It means consulting herbalists and diviners and invoking the intersection of the ancestors before and after important events in life, such as traveling, rites of passage, and above all marriage and family. To avoid reprisal from the Church and from the colonial authorities, Mozambicans kept performing traditional rituals in only secluded areas. When confronted with such apparent inconsistency, some replied, "We are Africans. This is part of our life. The white men do not understand our way of life." As the inner conflict becomes stronger, it "often degenerate[s] into religious indifference or apostasy."[133] Benedito Marime rightly explained this phenomenon:

> At the same time, native dances were the object of disapproval, as were initiation rites and other activities of African religiosity that survived due to the complicities that 'secular resistance to foreign penetration' succeeded in breeding. This constraint has resulted in a duplicity of the experience of Christianity on the part of most native Catholics: publicly, assiduous in their religious observances when in missions and schools; but clandestine protagonists of their African experience.[134]

---

[131] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 54.

[132] Cf. Ibid., 53.

[133] Marime, *Arquidiocese do Maputo,* 109.

[134] Ibid.

This duplicity appears in marriage ceremonies. People come to ask for the blessing for their marriage in the Church only after fulfilling the requirement of traditional marriage. Church leaders are aware of this fact to the point that before blessing any marriage, a parish will ask whether the couple has undergone the traditional ceremony. If not, the Church will be reluctant to bless such a marriage, because in most cases, they will not stand the challenges of marital life when it lacks the support that the traditional preparation offers. Furthermore, it is common place that traditional marriages are more stable than those from the Church alone.

c. __Communism: Fighting Polygamy and Other Traditional Practices__

i. __Marxist-Leninist Orientation__

It is understandable that after independence, Mozambique took a Marxist-Leninist orientation and not a capitalist one. The communist countries of Eastern Europe and China supported the struggle for independence, whereas, as Hans Abrahamsson and Anders Nilsson have stressed, "Western democracies resisted the liberation of the country through their support for the Portuguese fascist regime and the apartheid regime in South Africa. Mozambique was, therefore, more or less forced into the arms of the Eastern bloc which had provided the necessary military support for the liberation struggle." [135]

The antireligious ideology of Marxism combined with the uneasiness toward the Catholic Church for her ambiguous stand during colonization and the revolutionary overzealousness fueled government opposition against the Church in the first years of independence (1975-1989). For the Church, it was a time of deprivation, humiliation,

---

[135] Hans Abrahamsson and Anders Nilsson, *Mozambique: The Troubled Transition; From Socialist Construction to Free Market Capitalism* (London: Zed Books, 1995), 7.

purification, and trust in divine providence once stripped of her possessions, reputation, and privileges.

ii.   The Dismantle of Colonial and Traditional Structures

In the first years of independence (1975-1990), the ruling party, with its "radical-oriented strategy," as Abrahamsson and Nilsson put it, held that development implied rejecting the model of life in rural areas along with its traditional customs, beliefs, and rituals.[136] The government fought brutally against traditional ceremonies and decided to replace them with scientific socialism, which would free humanity from ignorance, obscurantism, poverty, and domination. Furthermore, the government dethroned traditional leaders and other elements of the colonial system. This process was popularly known as *escangalhamento das estruturas coloniais*, meaning, dethronement of the colonial structures. It prevented the new leaders from learning from those who served during colonialism.[137] Abrahamsson and Nilsson explain,

> The fact that traditional religious worship was deemed to be superstition *in practice* made traditional ceremonies illegal…. But the legitimacy of traditional power's role as a repository of knowledge about local ceremonies did not disappear in the eyes of the local population. It has survived as a strong undercurrent in all levels of the population.[138]

This overall policy made it difficult to teach, learn, or participate in the traditional rituals, which prevented young people from getting the education of character and the training for adulthood that those rites favored. The problems marriage faces today are some

---

[136] Cf. Abrahamsson and Anders Nilsson, *Mozambique*, 7.

[137] Cf. Ibid., 84.

[138] Abrahamsson and Nilsson, *Mozambique,* 86.

of the consequences of dismantling the structures that valued and trained people for life and supported their marriage and family journey.

4. Struggle for Independence and Building Up National Identity

a. <u>Building Up National Identity</u>

The history of Mozambique, unlike that of other African countries, has a particularity in their struggle for independence. The various communities ("tribes"), clans, and families forged a sense of a common national identity, emphasizing unity rather than division based on "tribe", race, clan, or family, though not forgetting about their distinctions. Samora argued that "the people's culture influenced and was, in turn, influenced by the armed struggle." He then exclaimed, "Let the creativity of some become that of all, man and women, young and old, from the north to the south, so that the new revolutionary and Mozambican culture may be born to all."[139]

Furthermore, he underscored the importance of unity and nation building, rejecting any particularism that could impair the struggle for independence and reconstruction of the country after independence. He strongly insisted, "We do not know tribes, regions, races or religious beliefs. We know only Mozambicans who are equally exploited and equally desirous of freedom and revolution."[140] Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel, and other liberationist leaders insisted on unity, hard work, and vigilance against local and foreign enemies as being integral to nation-building.

Such stress on unity justifies, in part, my preference to base my work not on any specific community of my state (Tete Province) but on Mozambique as a whole. This

---

[139] A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 115.

[140] Samora Machel, "The People's Republic of Mozambique: The Struggle Continues," *Review of African Political Economy* 2, no. 4 (1975): 23.

approach would more likely find wide acceptance among people from different clans and communities than if I had done otherwise. Tribal and regional sensibilities are still a challenge in Mozambique and in other parts of the continent. As *Ecclesia in Africa* has reminded us, "Tribal oppositions at times endanger if not peace, at least the pursuit of the common good of the society. They also create difficulties for the life of the Churches and the acceptance of Pastors from other ethnic groups."[141]

b. **Intermarriage among People of Different Regions**

The quest for unity and national identity is inherent in Mozambican consciousness, though it is still an ongoing process. Samora encouraged intermarriages between people of different regions and communities (tribes) as one way of encouraging unity against any form of regionalism and tribalism. Although it took time and effort to welcome such an initiative, there are still some remnants of interregional biases. In general, however, people cherish and celebrate interregional marriages.

In 1986, when she was barely 19 years old, Virgília Ferrão published her first novel, "*O Romeu é Xingondo é Julieta Machangane*," a Mozambican and contemporary version of Shakespeare's famous play of Romeo and Juliet. Ferrão's novel celebrates the victory of love between a boy from the northern region of Tete and a girl from the southern region of Maputo. *Xingondo* literally means foreigner, but it is used derogatorily to refer to people from the center and the northern part of the country, implying that they are rude, dull, unskilled, "uncivilized", and "unsocial" in contrast with people from the south. The novel celebrates the triumph of love and marriage as building unity, respect, and national identity

---

[141] EIA 49.

against tribalism and regionalism.[142] It is an example of how the post-independence generation values interregional relationships.

5. National Independence and Native Leadership in the Church

a. Independence Boasts for Native Leadership

"Mozambique became independent on 25 June 1975 after ten years of military struggle against Portuguese colonial domination."[143] This date is of significant relevance for the civil society and for the Church because the struggle for independence helped to build a national identity, a Mozambican consciousness, a Mozambican way of looking at and relating to reality. Moreover, the Church began to place native people in leadership positions. The new leadership, though at an unsteady pace, attempted to give a Mozambican face to the Church while mindful of her universal character

With independence and the subsequent ascendance of Mozambicans in leadership, the Church unambiguously distanced herself from the past colonial regime and, for that matter, from any government or organization, foreign or national, that abused the Mozambican people's identity, dignity, and resources, both natural and human. The hierarchy, on behalf of the entire Church, the People of God, took an explicit prophetic role and continues to serve as an authoritative voice in Mozambican society, from which the members of the Church come.

---

[142] Cf. Awaji Malunga, *O Romeu É Xingondo E a Julieta Machangane* (Maputo: Imprensa Universitária - UEM, 2005).

[143] Luis Serapiao, "The Catholic Church and Conflict Resolution in Mozambique's Post-Colonial Conflict, 1977-1992," *Journal of Church and State* 46, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 365.

b. <u>Independence as Affirmation of Cultural Identity</u>

National independence gave room for the affirmation of national and cultural identity of the Mozambicans. Realizing that the Church was vested in the Portuguese garment, a disguised expression of colonial mentality, and aware that religious and priestly formation/life still reflected subservience to a Portuguese Eurocentric mentality, Mozambicans religious and clergy formed USAREMO, Union of Mozambicans Religious and Priests, which aimed at sharing the challenges and joys of a native religious or priest and the roles of religious life and priesthood in an independent nation. According to Joaquim Mabuiangue, their "initiative and courage made possible the birth of a Church with 'a Mozambican face' in which we live now."[144]

The still predominant Church of international missionaries interpreted the initiative as a move against unity and fought vigorously against it. USAREMO disappeared but not her dream of a Church with a "Mozambican face," an inculturated Church in every sense of the expression. USAREMO would have been impossible without national independence. The initiative shows the importance of people's cultural identity in the life of the Church as well as the freedom to express it in an official meeting. The Mozambican bishops had already stated in 1971 that "the local Church will hardly be rooted in the land of the people if she ignores and does not assume the culture of that people."[145] Despite this declaration, USAREMO did not find support.

---

[144] Joaquim Mabuiangue, "Pastoral das situações matrimoniais [Ministering to challenging situations in marriage]," in *O matrimónio: Actas da 5a semana teológica, Arquidiocese da Beira , 18-22 Junho 2001*, ed. Centro de Formação de Nazaré (Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2001), 141.

[145] CEM, "Carta dos bispos Moçambique," 42. "Muito dificilmente a Igreja local terá raízes profundas no subsolo do povo que a integra, se desconhecer e não assumir a cultura própria desse mesmo povo." The text makes reference to *Ad Gentes* 15 and 9.

c. Native Leadership Paving a New Image of the Church

When evidence showed that independence was inevitable,[146] most Portuguese missionaries would leave the country, whether for fear of repression from the Marxist-Leninist government or because of their unwillingness to be ruled by Mozambicans, though it was not openly spoken.[147] The Vatican began to appoint Mozambican priests as bishops. By the time of the first Post-Independence National Pastoral Assembly in 1977, the CEM had nine Mozambican bishops and only two Portuguese (Luís Ferreira da Silva, a Jesuit consecrated in 1972, and Manuel Vieira Pinto, consecrated in 1967).[148] It suffices here to state that the shift in the leadership was noticeable in the National Pastoral Assembly, which reflected on the identity, the mission, and the activity of the Catholic Church in post-independent Mozambique.[149]

6. Image of the Church in the National Pastoral Assembly

a. New Image of the Church

After independence, with the native clergy in leadership and the active participation of the laity and with the option of the 1977 National Pastoral Assembly for a ministerial church that was organized into Small Christian Communities, there was a growing awareness that we all (clergy, religious men and women, and the laity) are a people of God. "We are the Church," "the Church is ours," and therefore we must work hard to build up

---

[146] José Augusto Alves de Sousa, *Os jesuítas em Moçambique 1541-1991: No cinquentençrio do 4o período da nossa missão* (Braga: Livraria AI, 1991), 419-22. Fr. Sousa reports of participating in the Pastoral Assembly of the Dioceses in Mozambique, which took place in Matola (15km from Maputo) on November 1972. For the first time, the Church spoke openly about the independence of Mozambique, a reality up to then regarded as "taboo."

[147] Cf. Luís de Matos, "Os bispos portugueses: Da concordata ao 25 de Abril - Alguns aspectos," *Análise social* 29, no. 125/126 (1994): 365.

[148] Cf. Marime, *Arquidiocese do Maputo*, 97 and 99.

[149] Ibid., 96.

this Church. This was the image of the Church in Mozambique, in line with the spirit of *Lumen Gentium*.[150]

It was also a prophetic Church in the sense that it could challenge abuses against the population, refusing to identify itself with any government or political party, though supporting initiatives for the common good wherever they come from. It became a suffering Church, stripped of her material possessions and the favoritism of the colonial regime. All these aspects are important because they influenced people's lives on marriage and family.

b. **Purified and Prophetic Church**

The period from the announcement of the nationalizations of public and private institutions in July 1975 to the beginning of a multiparty system in 1990 was a time of purification for the Church. She took a prophetic stand in society when compared to the subservient hierarchy during the colonial era. Marime explains that, for the Church, it was a purifying time because she led a life of evangelic simplicity and prophecy.[151]

Due to the anti-Catholic rhetoric of the Marxist-Leninist government, the frequent harassment of priests, religious persons, and catechists, the disruption of religious services, and the exclusion from positions of leadership in the party and in the society of people loyal to their religion, some Christians gave up practicing their faith. Others kept practicing it privately while publicly claiming loyalty to the government's anti-religious rhetoric. A third group understood the signs of the time as an opportunity to publicly witness their

---

[150] Cf. LG 9-17.

[151] Marine, *Arquidiocese do Maputo*, 168-170.

faith, accepting all possible consequences.[152] Marime's description of the situation of the Church reminds us of the parable of the sower in Luke's Gospel.[153] The seed fell into different soils, yielding different results.

c. **Ministerial Church based on SCCs**

At least three reasons account for the development of SCCs in Mozambique. The first is the decision of the 1976 National Pastoral Assembly to make the Mozambican Church a ministerial Church, that is, a Church organized in various ministries under the coordination of any member of the People of God, generally a committed layman or woman. This boosted the active participation of the laity.

The second reason is that the organization of SCCs had much in common with the way families and clans operated. The presence of each member is recognized and appreciated, not just tolerated. Each member feels at home, he or she is mutually responsible for the good of the family and benefits from the care and protection of the family. As mentioned above, Ndege reminded us, "Belonging to a family brings shared benefits and responsibilities. In the traditional Mozambican society, every individual had a vital role to play in the betterment of society."[154]

A third element that favored the SCCs was the difficulty that the post-independence context put on the freedom of religion. Given to the fact that Christians could no longer profess openly their faith, at least in its "westernized format," they found new ways of celebrating their faith by gathering into groups of two or more nearby families. A group of

---

[152] Marime, *Arquidiocese do Maputo,* 169.

[153] Cf. Lk 8: 1-15.

[154] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 77.

families formed a *núcleo* and a group of *núcleos*, a SCC.[155]

These meetings in one of the families' home strengthened both the faith and the families because they "put together family members in prayer," favored mutual-knowledge, proximity, and active participation. They played the role of an extended family in traditional society, which celebrated and supported marriage and family. Furthermore, in SCCs, people could pray in local languages, read the word of God and reflect on the way it inspired their lives. Thus, SCCs became a favorable locus for inculturation, support for families, and growth for the Church.

In 2001, Patrick Kalilombe, a member of the Missionaries of Africa and bishop from Malawi, speaking at the VI Theological-Pastoral Week in Mozambique, stressed that SCCs are privileged forums for supporting Christian marriages. His word confirmed the reality in Mozambique. He said,

> The various customs and procedures that used to strengthen the institution of marriage were rooted in the experience of people living together as a corporate entity: extended family, village, clan, and so on. Within these communities, the marriage partners could find guidance, support, and purpose. Now that these cultural communities are losing their cohesion, it is the church community that the marriage institution will be able to find that kind of support.[156]

7. Globalization: Unsettling Foreign Policies and Cultural Imperialism

a. Consumerism: Showing Off Unbearable Celebrations

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelium Gaudium*, Pope Francis refers to the bishops of Africa and Asia when reporting that the culture of appearances is spreading in their societies. He states, "In the prevailing culture, priority is given to the outward, the

---

[155] Marime, *Arquidiocese do Maputo,* 169.

[156] Patrick Kalilombe, "Inculturated Christian Marriage Pastoral," in *O Matrimónio em África: Aspectos Pastorais - Actas Da 6a Semana Teológica, Arquidiocese Da Beira, 18-22 Junho 2001*, ed. Centro de Formação de Nazaré (Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2001), 41-42.

immediate, the visible, the quick, the superficial and the provisional. What is real gives way to appearances."[157] This culture cannot but interfere in human relationships, specifically in marriage and family, as is currently happening in Mozambique. Pope Francis, in *Amoris Laetitia*, accurately describes this challenge:

> Short-term preparations for marriage tend to be concentrated on invitations, clothes, the party and any number of other details that tend to drain not only the budget but energy and joy as well. The spouses come to the wedding ceremony exhausted and harried, rather than focused and ready for the great step that they are about to take. The same kind of preoccupation with a big celebration also affects certain de facto unions; because of the expenses involved, the couple… never get married.[158]

This can lead to an indefinite postponement of marriage because a consumerist society makes the couple believe that something is still missing for a perfect wedding. One reason after another will appear to justify the procrastination. There is much concern about the wedding and less on marriage. The synodal members realized this problem: "In some countries, many young persons 'postpone a wedding for economic reasons, work or study.'"[159] To worsen the situation, "Consumerism may also deter people from having children, simply so they can maintain a certain freedom and lifestyle."[160]

The Mozambican singer Stewart Sukuma, in his music *Vale a Pena Casar?* (Is marriage worthwhile?), speaks of people hosting very expensive weddings and receiving flashy gifts, using luxurious cars and huge amounts of money just to draw attention to themselves. In the following days, months and years, the couple would have to forego

---

[157] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, November 24, 2013, no. 62, accessed February 28, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

[158] AL 212.

[159] AL 40.

[160] AL 42.

necessities to recover the cost of the extravagant celebration. The refrain says, "Is marriage worthwhile if after all that showoff the couple divorces?"[161] If you understand marriage as a luxurious wedding prone to divorce, it is better not to marry. Marriage is a lifelong commitment, says the lyric. Indeed, the song begins and ends with witnesses from couples about the meaning of marriage and the qualities people should develop in preparation for and during marriage. Sukuma captured one of the major challenges that scare people away from marriage: concern for an extravagant wedding and not enough preparation for a lifelong marital journey. In this regard, Carlos Arnaldo, a Mozambican sociologist at the Center of Studies on Population of the UEM argues, "This (religious marriage) type of marriage is more expensive than the customary marriage since, apart from bride-wealth payments… wedding rings and modern clothes are also required."[162]

The problem of costly weddings is not new, and it is just getting worse as the culture of consumerism unfolds. In 1974, John Njenga, the former archbishop of Eldoret (1970-1988) and of Mombassa (1988-2005) in Kenya, complained, "Many a time, people do not think of marrying in the Church because it involves a lot of expenses - they say they have no money to hire a car, to buy dresses for the bride, and the bridesmaid, etc. This goes to prove that for many the Church Marriage is only a 'solemnizing' action."[163]   In Mozambique, despite costly weddings, people are marrying in the Church because they value Christian marriage. However, the percentage could be higher with proper preparation

---

[161] Stewart Sukuma, "Vale a Pena Casar? (music video), December 12, 2010, accessed August 4, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfBtTCBMV04.

[162] Arnaldo, *Ethnicity and Marriage Patterns in Mozambique*, 146.

[163] John Njenga, "Customary African Marriage," *AFER* 16, no. 1 (1974): 114.

and wide mobilization in society. Pope Francis's advice deserves a hearing: "Don't let yourselves get swallowed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances."[164]

b. **Impact of Uncritical Use of Mass Media**

Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, states that the bishops of Asia

> underlined the external influences being brought to bear on Asian cultures. New patterns of behavior are emerging as a result of over-exposure to the mass media.... As a result, the negative aspects of the media and entertainment industries are threatening traditional values, and in particular the sacredness of marriage and the stability of the family.[165]

What is said about Asia is true for Africa and Mozambique. The *Lineamenta* preceding Pope Benedict's 2011 apostolic exhortation *Africae Munus* questions whether people in Africa use the media critically. It invites the Church to reflect, "In this era of globalization, how one can best safeguard African cultures while integrating the best of what comes from outside the continent?"[166]

Pope Francis also recognizes the problem posed by a "technological disconnect" from reality: "In any event, we cannot ignore the risks that these new forms of communication pose for children and adolescents; at times, they can foster apathy and disconnect from the real world. This 'technological disconnect' exposes them more easily to manipulation by those who would invade their private space with selfish interests."[167]

---

[164] AL 212.

[165] AL 62.

[166] Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta* of the II Special Assembly for Africa on the Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, June 27, 2006, no. 20, accessed February 21, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20060627_ii-assembly-africa_en.html.

[167] AL 278.

For Francis, "in the family, we can also learn to be critical about certain messages sent by the various media. Sad to say, some television programs or forms of advertising often negatively influence and undercut the values inculcated in family life."[168] However, the family needs training and support for a critical use of the media.

Young people are more likely to model their lives by uncritically mimicking what appears in the media coming from Europe, North America, and from Brazil. Movies, *telenovelas*, and other TV shows present enticing but unrealistic scenarios which trivialize commitment, fidelity, enduring love, and all that stands for marriage and family. That is why *Ecclesia in Africa* speaks of the "intrusiveness of mass media" and "being run by centers mostly in the northern hemisphere, do not always give due consideration to the priorities and problems of such countries or respect their cultural make-up. They frequently impose a distorted vision of life and of man and thus fail to respond to the demands of true development."[169]

c. Unsettling Foreign Policies: Cultural Imperialism

Sharon Slater, the cofounder and president of Family Watch International (FWI), "a non-profit organization in consultative status with the United Nations (UN),"[170] in a video trailer of her documentary *Cultural Imperialism: The Sexual Rights Agenda*, defines cultural imperialism as "imposing one's values on another country or culture through bribery, blackmail, coercion or deceit."[171] She clarifies further that it "is a hard-hitting

---

[168] AL 274.

[169] EIA 52.

[170] Sharon Slater, *Stand for the Family: The Family Defense Handbook*, 5th ed. (Gilbert, AZ: Iglestone Publishing, 2016), v.

[171] StandForFamilyNow, "Cultural Imperialism" (video trailer), October 1, 2012, accessed December 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iQMcrC_L8I.

documentary exposing how Western donor nations are now using financial aid as a weapon to force smaller nations to comply with a radical sexual rights agenda."[172] She convincingly argues that "UN agencies create and fund programs that sexualize children" through a "highly controversial" program known as "Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)," done often without knowledge and consent of parents.[173] The FWI presents a well-documented and pedagogical video and text material on CSE.[174]

The documentary is particularly pertinent to my subject because it offers a glimpse into the horrendous impact of deceitful foreign policies in Mozambique. The video shows two of the three Mozambican orphans the Sharon family has adopted, giving an outstanding presentation to the UN General Assembly on how foreign policies impacted their lives.

Apart from sexualizing children, foreign agents invite Mozambican health and education ministries to go to schools regularly to distribute contraceptive pills to girls 14 years of age or older. They do this without the knowledge and consent of their parents and guardians. According to Slater's insight, this is an assault on parental rights.[175] To Mozambican women, they give Depo-Provera, a cheap and highly harmful contraceptive, not recommended in the USA and Europe but shipped to poor countries, mostly in Africa.[176]

---

[172] StandForFamilyNow, "Cultural Imperialism" (video trailer), October 1, 2012, accessed December 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iQMcrC_L8I..

[173] Slater, *Stand for the Family*, 22-23.

[174] FWI, "The War on Children: The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda," directed by Sharon Slater, April 11, 2016, accessed September 18, 2017, https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/english10. See also "Comprehensive Sexuality Education Defeated at the UN. Again!," FWI, September 2017, accessed September 17, 2017, https://tinyurl.com/FHI-CSE-and-UN.

[175] Cf. Slater, *Stand for the Family,* 137-53.

[176] Cf. Randy Short and Abby Martin, "Depo-Provera: The Drug Made to Kill Black Women (video interview)," posted April 1, 2015), accessed August 16, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ajb487Y48gA. See also Jonathan Abbamonte, "Depo-Provera and HIV," Population Research Institute, September 7, 2016, accessed August 16, 2017,

According to the Population Research Institute (PRI), USAID (and UNFPA) sent more Depo-Provera to Africa—countries like Mozambique, Tanzania, and Nigeria—than to other parts of the world.[177]

Why are foreign agencies doing this for our people? Obianuju Ekeocha, a Nigerian biochemist based in the United Kingdom since 2006 and founder and president of Culture of Life Africa, in an interview with the BBC, articulated convincingly, to my satisfaction, how western countries arrogantly think that they know what is best for Africans and impose their ideologies without any regard to the people's views nor the consequences those policies have on marriage and family. The Euro-North American governments and NGOs go to Mozambique and to other African countries and present as the solution to poverty "reproductive health rights," which in practice means promoting contraception, the legalization of abortion-on-demand, sterilization, and the "Comprehensive Sexuality Education" (CSE).[178] They coerce Mozambicans to adopt questionable ideologies which, in the long run, are disruptive to marriage and family. The Maputo Protocol is just another example of the surreptitious ways that Euro-North American countries use well-articulated subterfuges to impose their agenda on poor countries. The Human Life International (HLI) underlined the fallacies:

https://www.pop.org/depo-provera-and-hiv; and   Steven Mosher and Jonathan Abbamonte, "Medical Malpractice: Are We Contributing to the Spread of HIV/AIDS? New PRI Video Reveals the Dangers of Depo-Provera," *Population Research Institute Review* 26, no. 5 (September-October 2016), accessed August 16, 2017, https://www.pop.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2016Sept-OctPRIR-online-color.pdf.

[177] Cf. Steven Mosher, "Comunicación: Depo provera es peligrosa para su salud [Communication: Depo Provera is dangerous for your health]," *PRI* 6, no. 29 (September 7 2004), accessed November 4, 2016, https://www.pop.org/informe-de-los-medios-de-comunicacion-depo-provera-es-peligrosa-para-su-salud/.

[178] Cf. HLI, "The Maputo Protocol: Clear and Present Danger," MenEngage Alliance, 2009, 6, accessed February 24, 2016, http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_Maputo_Declaration.pdf. The full name of the document is "The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa."

1. The Maputo protocol is being marked as a method to combat female genital mutilation (FGM), but out of 23 pages, it mentions FGM on only one sentence… 2. Large sections of the Protocol are devoted to the central desires of its drafters: Wholesale radical feminist transformation of African society and the destruction of traditional cultures… 4. The Protocol calls for abortion for rape, incest, and to save the life of the mother… 6. The Protocol is a part of the decades-long campaign by Western Elites to reduce the number of black Africans.[179]

Indeed, as Shenan Boquet put it in a 2012 article entitled, "the Maputo Protocol an anniversary to be remembered but not celebrated."[180] According to HLI, "Catholic leaders including the Pope, African cardinals, and African bishops have denounced the pro-abortion provisions of the Maputo Protocol."[181] Voices against the Protocol do not receive media attention apart from the backlash in areas such as curtailing freedom, women's rights, discrimination against minorities, and interference of religion in public affairs. Echoing African leaders, Pope Francis spoke about "ideological colonization," referring to the range of "radical ideologies" that contribute to undermine the stability of marriage and family.[182] On October 2, 2016, at an in-flight press conference, Pope Francis spoke of "gender theory" as creating confusion in children. He concluded, "This is what I call ideological colonization."[183]

---

[179] HLI, "The Maputo Protocol," 2.

[180] Shenan Boquet, "The Maputo Protocol: An Anniversary to be Remembered but Not Celebrated," HLI, July 6, 2012, accessed February 24, 2015, https://www.hli.org/2012/07/the-maputo-protocol-an-anniversary-to-be-remembered-but-not-celebrated.

[181] HLI, "The Maputo Protocol," 2. See also 13-15, the section entitled, "Catholic and African Leaders Oppose the Maputo Protocol."

[182] Joshua McElwee, "Francis Warns against 'Ideological Colonization' of Family, Reaffirms Contraception Ban," *NCR*, January 16, 2015, accessed February 27, 2017, https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-warns-against-ideological-colonization-family-reaffirms-contraception-ban.

[183] "Full Text of Pope Francis' in-Flight Press Conference from Azerbaijan," The Catholic World Report, October 2 2016, accessed February 27, 2017, http://www.catholicworldreport.com/2016/10/02/full-text-of-pope-francis-in-flight-press-conference-from-azerbaijan.

At the Theological Pastoral Conference in Mozambique in 2001, striking a similar note, Patrick Kalilombe contended, "Cultural imperialism brings cultural confusion in people's lives."[184] It weakens the traditional structure with which "the marriage partners could find guidance, support, and purpose. Now that these cultural communities are losing their cohesion, it is the church community that the marriage institution will be able to find that kind of support."[185] The Maputo Protocol is a clear form of neocolonialism. It "is about the eradication of traditional African family cultures," rightly argued HLI.[186] This fact makes pressing the Message of the 17th Plenary Session of the the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in June 2016: "we urge all the member States of the African Union to resist all pressures from governments and organizations who want to impose anti-family policies on Africa. We are grateful to governments who, in the name of moral values and our culture have dared to oppose such policies."[187]

8. **Urgent Challenges Destabilizing Marriage and Families (SECAM)**

   a. **Common African Problems with Mozambican Flavor**

Three months after the release of Pope Francis's *Amoris Laetitia,* the Catholic Bishops of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) held their 17th Plenary Assembly in Luanda (Angola) from the 18th to the 25th of July 2016. They reflected on the theme "The African Family, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow in the Light of the Gospel." Their message presents "urgent challenges" that are destabilizing the family in Africa:

---

[184] Centro de Formação de Nazaré, ed., *O Matrimónio Em África*, 33.

[185] Ibid., 41-42.

[186] HLI, "The Maputo Protoco," 7-12.

[187] Mbilingi, "Final Message." The text refers to SECAM, *The Future of the Family, Our Mission*, 146.

the precarious conditions and poverty, social exclusion, impact of the new Information and communication technologies on family life, gender ideology, mono-parental family, divorce-remarried couples, contraception, sterilization, abortion, polygamy, dowry, widowhood rites, migration consequences of war and conflict situations, internal family crises, belief in witchcraft and absence, at times of one of the couples due to studies and work.[188]

Looking closely at these "multilayered factors" affecting marriage and family may be disheartening. Those related to Mozambique were covered in this chapter. Some of the challenges (gender ideology, contraception, sterilization, abortion) were discussed under the heading "unsettling foreign policies and cultural imperialism." Others (social exclusion, poverty and the culture of showoff) will be dealt in reference to corruption, nepotism and domestic violence, or explained when speaking about the uncritical use of the media. Themes such as witchcraft, internal conflicts, and widowed rites are best understood and handled within a context of an African religion and tradition. I showed extensively how derogatory views of native people and their traditions have disrupted the way society educated the young for adulthood, which has consequences for the current situation. Polygyny, as I explained, is declining in Mozambique, and the divorce rate is less than 3%, though it may increase if nothing more is done at the pastoral level.

My contention is that to address much of the current dysfunctionalities in Mozambican society, there is a need to critically reappraise the underestimated customs, beliefs, and rituals that build community, enhance life, and strengthen marriage and family. As Herb Shore remarked, "Traditional religious customs, song and dance forms, folk tales, and other elements of African cultures are used as a cohesive force contributing to the

---

[188] Mbilingi, "Final Message," no. 7.

growing sense of community."[189] They can prepare, strengthen, and support the family against the "multilayered factors" disturbing society.

b. <u>High Cohabitation Rate and Decreasing Church Marriages</u>

In 1981, the bishops of Mozambique, in their first pastoral letter on the family, presented one of the challenges facing marriage and a possible way to address it. They stated that "Christian communities feel and question the fact that, nowadays, sacramental marriage is becoming rare. Before rethinking any pastoral to marriage, we should rethink the pastoral of faith. Live communities of faith are communities open to the sacraments."[190] Nineteen years later, Mabuiangue, a Mozambican canonist and pastoralist, in the V Theological-Pastoral Week on matrimony, showed that the civil and religious marriage rate had declined in the last three years (1997-2000) in Maputo.[191]

i. High Rate of Cohabitation

Using data from the National Institute of Statistics, Mabuiange showed that *de facto* unions were three-quarters of all unions.[192] He also underscored that most of those marriages were from people who were already cohabiting or married traditionally but not sacramentally.[193] Furthermore, he argued that more young adults of age 18 to 30 are receiving baptism than getting married in the Church. The same point is still valid today as tables 3 and 4 in the following pages may suggest.

---

[189] Shore, *Mondlane, Machel and Mozambique,* 8.

[190] CEM, *A família cristã na igreja de Moçambique* [A Christian family in the Church of Mozambique] (Porto, PT: Tipografia do Carvalhido, 1981), 44-45.

[191] Joaquim Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique: Estado da questão," in *O matrimónio: Actas da 5a semana teológica, Arquidiocese da Beira , 18-22 Junho 2001*, ed. Centro de Formação de Nazaré (Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2000), 120-21.

[192] Cf. ibid., 119.

[193] Cf. ibid., 120.

In August 2017, there was a fourth census after independence. The INE has not yet released the data. However, according to the projections from the previous censuses of 1997 and 2007 and the Demographic and Health Survey of 1997, 2003, and 2007, one realizes that changes happen slowly in Mozambique.[194] Mugambi has argued that in general, changes occur at a slow pace in Africa.[195] Therefore, we can still rely on those data from 10 years ago. That said, a 2014 article from Social Institution and Gender Index indicated that "*de facto* unions are the most common type of union in Mozambique."[196]

ii.   Marriage in Mozambique

Observe the chart in table 6.

Table 6: Demographic and Health Survey by Mozambican Healthy Ministry						
	1997		**2003**		**2011**	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Single	15.1	24.4	15.8	31.4	18.3	30.0
Married	19.7	20.9	15.5	32.8	44.6	49.1
Cohabitation	54.7	50.3	54.8	30.8	23.2	15.8
Widow	1.2	0.2	0.9	0.2	3.8	1.1
Divorced	0.4	0.3	0.4	1.0	2.2	1.2
Separated	8.9	4.0	12.6	3.8	7.8	2.8

---

[194] Cf. INE, "Inquérito Demográfico E De Saúde 1997, 2003, 2011," 2013, accessed October 23, 2016, http://www.ine.gov.mz/operacoes-estatisticas/inqueritos/inquerito-demografico-e-de-saude.

[195] Cf. Jesse Mugambi, *African Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Kenya: Heinemann, 1989), 91.

[196] SIGI, "Mozambique: Discriminatory Family Code," (2014): 1, accessed February 13, 2016, https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/MZ.pdf. See also INE, "Annual Projection of Total Population 2007 – 2040," accessed October 23, 2016, http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-demograficas-e-indicadores-sociais/projeccoes-da-populacao/mocambique_projeccoes_2007_2040.xls/view.

The data from 1997, 2003, and 2011 surveys in table 6 indicate clearly that the percentage of those in cohabitation is higher than that of those in marriage (civil and religious). Though people long and prefer marriage to cohabitation, they end up resorting to cohabitation. Urban areas have higher rates than rural areas. However, these data have the limitation of putting traditional marriage in the category of informal union or cohabitation."[197] Such view ignores the 2004 New Law of Family, which considers three kinds of marriages: traditional, civil, and religious. The expression religious includes Catholics, all Christian denominations and other faith traditions. Another limitation of the data lies in putting divorced and separated in the same category, which are two distinct realities. Observe the chart in Table 7.

Table 7: Socio-Demographic Indicators of the Provinces (1997 and 2007)										
	Single		Married		Cohabitation		Widow		Divorced & Separated	
	1997	2007	1997	2007	1997	2007	1997	2007	1997	2007
Tete	31.0	30.7	16.3	16.6	43.4	43.8	5.1	4.7	2.8	3.3
Sofala	33.7	34.5	9.0	7.8	47.7	47.3	5.3	6.4	2.7	2.9
Manica	32.5	33.1	6.6	4.4	50.9	51.9	5.9	6.6	2.8	3.0
Niassa	27.4	27.2	22.1	25.1	38.4	40.9	3.4	3.3	4.9	5.2
C. Delgado	26.6	26.3	24.7	20.5	39.9	42.4	2.9	3.1	5.0	6.2
Nampula	24.6	25.3	20.6	22.7	46.5	42.4	2.9	3.0	4.7	5.3
Zambezia	27.7	26.7	17.9	21.2	45.1	42.0	4.5	4.6	3.9	4.4
Gaza	36.4	35.9	6.6	4.8	42.8	43.1	9.3	10.5	3.6	4.2

---

[197] Cf. INE, MISAU, and ICF International, *Moçambique Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde 2011* (Calverton, MD: MISA/Moçambique, INE/Moçambique and ICF International, 2013), 61, http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR266/FR266.pdf. The text reads, "Se os parceiros vivem juntos, numa relação consensual durável, mas sem nunca terem oficializado a relação, trata-se duma união informal aqui designada por união marital ou casamento tradicional."

Inhambane	34.7	34.7	8.1	6.3	43.4	43.9	8.4	8.0	5.2	5.6
Maputo City	49.3	47.7	10.9	9.7	32.6	33.1	3.0	4.1	3.2	4.5
Maputo Province	42.1	40	7.6	6.2	39.9	42.1	5.7	5.9	3.5	4.6

The statistics of the eleven provinces of the country show that only the two northern provinces of Niassa and Nampula registered an increase of 2 percent in marriages from 1997 to 2007. In the central-western province of Tete, the percentage remained the same in the same period. In the other eight provinces, the decrease in marriage rate fluctuates from 1 to 4 percent. Four provinces had a decrease of one percent: Sofala and Maputo City with 1.2 percent, Maputo province with 1.4, and Inhambane with 1.8 percent. Manica and Gaza had a decrease of 2.2 percent each. Cabo Delgado and Zambezia are the two provinces with the high decline of 4.2 percent. Except for Inhambane, the two provinces also present a high rate of divorce.

According to the official data from INE, Tete is the only province where the percentage of marriage has remained steady from 1997 to 2007, as shown in Table 7. Table 8 shows the recent data collected from the office of Lifidzi Mission, a Jesuit parish bordering Malawi in the rural northeast region of Tete and one of the Catholic strongholds in Mozambique. From 2005 to 2015, the number of Church marriages decreased slightly, with a tendency to remain steady, unlike other provinces where the number decreased from one to four percent.

Table 8: Lifidzi Mission – Slight Decrease in Marriages from 2005 to 2015										
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Baptisms	1117	1046	1055	1118	1073	1175	992	979	978	1000
Marriages	230	163	121	210	204	203	234	203	226	128

Source: Archive of the Lifidzi Mission/Parish

However, Small Christian Communities are concerned that young people resort to cohabitation and that most of those getting married in the Church have already been living together for some time. During the eight months as an interim pastor from January to August 2015, community leaders of Lifidzi Mission reported cases of young adults marrying in other Christian denominations, which offer a quick preparation and easy access to divorce.

Such preference indicates that the more the communities strengthen preparation as close as that of the traditional culture, the better because young adults will have enough confidence and support to embrace Christian marriage without the extravagance of costly celebrations. People want to marry in the Church without neglecting their Mozambican traditions. However, they feel unprepared for that. Thus, they opt for the easy way: cohabitation, postponement, or going to other denominations with less marital demands. Only after settling in life, they come back to formalize their situation in the Catholic Church.

Without going into detailed analysis, although the number of Christians is growing with more than nine hundred baptisms a year—and the population of young adult Christians eligible for marriage also increasing—the number of Christian marriages is not

growing in the same proportion. Most of those getting married in the Church have been already cohabiting, as Mabuiangue indicated already in 2000 when speaking about Maputo.

It is worth mentioning that in the first five years after independence (1975-1980), there was a decline in Church marriages. In the following 12 years, there was a gradual increase with the highest number during the year of the general peace agreement (1992). In the last fifteen years, the number of Catholic marriages has gradually declined from 5.9 per 1,000 Catholics in 2000 to 1.7 in 2015. As indicated above, between 15 to 53 percent of Mozambicans ages 15 to 49 are cohabiting. The data from the sample of seven parishes in two different dioceses show a slight increase but not proportional to the number of baptisms. See the table below. It is self-explanatory.

Table 10: Marriage Rates per 1000 Catholics from 1975 to 2015
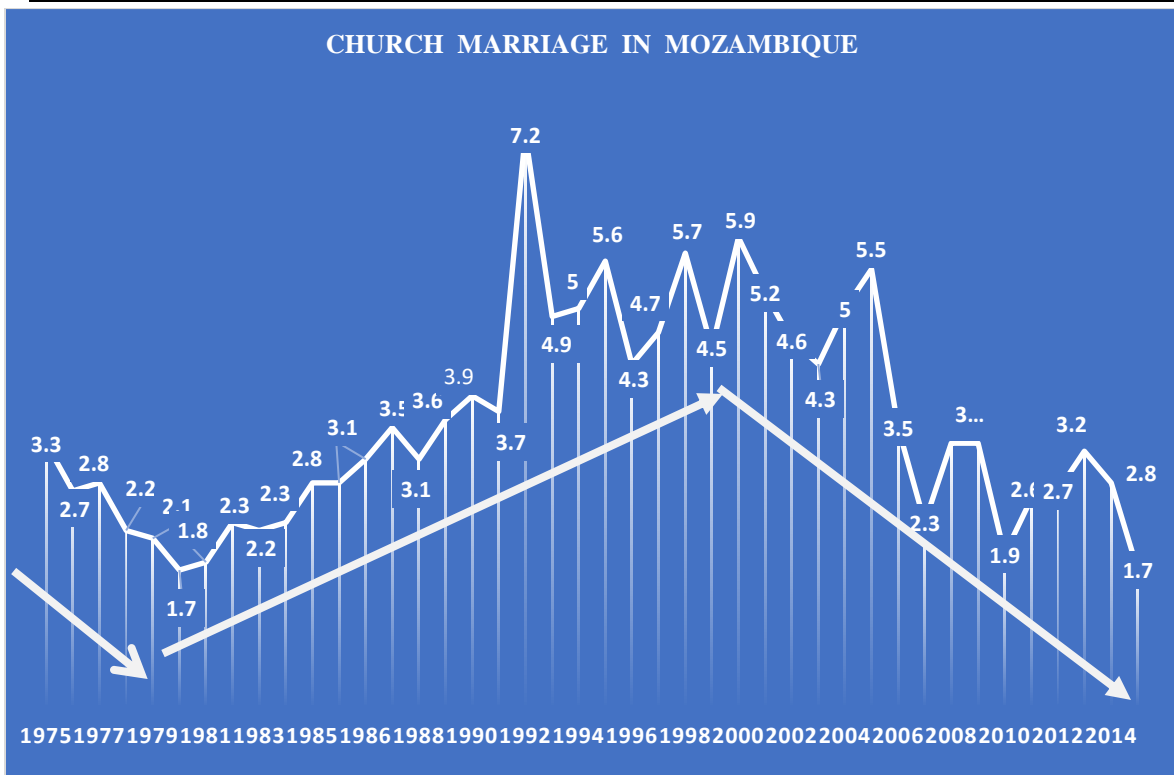
Source: Data from Vatican City, *The Statistical Yearbook(s) of the Church* of 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

9. **Mozambican Type of Women's Emancipation**

   a. <u>**Factors Favoring Women's Emancipation**</u>

The emancipation of women in Mozambican emerged during the struggle for independence, with the conviction that without active participation of women in all areas of the society, the victory against colonialism and other forms of oppression would take longer or impaired. It also emerged as a reaction against black women lured into promiscuity, concubinage, and prostitution, serving as commodities of colonizers and tourists from neighboring South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and segregated South Africa. Therefore, emancipation meant freedom from restrictions that prevented women from fully participating in the struggle for independence and the development of her community. It meant freedom from polygamy and traditional practices that did not favor women work side by side with men in military or holding offices outside the household. Emancipation meant freedom from merchandizing women, behaviors that demeaning women dignity. At the same time, emancipation meant valuing marriage, family, motherhood and working for the good of the community in sound collaboration with men and all people of good will.

Several measures have helped the emancipation of women in Mozambique. I will highlight what I consider to be the major ones. The first was to allow women to participate actively in the armed struggle for national independence. The second was to fight against all traditional practices regarded as demeaning to women. The third was to encourage women to take positions of leadership in society. The fourth measure was to give paid maternity leave and equal salaries for equal work. The fifth was to give priority to the education of girls, ensuring that there were enough primary schools in rural areas. The sixth was to allow women to sue their husbands who abandon them without supporting their

children. The seventh was to give legal recognition of a *de facto* union when petitioned. These aspects have placed Mozambican women in a distinct position in Africa.

i. Active participation in the armed fight

After fierce discussions within and outside FRELIMO, women formed a special military department. In that capacity, they could fight side by side with men apart from what they were already doing, which was helping in transporting and preparing munition, mobilization, educating the population, spying, and caring for the wounded. The leaders realized early enough that involving women in their full capacity would hasten the path to victory.[198] Hanlon explains,

> But it was only with the creation in 1967 of the Women's Detachment that women received military training and actually began to fight, and it was only then that they began to play more active role in Frelimo. The very presence of the Women's Detachment, and of armed women marching into remote villages, helped to change the attitudes of men both inside and outside Frelimo.[199]

ii. Fighting polygyny, promiscuity, and concubinage

Joseph Hanlon, in his book *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire*, states that commitment to women's emancipation "led Frelimo down the path of opposing polygamy, initiation rites and other forms of discrimination against women, in a direct confrontation with the chairmen and traditional authorities."[200] Although in the fervor of revolution, FRELIMO condemned indistinctively all traditional practices, including the rites of initiation. That policy was corrected when the country adopted a multiparty system in the 1990s. However, there is a general disregard for polygyny. FRELIMO's attitude also

---

[198] Cf. Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 157.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid., 31. This author spells sometimes Frelimo and other times FRELIMO.

helped traditional leaders to hold fast to what is essential, to purify what was ambiguous, and to abandon practices that demeaned women, such as giving preference to the education of boys, not allowing women in leadership, promiscuity, and public indecency for sexual tourism.

Samora went as far as sending to reeducation camps women who persisted in prostitution and did not look for alternative ways of subsistence, though he should also have sent those who use their "services." He rightly regarded prostitution, promiscuity, and concubinage as demeaning to women and families. According to him, the colonial system condoned and indirectly promoted those abominations, which in fact are worse than polygyny.[201] Also, only monogamous and FRELIMO members could qualify for government positions.[202]

iii. Women in positions of leadership

Joseph Hanlon rightly notes, "At independence, Frelimo moved quickly to introduce rules promoting the equality of women and, in particular, by forcing women into decision-making positions…. local councils were forced to have women members."[203] Currently, women account for 40% of those in various leadership positions in the country, including a woman as president in her second term in parliament. The UNDATA information entitled "Seats held by women in national parliament, percentage" indicates that the percentage has grown from 15.7% in 1990 to 39.6% in 2015.[204]

---

[201] Cf. Munslow, *Samora Machel,* 131.

[202] Cf. Abrahamsson and Nilsson, Mozambique, 87.

[203] Hanlon, *Mozambique,* 152.

[204] Cf. "Mozambique 2015 Data: Women in National Parliament," UN Data, 2016, accessed October 31, 2016,

iv. Tough on sexual harassment and more freedom of expression

Another measure that the government took in favor of women's emancipation was to fight against sexual or psychological harassment in the workplace, a practice that had become common because of the destruction of the traditional code that had prevented harassment. Hanlon explains, "Frelimo has also taken a strong line against sexual harassment…. This creates a different climate."[205] Furthermore, the new regime favored women's freedom of expression. According to Hanlon, "The most important aspect was that there were women candidates and that women in the audience spoke up and expressed their views."[206] Those views were taken into consideration.

v. Family laws protecting women and family

Unlike some of the so-called "developed world," the government of "Frelimo has also introduced a series of laws to protect women, including a two-month maternity leave and the right to time off work to breastfeed young babies."[207] These laws emphasize not only the importance of women's rights but also her motherhood and the protection of children, both highly valued aspects in Mozambican culture. For Mozambican society, motherhood dignifies and does not demean women in any aspect, values that some radical groups in western societies may look at differently.

The government also allows women to file for divorce. This measure is a double-edged sword for marriage and family. The traditional setting had better ways of dealing

---

http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?q=mozambique&d=MDG&f=seriesRowID%3a557%3bcountryID%3a508. This source presents the percentage of women in Parliament from 1975 to 2015.

[205] Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 152-53.

[206] Ibid., 154.

[207] Ibid.

with this by allowing family members to help heal the causes of marital unrest and to put

divorce as a last resort. FRELIMO was attempting to solve a problem that emerged when

colonialism undermined the traditional formation that had protected women, children, and

the elderly, which had structures for supporting children and the vulnerable. There were no

abandoned or "street children" in traditional Mozambique. Having said that, the

government measures were commendable for post-independent Mozambique, where

abuses, which had been introduced by the colonial system, had weakened traditional

structures. Hanlon says,

> Part of the new Family Law has been introduced giving women protection in areas of divorce, desertion and child custody. Previously there little a woman could do if her husband left her, for example if a man left his country wife whom he had married in a traditional ceremony in order to take a city wife whom he then marries in a civil ceremony. Sometimes men refuse to support their younger children.[208]

b. __The Meaning of Women Emancipation in Mozambique__

FRELIMO made clear that the Mozambican struggle for the emancipation of

women is different and should be different from that of western countries.[209] This concurs

with Pope Francis's contention in *Amoris Laetitia*, saying, "If certain forms of feminism

have arisen which we must consider inadequate, we must nonetheless see in the women's

movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of

women."[210] Hanlon explains,

> But to Frelimo, ending exploitation by men does mean fighting against men. Thus, the OMM accepts as a fundamental principle that 'the antagonistic contradiction is not between women and the men at whose side they fought colonialism. Rather the

---

[208] Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 154.

[209] Cf. Ibid., 157-58.

[210] AL 54.

antagonistic contradiction is between women and the system of exploitation for man by man.'[211]

Verónica Macamo, President of the Parliament in Mozambique, in an ad hoc interview at the celebration of April 7, the Mozambican Women's Day, wisely summarized the true meaning of women's emancipation. She contended that, for Mozambicans, the emancipation of women means a proper education for girls and women so that they may have the opportunity of a profession according to their training and abilities and to be mothers and wives. It means cooperation with men and not opposition to men in building up a better Mozambican society. An emancipated woman strives to balance education, marriage, family life, children, and husband, not putting profession or anything else ahead of the other aspects. There could be no better explanation of emancipation of women which respects Mozambican sensibilities.[212] My contention is that any meaningful and relevant pastoral approach cannot ignore these views.

CONCLUSION

The SECAM document, which was mentioned several times in this chapter, states that "the new world order (or ethics) proposes some orientations which are contrary not only to the African traditions, but to the Word of God and the teaching of the Church. The Christian communities and families should therefore be very much attentive and must always be ready to defend the dignity of the family."[213] This chapter presented those aspects

---

[211] Hanlon, *Mozambique*, 157. The OMM, Organization of Mozambican Women, was founded in 1973.

[212] Cf. Verónica Macamo, "Sejamos solidárias umas com as outras," *Noticias Online*, April 11, 2016, accessed September 14, 2017, www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/index.php/politica/51445-veronica-macamo-e-o-7-de-abril-sejamos-solidarias-umas-com-as-outras.html.

[213] Mbilingi, "Final Message," no. 19.

in this changing world that shape the way people view and live marriage today in Mozambique.

This chapter underscored the forces that have demeaned native people and their traditions since the time of colonization and that have legitimized the exploitation of the human and natural resources of the land. I have tried here to uncover new forms of colonization that under the disguise of development, human rights, and aid, have coerced Mozambicans to adopt behaviors and lifestyles which disregard practices of their traditional experiences that prepared, strengthened, and supported marriage and family. Moreover, the chapter stresses how people have resisted these intrusions as well as the lessons we can learn to face the multilayered challenges that disrupt marriage and family today.

The openness of Mozambican leadership towards inculturation; their willingness to welcome initiatives that can help in that process; the vitality of SCCs organized in ministries with the active participation of laity; the Mozambican population which is young, eager to learn, and with high regard for marriage, children, and family; the good reputation that the Church enjoys in Mozambican society; and the emancipation of women as understood in Mozambique offer opportunities that can help in formulating an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family in a way that confronts the current challenges. The Word of God uses the metaphor of covenant to speak about the relationship between God and God's people and about (Christian) marriage. The next chapter will present the main features of covenant, learning from the Middle East, the Scriptures, and Catholic Tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

COVENANT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IN THE SCRIPTURE, AND IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will analyze the key features of a covenantal relationship not only in the Scriptures but also in the societies of the Middle East, which influenced the Hebrew Scriptures. This chapter will also analyze the way the metaphor of covenant evolved throughout Judeo-Christian history until becoming part of the official understanding of Christian marriage in the Catholic Church.

This chapter has eight parts. The first part will introduce the topic underscoring the reasons for choosing the metaphor of covenant and why this metaphor matters in the current discussion on marriage and family not only in Mozambique but also in the United States and worldwide. The second part will give an overview of the different approaches to understanding the meaning of covenant. This part will also explain the relevance of Hugenberger's biblical-concept approach in reflecting on the polysemic richness of covenant in the Scriptures.

The third part will present the Israelites as part of the Ancient Near East (ANE) and therefore were most likely familiar with making a treaty, a common practice among ANE peoples. This part will also highlight the similarities and differences between ANE suzerainty treaties, treaties between kind and his vassals, and the covenants between the Israelites and God. The fourth part will look at the biblical foundations of marriage as covenant. The fifth part will discuss how covenant evolved from early Christians, the Church Fathers, the periods before and after the Council of Trent, and then up to the time

it became an official understanding of Christian Marriage in the Second Vatican Council. The sixth part will present the main characteristics of covenant. Finally, the eighth part will point out the implications of understanding marriage as covenant in people's lives. All these aspects stress the importance of this metaphor when conversing about marriage and family.

1. Metaphor of Covenant: Why Does It Matter?

a. Common Ground for Conversation

The Hebrew expression for covenant is בְּרִית (*berit*). It has three renderings in Latin *conventus, foedus and testamentum* and one main in Greek, διαθήκη [*diatheke*]. In roman languages, it is translated as alliance, that is, **Aliança** in Portuguese **Alianza in Spanish,** Alliance in French and Alleanza in Italian, as you can view in the table below. Strikingly, alliance is the expression used to name the ring that a man and a woman put in each other's finger as a sign of their matrimonial love and fidelity.[214]

Table 41: The Rendering of the Word "Covenant" in Different Languages

Covenant (English); **Aliança** (Portuguese); **Alianza**-Alliance-Alleanza (Spanish			
Assyrian	Hebrew	Greek	Latin
birîtu	[בְּרִית] - b^e*rīth*	διαθήκη [*diatheke*]	*Foedus*, *Testamentum* [same root with Covent]

The metaphor of covenant favors a common ground for conversing about the joys and the sorrows as well as the challenges and the opportunities of marriage and family in

---

[214] Cf. USCCB, *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony - Ritual Del Matrimonio* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016), no. 67. See the explanation of this rite in Paul Turner, *Inseparable Love: A Commentary on the Order of Celebrating Matrimony in the Catholic Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), 102-11.

a way that is interreligious and ecumenical, interdisciplinary and transcultural, and sympathetic for both religious and secular/civil sensibilities. John Witte, Jr. and Lizza Ellison, editors of "Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective," state that covenant "is also emerging as a common term to connect the interreligious dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims and the interdisciplinary dialogue among jurists, theologians, and ethicists about marriage."[215]

Rabbi Elliote Borff, from the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, reviewing Witte and Ellison's book, underscores how the metaphor of covenant can be a common ground for conversation about marriage and family between people of different backgrounds and sensibilities. Borff argues that the book, that is, the discussion on covenant, "brings together eminent scholars from Jewish, Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic religious traditions as well as experts on American covenant marriages."[216] In 1994, Witte rightly stated, "The covenant metaphor is a better conceptual bridge builder in discussing marriage historically and today. It not only bridges Hebrew Bible and New Testament formulations, but also bridges theological and legal, religious and secular discourses on marriage. It allows us to draw easier connections between rational natural law and various theological discussions of marriage."[217]

Futhermore, covenant is a biblical metaphor, grounded in the Catholic tradition, that is closer not only to the Mozambican way of speaking and educating people about life

---

[215] John Witte and Eliza Ellison, eds., *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 606.

[216] Ibid., on the back cover.

[217] John Witte, "The Covenant of Marriage: Its Biblical Roots, Historical Influence, and Modern Uses," *Review on Marriage and Spirituality* 18 (2012): 163, accessed October 15, 2017, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2705616. Joel Nichols is on faculty at the School of Law, University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, MN.

but also closer to the Mozambican mentality and values on marriage and family.[218] Additionally, the spirit of renewal, openness, and pastoral concern of the Second Vatican Council used the expression of covenant in speaking of marriage.[219] Viewing marriage as covenant received overwelming consensus and smoothed the way for dialogue among people of different backgrounds. In their article, "More Than a Mere Contract: Marriage as Contract and Covenant in Law and Theology," John Witte and Joel Nichols, say,

> Since Vatican II, a number of Catholic ethicists, jurists, theologians, and catechists have come to adopt the language of covenant marriage, alongside the traditional language of marriage as sacrament. A number of these same Catholic scholars have used the language of covenant to engage in rigorous ecumenical discussions of the higher dimensions of marriage and to find common cause with Protestants, Jews, and others in pressing reforms of state marriage law.[220]

John Tarwater argued that the metaphor of covenant matters in the current discussions on marriage and family to people of difference backgrounds and sensibilities. For those with a religious background, it matters because of the conviction that "God designed marriage to be a covenant relationship."[221] For Tarwater, in European and American societies, there is an assumption that "the present crisis surrounding the institution of marriage arises, in large measure, from people viewing marriage as a contract rather than a covenant."[222] He argues, "these challenges, moreover, are not limited to any

---

[218] "Admittedly, the term 'covenant' is more biblical than the term 'contract,' and this may explain why the fathers of Vatican II in their more pastoral approach to the 'Church in the Modern World' avoided the legal expression 'contract.'" Paul Palmer, "Christian Marriage: Contract or Covenant?," *Theological Studies* 33, no. 4 (1972): 618.

[219] Cf. GS 48.

[220] John Witte and Joel Nichols, "More Than a Mere Contract: Marriage as Contract and Covenant in Law and Theology," *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* 5, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 611.

[221] John Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant: Considering God's Design at Creation and the Contemporary Moral Consequences* (New York: University Press of America, 2006), 53.

[222] Ibid., 53.

sector of the church, but seem to have infected all mainline denominations. As a result, most ecclesial bodies are operating, with regard to marriage, from a state of disorder and confusion."[223] Although the crisis is rampant in the most European and North American countries, due to the influence of the western societies in the rest of the world, at different levels, such a crisis threatens to reach other distant places such as Africa.

Ponzetti makes the same point: "The significance of covenant is difficult to grasp in a society dominated by legalistic contractual ideology."[224] I concur with Tarwater's appraisal of covenant and Pozenti's reading of the reality, assumptions that undergird this research. Chapter Three, on Mozambican Values, will underscore that Mozambicans still regard marriage as a covenant, despite the various unsettling forces that militate against such a view as presented in Chapter One.

Scholars concur that covenant is one of the most appropriate metaphors to convey the relationship between God and God's people. Witte gives five reasons why this metaphor is the most appropriate in the discussion on marriage: (1) covenant is biblical; (2) covenant bridges various religious traditions; (3) "the covenants metaphor better recognizes the critical mutuality and consensually of marriage"; (4) "the covenant metaphor better shows that marriage is enduring but not necessarily indissoluble"; and (5) covenant "captures better the reality that marriage is a multidimensional institution that interacts with and depends upon a variety of other social institutions and sectors of society to flourish."[225] It comes to no surprise that the fourth aspect is consistent with his Protestant

---

[223] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 16.

[224] James Ponzetti and Barbara Mutch, "Marriage as Covenant: Tradition as a Guide to Marriage Education in the Pastoral Context," *Pastoral Psychology* 54, no. 3 (2006): 224.

[225] Cf. Witte, "Covenant of Marriage," 164.

perspective on divorce and remarried policies, aspect that scholars sympathetic to the

Catholic tradition will certainly dispute (e.g., Palmer, Tarwater).

b. <u>**Growing Appraisal Even in the USA**</u>

Speaking on the "reforms of state in marriage law" brings me to one of the joyful

findings in this research: the introduction in the USA legislation of "covenant marriage" as

distinct to "standard marriage."[226] Chauncey Brummer, from the University of Arkansas

School of Law, affirms, "In 1997 Louisiana became the first state to enact a covenant

marriage law."[227] This move aimed at strengthening marriages and families and to help

them cope with the crises they face.[228] Katherine Shaw Spaht, a professor of law at

Louisiana State University who writes extensively on covenant marriage, explains that

Louisiana's move was "followed by the enactment of similar legislation in Arizona in 1998

and Arkansas in 2001. During the intervening years between its enactment in Louisiana

and the present, covenant marriage legislation has been introduced in approximately thirty

other states but the bills containing the legislation have failed to pass."[229] This bold

initiative inspired the foundation of the "Covenant Marriage Movement" in 1998. The

Covenant Marriage Movement networks with organizations that support marriage in the

USA and Europe.[230] The growing interest in the notion of covenant highlights how

---

[226] Cf. Spaht, "Modern American Covenant Marriage," 239-64. Hay, "American 'Covenant Marriage' Laws." Ibid., 294-316.

[227] Chauncey Brummer, "The Shackles of Covenant Marriage: Who Holds the Keys to Wedlock," *University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law Review* 25, no. 2 (2003): 274, accessed June 21, 2017, http://lawrepository.ualr.edu/lawreview/vol25/iss2/9.

[228] Cf, Ibid., 291.

[229] Katherine Spaht, "Covenant Marriage Seven Years Later: Its as yet Unfulfilled Promise," *Louisiana Law Review* 65, no. 2 (2004): 605.

[230] Cf. Ibid., 620. See also Spaht,"Modern American Covenant Marriage," 239-64.

appropriate this metaphor is in discussing marriage and family not only in Mozambique but worldwide.

2. Different Approaches to Covenant

a. <u>General Overview of Different Approaches</u>

Scholars have used different approaches to grasp the meaning of covenant. In 1994, Hugenberger identified two approaches to covenant: a field-oriented and a concept-oriented approach. He opted for the second. Twelve years later, Tarwater called this "Gordon Hugenberger's biblical-concept approach," and he identified four different approaches altogether which, in some way, expand and complement those of Hugenberger. Two approaches (evolutionary, philological) consider covenant as having one meaning and use only extrabiblical sources.[231] The third approach (biblical-theological), even though using only biblical material, falls short because it so widely defines covenant to the extent that anything could be considered covenant.[232] There are three other approaches on covenant: the socio-cultural approach of George Mendenhall (1954), the revelatory approach of John Walton (1994), and a <u>typological approach,</u> which looks at covenants as Abrahamic, Noahtic, Sinaitic, Davidic, and Priestly.[233] Mendenhall studied the ANE cultures and found striking similarities between those cultures and covenantal material in

---

[231] In 1883, Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), in his book *Prolegomena*, explained the documentary theory of the Old Testament based on his approach to covenant. See Alexa Suelzer and John Kselman, "Modern Old Testament Criticism," in Brown, Fitzmyer, and Murphy, 1113-29. Wellhausen argued that "the use of בְּרִית for covenant was a later development, incorporated from the priestly tradition whose composition began with the exile and continued until the final redaction of the Hexateuch during the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah ca. 450."

[232] Cf. Gordon Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*, vol. 52, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* (Leinden: EJ Brill, 1994), 9.

[233] Cf. Richard Bautch and Gary Knoppers, *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 5.

Hebrew Scriptures.[234] Then, he concluded that covenant appeared much earlier among the Israelites, contradicting Wellhausen and his followers. [235] John Walton's key insight is that God wants to establish a relationship with humankind and uses a covenant as a mediation for self-revelation and relationship [236] God's relationship to humans is revelatory and covenantal.[237]

Given the scope of this chapter, it suffices to say that each approach, with its strengths and limitations, contributed to a better understanding of the meaning of covenant. As Hugenberger put it, "we must look at what constitutes a covenant in the Old Testament, as well as elsewhere in the ancient Near East, to determine whether marriage fits this understanding of covenant."[238] Today, a growing number of scholars accept the biblical-conceptual approach as a more comprehensive approach, enriched from the contributions of the previous approaches. That said, I will speak a bit more about the philological approach and develop the biblical-concept approach.

b. <u>**Critical Appreciation on Covenant Approaches**</u>

A growing number of scholars have demonstrated the inadequacies of the previous attempts to understand the meaning of covenant based on philology or socio-cultural

---

[234] Cf. John Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Harper Collins, 1994), 24-29.

[235] Cf. Irvin Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: the Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," *Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (1999): 174. See also Cf. Bautch and Knoppers, *Covenant in Persian Period*, 5.

[236] Cf. John Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Harper Collins, 1994), 24-29.

[237] See a concise overview of this approach in Scott Hahn, "Covenant in the Old and New Testaments: Some Current Research (1994-2004)," *Currents in Research* 3, no. 2 (2005): 272.

[238] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 169.

approaches. Busenitz argues, "It is obvious that etymology sheds only minimal light on the meaning of the term as used by the biblical writers." [239] Busenitz avers,

> Nor does a comparison with the treaties of Israel's pagan neighbors generate anything more than an occasional analogy. Rather, its usage within a given context provides the most understanding and perspective. Payne observes that basically "the meaning of the בְּרִית [*berit*] must be sought not in its etymology or significance as found in pagan cultures that surrounded Israel. Only in the transformed usage of the term, as it appears in God's own historical revelation, is its ultimate import disclosed.[240]

Busenitz (1999) and Tarwater (2004) captured rightly the intuition of Hugenberger's biblical-concept approach (1994). Tarwater explains that "whereas diachronic approaches explain *how* a word came to be used with a particular sense at a specific time in history, a concept oriented approach determines *what* a lexeme means at a certain time."[241] Knowing the socio-cultural background of the lexeme and its original meaning are important but they will not suffice to understand the meaning of the word if one does not examine how the word is used in the various contexts it appears in the text. Besides, a lexeme may have more than one meaning. It also helps to analyze expressions that convey a similar message to that of the lexeme.

Certainly, Tarwater overly underscored the point contending, "one does not need to know the *history* of the language, or of its lexical stock, in order to understand the sense of utterances today."[242] However, it is noteworthy to realize that covenant is polysemic and that Hugenberger's approach rely on biblical material, while cognizant of the findings of

---

[239] Irvin Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants; the Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," *Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (1999): 175.

[240] Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants," 175.

[241] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 32.

[242] Ibid., 32.

the previous approaches which relied on extrabiblical material or considered covenant as univocal. Tarwater opts for Hugenberger's approach as the most appropriate of all, and gives three convincing reasons:

> *First* … his definition lies well within the mainstream of credible scholarship regarding covenant research. *Second*, [it] arises… from the biblical data itself, not from Ancient Near Eastern History, which means it is not skewed by competing theories of interpretation arising from speculative external sources with no clear relation to the Bible itself. *Third*, [it] effectively transcends current hermeneutic conundrums that tend to immobilize all possible analysis and application of biblical revelation concerning the covenant nature of marriage.[243]

c. **Philological Approach from Koehler, Weinfebarricld, and Begrich**

A field-oriented or philological approach is "based upon the etymological analysis of the Hebrew word for covenant, בְּרִית"[244] According to Tarwatar, three complementary insights came from this approach, depending on the scholars' findings in their lexical analyses. For J. Begrich, "the basic and original meaning of *berit* was that of a legal union (*Rechtsgemeinschaft*) which was established by a simple act of the will on the part of the more powerful party."[245] In this sense, covenant has common aspects with contract, pact, and legal agreement. For Ludwig Koehler, covenant (בְּרִית) conveyed the idea of dining (together), having a meal, and this is related to the expression 'to cut a covenant', "because one had to cut up the food for the covenant meal."[246] In this sense, covenant relates to a sacrificial meal and/or a ritual with a religious dimension. For Moshe Weinfeld, "the most plausible origin of בְּרִית was the Akkadian word, *biritu*, meaning 'clasp,' or 'fetter,'" conveying the meaning of "'imposition,' 'liability,' or 'obligation,'" inferring from its root

---

[243] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 33. Emphasis mine.

[244] Ibid., 29. Akkadian was the language of Babylon and Assyria.

[245] Ibid.

[246] Ibid., 30.

of binding.[247] "Weinfeld, then, viewed covenant as a legal union, even synonymous with law and commandment."[248] In this sense, covenant has contractual and binding obligations.

By analyzing the lexicon בְּרִית, the philological approach unveils its possible origins and meanings of covenant, and consequently, it can help to nuance the current meaning of the word. However, though insightful, such an approach tends to be static and not attentive to the fact that a word and its meaning can evolve throughout history. Consequently, as Dennis McCarthy rightly argued, "Words do not stay always limited by their origins, and so with a *b^erit*. It has acquired meaning from many of the things associated with oath."[249]

d. **Gordon Hugenberger's Biblical-Concept Approach (1994)**

Gordon Hugenberger suggests "a concept-oriented approach to the distinct senses of בְּרִית."[250] Such approach recognizes that the same word can mean different things (i.e., have multiple senses) in a different text or context. This avoids the pitfall of confining a word to any of its meanings and neglecting nuances that other meanings convey. Therefore, according to Hugenberger, "any attempt to reduce the numerous occurrences of בְּרִית to some univocal sense, basic meaning, or original meaning, whether one chooses 'relationship,' 'obligation,' 'oath,' or 'solemn promise,' is unwarranted.'[251] Scott Hahn

---

[247] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 30.

[248] Ibid., 29. See also Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 14.

[249] Dennis McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 22.

[250] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 171.

[251] Ibid.

corroborates with Hugenberger, arguing that "the reductionist idea that covenant means only 'obligation' and is essentially one-sided has been largely abandoned."[252] Hahn says,

> In the Scriptures the influence of covenant thought cannot be limited only to passages where the terms berit (בְּרִית) or diateke (διαθήκη) occur. Covenant is a multifaceted theme encompassing a variety of phrases, terms and concepts (e.g. the "covenant formula"), and is tied to other important biblical themes such as creation, wisdom and the eschaton.[253]

Six Different Senses

Hugenberger explains the assumption underlying his approach and his goal, stating, "What is necessary, however, for us to begin our investigation is an awareness of the major elements which typically comprise a covenant [בְּרִית] in order that we might have a reasonable idea of what to look for."[254] Then, he identifies six different meanings in which the expression בְּרִית (*berit*, translated in English as covenant) appears in the Hebrew Scriptures. Hugenberger argues that a covenant does not require the presence of all the different meanings to qualify as a covenant. It requires only the predominant one, as I will explain.

The six meanings are predominant, pact, documentary, synecdoche, symbolic, and idiomatic. I will explain the first sense last. The second sense is found in passages like Ezra 10:3 where covenant appears synonymous with a pact. [255] As for the third sense, "occasionally בְּרִית [covenant] bears the sense of the documentary witness (book/tables) of

---

[252] Hahn, "Covenant in the Old and New Testaments," 285.

[253] Ibid.

[254] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 11.

[255] Cf. Ibid., 173.

the covenant."[256]. Regarding the fourth sense, there are cases, such as that in Gen 17:13, where the expression בְּרִית "does not refer to the covenant relationship itself, but to the sign of the covenant."[257] Concerning the fifth sense, sometimes the biblical author uses synecdoche, the literary figure of speech where an aspect of the reality is taken as signifying the totality. According to Hugenberger, "an example of this sense may be found in Lev. 24:8."[258] Here, a Sabbath, one expression of the covenant, is taken as a covenant itself. In the sixth sense, covenant appears in an idiomatic expression like 'to cut a covenant' or 'to give/present a covenant' to underscore an aspect of covenant. Now, given its importance, I will give more thought to the first meaning of covenant, the predominant one.[259]

i. Predominant Sense and Essential Elements of a Covenant

According to Hugenberger, the predominant sense is the common meaning. It contains the essential elements of a covenant without which there is no covenant. He states, "From our lexical study, it was determined that the predominant sense בְּרִית in Biblical Hebrew is that of '*an elected*, as opposed to natural, *relationship of obligation* established under *divine sanction*. It is this sense which we intend by the English term 'covenant.'"[260] From this explanation, four interconnected elements stand out: election, relationship, obligations, and divinity. Choosing someone not only implies predilection but also renunciation of the option left. Thus, predilection implies love and exclusivity. Obligation

---

[256] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 173. Cf. Ex 31:18; Dt 9, 9-11 and 2 Cor 3:3.

[257] Ibid., 173-74.

[258] Ibid., 174.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Ibid., 215. Emphasis added. Hugenberger claims that an example of this sense appears in Ex 19:5, Gn 14:13, 1 Sm 18:3. See Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 172.

is related to a pledge of loyalty to an agreement. An oath, having God as witness and guarantor, makes the covenant binding.

ii. Essential Elements a in a Covenant

After presenting the predominant sense, Hugenberger speaks of the essential elements implied in a covenant. He states that "there are four essential ingredients in the Old Testament understanding of בְּרִית, namely, 1) a relationship 2) with a non-relative 3) which involves obligations and 4) is established through an oath."[261] If I understand Hugenberger correctly, a covenant initiates a relation or formalizes an existing one through an oath of loyalty to fulfill certain obligations. A God is invoked as witness and guarantor of the covenant. He also argued, "Not only does בְּרִית occur most frequently with this sense in biblical corpus, it does so most often while referring to covenants between Yahweh and his people…."[262]

3. ANE Treaties and the Israelite Covenant(s)

a. <u>Israel as Part of the ANE World</u>

The Book of Genesis states that Abraham came from Ur of Chaldeans in Babylon (present-day Iran) and settled in Canaan.[263] From Canaan, "Abraham went down to Egypt (Gen 12:10). The land of Canaan is part of the Ancient Near Eastern world.[264] It is reasonable to think that Abraham and his family interrelated with the natives of those lands in different ways: in business, marriages, solving conflicts, making agreements for a

---

[261] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 172. Tarwater comments on these elements in his book, *Marriage as Covenant,* 34-38.

[262] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant,* 171-72.

[263] Cf. Gn 11:31.

[264] Cf. Gn 10:19, Nh 9:7-8 and Nm 34:1-15.

peaceful interaction, and so on. Delbert Hillers undercores that the Israelites likely had ANE influences since the early stages in Canaan. Hillers argues, "In dealing with those biblical analogies that hitherto escaped our understanding, like 'covenant,' there is a chance that we may find the terrestrial side of the equation somewhere in the literature and life of Israel's ancient neighbors.[265]

As the history of Israel evolved, more interactions occurred and most of the time under the dominion of foreign powers who forced their cultures and deities on the Israelites.[266] McCarthy underscored such foreign influence as he speaks of one of those powers. "Throughout their long imperial history [XII - VI BC], the Assyrian put down their enemies and installed new princes in dependent territories, princes who were bound to specific obligations under oath. They administered their realm through a system of treaties."[267] Therefore, it is undeniable that being part of the ANE world and living side by side with ANE peoples, relating to them, making business and diplomatic relations with them, that the Israelites could be oblivious of ANE customs, the protocols for negotiations, business, relationships, their gods and rituals.[268] It is likely that the Israelites influenced the neighboring peoples and vice-versa, despite the Israelites' continuous effort to preserve their identity.

---

[265] Delbert Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 23.

[266] Cf. Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose,* 106.

[267] McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 107-08.

[268] Cf. John Thompson, *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1964), 21.

b. **Ancient Near East Treaties**

Treaties were a binding agreement between two or more parties of equal authority called 'parity treaties' or between a superior and a vassal called 'suzerainty treaties'. [269] John Thompson explains, "The suzerainty treaties… were imposed by powerful kings on their vassals. An inferior ruler was bound to obey stipulations imposed on him by his suzerain…. It is the suzerainty treaty that is of the greater significance for Old Testament study."[270] Making a treaty was a common practice among ANE peoples (Assyrians, Babylonians, Syrians, Persians). [271]

McCarthy argues, "Despite the scarcity of texts and their fragmentary character, there is sufficient evidence that the treaty was known in the early days of Mesopotamia, and it had many features in common with the later treaties from the near east."[272] Treaties between the king and a vassal (suzerainty treaties) resemble the covenant between God and the chosen people and not the treaties between equals. Busenitz explains that "though covenants among/between peers were usually negotiated, covenants between God and men were not. Men do not have parity with God. Thus, in the covenants of God, it is God alone who sets forth the conditions."[273]

However, unlike the vassal treaty, in a covenant, Israel was expected to love God and not merely be in submission to God, as expected between king and vassals.[274] As

---

[269] Cf. Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 4.

[270] Thompson, *Ancient Near Eastern Treaties*, 13.

[271] Cf. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 107-108.

[272] Ibid., 29.

[273] Busenitz, *Introduction to Biblical* Covenants, 176.

[274] Cf. Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose,* 21.

Walton explained, "The purpose of the ancient Near Eastern treaties and land grants was to induce loyalty and to reward loyalty respectively."[275] Covenant was meant to establish, heal, or confirm a relationship of love and faithfulness between God and God's people. Walton goes on to explain that "the covenants of the Old Testament are formulated in accordance with the stylistic customs of ancient Near Eastern practice… For instance, though the formulation of laws in the Pentateuch has much in common with the formulation of ancient Near Eastern laws, the function of those laws is quite distinct."[276]

The Hittites and the Assyrians gave importance to a written text of the treaty, whereas the Semites (Siro-Palestinians, Israelites) valued a spoken and ritualized word. Even when the Israelites had a written text, their leaders read it, explained its meaning, and ritualized its content as attested in Nehemiah 9:3 and other passages.[277] According to McCarthy, "The point is that the Hittite texts themselves do not connect covenant and rite. The Hittite treaties never mention such rites. In contrast, then, to the Hittites certain Semites put a special importance on the rites over against the word, in the very record of a covenant."[278] Thus, covenant and oath were sometimes used interchangeably. Concurring with this claim, Hillers, in *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*, practically identify treaty with oath. He states that "an ancient treaty, then, is essentially an elaborate oath. There are two fundamental components: the thing to be performed, and the oath, the

---

[275] Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose,* 21.

[276] Ibid.

[277] Cf. Alan Lenzi, "How Does the Hebrew Bible Relate to the Ancient Near Eastern World?," Bible Odyssey, 2017, accessed October 9, 2017, http://bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/bible-basics/how-does-the-hebrew-bible-relate-to-the-ancient-near-eastern-world. Lenzi substantiates this claim by referring to three texts: Dt 31:9-13, 24-26, and 17:18-19.

[278] McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 92. Thompson makes the same point: "The primary purpose of all suzerain treaties was to secure the interests of the great king and to guarantee the allegiance and, if need be, the economic and military support of the vassal." Thompson, *The Ancient near Eastern Treaties,* 13.

invoking of divine vengeance in case the promise is not kept. These basic features are discernibly present in extremely early texts, even though the documents are in part obscure or damaged."[279]

Furthermore, ANE societies had in common the conviction about the interdependence of people's lives, the world, and the deities as three distinct but intertwined realties. Thus, their treaties or any other human endeavor had meaning within that integrated perspective.[280] Such a view explains why treaties and covenant in ANE had a tacit religiosity in them. Drawing from McCarthy, this religious dimension can be inferred from

> the odd connection between cutting and covenant is found among various languages and various nations, but the phenomenon is not simply a matter of linguistics. There is no question of development from a common root. Different words appear for *cut* and for *covenant*. It is the meaning which remains constant. It must have been basic in the conception these peoples had of covenant making.[281]"

c. **Similarities and Differences: ANE Treaties and Hebrew Covenant**

The existence of common elements between ANE treaties and the Hebrew covenant is one of the proofs that that Israel was cognizant of her ANE practices in diplomatic relationships. John Thompson explains, "Such elements as a *historical introduction* to a covenant, a list of *stipulations*, some reference to curses and *blessings*, an oath, and a *religious ceremony*, are to be found in several treaty or covenant contexts in the Old

---

[279] Hillers, *Covenant: History of Biblical Idea*, 28.

[280] Cf. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 134.

[281] Hillers, *Covenant: History of Biblical Idea*, 92. McCarthy explains that "it is impossible to separate this connection between oath and the killing of an animal from the widespread evidence from the Siro-Palestinian area for the close and necessary connection between covenant making and symbolic rites involving an animal." McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 91.

Testament"[282] Hillers adds a nuance in presenting his lists, arguing the order and stress may vary depending on the context.

> There are six principal parts in the text of a typical treaty: (1) the preamble; (2) the historical prologue; (3) the stipulations; (4) provisions for deposit of the text and for public reading; (5) a list of the divine witness to the treaty; (6) blessings and curses. Any single treaty may vary slightly from this outline; the order may be somewhat different, or one of the elements may be omitted. The basic pattern may be discovered in most of them.[283]

William Barrick, Professor of Classical Hebrew and Old Testament at Master's Seminary in Sun Valley, California, points out that the Israelites were familiar with the suzerainty treaty pattern "in the ancient Near East, a conquering king would often promulgate a covenant (i.e., a treaty) governing the lives of his new subjects."[284] This position concurs with the growing consensus among scholars about the early origin of covenant as the aforementioned section on the socio-cultural approach of covenant. Alan Lenzi, Associate Professor of Religious and Classical Studies at University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, in his article "How Does the Hebrew Bible Relate to the Ancient Near Eastern World?," explains the similarities among ANE treaties and underscores the distinctiveness of the Hebrew covenant(s). He states,

> Although the broad form and general content of ancient Near Eastern treaties were similar over time, there are also intercultural differences and local variations, especially in the content and order of typical elements. The Hittite treaties usually begin with a historical introduction and contain a list of both blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. The Neo-Assyrian treaties do not have the

---

[282] Thompson, *Ancient Near Eastern Treaties*, 21. Emphasis added.

[283] Hillers, *Covenant: History of Biblical Idea,* 29.

[284] William Barrick, *The Mosaic Covenant*, *Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 222.

historical introduction, contain no list of blessings, and have an especially lengthy curse section.[285]

He goes further, highlighting that one of the major differences is that Hebrew and Neo-Assyrian covenants encompassed a ritual which always accompanied the oath, unlike the Hittites whose oath did not necessarily have a ritual. A second major difference is that the Hebrew covenant established the terms of the relationship between the most powerful God (as suzerain) and God's people (as vassal) and not between a king and the people as it happened among Hittites and Assyrians. Rene states, "In ancient Near Eastern treaties gods were witnesses, but never parties to the covenants. Uniquely, the Israelites have a covenant with their God."[286] Professor Lenzi explains,

> What stands out as remarkably distinctive in the Hebrew Bible is the fact that a god rather than a king makes a treaty/covenant with his people. This unique adaptation was probably quite subversive. If, as most scholars think, Deuteronomy (or some version of it) was published during the Neo-Assyrian period when Judah was an Assyrian vassal, then Deuteronomy's recognition of Yahweh as its divine suzerain intends to reject Assyrian lordship.[287]

Thompson, in his catching lecture in biblical archaeology entitled "The Ancient near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament," underscored the specificity of the Hebrew covenant, claiming, "A comparative study of the total vocabulary of the Near Eastern treaty texts and the Old Testament covenant contexts will indicate that Israel had her own emphases in describing the covenant between Yahweh and herself."[288] Hebrew covenant

---

[285] Cf. Alan Lenzi, "How Does the Hebrew Bible Relate to the ANE World?," *Bible Odyssey* (2017), accessed October 9, 2017, http://bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/bible-basics/how-does-the-hebrew-bible-relate-to-the-ancient-near-eastern-world.

[286] Cf. René Lopez, "Israelite Covenants in the Light of Ancient near Eastern Covenants," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 9, no. 2 (2003): 101. Rene was a PhD candidate at Dallas Theological Seminary when he wrote this article.

[287] Cf. Lenzi, "Hebrew Bible ANE World."

[288] Thompson, *Ancient Near Eastern Treaties*, 38.

does not have a long list of curses and condemnations.[289] It omits a historical introduction or presents a brief version of it because people had already an imbedded and tacit consciousness as a chosen people of God.

Roy Beacham, Professor of Old Testament at the Central Baptist Theological Seminary at Plymouth, Minnesota, in a paper entitled "New Covenant of Scripture in ANE Covenant Context," argues, "By nature, all ANE covenants consisted of at least two fundamental elements: relationship and obligation."[290] Another difference is that the Israelite covenant had room for compassion, restoration, and healing when the covenant was threatened by the unfaithfulness of the Israelites.[291]

4. Biblical Foundations of Marriage as Covenant

In this section, I will present the significant scriptural background for marriage as covenant, and I will underscore the importance of reappraising it in any discussion on marriage and family. Andreas Kostenberger, Professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and "founding president of Biblical Foundations, an organization with the aim of 'restoring the biblical foundations of the home, the church, and society," rightly claims, "The contemporary culture is in a deep crisis regarding marriage and family today. While the crisis has important political, social, and economic ramifications, *in the ultimate analysis only a spiritual return to the biblical foundations*

---

[289] Ibid. "Such elements as a historical introduction to a covenant, a list of stipulations, some reference to curses and blessings, an oath, and a religious ceremony, are to be found in several treaty or covenant contexts in the Old Testament." Thompson, *Ancient Near Eastern Treaties*, 21.

[290] Roy Beacham, "The New Covenant of Scripture in Ane Covenant Context: A Preliminary Paper," (paper presented at the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics, Clarks Summit, PA. September 23, 2009), 3-4, accessed October 6, 2017, http://64.106.241.238/council/documents/Roy_Beacham_ANE-Covenants-and-NC.pdf.

[291] Cf. Lopez, *Israelite Covenants*, 100.

will address the root issue of the current crisis."[292] A key insight from the Scriptures comes from the metaphor of covenant, which helps to comprehend God's original purpose in creating human beings and the institution of marriage.

Kostenberger, under the heading "How Did Sin Affect Marriage and the Family," explains insightfully the consequences of the fall, pointing to situations that disrupt God's original plan on marriage. He argues that sin brought to the world not only polygamy, adultery, divorce, childlessness, singleness, and radical ideologies but also condescendence and militancy for those consequences.[293] Thus, because of sin, which leads to the hardness of human heart, God's original plan falls under mockery and oblivion. Corroborating with this line of thought, Tarwater explains, "the present crisis surrounding the institution of marriage arises, in large measure, from people viewing marriage as a contract rather than a covenant"[294] Then, what is God's plan for marriage?

a. **Original Divine Plan in Genesis**

The Book of Genesis speaks not only about the creation of the world and the creation of human beings but also about the primordial experience of the relationship between God and humanity. Genesis gives insights about who human beings are and what they are called to be. At the same time, Genesis makes explicit what marriage means according to God's original plan. Subsequent references on marriage throughout the Scriptures, whether from the prophets, wisdom literature, Synoptics, or Pauline writings,

---

[292] Roy Beacham, "The New Covenant of Scripture in Ane Covenant Context: A Preliminary Paper," (paper presented at the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics, Clarks Summit, PA. September 23, 2009), 3-4, accessed October 6, 2017, http://64.106.241.238/council/documents/Roy_Beacham_ANE-Covenants-and-NC.pdf.

[293] Cf. Ibid.

[294] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 53.

will legitimate their claims by appealing to God's original plan in Genesis.

According to Genesis, God created humans in God's image and likeness, male and female, and God blessed and missioned them to cooperate in God's creative activity by being "fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28) and by exercising responsible stewardship (cf. Gen 1:29-30) over God's creation, which was "very good" (Gen 1:31). To accomplish such a divine ordinance, it is written, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24).[295]

These key texts confirm Schillebeeckx's claim that "Israel's belief in the divine institution of marriage is expressed in Genesis."[296] Bevil Bramwell underscores the same point when he says, "The fundamental sources for any understanding of marriage in the Old Testament can be found in two main groups of texts, the creation stories of the Book of Genesis and the texts that refer to the marriage between God and his people."[297] Additionally, the Book of Tobit presents a single but key reference to the various steps of a marriage ceremony, a prototype of a marital blessing, and a family evolvement in the preparation and celebration of marriage. In Tobit, marriage appears as a family, social, and religious reality, though the ceremony does not take place in a shrine or in the presence of any religious official.

---

[295] See an insightful comment on creation and God's plan in reference to monogamy, heterosexuality and marriage in Jakobus Vorster, "Marriage and Family in View of the Doctrine of the Covenant," *HTS Theological Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1, accessed October 2, 2017, http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v72n3/08.pdf.

[296] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Marriage: Secular Reality and Saving Mystery* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1965), 40.

[297] Bevil Bramwell, *The World of the Sacraments: The Catholic Theology of the Sacraments* (Fairfield, OH: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 419.

Jesus referred to those texts from Genesis when answering the question that the Pharisees asked to test him. Bramwell rightly points out, "These ancient texts are significant for the Christian community…[because] they were taken up by Jesus Christ, in his preaching, in the New Testament."[298] Those passages are also significant for the mission of the Church today, as John Paul II vehemently stated in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (*On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*). He said, "The Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family, ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the People of God." [299]

Tarwater asks a rhetorical question to draw attention to the significance of the original divine plan. He asks,

> Why is it important to establish that God, in the beginning, designed marriage as a covenant relationship? Did God originally create marriage as a covenant relationship or did man [humans] create the idea of covenant marriage? If God made marriage a covenant at creation, then the covenant nature is *essential* to the basic meaning of marriage.[300]

For Tarwater, the answer is that "if marriage was established as a covenant from the beginning, it is both essential and binding on all men on all cultures for all times."[301]

b. Noahtic Covenant as a Family-Binding Covenant

We read in the Book of Genesis, "Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and

---

[298] Bramwell, *The World of the Sacraments*, 421.

[299] FC 3.

[300] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 53.

[301] Ibid., 54.

with every living creature that is with you'" (Gen 9: 9 -10). According to Irvin Busenitz, "The Noahic Covenant is the first covenant referenced in Scripture. Its first mention is in Gen 6:18 where God reveals to Noah His intention to destroy the whole earth."[302] In any covenant, God takes initiative and chooses with whom to establish a covenant, regardless of the shortcomings or qualities of the elected.[303]

The covenant with Noah has three important elements. First, the initiative and gratuitousness of God in the choice. Second, God establishes a covenant not just with Noah but with his family and subsequent generations. The covenant is personal, familiar, and intergenerational. It unites present families with their future generations, and this fact can strengthen the sense of identity, cohesion, and solidarity in the community. Lenzi explains, "Like the Neo-Assyrian loyalty oaths, Yahweh, the suzerain, makes his covenant with the entire vassal population, Israel (see Deut 29:14-15, which includes future generations)."[304]

Third, the covenant is everlasting. On this regard, Busenitz argues, "This covenant with Noah is the first of five divinely originated covenants in Scripture explicitly described as 'everlasting.' The other four include the Abrahamic (Gen 17:7), Priestly (Num 25:10 - 13), Davidic (2 Sam 23:5), and the New (Jer 32:40). The Mosaic Covenant, though divinely initiated, is not described as everlasting."[305]

---

[302] Busenitz, *Introduction to Biblical Covenants*, 184.

[303] Cf. Gn 6:8-9.

[304] Alan Lenzi, "How Does the Hebrew Bible Relate to the ANE World?," *Bible Odyssey* (2017), accessed October 9, 2017, http://bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/bible-basics/how-does-the-hebrew-bible-relate-to-the-ancient-near-eastern-world.

[305] Busenitz, *Introduction to the Biblical Covenants*, 186, footnote 57.

Margaret Brinig, Professor of Law at the University of Iowa, and Steven Nock,

Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia, in their article "Covenant and

Contract," underscore the communitarian aspect of the Noahic covenant by arguing,

> As useful as Noah's story is for illustrating the common characteristics of covenant as expressed in the Bible, writers thus far have not paid much attention to its implications for families. First, Noah's story obviously involves a family. God might have chosen Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives because as a group they could efficiently coordinate the work effort involved.[306]

Furthermore, Brining explains, "Noah's story involves several generations. The older

couple, Noah and his wife, did not produce more children but stood as a source of wisdom

for the younger."[307]

c. __Marriage as a Covenant in the Prophets__

In *Marriage as a Covenant*, Hugenberger states,

> Hosea appears to have been the first to describe Israel's infidelity as "adultery" and to develop the marriage analogy so fully… (cf., e.g., Hosea 2:4-25…). As a result of chronological priority, it is generally assumed that Hosea's use of the marriage analogy is the source of its reappearance in Isaiah (cf. Isaiah 1:21; 54:5-8; 57:3-10; 61:10-11; 62:4-5); Jeremiah (cf. Jeremiah 2:2, 20; 3:1-5; 3:6-25; 13:27; 23:10; 31:32); Ezekiel (Ezekiel 16, 23); and perhaps also Proverbs (Proverbs 8).[308]

John Witte concurs with Hugenberger: "The Hebrew Prophets Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel,

Isaiah, and Malachi all analogized this covenant relationship between God and Israel to the

marital relationship between a husband and wife."[309] Hugenberger argues that though

Hosea was the first to use the analogy, it could also be possible that some prophets

---

[306] Nock and Brinig, "Covenant and Contract," 14.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 295.

[309] Witte, "Covenant of Marriage," 152.

developed the analogy independently from Hosea.[310] Whether independent or not, each prophet underscores, with different nuance, an aspect of a marital covenant.

Overall, the prophets compare God to a groom or husband and Israel to a bride or wife and Israel's idolatry with the foreign deities to prostitution and adultery. Because of people's ingratitude and repeated unfaithfulness, God considers abandoning the chosen people. But at the end, God decides to do whatever it takes to regain the love of the Israelites and bring them back to worshipping a true God. Because the divine faithfulness endures forever, God does not abandon the idolatrous people, the unfaithful wife. The prophet Malachi will state unequivocally that God hates divorce and, wherefore, encourages a man not to abandon the wife of his youth.

i. Hosea and God's Covenant as Prototype of Marriage

Paul Palmer, SJ, Professor at St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, was "engaged in research and teaching in the field of marriage" for more than thirty years when he wrote his "overquoted article" in 1972.[311] In that article, Palmer states, "The first to draw the daring analogy of the husband-wife relationship between Yahweh and Israel is the prophet Hosea. Yahweh is portrayed as the jealous husband, Israel as the faithless wife; but Yahweh is ready to set aside His righteous anger, to offer pardon on repentance, and through a new covenant more perfect than the first to accept Israel once again."[312]

---

[310] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant,* 295.

[311] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 617.

[312] Ibid., 620. Commenting on Prv 2:16-17, which portrays adultery as forsaking the partner of one's youth and forgetting one's sacred covenant, the editors of *Difusora Bíblica* (Portuguese Franciscan Version of the Bible) points out that "marriage, in Israel, was not considered just a juridical contract. It was mainly a symbol of a covenant with the Lord. Prophet Hosea presents above all that vision." This text translates as follows: "Prov. 2,17. *O casamento, em Israel, não é considerado apenas como um contrato jurídico, mas*

God does everything possible to make her unfaithful wife come back home.[313] The difficult question remains, what will happen if the straying spouse does not return home? Certainly, God will continue to love her! Such unconditional love seems to be one of the great challenges today: to keep loving someone even when there is no reciprocity. That is why a covenant goes beyond a contract. Unlike a covenant, a contract stands only as long as the parties keeps their promises.

Underscoring the need for healing and ongoing reconciliation, one key aspect of covenantal marriage, Margaret Thatcher's affirms, "Gomer is not to be divorced or killed as (Deut. 22, 22 sanctioned) for her crimes. Rather her anguished husband shows his love for his faithless wife by forgiving her and taking her back. Their reconciliation will be the precursor of a new covenant between God and Israel."[314] From Hosea, one learns that marriage, which by God's original design is covenantal, implies exclusivity, faithfulness, and gratuity and a continuous call for healing and reconciliation in situations of despair and sufferings. From Hosea, one can also learn that covenantal marriage invites each spouse to express creatively one's love as one way of strengthening proximity, intimacy, and mutual care. These aspects resonate with a personalistic approach of marriage.

ii. Malachi and the "Reverse Application" of the Metaphor

Although Malachi nowhere employs the marriage analogy itself (where Yahweh's covenant relationship to Israel is compared to a marriage) … [he] acknowledged a profound similarity between Israel's covenant with Yahweh and the marriage covenant… Malachi appears to offer the first of many "reverse applications" of the marriage analogy. In other words, while the marriage analogy was originally

---

principalmente como um símbolo da aliança com o Senhor. É sobretudo o profeta Oseias que reflecte essa visão (Os 2,20-22)."

[313] Cf. Hos 2:14-23.

[314] See Thatcher, *Marriage after Modernity*, 69.

intended to elucidate Yahweh's relationship to Israel, it is now being reapplied to serve as a paradigm for marriage itself.[315]

Hugenberger convincingly argued that Malachi invites the people of God to learn from the way God relates to humans and apply to their marriages. God did not only use marriage to explain the relationship between God and God's chosen people. God also invites humans to live their marital relationship as God related to the Israelites, that is, in steadfast love, faithfulness, and reconciliation. According to Hugenberger, a "reverse application" is called when applying the metaphor of covenantal relationship between God and the chosen people to the life of a marriage between a man and a woman. James Ponzetti and Barbara Mutch from the University of British College, explain insightfully such divine wisdom and pedagogy as follows:

> It is as if God, observing human behavior in order to find a form of language through which to be understood, discovered that marriage offered the most appropriate way of speaking about the type of relationship He wanted to establish with humanity. The monogamous union of a Christian man and woman, persevering through quotidian uncertainties and adjustments until death do them part, becomes a metaphor to appreciate, partially but concretely, the covenant between God and human beings.[316]

Dennis rightly avers, "Malachi flipped this covenant marital metaphor on its head, using it to offer moral instructions about human marriages… He now called humans to be faithful to their covenant marriage with each other, just as God had been faithful in his covenant relationship with his chosen people."[317] Anyway, as Hugenberger argued, "Malachi, along with several other biblical authors, identified marriage as a 'covenant

---

[315] Hugenberger *Marriage as a Covenant*, 295, footnote 58.

[316] Ponzetti and Mutch, "Marriage as covenant, 224-5.

[317] McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 9-10.

[בְּרִית’… even where the term בְּרִית does not happen to appear."[318]] For him, "Malachi 2:
14 is perhaps the chief pillar of the traditional identification of marriage in the Old
Testament as a covenant:"[319]

iii. Concluding Remarks on the Prophetic Views of Marriage

Prophet Isaiah speaks of God's faithfulness as implying that the marital covenant,
is stronger than a bond of a caring mother.[320] Prophets Jeremiah and Ezequiel give another
insight on a new and everlasting covenant that God will make with the house of Israel,
written not on tablets of stone but on the human heart.[321] Jeremiah's prophecy found its
fulfillment in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

Though important, it suffices for now to retain the significance of the prophetic
understanding of marriage as a covenant. As McCarthy satisfactorily explains, "Most
important for our purposes is how this running covenant metaphor of Malachi and the
earlier Prophets holds major lessons for human marriages - integrating and elevating some
of the other Hebrew Bible teachings on marriage, and anticipating the important teachings
of the New Testament."[322]

d. **Marriage as a Covenant in the Wisdom Literature**

i. Marriage as Covenant in Proverbs and Tobias

You will be saved from the loose woman, from the adulteress with her smooth
words, who forsakes the partner of her youth and forgets her sacred covenant.
—Proverbs 2:16-17

---

[318] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 12.

[319] Ibid., 13.

[320] Cf. Is 49: 15, 62:4.

[321] Cf. Dt 4:13; 5: 22; 9:10-11; 10: 1, 10-11; Exo 31:18. and 1 Kings 8:9. Paul will say that the Spirit
of the Lord will imprint the new law in human hearts.

[322] McCarthy, *Treaty and* Covenant, 10.

Tarwater argues, "Whereas marriage is viewed as a covenant by analogy in Hosea, it is stated explicitly in Proverbs."[323] Other relevant passages from the wisdom literature do not clearly speak of marriage as covenant but depicts love in a way that characterizes marital covenant, as in the Songs of Songs and the Book of Tobias. For now, it suffices to indicate that the significance of Tobias 7:11-15 lies in presenting the only account of a marriage ceremony in the Hebrew Scriptures. The ritual depicts not only key features of the marital covenant but also underlines its communitarian dimension. I will explore the implications of that passage in the fourth chapter.

ii. Human and Covenantal Love in Songs of Songs

The Song of Songs presents at least three insights relevant to our reflection on Christian marriage as a covenantal partnership of love: sexual intimacy, exclusive self-giving, and permanent commitment between a wife and husband. It praises vividly human love with its eroticism, passion, and intimacy as integral expressions of marriage. Such a revolutionary view contrasted with Greco-Roman movements which, when not forbidding it all that altogether, frown upon passion, sexual intercourse, and marriage.[324] St. Paul will allude to those who forbid marriage (1Tim 4:3), whereas the Letter to the Hebrews will praise marriage and sexuality and reproach fornication and adultery (Heb 13: 4).

The Canticles of Canticles invites the husband and wife to cherish the carnal pleasures of their marital love, contradicting two radical positions: one ascetic and the other permissive. Palmer underscores the newness of this book, asserting, "The love of husband

---

[323] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 78. See also the discussion in 78-80.

[324] Cf. Theodore Mackin, *Marriage in the Catholic Church: What Is Marriage* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 83. See Cf. Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament*, 52-56.

and wife is described, particularly in the Song of Solomon, in imagery which is frankly sexual, even erotic. However, the love is definitely covenant love, exclusive and permanent. Thus, the bride of the Canticle can triumphantly exclaim: 'My beloved is mine and I am his' (2:15)".[325]

e. **Marriage as Covenant in the Synoptics**

Jesus's explicit teaching on marriage appears in the synoptic gospels on two key occasions: (1) when Jesus explains his stand on the old and new law of the kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel (Lk 16:14) and (2) when religious leaders, in a polemic context, asked Jesus about the ground for divorce in the Gospels of Matthew (5:31-32 and 19:3-9) and Mark (10:2-12). Tarwater underscores the importance of these texts in understanding Jesus's view of marriage, which undoubtedly is covenantal. He argues,

> Matthew 19:1-9, and its parallel passage in Mark 10:1-12, constitutes a second New Testament passage addressing the meaning of marriage. Like the Ephesians periscope, the term 'covenant' is absent. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence exists for viewing Matthew's understanding of marriage as being significantly dependent upon marriage as a covenant institution.[326]

In answering the Pharisees, Jesus appealed to God's original plan in Genesis and to the true intention as to why Moses regulated divorce through a bill. Jesus underscored that by dwelling on divorce and forgetting God's design for marriage and by not focusing on promoting marriage and the family but testing Jesus's teaching as a way of protecting their own status quo and privileges, the Pharisees missed the point. Thus, Schillebeeckx rightly demonstrated that "Christ overrode the views of both schools by referring to the great marriage chapter of Genesis… marriage had been brought about by God himself, it could

---

[325] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 621.

[326] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 88.

not [to] be dissolved by any secular authority."[327] By referring to God's original plan on marriage as presented in Genesis and by stating clearly that he abhors divorce, Jesus shows that he regarded marriage as a covenant.[328] Tarwater claims, "By observing that Malachi and Matthew quote the same verses, one may reasonably argue [that] Mathew was cognizant of Malachi when the text was being composed."[329]

Walton's insight can serve as a concluding remark on the covenant in the synoptics. He argues, "The only specific reference to the covenant that Jesus makes in the Gospel is in the words at the last Supper that the cup was the new covenant of his blood (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20). … Jesus preached the kingdom of God throughout his ministry, and the kingdom cannot be understood apart from the covenant."[330] Jesus did not say explicitly that marriage is a covenant. However, what he said about covenant and about marriage helps listeners understand the implications of a marital covenant.

f. <u>Marriage as Sacrament and Covenant in the Pauline Writings</u>

> For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.
> —Ephesians 5: 31-33

Palmer rightly argues, "In the classical passage Eph 5:21-32, Paul develops the theme of Christ's redemptive love for His bride the Church, and the loving obedience of

---

327 Schillebeeckx, *Marriage,* 206. See also Cf. John Haran, "The Indissolubility of Christian Marriage." *Theological Studies* 2, no. 2 (1941): 208).

328 Cf. Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 89.

329 Cf. Ibid.

330 Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose*, 106.

the bride, as the exemplar for the Christian husband and wife."[331] The Letter to the Ephesians presents one of the New Testament's most influential metaphors in the Christian understanding of marriage (as sacrament). Ephesians describes marriage as *mystery*, in the sense that it unveils to humanity a hidden reality always present in marriage "since the beginning" but not always perceived before Christ's full revelation.[332] The letter presents marriage as a covenant by appealing to God's original plan. Marriage helps humanity to grasp the identity of God and the way God communicates and relates to humanity and the way Christ relates to the Church. For Paul, marriage symbolizes a reality greater than itself. In this context, marriage is indeed a Sacrament.

According to Martin Luther and his followers, "Marriage is not a sacrament."[333] Palmer explains, "Luther agreed, marriage can symbolize the union of Christ with his Church, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:32. The sacrifices that husband and wife make for each other and for their children can express the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross… But these analogies and metaphors do not make marriage a sacrament on the order of baptism and the Eucharist."[334] Luther contended that "the Church's 'real goal is jurisdiction not theological' in declaring marriage to be a canonical sacrament."[335] The Council of Trent will refute Luther's claim. Nowadays, most Protestants and Catholics strive for a balanced and more consensual approach.

---

[331] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 264.

[332] Paul makes the same claim in 2 Cor3:4-18.

[333] Cf. John Witte, "Marriage as Social Estate in the Lutheran Reformation," in *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*, ed. John Witte (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 131-134.

[334] Cf. Ibid., 130.

[335] Witte, "Marriage as Social Estate," 131.

5.   Main Characteristics of a Covenant

  a. <u>What is Really a Covenant?</u>

What are the main characteristics of a covenant? What distinguishes a covenant from a contract? From the quick overview of the ANE treaties, from a presentation of the biblical foundations of a covenant, and from the way Catholic tradition flipped back and forth from covenant to sacrament, from sacrament to contract, and from contract to sacrament and covenant, and sometimes merging two or more perspectives, some elements stand out as the main characteristics of a covenant. Scholars have attempted to explain the metaphor of covenant, using different approaches as shown in the first part of this chapter. In this section, I draw our attention to three significant attempts from Michael Lawler (1985), Michael Guinan (1975), and Paul Palmer (1972), each one giving an insightful nuance about a covenant and specifically a marital covenant.

  i. Michael Lawler

Michael Lawler, in an introductory remark to his article "Marriage as Covenant in the Catholic Tradition," underscores key elements in a covenant and makes a striking point relevant to this reflection: "Every covenant involves a mutual solemn promise of oath, with God as witness, to achieve specified ends in a context of mutual respect and justice. It also demands fidelity to the terms of the covenant as exemplified by Yahweh's steadfast love and faithfulness."[336] He concludes, "These elements will be important to the claim later in this chapter that marriage is a solemn covenant."[337]

---

[336] Lawler, "Marriage as Covenant," 72.

[337] Ibid., 72.

Lawler's description emphasizes at least four key characteristics of a covenant: oath, God's witness, mutuality, and faithfulness. His description presents the religious dimension of a covenant and the connection between oath, mutually and a voluntary consent of the parties to the terms of the agreement.[338] The aspect regarding the promise to fulfill an obligation and to treat each other with fairness is a reminder of the contractual aspect of a covenant.

ii. Michael Guinan

Another biblical scholar, Michael Guinan, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Hebrew, and Aramaic at the Franciscan School of Theology formerly in Berkeley, explains,

> A covenant was an agreement or promise between two parties, solemnly professed before the witnesses and made binding by an oath expressed verbally or by some symbolic action.... Covenants were closely connected with religion because the gods of the various parties were called on to be witnesses and also to punish any breach of the covenant which might occur. Law too was involved because either or both of the parties were obliging themselves to some particular and specific type of behavior.[339]

Guinan indicates the symbolic and religious dimension of a covenant while underscoring the legal aspect and the obligations the parties promise to honor. Thus, both Lawler and Guinan stresses that covenant has a contractual aspect, but it goes far beyond a contract. This brings us to Palmer's insightful distinction between covenant and contract.

iii. Paul Palmer

Palmer is one of the staunch defenders of marriage as covenant and one who articulated clearly the distinction between covenant and contract. His explanation encompasses key aspects of a covenant as they appear in the Hebrew Bible and throughout

---

[338] Lawler, "Marriage Covenant Catholic Tradition," 72. Internal citation of Hillers, *Covenant: History of Biblical Idea*, 25-39.

[339] Michael Guinan, *Covenant in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), 8.

the Catholic tradition. A covenant has an intrinsic religious dimension which begs for faithfulness. Palmer argues,

> Among ancient peoples the binding and inviolable character of covenants derived from the divine sanctions attached to the covenant agreement. Contracts have people as witness, and human or civil society as guarantor. Covenants have God or the gods as witness, but not in the sense that the gods or God simply vouch for the correctness of the agreement; they act as guarantors that the terms of the treaty, alliance, or covenant will be carried out.[340]

Scriptural references such as Genesis 31:49, Joshua 24:27, and 2 Kings 11:4 give evidence of God as both witness and guarantor of a covenant.[341] Palmer makes another insightful distinction that covenants deal with persons whereas contracts refer to things or services that a person offers. Though things and services are important in a marriage, it is inaccurate and reductionistic to speak of marriage as merely a contract. He reiterates his main thesis that the Roman empire, in general, treated marriage as a covenant. He states,

> Contract is used of things, of property or of personal belongings. When persons are involved, it is not the person who is hired or contracted for, but his services. A man is hired to do something. Only in a slave economy can we speak of buying or selling people. Thus, in the Digests of Justinian, *contractus* is used of buying and selling, lending and leasing, of hiring and engaging the services of another. Occasionally *contractus* is applied to people, to a *societas*, but the society in question is a group of business associates engaged in trade.[342]

b. <u>Key Features of a Covenant</u>

i. Covenant as both Secular and Religious

I have presented above how Palmer refutes the position of those scholars (e.g., Schillebeeckx) who contend that in Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian societies before the twelfth century and, above all, before the Council of Trent, marriage was viewed as a

---

[340] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 618.

[341] Cf. R. W. Moss. "Covenant" in James Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible. SwordSearcher Deluxe Study Library 8 (Broken Arrow, OK: StudyLamp Software LLC, 2018).

[342] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 619.

merely a civil and secular institution devoid of any religious dimension. Their position purported to show that the state and not the Church had jurisdiction over marriage and that there was no official Church ceremony for the validation of marriage. In fact, it was the Council of Lyons, in 1274, that made a formal claim of jurisdiction when presented herself with authority to establish the impediments of valid and licit marriage.[343] However, Palmer argues that among Hebrew, marriage was religious regardless of where it took place and those present.[344]

Hugenberger joins the voice of those (e.g., Palmer, Ponzetti, and Mutch) who consider (marital) covenant intrinsically religious. They demonstrate that in the ANE world and particularly in the Jewish tradition, marriage was never entirely secular but always religious. Palmer argues convincingly that "a covenant marriage does not need a religious or liturgical setting to express its inherent sacral character, in so far as God is both witness and guarantor of the covenant agreement."[345]

Another biblical scholar, William P. Brown, rightly argues, "The two defining marks of ancient Israel's concept of covenant are its theocentric origin and its corporate inclusiveness. In contrast to the ancient Near Eastern extra-biblical covenants, Israel's covenant was *established* by God for a *people*."[346] Hugenberger explains that "marriage was not only a status regulated by custom (ethics) and family law, but also, at least in the minds of some biblical authors, a sanction-sealed commitment to which the deity was

---

[343] Cf. Heinrich Denzinger, et al., *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), no. 860.

[344] Cf. Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 619.

[345] Ibid., 630.

[346] Brown, "The Character of Covenant in the Old Testament: A Theocentric Probe." *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 16 (1996): 16, 284.

witness."[347] He demonstrates that "the identification of marriage as covenant may be found in those texts which express Yahweh's relation to Israel in terms of the marriage analogy."[348]

Any covenant, marital or otherwise, is religious. As Professor Alan Lenzi put it, in the ANE world, "Treaties invoked divine powers to witness the stipulations and the oaths parties took to abide by them. And the physical documents were usually deposited in a temple, where they served as reminders to the gods to enforce them."[349] An oath which integrates a covenant was sworn by invoking the witness of the deities. Lawler gives another insight when he argues,

> Though the covenant of marriage is brought into being by the human act of free consent on the part of the couple, God is intimately involved in it as its author, its primary witness, and its guarantor. Covenants, therefore, are essentially religious and moral affairs, in distinction from contracts, which are secular, legal affairs. The parties bound by covenant are obligated to deal with one another in mutual respect and justice beyond the letter of the law… The involvement of God in a covenant marriage makes the marriage not just a legal institution but also a *mystery* or *sacrament*"[350]

ii. Covenant as Irrevocable and Permanent

In explaining the metaphor of covenant in the prophets, Schillebeeckx underscores that a covenant implied permanence and faithfulness. According to him, "The idea of such a covenant relationship clearly included lifelong fidelity, since it was precisely in order to expose Israel's infidelity to Yahweh that the prophets made an appeal to the image of

---

[347] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 281.

[348] Ibid., 294.

[349] Lenzi, "Hebrew Bible ANE World."

[350] Lawler, "Marriage as Covenant," 87.

marriage."[351] Contracts are temporal and conditions changeable according to a mutual or

unilateral agreement, whereas covenants are permanent and their terms of agreement

irrevocable.

Reflecting on the distinction between a covenant and a contract, Lawler explains,

"Contracts can be made for a stipulated period of time and, even in that time, can be voided,

albeit with material loss to one or both parties to the contract. Covenants are forever and

are irrevocable. They can be violated, but they cannot be voided. When they are violated,

the result is personal, not just material, loss for one or both of the covenanters."[352] This

position concurs with the clarification of two other biblical scholars, David Jones and John

Tarwater, who argue,

> We have noted that the language used to describe the nature of biblical covenants, the manner in which biblical covenants are established, and the way in which God deals with violations of biblical covenants all point to the enduring nature of these covenants. We are convinced that this evidence, coupled with the absence from scripture of any dissolved covenant in which God is a participant, provides evidence that points to the permanence of biblical covenants.[353]

Lawler stresses that covenant insinuates that the free, loving, mutual gifting and

accepting that creates the community of marriage is not temporary and revocable, as it

could be under contract, but permanent, irrevocable, and 'no longer [dependent] on human

actions alone.[354] Hillers underscored the same point and averred, "The covenant is such

that even wrongdoing cannot break it… God is bound to his promise no matter what."[355]

---

[351] Lawler, "Marriage as Covenant," 108.

[352] Ibid., 87.

[353] Jones, David and John Tarwater. "Are Biblical Covenants Dissoluble? Toward a Theology of Marriage". *Southwestern Journal of Theology*. Vol. 47:1 (Fall 2004), 11.

[354] Lawler, "Marriage as Covenant," 85. Lawler refers to GS 48.

[355] Hillers, *Covenant*, 112.

iii. Covenant as a Faithful "Partnership of Love"

Based on an etymological analysis of the Hebrew expression for covenant (*berit*) and its two renderings in Latin (*conventus* and *foedus*), Palmer concluded that *conventus* stresses the aspect of partnership, togetherness, and alliance, whereas *foedus* stresses trust and fidelity. Thus, understanding marriage as covenant means to regard it as a "faithful partnership." Wherefore, covenant encompasses loyalty, fidelity, exclusivity, and faithfulness, even when the partner is not faithful. Palmer avers,

> From the root word *fidus* and the verb form *fidere,* which means to trust, to have faith in, to entrust oneself to another, a covenant is seen as a relationship of mutual trust and fidelity *(fides).* Hence, to speak of a covenant of fidelity is redundant. Fidelity is of the essence of covenant. Contracts can be broken by mutual agreement, by failure to live up to the terms of the contract, by civil intervention. Covenants are not broken.[356]

Faithfulness implies exclusivity and total self-giving to the partner. William Roberts underscored that "though there are contractual elements in a marriage, the marital union is trans-contractual, going beyond any limits imposed by a contract. The couple give themselves to one another without reserve."[357] All these elements endorse the claim that "covenantal partnership of love," as *Gaudium et Spes* presented it, is, the best description of the key insights of the Catholic teaching on Christian marriage.

iv. Covenant as Community and Identity Building

In discussing the Noahatic covenant, it became clear that a covenant between God and the chosen people binds not only the person whom God choses as a mediator, but through the person, God establishes a covenant with his entire family, community, and his

---

[356] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 619.

[357] William Roberts, "Christian Marriage," in *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, ed. Jill Raitt, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick Parrella (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 217.

future generations. Thus, a covenant becomes not only an individual affair but also a familiar, communitarian, and intergenerational commitment.[358]

A covenant also becomes a reminder of the identity of the people, as some biblical passages attest.[359] Richard Bautch and Gary Knoppers view covenant "as the basis of group identity in Yehud."[360] The two authors argue that one issue begging for further clarification is "how [a] covenant can express the dynamics of group identity within Judean society as well as a 'national' identity for Judeans who are subjects of the Persian Empire."[361] Putting the same question in a Mozambican context, how has the formation of Mozambican identity contributed to an understanding of marriage as a covenant and as a building block of society? The first chapter responded to this question in the section on building national identity and promoting marriages between people of different regions. Interdependence, stability, and sense of belonging build and strengthen group or national identity. Community identity can strengthen marriages and family.

v. Covenants as Binding Oath

An oath is such an essential element in a covenant that the two expressions are sometimes used interchangeably. Hugenberger argues, "While few scholars would wish to follow N. Lohfink in identifying בְּרִית with oath, the indispensability of an oath for ratifying a covenant commands a widespread scholarly consensus."[362] For now, it suffices to refer to

---

[358] Cf. Nock and Brinig, "Covenant and Contract," 14.

[359] Cf. Dt 6:21 and Gn 28:13.

[360] Bautch and Knoppers, *Covenant in Persian Period*, 6.

[361] Ibid.

[362] Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 11-12.

the explanation given in the sections entitled "Marriage as Moral Obligation and Sacrament as on oath," and "What is really a covenant."

6. Marriage as a Covenant in the Catholic Tradition

a. <u>Marriage as Covenant in Greco-Roman Society</u>

Palmer summarizes insightfully how the Greco-Roman society, in which Christians lived, viewed marriage. He writes,

> There is no evidence that Christians or pagans ever regarded marriages as a secular reality, a sheerly social or civil affair. The sacral character of marriage, however, did not derive from the religious setting in which marriage was usually celebrated by pagans and Christians alike. It was rooted in the exchange of vows, which were likened to the military oath sworn to the emperor, the sacred commitment made by initiates in the mystery religions, and the baptismal vows of Christian initiation.[364]

Marriage was a covenantal and religious reality even when there was no apparent religious ritual or a presence of a religious minister or a shrine. According to Palmer, the covenantal character is indicated even in the use of expression *foedus* (covenant) and never *contractus* (contract).[365] He demonstrates that "in the monogamous societies of Rome and Greece the preferred expression for marriage was covenant, never contract."[366] Marriage was, at once, familiar and social, civil and religious.

Christians followed the marital practices of the empire unless clearly contrary to their faith. Palmer concludes, lamenting that "the change from the covenant idea of marriage, in which love and fidelity were mutually vowed or pledged, to a contractual agreement, in which rights to acts which service the race were exchanged, has contributed

---

[364] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 663.

[365] Cf. Ibid., 619.

[366] Ibid., 663.

to the breakdown of Christian marriage and to the growing number of intolerable marriage situations today."[367] The change occurred notably from the twelfth century onwards.[368]

b. Patristic: Marriage as Covenant, Sacrament and Contract

i. Marriage as Moral Obligation and Sacrament as an Oath

The prominent Dominican theologian Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009) rightly underlined that the Church fathers "view marriage as a moral obligation" in the sense that the spouses committed themselves to honor, respect, and support each other, to form a family, and to beget and raise their children. [369] Schillebeeckx also noted that "according to the church Fathers, marriage as a *sacramentum* in the older sense of '*life commitment'* or an '*oath of fidelity'* was something that *might not* be dissolved, since it involved a personal commission to live married life in such a way that the bond of marriage was not broken."[370] The couple promised to one another and to society that they would do whatever it takes to make their marriage and family work as long as they lived.[371]

The church Fathers understood *sacramentum* as an 'oath of fidelity' analogous to a Roman soldier's pledge of loyalty and commitment to belong and defend their country, even to die for it if necessary.[372] Through the oath, a soldier understood his obligation to defend his empire and give his energy and talent for the benefit of the country. Looked at in this perspective, marriage was as a sacrament analogous to Baptism being a sacrament.

---

[367] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 663.

[368] Cf. Ibid., 617 and 664.

[369] Schillebeeckx, *Marriage,* 204.

[370] Ibid., 203, Emphasis added.

[371] Cf. Ibid.

[372] Cf. Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*, rev. ed. (Liguori, MO: Triumph, 2001), 29.

ii. Moving Forth and Back from Covenant to Sacrament

Schillebeeckx presents a patristic view of marriage as leaning from a covenant to a sacrament understood in a contractual manner.[373] Palmer makes two qualifications on Patristic conceptions of marriage. First, "Early Christians writers accepted the Greco-Roman ideal of marriage as heterosexual, monogamous union designed for the procreation of children and the cultivation of virtuous citizens."[374] The second underscores how Christians strove to identify their marriage as "in the Lord" and respectful of their faith, which demanded mutual love, respect, and no distinction between free and slave.[375] Palmer argues,

> They strove for greater equality between husband and wife, for better treatment for women and children, and for greater restraint of sexual expression. They inveighed against the sexual double standard in Roman legal culture, against unchecked power of the paterfamilias, against infanticide and child enslavement, against sexual immorality, against extravagant weddings, easy divorces, and routine remarriages.[376]

iii. Moving from Covenant to Sacrament

Augustine spoke of marriage as a companionship and covenant, but he is best remembered for his presentation of the goods of marriage, often interpreted in a contractual than in a covenantal manner. Michael Lawler rightly states that Augustine "was to mold and control the doctrine of the Latin Church down to our own day, so much so that Augustine is sometimes called the doctor of Christian marriage. His influence is always felt in talk about marriage."[377] As Witte explains, "His fullest expositions came in tracts *On*

---

[373] Schillebeeckx, *Marriage,* 204.

[374] Witte, "The Covenant of Marriage," 75.

[375] Cf. Rom 10:12 and Gal 3:28.

[376] Witte, "Covenant of Marriage," 75.

[377] Lawler, *The Sacrament of Marriage*, 56.

the Good of Marriage (c. 401)*, On Marriage and Concupiscence* (ca. 419), and *On Adulterous Marriage* (419)."[378]

The controversies against the Manicheans and Pelagians shaped the reflection on sexuality and marriage in the Latin Church as the controversies with Gnostics and Stoics had earlier conditioned the reflection on sexuality and marriage in the Greek Fathers. Lawler poignantly points out, "As the Alexandrians defended sexuality and marriage against the attacks of Gnostics, so did Augustine defend them against the attacks of the Manicheans and Pelagians."[379] Augustine strived to balance between two contrasting tendencies: one advocating abstention from sexual relations and marriage regarded as evils and another encouraging licentiousness considered as not interfering in one's salvation.[380]

In his writings, Augustine wanted to claim the goodness of marriage and the radical superiority of Christian morality compared to the discipline of any ascetic movement of the time (e.g., Stoics, Essene). His legitimate concern drew him to a suspicion towards sex, on the one hand, and to toleration, but not really an exaltation of marriage, on the other hand. Augustine defended marriage in terms of the three 'goods of marriage' (*proles, fides, sacramentum*) and he added another aspect, 'the friendship between the sexes.'[381]

However, friendship and partnership did not receive much attention in subsequence reflections on marriage until the Second Vatican Council. The Baptist scholar John Witte Jr. reminds us that Augustine understood marriage as a covenant. According to Witte Jr.,

---

[378] John Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 65.

[379] Michael Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament*, 57.

[380] Cf. Mackin, *Marriage in the Catholic Church*, 83. Mackin explains, "Marcion forbade his followers to marry or to engage in sexual conduct in any circumstance."

[381] Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament,* 58.

"The deeper quality of a Christian sacramental marriage, Augustine argued, lies in its also being a 'covenant' (*foedus*), a 'bond' (*vinculum*), or a 'bond of covenant' (*vinculum foederis*)."[382]

Augustine's view on marriage has prevailed in the Catholic Church until the Scholastic period when Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) articulated the same teaching in terms of primary and secondary ends of marriage. The procreation and education of the offspring were the primary ends; the faithfulness and permanence were the secondary ends.[383]

After a stiff and tiring discussion, the Second Vatican Council will suppress this distinction and hierarchy, calling for a balanced harmony and stressing the importance of intimacy, an aspect that had not received much attention since Augustine's time.[384] It is worthwhile to point out that during the tense discussions and the interventions of Paul VI, "the outcome showed that the majority on the mixed commission wanted to leave open both the question of the hierarchy of the ends of marriage and the question of a new assessment of birth control."[385] Though the mixed commission had the responsibility of coordinating the discussion and elaborating the text on marriage, Paul VI had taken extensive treatment of marriage off the Council's agenda, and appointed another

---

[382] Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract*, 71.

[383] Cf. Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament,* 58 and 61. See also ___. *Marriage and the Catholic Church*, 31

[384] GS 48 speaks of partnership and GS 49 speaks of "the friendship distinctive of marriage."

[385] Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak, eds., *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, *The Council and the Transition: the Fourth Period and the End of the Council, September 1965–December 1965* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), 415.

commission to address marriage, which led to his controversial and yet prophetic 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.[386]

iv.   High Scholasticism: Marriage as Sacrament and Contract

Otto says that "The formal numeral seven presupposes a well-developed concept of sacrament. This emerged only around the middle of the 12th century."[387] However, the discussion on the notion of *sacramentum*" goes back to Augustine. It suffices here to say that, during the first millennium, before Thomas Aquinas, "Classic Roman law never defined marriage as a contract. neither did the European tradition…"[388] Marriage was always a covenant or sacrament in the broad sense of Augustine. Mackin explains that "The victory of the Roman side, that of Peter Lombard and the University of Paris, in the twelfth-century debate over the act of creating a marriage, favored the definition of marriage as contract."[389]

Palmer argues that during the mediaeval period, marriage was always referred to as a covenant and never as a contract. According to Palmer, "In the first millennium of the Church's history, all marriage, pagan as well as Christian, was discussed almost wholly in terms of covenant."[390] The change in language, from covenant to contract, carried changes of mentality and of the way people lived their marriages. Thus, Palmer demonstrates that

> the term contract was introduced into the vocabulary of marriage in the Scholastic period. The change from the covenant idea of marriage, in which love, and fidelity were mutually vowed or pledged, to a contractual agreement, in which rights to acts which service the race were exchanged, has contributed to the breakdown of

[386] See full account of the discussion during the council on marriage in Ibid., 408-419.

[387] Ludwing Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 1974), 338).

[388] Theodore Mackin, *Marriage in the Catholic Church: What Is Marriage* (NY/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1982), 186.

[389] Mackin, *Marriage in the Catholic Church*, 187.

[390] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 617.

Christian marriage and to the growing number of intolerable marriage situations today.[391]

The Council of Trent officialized such understanding of marriage as a contract in its attempt to clarify the grounds of validity of a marriage and prevent the abusive situation that occurred at the time. Such become an official view of the Church before Vatican Council as the next section shows.

c. __From Trent to the 1917 Code of Canon Law: Marriage as a Contract__

i. __The Council of Trent on Marriage__

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) in the session, "Doctrine and Canons on the Sacrament of Marriage," speaks of marriage as a sacrament which Christ instituted.[392] Reynolds explains that "No previous conciliar or papal decree had declared as a matter of dogma that marriage was a sacrament in the proper sense, and no one yet had been anathematized for saying or doubting it, but belief in the doctrine had become established as if it were an article of the Catholic faith…"[393] However, Reynolds points out "a serious

---

[391] Palmer, "Christian Marriage," 664.

[392] Cf. Trent 1563, DS 1799. Otto says, "The formal numeral seven presupposes a well-developed concept of sacrament. This emerged only around the middle of the 12th century. The earliest names in this connection [listing seven sacraments] are Magister Simon, the *Sententiae divinitatis* of the School of Gilbert of Poitiers, Petrus Lombardus, Magister Roland (Alexander III)." Otto, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 338.

[393] Philip Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology of Marriage from Its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 727.

of official pronouncements that ascended toward recognition of the doctrine without explicitly affirming it."[394] Trent moved "from implicit faith to explicit dogma."[395]

The Council of Trent reaffirmed what it considered the teaching of the Church, refuted and condemned what it understood as abuses against the sacrament of matrimony (Canons 1-12), such as polygamy (Can. 2) and marriages between close relatives (Can. 3).[396] Through the decree *Tametsi*, the Council gave concrete pastoral guidelines for a valid and licit celebration of the sacrament and discouraged clandestine marriages and any change to the ceremony/ritual without a permission of the bishop.[397] Furthermore, the Council reaffirmed "the Church's competence to make canonical rules regulating matters relating to marriage."[398]

ii. The Catechism of Pius V

In 1566, Pius V published the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which presents marriage in a clear contractual and legalistic language.[399] It states, "Matrimony, according

---

[394] Reynolds, *How Marriage Became Sacraments*, 728. "There included four pronouncements: Pope Lucius III's *Ad Abolendam* (1184) [Council of Verona]; the profession of faith that Pope Innocent III sent to the bishops of the Vaudois for the Waldensians in 1208.... the Profession of Faith of Michael Palaeologus from the Second Council of Lyons (1274); and above all, *The Bull of Union with the Armenians* from the Council of Florence (1439)." The Council of Florence specified that the seven sacraments confer grace to "those who receive them worthily." See Lawler, *Secular Marriage, Christian Sacrament* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1985), 37. Lyons listed marriage as one of the seven sacraments.

[395] Cf. Reynolds, *How Marriage Became Sacraments*, 728.

[396] Cf. Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament*, 63. Martos states, "It was only after the Council of Trent, because of the need to eliminate abuses in the practice of private marriages, that a standard Catholic wedding rite came into existence." Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 30.

[397] Martos, *Doors to the* Sacred, 8 and 30. Guidelines for a unified and unchanged ritual celebration purport to eradicate the rampant abuses that plagued the Church.

[398] Herbert Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 299. See also Trent, canons 4 and 12. Can. 4 reads, "If anyone says that the Church cannot establish impediments dissolving marriage, or that she has erred in establishing them, let him be anathema." Can. 12 reads, "If anyone says that matrimonial causes do not belong to ecclesiastical judges, let him be anathema."

[399] Cf. Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament*, 67.

to the general opinion of theologians, is defined: The conjugal union of man and woman, contracted between two qualified persons, which obliges them to live together throughout life."[400] Pius V clarifies that although different from other contracts, marriage is nevertheless a natural contract.[401] The catechism goes further in explaining the implications of the contract stating that "the marriage contract is not a mere promise, but a transfer of right, by which the man actually yields the dominion of his body to the woman, the woman the dominion of her body to the man." It speaks of sexual intimacy as "marriage debt."[402] Lawler summarizes, in three points, the teaching of Pio V's catechism on marriage.

> First, marriage was defined as 'the conjugal union of man and woman between legitimate persons, which is to last during life.' Secondly, it insisted that 'marriage is not a simple donation, but a mutual contract,'. Thirdly, it listed three goods associated with marriage, 'offspring, faith and sacrament,' and underscored the primacy of offspring over the others.[403]

iii. A Neglected Insight: Marriage as a Companionship

The Catechism of Pius V also spoke of marriage as a covenant, though such insight did not receive much official attention nor further development in the following centuries until the Second Vatican Council. Pius V states that marriage is a "matrimonial alliance," a rendering of *coniugii foedus*.[404] Pius V puts as the first reason of marriage companionship and "mutual assistance," the second as family and raising God-fearing children, and the third resembles the Augustinian contention of "remedy" against concupiscence.[405] The

---

[400] Pius V, *Council of Trent: Catechism for Parish Priests* trans. John McHugh and Charles Callan (The Catholic Primer, 1923), 208.

[401] Cf. Ibid., 211.

[402] Cf. Ibid. 208, 9, 212, 218.

[403] Lawler, *Secular Marriage, Christian Sacrament*, 43.

[404] Pius V, *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. Jeremiah Donovan (Baltimore: Lucas Brothers, 1905), 227. See also Pius V, *Council of Trent*, 210.

[405] Pius V, *Council of Trent,* 210.

Catechism stresses the importance of "mutual consent" and speaks of "matrimonial alliance."[406]

Two other important aspects that the council underscored which can enhance marriage as a covenant is the communitarian aspect of a marriage. The first aspect is that the witnesses represent the community. The community supports their marital journey and is strengthened by the love of the couple.

A second aspect deals with extraordinary witness of marriage. The council recommended that "when needed, provision is made for a lay person to act as the official witness. Where there is need, such as scarcity of sacred ministers, the local bishop may petition the Holy See for permission to delegate lay persons in countries where the episcopal conference has authorized such procedures."[407]

iv. From Trent to the Code of 1917

The Council of Trent had a "long-term effects" on the life of the Church.[408] Giuseppe Alberigo argues that the publication of the *Professio Fidei* in 1564, the Catechism and the new Missal in 1560, and the breviary in 1570, "helped to standardize certain key aspects of Catholic life, and gave the impression that Tridentine Theology was far more systematic than the conciliar decrees had suggested."[409] Alberigo explains that another aspect which helped to keep a sense of uniformity was the fact that "From the end of the sixteenth century, the papacy encouraged the Church to view the Council as the last

---

[406] Pius V, *Council of Trent,* 210. See Pius V, *Catechism of Trent*, 212.

[407] Ibid., 54. Quoting Thomas, 739.

[408] Raymond Bulman, "Introduction: The Historical Context," in Raitt, Bulman, and Parrella, 11.

[409] Giuseppe Alberigo, "From the Council of Trent to "Tridentinism"," in *From Trent to Vatican Ii: Historical and Theological Investigations*, ed. Jill Raitt, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick Parrella (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 21.

word I matters of faith and discipline. The Council has incorporated, redefined, and updated the norms of the previous centuries to such an extent that it became sufficient, and preferable, to know these norms only through the lens of the Council's decrees."[410] As the time went on, The Council of Trent, "came to be seen less and less as a significant event and more and more as a cogent but lifeless corpus of doctrinal and disciplinary norms."[411]

v. The 1917 Code of Canon Law

Lawler states, "Over the next four hundred years," that means from 1563 up to 1917, "in their attempt to define what they called the *juridical essence of marriage,* canon lawyers of the Roman Catholic Church will ignore the insight of marriage as companionship and covenant and will concentrate exclusively on the contractual component.[412] According to Lawler, "the principal designer and editor of the *Code of Canon Law... * Gaspari acknowledged that marriage was never called a contract either in Roman or in European law. But he insisted that it must be a contract since it is formed by two parties consenting to the same thing, thereby creating mutual obligations, just as a contract does."[413] So the 1917 Code officialized a contractual view of marriage.

The Code states, "Marriage is a lawful and exclusive contract by which a man and a woman mutually give and accept a right over their bodies for the purpose of acts which are in themselves suitable for the generation of children."[414] This approach to marriage

---

[410] Alberigo, "From Trent to 'Tridentinism," 27.

[411] Ibid., 30.

[412] Cf. Lawker, *Secular Marriage, Christian Sacrament*, 44. See the summary in ibid., 43.

[413] Ibid., 44.

[414] T. Lincoln Bouscaren and Adam Ellis, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary* (Milwaukee, WI.: Bruce, 1957), 447, quoted in William Roberts, "Christian Marriage," in From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations, ed. Jill Raitt, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick Parrella (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 211.

became a predominant Catholic teaching before the Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes*.[415] The revised Code of 1983 presents marriage according to the Second Vatican's understanding of marriage as Covenant.

d. Second Vatican Council: Marriage as Covenant

The *Gaudium et Spes*, or "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," dedicates a chapter on matrimony and presents it as a covenant. The chapter entitled "Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family," shifts from a legalist, juridical, rigorist view of marriage to a more personalist, biblical, pastoral approach. It balances satisfactorily the couple's unitive-intimate, communicative, personalist aspects of marriage with the communitarian, ecclesial, and social dimensions of a Christian family.[416] Speaking about the Second Vatican Council, Martos explains that

> although [it] did not reverse the traditional Catholic teaching on marriage, it did adopt a more personalist perspective toward sex. In particular, the council avoided speaking of marriage as contract or legal bond and instead referred to it in sociological, personal, and biblical terms. It spoke of marriage as a social and divine institution, an agreement between persons, an intimate partnership, a union in love, a community, and a covenant.[417]

The breakthrough was that marriage is spoken of as "the intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator…and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent."[418] Bernard Häring explains why the Council thought covenant expresses better than contract the meaning of the sacrament of matrimony. For Häring,

---

[415] Roberts, "Christian Marriage," 211-12.

[416] Cf. GS 51.

[417] Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 387-388.

[418] GS 48,1.

The insertion of the word '*contractus*' (contract) instead of '*foedus*' (covenant) was rejected by the commission despite repeated numerous petitions… There are many reasons for this. The relation between Christ and the Church is not a contract but a covenant. Historically speaking, the 'marriage contract' was often something bargained for by the two families and frequently obscured the genuine nature of the marriage covenant, which is a **community of love**.[419]

Gaudium at Spes presents marriage in biblical and not in contractual or commercial-like language. I will underscore in the fourth chapter the prophetic role of this teaching in confronting the Mozambican practice of *lobolo*, whose covenantal dimension is obscured by the mercantilist and consumerist mentality of our time.

e. <u>From the Second Vatican Council to *Amoris Laetitia*</u>

Since Vatican II, there have been three synods on marriage and family: one in 1980 and the others in 2014 and 2015. From these synods came two post-synodal apostolic exhortations: *Familiaris Consortio* in 1981 and *Amoris Laetitia* in 2016. My reading of these documents confirms the importance of an inculturated pastoral approach on marriage and family, as I already explained in the first chapter. These exhortations also underscore the importance of an ongoing study to make marriage and family more appealing to young people and to society in general, with supportive structures to prepare and support their commitment. This section will present the main insights from *Familiaris Consortio*, *Amor Laetitia*, *Ecclesia in Africa*, *Africae Munus* and, finally, documents related to Mozambique.

---

[419] Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 232-234.

i. Familiaris Consortio (FC, 1981)

Familiaris Consortio underlines the urgency for further study for ongoing inculturation, which will definitively enrich both the local and universal Church in every aspect of our faith, including marriage and family. "The whole Church will be enriched also by the cultures which, though lacking technology, abound in human wisdom and are enlivened by profound moral values."[420] In this statement, we cannot but include among those cultures many African societies. A second aspect is that Christ accompanies and graces couples in their journey.[421]

Through a life of personal self-giving, the couple participates in the new and eternal covenant of Christ to his Father and to the Church. Thus, they become a sacrament to each other, to the Church, and to the world. This is possible because "Christ renews the first plan that the Creator inscribed in the hearts of man and woman, and in the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony offers a 'new heart': thus, the couples are not only able to overcome 'hardness of heart' but also and above all they are able to share the full and definitive love of Christ, the new and eternal Covenant made flesh".[422] This assurance is of paramount significance when building a pastoral approach that considers the fears that young people have of permanent commitments but also their desire for a stable, faithful, and fulfilling marriage.

---

[420] FC 20.

[421] Cf. Pius XI, *Casti Connubii: On Christian Marriage*, 61-62.

[422] FC 20.

ii. Africa: Two Synods of Africa and Two Apostolic Exhortations

John Paul II's 1994 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* underscores the "positive values of African Culture."[423] Next chapter of this dissertation, which deals with Mozambican values, will present these positive elements because they are integral to an understanding of marriage as covenant and can ground an inculturated pastoral approach that responds to the challenge of marriage and family today in Mozambique.

Benedict XVI's 2011 post-apostolic exhortation *Africae Munus* devoted a session on family as an environment where people learn to live in harmony with the various generations with the elderly, men, women, children, and young people.[424] Family is the conducive environment to acquire those values so important for a healthy society, including "forgiveness, peace and reconciliation."[425] The document underscores the African vision of life as encompassing elements that upholds marriage and family and helps to solve problems without having to resort to separation or civil divorces.[426] All these elements contribute to making Africa a "sign of hope" for the continent and for the world.[427]

iii. One Pastoral Letter and Two Theological-Pastoral Seminars

In the first chapter, I referred to and used extensively the first pastoral letter of the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique (CEM), which was published in 1981, the same year

---

[423] EIA 43-44.

[424] Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, November 19 2011, nos. 42-46, accessed February 21, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html. Henceforth cited as AM.

[425] Cf. AM 42-43.

[426] Cf. AM 69-78.

[427] Cf. AM 172.

of the publication of *Familiaris Consortio*. The CEM recognized the publication of *Familiaris Consortio* but did not have time to include its insight in the pastoral letter. The CEM pointed out the lights and shadows of families in Mozambique and acknowledged the initiatives that the government was taking to protect and ameliorate marriage and family. They underscored the importance of traditional values in families, but guided by pastoral prudence, they did not say much about traditional marriage and its influence in the lives of Christians.

With the encouragement from *Ecclesia in Africa*, the Mozambican church held two important Theological-Pastoral Weeks in 2000 and 2001. Pastors, theologians, the laity, people engaged in family ministry, and those knowledgeable in African culture(s) together reflected on the challenges and opportunities for an inculturation of marriage and family in Mozambique to respond to the challenges they face. The general perspective on how I read the Mozambican context draw its insight from those Weeks. The next chapter will also benefit from the reports, the collaborative effort of members of the people of God and from the openness of the Mozambican Church leaders in welcoming new initiatives in the area of inculturation of marriage and family.

iv. *Amoris Laetitia* (AL, 2016)

As I keep reading *Amoris Laetitia*, three elements call my attention as being relevant for this research. First, its objective underscores the way we should approach the document, that is, as "an aid to reflection, dialogue and pastoral practice, and as a help and encouragement to families in their daily commitments and challenges."[428] Thus, as an aid, we use the Ignatian criterion of *tantum quantum*, which means everything that will be of

---

[428] AL 4.

help for fostering marriage and family in Africa will be taken, appropriated, and implemented.

The second element of *Amoris Laetitia* is its clear reference and appreciation of African values that enhance family.

> In some countries, especially in various parts of Africa, secularism has not weakened certain traditional values, and marriages forge a strong bond between two wider families, with clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and conflicts… All these factors can inspire a positive and welcoming pastoral approach capable of helping couples to grow in appreciation of the demands of the Gospel.[429].

This passage is one of the significant insights that supports the kind of research I am doing and makes this project relevant for the Church in Africa. It concurs with *Ecclesia in Africa* in its positive presentation of African values as mediation for sustaining marriage and family.

A third element is *Amoris Laetitia*'s presentation of one of the biggest challenge marriage is facing: "The ideal of marriage, marked by a commitment to exclusivity and stability, is swept aside whenever it proves inconvenient or tiresome. [430] The fear of loneliness and the desire for stability and fidelity exist side by side with a growing fear of entrapment in a relationship that could hamper the achievement of one's personal goals."[431] My reading of AL underlines these three aspects as giving light to my dissertation.

v. The 2016 Oder of Celebrating Matrimony

In 2016, the USCCB published "The Order of Celebrating Matrimony," which is the revised English translation of the second edition of the *Rite of Marriage,* published in

---

[429] AL 38.

[430] Cf. AL 34.

[431] AL 34.

1966, as a follow up of the Second Vatican Council on marriage and family.[432] The history of the text and the change of the name from rite to order and from marriage to matrimony are interesting.[433] However, here, it suffices to underscore three aspects: First, the text highlights more than the previous one that marriage is a covenant.[434] Turner explains, "The new paragraph describes marriage as a covenant and a partnership between a man and a woman, and places it within some spheres of natural and canon law. Its first footnote stands upon canon law's definition of marriage."[435]

Second, the order underlines the "Adaptations to be prepared by the Conferences of Bishops," in line with the third chapter of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* "Norms for adapting the Liturgy to the culture and traditions of peoples."[436] The Order states that "whatever is honorable and not indissolubly connected with superstition and errors should be sympathetically considered and, if possible, preserved intact, and in fact even admitted into Liturgy itself as long as it harmonizes with a true and authentic liturgical spirit."[437]

The third element is that the order underscores the importance of the community in the celebration of matrimony and helping the couple live her marital vocation faithfully.[438] The Order introduced a new paragraph which states, "the entire Christian community is

---

[432] Cf. Turner, *Inseparable Love*, 1.

[433] See Barry Hudock, "Changes Coming to Marriage Rite in the U.S. Rollout of 'Order for Celebrating Matrimony,' Approved by the Vatican, Is Expected Sometime in 2016," *OSV Newsweekly*, December 16, 2015, accessed January 4, 2018, https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/Story/TabId/2672/ArtMID/13567/ArticleID/18852/Changes-coming-to-marriage-rite-in-the-US.aspx.

[434] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, nos. 1-2, and 7.

[435] Ibid., 9. Ref. Canon 1055, &1

[436] Cf. SC 22.2 speaks about who can make the adaptations and SC 37-40 speaks about what kind of adaptations.

[437] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no, 43.

[438] Cf. ibid., nos. 14 and 26.

involved in all the rituals. Here the faithful are expected to participate in preparing the couple and in bearing witness to God's love."[439] These three aspects are of particular relevance for an inculturated pastoral approach.

7.   Practical Implications of Marriage as a Covenant

a. Seven Practical Implications

Chapter Six of Tarwater's book *Marriage as Covenant* deals with the "Theological and Moral Implications of a Covenant Marriage." Tarwater aims at responding to the question, what does it mean that marriage is a covenant in daily life? How can understanding marriage as covenant influence the way people live their marital life? Tarwater summarizes the pratical implications in four points. He argues, 'God having designed marriage to be a covenant implies that the husband-wife relationship is *exclusive*, *heterosexual*, *fruitful*, and *life-long*.'[440]

The Baptist professor Andreas Köstenberger explains that "embracing a 'marriage covenant' concept means a couple must understand and commit itself to at least the following five things:" permanence, sacredness, intimacy, mutuality and exclusivity.[441] When Tarwater's list is combined with the one from Köstenberger, the result is a relation of seven implications of understanding marriage as a covenant. Marriage is exclusive, fruitful, heterosexual, permanent (lifelong), intimate, mutual (complementarity).

Understanding marriage as covenant implies that all these elements will be part of an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage. Chapter Three will show that Mozambican

---

[439] Turner, *Inseparable Love*, no. 26.

[440] Tarwater, *Marriage as Covenant*, 122.

[441] Kostenberger, "Bible's Teaching Marriage Family."

values that enhance marriage and family are covenantal. Chapter Four will show that those Mozambican values are consistent with biblical understanding of covenant and with Christian values.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explained what a covenant is, what marriage as a covenant means, how it became part of the official teaching of the Church on Christian Marriage, and what the implications of understanding marriage and family as a covenant are. While presenting the key features of a covenant, the chapter underscored that the metaphor of covenant is currently favored as a common ground for conversing about the joys and the sorrows, the challenges and the opportunities of marriage and family in a way that is interreligious and ecumenical, interdisciplinary and transcultural, sympathetic for both religious and secular/civil sensibilities. As Witte Jr. put it, "The covenant metaphor is a better conceptual bridge builder in discussing marriage historically and today." [442]

Above all, Mozambican societies appreciate metaphoric language (i.e., storytelling, proverbs and riddles, pedagogic dramatizations, refrains blending poetry and songs), and they use it in educating people for adulthood, of which marriage is an integral part. The next chapter, "Mozambican Values that Enhance Marriage and Family," will explore the covenantal elements present in Mozambican society and how they influence marriage and family.

This chapter showed that the relevance of the notion of covenant undergirds the Christian faith and any human relationship because, as some scholars put it, "Christianity is based on covenant relationships with God, with the community, and with each other.

---

[442] Witte, "Covenant of Marriage," 163.

Covenant relationships are characterized by fidelity, mutuality, and earnest personal encounter."[443] The fact that covenant binds the individual, family, community and future generations makes such a notion appealing to Mozambique.

---

[443] Ponzetti Barbara Mutch, "Marriage as Covenant," 224.

CHAPTER THREE

MOZAMBICAN VALUES ENHANCING MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

> In some countries, especially in various parts of Africa, secularism has not weakened certain traditional values, and marriages forge a strong bond between two wider families, with clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and conflicts… All these factors can inspire a positive and welcoming pastoral approach capable of helping couples to grow in appreciation of the demands of the Gospel.
> —Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 38.

The above passage highlights how the recent apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* makes astounding and encouraging reference to African values that enhance marriage and family.[444] I cannot but concede that this is one of my favorite passages, and it justifies the importance of this chapter. Similarly, in 1995, another post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, had a two-paragraph section entitled the "Positive Values of African Culture."[445] There, the Synod Fathers acknowledged that Africa "is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities which it can offer to the Churches and humanity as a whole. The Synod Fathers highlighted some of these cultural values, which are truly a providential preparation for the transmission of the Gospel."[446]

In 2011, *Africae Munus*, dedicated to the mission of the Church in Africa, devoted a section on the family as an environment where people learn (and are called) to live in harmony with various generations: with the elderly, men, women, children, and young people.[447] See more on this document in the previous chapter in the brief section entitled,

---

[444] Cf. AL 38.

[445] EIA, 42-43.

[446] EIA 42.

[447] AM 42-46.

"Africa: Two Synods of Africa and Two Apostolic Exhortations."

The 1981 pastoral letter of the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique suggested that the local church should "promote the moral, cultural and traditional values that enrich a family, the preparation for matrimony, the liturgical celebration, the church and the society."[448] It also explicitly recognized the particular importance of the traditional family in the "great moments of life such as birth and death, preparation and celebration of marriage, in crises in the conjugal unity and fecundity, closeness, and bond between families, education, and vocation of children."[449] Given the then-government animosity towards traditional practices and a lingering uneasiness from influential sectors of the high hierarchy as regards to traditional Mozambican practices, the CEM prudently and wisely judged that it was not yet opportune to elaborate on traditional values. However, the few references in the letter suffice to highlight the presence, in the society, of traditional elements that strengthen marriage and family.

The above references indicate unequivocally Mozambican wisdom in coping with life and its challenges. This chapter will underscore ten of those values, namely, (1) the overall approbation of marriage, family, and life, (2) the rites of initiation and education for adulthood, (3) community-oriented societies with a keen sense of belonging, (4) a strong bond of solidarity and interdependence, (5) the assessment of maturity through hard work, discipline, and responsibility, (6) taboos as guiding principles in human sexuality

---

[448] CEM, *A família cristã*, 66. The translation is mine. The text in Portuguese reads, "Que se promovam os valores morais, culturais e tradicionais que enriquecem a família, a preparação para o matrimónio, a celebração da liturgia, a Igreja e a sociedade."

[449] Ibid., 2. The translation is mine. The text reads, "a família tradicional com a sua importância e decisão particularmente nos grandes momentos da vida dos casais, como são o nascimento, as crises da unidade e fecundidade conjugal, a aproximação e união das diversas famílias, a educação e vocação dos filhos."

and life in general, (7) respect for the elderly and veneration of ancestors, (8) a joyful celebration of life and resilience in difficulties, (9) lobolo as a token of appreciation and guarantee of stability, and (10) traditional structures for solving problems.

1. Overall Approbation for Marriage, Family, and Life

> In African culture and tradition, the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental. Open to this sense of the family, love and respect for life; the African loves children, who are joyfully welcomed as gifts of God. 'The sons and daughters of Africa love life… The peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life.'
>
> —John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 43.

a. <u>Interdependence between Marriage, Family, Life, and Community</u>

Ecclesia in Africa satisfactorily captures the view of the majority of African societies.[450] In his 1968 doctoral dissertation about Macua people, one of the major ethnic groups in the northeastern part of Mozambique, Lerma, a Consolata missionary working in Lichinga (Niassa Province), underscored an aspect of Mozambican society:

> The first objective of the matrimonial union is the transmission of life. Man and woman, when they marry, place themselves at the service of life and are community instruments through which the community receives life as a gift and transmits it as a tribute to the one who gave it to them. Life is given to us to pass on to others and not to retain it for us.[451]

Lerma underscores not only the importance of life among Macua people but also the interconnection between marriage, life, family, and community. On such interdependence, Bujo states,

> To impart life is the highest commandment and all members of a lineage are called to promote this life both individually and jointly. Whoever promotes individual life

---

[450] Cf. EIA 43.

[451] Martinez Lerma, *O povo macua e a sua cultura* (Lisbon: ME IICT, 1989), 104. The text reads, "O primeiro objetivo da união matrimonial é a transmissão da vida. O homem e a mulher, ao casarem-se, colocam-se ao serviço da vida e são instrumentos comunitários através dos quais a comunidade recebe a vida como um dom e transmitem-na como uma homenagem a quem lha deu. A vida é-nos dada para a transmitirmos aos outros e não para a retermos para nós."

– one's own life or that of another – strengthens the lineage. Similarly, whoever neglects 'life' harms the same community. Both men and women are equally involved in the life-giving process. Both men and women are commanded by God and the ancestors to pass on life, although in different ways.[452]

Other African scholars, in one way or another, have underscored that most African societies see marriage, family, life, and the community as interdependent, each one enhancing the other. Magesa concurs with such a view, pointing out that the process of traditional education fostered such a worldview. Magesa argues, "The initiation process, which turns a youth from a boy or girl into a man or woman, points to marriage as the most basic expression of the desire to maintain life. Without its consummation in marriage, initiation remains incomplete. Whatever else a person has or is, without marriage and children, one is nothing."[453] Wherever it comes from, any attempt to dissociate marriage, children, family, and the community should serve as a warning sign of an attempt to disrupt Mozambican family and render it dysfunctional. Destroying a family is equivalent to destroy Mozambican society.

b. **Interdependence and Inseparability of the Four Aspects**

Khofi Phiri rightly argues that "there is a strong link between community and life. In fact, the community is the custodian of life. It has the obligation of enhancing life, such that, without community, an individual is at risk."[454] Phiri goes on to underscore that "the community organizes life and makes it the center of all activities in such a way that all the ceremonies, rites and rituals are oriented to celebrate, promote, safeguard and enjoy life.

---

[452] Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 123.

[453] Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 104.

[454] Khofi Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage: A Christian Theological Appraisal* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011), 23.

Life, therefore, stands at the center of the entire community."[455] Underscoring the same point, Lawrence Ndlovu commenting on *Amoris Laetitia* argues that "Communitarianism is deeply engraved in African's outlook. Even personhood is defined communally – 'Ubuntu'. Here there is a real tangible avenue for the church in Africa to enculturate the sacrament of marriage because in the African context marriage is not just about those getting married it is also a marriage of families, tribes and communities."[456]

Observe the diagram in figure 1:
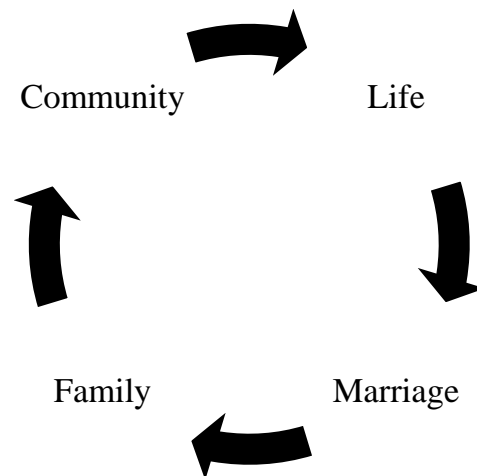
Figure 1: Four Interconnected Elements in Mozambican Society

"There is a strong link between community and life" because family life builds the community. "The community organizes life and makes it the center of all activities in such a way that the ceremonies, rites and rituals are oriented to celebrate, promote, safeguard and enjoy life."[457] Furthermore, marriage is the backbone of family and life. Marriage is

---

[455] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 23.

[456] Lawrence Ndlovu, "*Amoris Laetitia*: An African Perspective," The Jesuit Institute of South Africa, 2016, accessed August 10, 2016, www.jesuitinstitute.org.za/index.php/2016/04/19/amoris-laetitia-an-african-perspective. Fr. Lawrence Mduduzi Ndlovu is from the Archdiocese of Johannesburg who is studying at Heythrop College in London.

[457] Ibid.

associated with bearing and nurturing life and celebrating the life of the elders and ancestors. Phiri reiterates the link between marriage, family, community, and life in most African societies. Though emphasis can vary on the importance each society accords to one of the four elements, the general assumption is that they are interconnected. Therefore, any public policy or pastoral approach that dissociates those fours aspects will create unnecessary confusion, disrupt the equilibrium in society as shown in Chapter One. A key way of transmitting life is through bearing, nurturing, and educating children to adulthood.

c. **Love for Life and Children**

i. **Love for Children in Most African Societies**

As *Ecclesia in Africa* reminds us, "the African loves children, who are joyfully welcomed as gifts of God."[458] Concurring with this, Magesa argues that "this valuing of life is so crucial to the system of African ethical thought."[459] Magesa goes on to explain the reason Africans bestow so great importance to children. For an African, "the presence of children assures that the life of the individual, the clan, and the lineage continues as the children bear the names of their ancestors. If the lineage of a given family in the clan has to cease, to *die*, because of the lack of offspring to carry it on by name, part of the life of the clan ceases as well. It *dies*."[460] Therefore, each person has a "moral obligation" to do what it takes to contribute to the continuity of the life that God granted to the community through their ancestors. This way of looking at life is a value to cherish and commend in

---

[458] EIA 43.

[459] Magesa, *African* Religion, 64.

[460] Ibid., 63-64.

any ministry on marriage and family if it purports to be meaningful and relevant in Mozambique.

According to a *Bantu* perspective, to shy away from the responsibility of transmitting life is one of the worst things a person can do against oneself and the community. A deliberate refusal to share life is selfishness, irresponsibility, and immaturity altogether. As Magesa rightly argued, "For a person to cause this to happen knowingly and intentionally constitutes one of the worst crimes or moral wrongs against oneself, the community, and society. For what is demanded as ultimate good is that life be preserved and perpetuated in every way possible, in its past, present, and future forms."[461] This worldview is strongly present in Mozambican societies: Mozambican societies love marriage and children.

ii. Mozambicans' High Regard for Children: No "Unwanted Child"

Lerma wrote in 1968 that "the birth of a child is one of the most important events of Macua society. The child is desired and expected by the parents, by responsible and members of the family, by inhabitants and, finally, for all members of society, because of all love life and wish that it continues. Each time a child is born this ideal is concretely realized."[462] What Lerma speaks about the Makua matrilineal northern people also applies to the central and southern patrilineal societies of the country. Mozambicans love children and cherish each birth.

---

[461] Magesa, *African* Religion, 64.

[462] Lerma, *O povo macua*, 89. The texto reads, "O nascimento de uma criança é um dos acontecimentos mais importantes da sociedade macua. A criança é desejada e esperada pelos pais, pelos responsáveis e membros da família, pelos habitantes e, finalmente, por todos os membros da sociedade, porque todos amam a vida e desejam que esta continue. Cada vez que nasce uma criança este ideal realiza-se concretamente."

In traditional Mozambican society, there were no unwanted children. The society was structured in such a way that a child was always welcomed and taken care of. In a matrilinear society, even a child of an extra-marital affair was welcomed because a child always belonged to the mother and helped the growth of the matrilinear family regardless of the father. In a patrilinear society, an extramarital child was also welcomed but belonged to the patrilinear family whose man was officially recognized as the husband, even knowing that the man is not the biological father. In this context, the traditional society had a way to welcome, nurture, and educate a child regardless of the circumstances of the child's birth.

The life of a human being deserves every respect possible, whether it is a life of a child, an old or sick person, or a life of an unborn child. A child is a continuation of the life of the ancestor, who guarantees the continuity of the clan, community, and family. A popular proverb manifests the importantance of each child: "you do not know a child that will bury you." A life of an old and weakened person deserves all respect because they will soon join the realm of the ancestors. The spirit of those who die bitter, remorseful, and mistreated will not enhance the life of the community because they will be lingering around to harm and destroy the community they belonged to.[463] Those are the bad spirits of the society.

Indeed, the more children one has, the better. Concurring with such a view, in 2009, Bujo wrote, "African people see their survival in the bearing of many children."[464] Writing about Mozambique, in 2007, Ndege rightly argued, "The more descendents one has, the

---

[463] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 26.

[464] Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 148.

better off is considered and more and more one is assured of being immortalized after death."[465] Apart from the high regard for children, with the mortality rate still high, "It makes sense to many people who live in traditional society that having more children ensured that a least a few survive into adulthood."[466] This high regard for children can look exaggerated in western societies whose couples opt to have no child at all or reluctantly have only one or two.[467]

For most Mozambican societies, life is more satisfying with children than without or with only a few. The traditional mindset, which is still very much present in Mozambique, prefers a simpler life but with more children to share with than a materially wealthy life but with one or two children or no child at all. One cannot make sense of the Mozambican mindset unless they understand that life, children, and community are more valuable than any material gain or individual enjoyment of life. Material facilities are valued when enjoyed in a community. An Inculturated pastoral approach will consider a positive aspects of such a view.

Such high regard for children in the context of marriage, family and community explains why 80 to 90 percent of African rejects abortion and, to a great degree, contraceptives and sterilization. (Pew Research). Bujo explains that "African Traditions

---

[465] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 79.

[466] Ibid., 79.

[467] Cf. Gretchen Livingston, "Birth Rates Lag in Europe and the U.S., but the Desire for Kids Does Not," Pew Research Center, April 11, 2014, accessed January 24, 2018, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/04/11/birth-rates-lag-in-europe-and-the-u-s-but-the-desire-for-kids-does-not.

rejects abortion and has never regarded it as a legitimate method of birth control."[468] Such a view cannot be ignored in a inculturated pastoral approach to marriage.

The high regard for children also explains, in part, the finding of "The World Bank Database report of December 2017 that, in Mozambique, "Fertility rates are high when compared to peer countries… despite higher spending on reproductive and maternal health since 2012."[469] At the same time, The United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) reported that UNPF, USA Government and NGOs from Europe and USA have used more than 52 percent of their funds in what they call "Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Services," which in practice means offering easy access to contraceptives, abortion and sterilization.[470] Such offer intends to reduce the birth rate and the population of poor countries as Mozambique.

Such objective is not a secret as Keenan, in a March 2018 article in Lancet, , clarified that "Now more than ever, family-planning programmes (including safe abortion services) should be a global priority; they result in multifaceted health benefits for women and children, help to reduce population growth, and would contribute to success in the SDGs."[471]

---

[468] Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 149. See the reasons Bujo gives for such a high regard for children and rejection of abortion in *Plea for Change*, 148.

[469] Worldbankgroup, "Mozambique Economic Update: Making the Most of Demographic Change," (December 2017): 17, accessed March 20, 2018, http://clubofmozambique.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/122234-REVISED-Mozambique-Economic-Update-December-2017-EN.pdf.

[470] "Mozambique 2016 Programme Activities Data," UNFPA, 2016, accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.unfpa.org/data/transparency-portal/unfpa-mozambique?page=2. The average expenditure was 60% from 2014 to 2016. That is, 68.5% in 2014, 59.4% in 2015 and 52.8% in 2016.

[471] Katherine Keenan, "Novel Methods for Capturing Variation in Unintended Pregnancy across Time and Place," *The Lancet Global Health* 6, no. 4 (March 2018): e353, accessed March 21, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30076-7. She is from the School of Geography and Sustainable Development at the University of St Andrews and is commenting on Family Planning 2020 for developing countries.

Love for life and appreciation for children are values to commend and to consider in any serious discussion on marriage and family. In Mozambican society, children are an asset and not a problem or a burden to avoid, even when the family is poor, or the child was unexpected.[472] "There are no undesirable children in Africa," poignantly avers Obianuju Ekeocha, "Founder and President of Culture of Life Africa, an initiative dedicated to the promotion and defense of the African values of the sanctity of life, beauty of marriage, blessings of motherhood and the dignity of family life."[473]

d. **Motherhood and Fatherhood as Gift, Not a Problem**

Although the intensity of such value may vary from one country to another, there is an overall appreciation for life and children to the extent that Magesa sums up African religion as a "Moral Tradition of Abundant Life," expression that gave the title to his book. He avers that "the foundation and purpose of the ethical perspective of African Religion is life, life in its fullness. Everything is perceived with reference to this."[474] Thus, rearing, nurturing, and educating a child is the primary way of transmitting and sharing life. What Magesa speak of Africa as a continent applies as well to Mozambique, as Lerma points out in his writing on Macua people from Nampula, a northeast province of Mozambique.

Even today with so many unsettling and disrupting influences on marriage and family, Mozambican society still highly cherishes motherhood and fatherhood. Lermas states, "In the society, there is a great esteem for the motherhood. The greatest aspiration of a woman is to walk through the village with her child behind her back, an unmistakable

---

[472] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 86.

[473] Obianuju Ekeocha: Founder & President of Culture of Life Africa," Culture of Life Africa, 2012, accessed September 17, 2017, http://cultureoflifeafrica.com/meet-uju.html.

[474] Magesa, *African Religion*, 77.

sign that she is a mother."[475]   Motherhood, fatherhood, cherishing children and life, and giving oneself entirely for the family are Mozambican values to commend and reprise wherever they are weakened. Those values are a patrimony from traditional wisdom that should be emulated and taken as an antidote against questionable foreign lifestyles that plague many African countries.

Appreciation for children is a general feature in most African societies. For example, among the Gikuyu, "the social position of a married man and a woman who have children is of greater importance and dignity than that of a bachelor or spinster."[476]   As Ndege indicates, in Mozambique, "A childless couple is considered a misfortune," because "Procreation and marriage... provide spiritual continuity as well as material well-being."[477] In fact, as Ekeocha puts it, "Our babies are always a firm symbol of hope, a promise of life, a reason to strive for the legacy of a bright future."[478]

2. Rites of Initiation and Education for Adulthood

Through initiation, the individual passes from childhood to adulthood; participating in initiation rites, the young person acquires the maturity and becomes aware of one's own identity and one's place in the community. After initiation, a young person can take a full part in all activities of society: S/he can marry, participate in traditional sacrifices, sit in the midst of adults, speak publicly at meetings, take part in parties and go to funerals.

—Lerma, *O Povo Macua e a Sua Cultura*.

---

[475] Lerma, *O povo macua*, 90. "Na sociedade existe uma grande estima pela maternidade. A aspiração maior de uma mulher é passear pela aldeia com o seu filho as costas, sinal inequívoco de que é mãe."

[476] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu*, vol. 219 (London: Heiemann, 1979), 164.

[477] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 79.

[478] Obianuju Ekeocha, "An African Woman's Open Letter to Melinda Gates." Pontifical Council for the Laity, 2012, accessed September 17, 2017, http://www.laici.va/content/laici/en/sezioni/donna/notizie/an-african-woman-s-open-letter-to-melinda-gates.html.

a. The Meaning and Purpose of Rites of Initiation

In the epigraph, Lerma summaries insightfully and straightforwardly the meaning and significance of the rites of initiation in people's lives.[479] The rites of initiation are an intense training with a noticeable transformative impact in the life of young adults. For Lerma, the rites of initiation teach boys and girls all that is necessary for adult life.[480] According to Ndege, such transformation happens because "Instructions during initiation focus on conduct and behavior as well as duties and responsibilities on the part of the initiate for his or her good and the best interests of the entire community. A person is supposed to look beyond the self. The individual is socialized to be there for others. Unity is strength"[481] Such a complex and holistic education prepare young adults for marital life with all the challenges that it entails and it is a major factor in ensuring marital stability.[482]

b. Rites of Initiation and the Preparation for Marriage and Family

> One of the educational purposes of initiation rites is to introduce young people to matters of sex, marriage, procreation and family life. One could say that initiation is a ritual of sanctification and preparation for marriage, and only when it is over may young people get married. Since the whole community participates in the initiation rites, it is, therefore, the entire corporate body of society which prepares the young people for marriage and family life.
> —John Mbiti, *African Religions, and Philosophy*, 135.

---

[479] Lerma, *O povo makua,*109. The text reads, "Pela iniciação, o indivíduo passa da infância a idade adulta; participando nos ritos de iniciação, o jovem adquire a maioridade e toma consciência da própria identidade e do lugar que lhe compete na comunidade. Depois da iniciação, o jovem pode tomar parte de pleno direito em todas as atividades da sociedade: pode casar-se, participar nos sacrifícios tradicionais, sentar-se no meio dos adultos, falar publicamente nas reuniões, tomar parte ativa nas festas e ir aos funerais"

[480] Cf. Martinez, *O povo macua*, 142-144.

[481] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 85.

[482] Ibid., 81.

In this paragraph, the prominent and prolific Kenyan scholar John Mbiti presents the content, the role, and the communitarian dimension of the rites of initiation.[483] Mbiti avers, "In this respect, surely traditional methods of preparing young people for marriage and procreation are obviously superior to what schools and universities are doing for young people."[484] Ndege argues alongside Mbiti by highlighting the way in which rites of initiation contributed to the stability of marriages. He rightly argues, "Traditional marriages also generally record low divorce rate because of the elaborate education that the potential bride and bridegroom go through before entering the institution of marriage."[485]

Traditional marriage is stable because the rites prepare(d) a person for every single aspect of an adult life of which marriage is an integral part. Ndege goes on to highlight that "traditional education is not only to be acquired, but also to be lived. Hence preparation and education for marriage is a key element in the knowledge that is imparted to initiates during their initiation ceremony, which marks their graduation from childhood to adulthood."[486]. A contribution of Padre Gwembe fits in such a context of valuing and reappraising the rites of initiation for preparing people for adulthood of which marriage is integral.

c. __Padre Gwembe's Initiative__

Fascinated by his northeastern Nyanja culture, Ezequiel Gwembe, a Jesuit priest from Mozambique (1941-2016), studied anthropology in London and was editor of *Rumo Novo* (New Path), a journal on inculturation at the grassroots level. In his book "Initiation

---

[483] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1988), 135.

[484] Ibid. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 81.

[485] Ibid.

[486] Ibid.

Retreat: An Experience of Inculturation," he successfully underscored the values of the rites of initiation for the formation of the character of young people, so important in marriage and family.[487] Ndege underscored the same point when he argued that "marriage, takes place after the two individuals have gone through the rites of passage, which qualifies them as adults who understand the meaning and seriousness of marriage with all its attendant responsibilities."[488]

Through retreats of initiation, Gwembe appropriated traditional values and integrated them into a Biblical-Christian-Ignatian spirituality for young people in the contemporary world. Thus, the retreat had three components: tradition, modernity and Bible.[489] Gwembe explains that "The Retreats of Initiation are an experience grounded on the African Tradition, aiming at helping young people to face the challenges of modernity today in the light of the Word of God Bible."[490] Bible is presented as a tool to help youth to distinguish the authentic values of tradition and modernity in a way that help them to face the challenges they face, and the value of listening and discerning in life.[491] That is, the retreats of initiation is a youth program of formation encompassing traditional values on responsibility, respect, accountability, human sexuality, marriage and family, the

---

[487] Ezequiel Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação: Uma experimentação de inculturação* [Retreats of initiation: An experience of inculturation] (Beira: Jesuítas, 2000). The retreats underscore the training of young people to deal with hardwork (17), silence, discipline, self-control (1, 10, 15, 43), dealing with the ups and downs of life (19-20, 43), use of proverbs (20), solidarity and community life (15, 21-22, 59), using songs, riddles, dances, and metaphors of language in communication (35, 53, 57-58.), offering and accepting fraternal corrections (35-36), mutual-respect (16) and respect for the elders and ancestors (18, 46-47), solidarity, hospitality and communion (59-60), sexuality, marriage, and procreation (60).

[488] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 101.

[489] Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação*¸ 4. 43-44.

[490] Gwembe, *Retiros iniciação*¸ 28. "Os Retiros de Inicição são uma experiência que, baseando-se na **Tradição Africa**, procuram ajudar os jovens de hoje a enfrentar os desafios que a **Modernidade** lhes apresenta à luz da **Palavra de Deus** (Biblia)." All translation from Gwembe's book is mine.

[491] Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação*¸ 21 and 63.

challenges of modernity and the Ignatian spirituality of silent, prayerful reflection and discernment.

The experience of the retreats of initiation began in 1988 in the Parish of Our Lady of Amparo, in the outskirt of Maputo.[493] At that time, the parish was under the responsibility of the Society of Jesus. Given the acceptance of the experience, the retreats of initiation gradually spread from Maputo (1988), to the Dioceses of Chimoio (1994), Beira (1994), and some parishes of neighboring Zimbabwe. [494] In the same way as in the traditional rites of initiation, in the retreats of initiation, families are involved in the process by taking their children and presenting them to those who will train them.[495] They also participate in the concluding ceremony, in the rites of sending off the initiates and "reintegration in the society."[496] The active participation of the parents makes sense given to the fact that the initiative was a response to the outcry of parents who did not know how to educate their children in a way that impact their lives as the rites of initiation did.[497] The parents are asked to permit their children to participate in these retreats. [498]

The rites have a transformative impact in the life of those young adults. As Gwembe said, "*ninguém regressa da iniciação como foi.*" [499] Parents were so happy with the experiences, as a result, they encouraged other parents to send their children to those

---

[493] Cf. Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação¸* 28.

[494] Ibid., 1.

[495] Cf. Ibid., 11.

[496] Cf. Ibid., 26-27. Gwembe speaks of a "Rito de Reintegração na Sociedade."

[497] Ibid., 28 and 49.

[498] Cf. Ibid., 37.

[499] Ibid., 11. Meaning, "Nobody go back home the same after the initiation." See Ibid., 50. Where Gwembe says that there is a transformation in the way young adulst behave afterwards.

retreats. Strikingly, some of the parents opted to participate in the retreats together with their children.[500] However, parents recognize the difficulties in accompanying their children after the transformative experience of those retreats.[501]

After almost ten years of the implementation of the retreats of initiation, the original initiative benefited from an evaluation and an updated version to better respond to the original insight.[502] One of the aspects that deserved revision was how the relationship between authority of the master of ceremony and the team to those in initiation. The relationship should be not in absolute and unquestionable obedience but through respectful listening and creative fidelity to the insights of the one in authority. Second, the revised version reiterated the importance of an education that fosters discipline, responsibility, and courage, but it also underscored moderation in the exercises and rejection of harshness that characterized traditional education. Bujo argues,

> We have, for instance, explained that the painful initiation rites were also meant to prepare for the tough life ahead. Church and theology can no longer accept customs and practices of this kind in their material form. However, they also must not be satisfied with just abolishing them. Rather, they should offer a new alternative, which will do justice to the purpose of the abandoned practices.[503]

The retreats of initiation do not encompass circumcision a practice that has gradually decreased in those ethnic groups that practiced them. However, unfortunately, forces as those that coined the Maputo Protocol, tended to equate circumcision with rites of initiation, ignoring deliberately the all dynamic of the rites and dismissing all rites

---

[500] Cf. Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação¸* 41.

[501] Ibid., 51.

[502] Ibid., 41. In 2000, Gwembe reported that 16 retreats had been conducted. One thousand young adults participated and the groups ranged from 33 to 95.

[503] Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 132.

altogether. The retreats of initiation are an inculturated version of the rites of initiation, enhancing those elements that prepare young people for adulthood and living aside aspects that demean human dignity, marriage, family, community, and life.[504]

Some ethinic groups include male and female circumcision, while others have alternative experiences designed to train boys and girls to face the hardships of an adult life with courage, discipline, endurance, fortitude, and hardwork. According to TAG, in addiction to circuncision, "For most Bantu and Nilo-Hamitic Peoples (e.g. Akamba, Gikuyu, Kalenjin, Maasa etc)…tests of endurance and courage were often given the initiates."[505] Ndege indicates that, among the Makua, the rites of initiation, "*Matengusi* does not involve circumcision, but education and training pertaining to motherhood and attendant responsibilities."[506]

3. Community Oriented with a Keen Sense of Belonging

> What about the ordering of the African tradition with its meticulous prescriptions where everything is regulated to ensure communion, fraternity and security, and prevent evil! Everything is set in motion: families, communities, a neighborhood without escaping the ancestors or the supernatural world. Life is at stake - the blood and its continuity.
> —Joaquim Mabuiangue, *Marriage in Mozambique: State of the Issue,* in *O Matrimónio: Actas da 5a Semana Teológica* (2000)*, 113.

a. Education for a Community-Oriented Life

Mabuiangue describes how the preparation, celebration, and subsequent living of marriage involve(d) the entire community: family members, neighbors, ancestors, and the

---

[504] Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação¸* 21 and 63.

[505] TAG, *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa*, TAG Theological Reflections (Machakos, KE: Theological Advisory Group, 1994), 12. See an elaborate explanation on how Gikuyu, one of the Kenyan ethnic groups, performed rites. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 130-154.

[506] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 101.

supreme being.[507] The community of the living in this world and that of those living in the other world join efforts in the preparation and celebration of marriage and help the couple live their marital life. Mabuiangue rightly explains that the reason for the involvement of so many people is because "marriage is so complex and so serious. The future of the Mozambican society and that of the Church which is and lives in Mozambique depends on marriage."[508] Alongside Mabuiangue, Ndege explains that Mozambicans raise people from a tender age to value and cherish not only one's immediate family but also their lineage and the entire community. According to Ndege,

> The children are shown in a practical way the nature and extent of familial and kinship relations. They get to know that they are part of a wide network of relatives who are as important as the immediate family, father, mother, mother, and siblings. Such networks are useful in case of calamities when a child loses one or both parents and is forced to relocate and live with relatives who will be responsible for this or her upbringing. The parents exhibit less of the possessiveness over children that characterizes Western society.[509]

Traditional Mozambican culture raises a person to be part of the community: to know how to live in a society with its joys and oddities, to contribute to the good of society, and to benefit from the resources the community offers. One's identity is not in an isolated, individualist reality but a web of interdependent relations. The African Catholic Pastors argued, "Women and men in Africa are not mere individuals, autonomous from their parents, spouses, children. Women, men, children, we are all persons, created out of love

---

[507] Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 113. The original text reads,

E que dizer do ordenamento da tradição Africana com as suas minuciosas prescrições onde tudo está regulamentado para garantir a comunhão, a fraternidade e segurança, e prevenir mal! Tudo se põe em movimento: famílias, comunidades, vizinhança sem escaparem os antepassados nem o mundo sobrenatural. Está em jogo o a vida – o sangue e a sua continuidade.

[508] Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 112. "Um tema tao complexo e tao sério porque dele depende não só o futuro da sociedade Moçambicana como também o desta Igreja que está e vive em Moçambique."

[509] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 85.

and for love, and we all belong to a family and a community, vitally, ontologically and emotionally united!"[510] Kenyatta vehemently argued, "To the Europeans 'individuality is the ideal of life,' to the Africans the ideal is the right relations with, and behavior to, other people… the fact remains that while the Europeans place emphasis on one side, the Africans place it on the other."[511]

Encouraging visits among extended family members is one of the ways traditional societies educate younger generations to appreciate not only one's siblings but also the extended family and their entire lineage. Bujo explains that

> visiting relatives is considered part of growing up as a member of the community. This is important because the young get to know the relatives who do not live with them in the homestead and region. Visiting aunts, uncles, and cousins provide the individual with the opportunity to explore life outside the immediate family, get to know other places, socialize and strengthen the family bond and interpersonal relationships.[512]

Related to visiting and welcoming family members is storytelling and quizzing the young, which is meant to help the young generation know their genealogy and the way the members of the extended family and lineage relates. I remember my father telling me countless times the genealogy of the family up to the fifth and sixth generation. Such narrations were sometimes prompted with a visit of a family member or when receiving news about a family member. Then, an elder could add, "You better know your family

---

[510] SECAM, "Common Declaration of the Bishops of Africa and Madagascar," no. 5. See comment of this declaration in Chris Manion, "PRI Review Podcast – African Bishops Speak out to Defend the Family, with Support from Pope Francis," Population Research Institute (podcast), October 22 2015, accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.pop.org/podcast/pri-review-podcast-african-bishops-speak-out-to-defend-the-family-with-support-from-pope-francis.

[511] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 122.

[512] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 97.

members so that you do not marry your sister." Such an affirmation also underscores the seriousness of violating the taboo against incest.

b. **Marriage as Communitarian and Personal**

Because of a community-oriented look at society and a strong sense of belonging to a family, clan, lineage, and community, marriage is both communitarian and personal. Bujo rightly argues that "African marriage cannot be properly understood if its community dimension is not taken into consideration."[513] Mabuiange's intervention in the 2000 Theological Week on Matrimony made the same point that marriage is so important that it cannot be left at the whim of two people.[514] Marriage is an alliance that involves the community of bride and groom, with the ancestors and those who will be born.[515] Such a view explains the involvement of the community before, during, and after marriage. Bujo explains, "The two individuals, the future spouses, are the principal interested parties, but they alone cannot make the marriage which is intrinsically a communitarian act since it binds two families not by contract, but rather by the alliance."[516]

Concurring with Bujo, Kalilombe underscores the importance of traditional community in supporting marriage and family. He argues that "The various customs and procedures that used to strengthen the institution of marriage were rooted in the experience of people living together as a corporate entity: extended family, village, clan, and so on.

---

[513] Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 99.

[514] Mabuiangue, "o casamento em Moçambique," 124.

[515] Ibid.

[516] Bénézet Bujo, "Vatican II and the Challenge of Marriage and Family in Africa," Duquesne University, 2012, 5, accessed January 20, 2018, http://www.duq.edu/Documents/theology/_pdf/Vatican%20II%20Conference/Benezet%20Bujo_Vatican%20II%20and%20African%20Marriage.pdf. See also Bujo's reflection on "African Questions Regarding the European Thought on Human Rights," Chapter Nine in Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 148-149.

Within these communities, the marriage partners could find guidance, support, and purpose."[517] Given to the fact that these traditional structures are weak, he commends the Small Christian life communities as a privileged forum for supporting Christian marriages.[518]"

Kalilombe recognizes that the traditional sense of community, interdependence, cooperation contrast "To a large extent the 'modern' culture which is being adopted by the new generation."[519] Contemporary culture "tends to promote personal autonomy and independence. It encourages individual expression and the protection of one's private sphere, sometimes up to the point of not caring what the individual's actions may do to others."[520] A Mozambican sees freedom in the context of community and not in isolation from or in opposition to the community. Put differently, Bujo argues, "the African understanding of marriage is different from that of the West because it sees the bond between wife and husband as a covenant in which the families of both parties play a decisive and indispensable role."[521]

In Mozambican societies, the freedom and consent of the spouses are understood in the context of the community and not in an isolated, individualist, and self-centered way. Freedom and life have meaning in relation to other individuals within the society. According to Lerma, to live isolated from the society or deciding against society amounts

---

[517] Kalilombe, "Inculturated Christian Marriage Pastoral," 41-42.

[518] Cf. Ibid., 41-42.

[519] Ibid., 37.

[520] Ibid.

[521] Ibid.

to denying the basic dimension of life. This view springs from a common assumption that African morality is based on life.[522] Lerma He explains,

> The communitarian dimension does not deny nor destroy the personality of the individual, since this one is enriched, grows integrally as s/he lives and participates in the life of the community. The individual most intimate center, which is always irreducible, will be much more authentic, that is, s/he will live much more in plenitude the more s/he relates to others. [523]

c. **Marriage Binding a Man, a Woman, and Respective Families**

A brief survey among seminarians revealed how marriage as community-oriented binding two families is deeply rooted in people's consciousness. In an article delivered in 2000 at the pastoral-theological seminar on matrimony in the city of Beira, Mabuiangue recounts the answers from seminarians from all over the country at the Archidiocesan Theological Seminary in Maputo when he asked them what a marriage is. All of them stressed that marriage is a bond, a covenant. Seminarians from the northern part of the country, where most communities are matrilinear, stressed that "marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman, a bond accepted by the family."[524]

Seminarians from the central part of the country, where the societies are patrilinear, responded that "marriage is a covenant between two families through a mutual love of a man and a woman."[525] Mabuiangue draws attention that the "stress is on the bond of the man and the woman with the approbation of the family members of both sides. In the

---

[522] Lerma, *o povo macua*, 86.

[523] Ibid., 85. "A dimensão comunitária não nega nem destrói a personalidade do indivíduo, visto que este se enriquece, cresce integralmente, na medida em que vive e participa da vida, da comunidade. O seu centro mais íntimo, que é sempre irredutível, será tanto mais autêntico, ou seja, viverá tanto mais em plenitude quanto mais estiver relacionado com os outros."

[524] Mabuiangue, "O Casamento Em Moçambique," 115.

[525] Ibid. "O casamento é a uma aliança entre duas famílias por meio de um homem e uma mulher que se amam mutuamente…"

matrilineal northern provinces such as Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Nampula, and the central

part of Tete, maternal uncles or the brothers represent the family of the bride. In the central

and southern patrilineal provinces, the father or the uncles on the father's lineage represent

the groom or the bride.[526]

Ndege underscores that the involvement of the two families creates mutual

knowledge, strengthens the bond between the two families, and prepares a forum for

problem-solving when necessary. For Ndege,

> one of the important functions of marriage is to widen the network of relatives by
> uniting two groups. It is the best interests of the family that, lineage, and clan that
> all information pertaining to the two families be assembled as a safeguard against
> last-minute or future surprises. It is these aspects of marriage preparation that help
> to minimize future divorce in traditional society.[527]

In fact, the bond between the families becomes so strong that it lasts for life. The bond

helps to guarantee stability, fulfillment, and joy in marriage. In Mozambique, marriage

involves two families in its preparation and celebration and in helping the couple cope with

the anxieties and difficulties of marital life.[528] Ndege averred the same point that "Marriage

brings joy not only to the married couple, but also to their families. It is a bond that unites

the couple, the families, and societies."[529]

4. Strong Sense of Solidarity and Interdependence

> Interpersonal relations are also reflected in the way various members of a family or
> clans who live in close proximity help one another in undertaking certain chores.
> Members of the extended family usually offer a helping hand during planting,
> weeding, or harvesting as well as myriad other chores. In certain demeaning

---

[526] Mabuiangue, "O Casamento Em Moçambique," 115. "O realce vai para a união de 2 famílias…
é a união do homem e da mulher através de um pacto entre os dois perante a aprovação de familiares de
ambos os lados, sobretudo, dos tios maternos (Cabo Delgado)."

[527] Ndege, *The Culture and Customs of Mozambique,* 81.

[528] Cf. Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 117.

[529] Ndege, *The Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 101.

situations, members come together to offer such services to an individual to ease his/her burden. They are not paid in cash. Instead, the host prepares food and beer that the visiting family members of the extended family help their own.
—George Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*

a. <u>Solidarity as Mutual Help</u>

Ndenge captured the meaning of solidarity in Mozambican society adequately.[530] People are socialized to be mindful of the needs of their family members and those of the larger community. People manifest their solidarity in times of calamities, accidents, sickness, and death. Sometimes, natural calamities create a problem and place people in a vulnerable situation that calls for prompt solidarity. As Ndege put it, "Natural calamities such as flood, famine, drought, and lightning are considered happenings out of the ordinary. Their occurrence evokes a plethora of explanations ranging from the manifestation of God's power to displeasure by him or departed ancestors at an individual, family, clan, or community for some violation of societal moral prescriptions."[531] The living, the living dead, and nature all interrelate in this world. For Magesa, "all of these forces working together in harmony result in harmony and balance in the world and assure humanity. of its good conduct."[532]

That said, solidarity tends to wane in society, mostly in urban areas and in places where the market economy prevails. Whereas traditional societies encouraged helping one another generously and gratuitously, the growing tendency is to ask for help in exchange for something. Langa says that, in an ever-changing Mozambique, a person in need has to ask: "Please, help me to do this and I will pay… Sometimes, one has to specify the amount

---

[530] Ndege, *The Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 97.

[531] Ibid., 23.

[532] Magesa, *African Religion*, 114.

of money before getting the help one needs."[533] People are aware of the discrepancies between their appreciation of mutual-interdependency, solidarity, and the growing tendency to an individualistic, self-centered, and money-driven mentality.

The long sixteen years of civil war created a society whose members are prone to see reality according to what they get for their survival and less about behaviors that strengthen relationships and alliances. A survival mentality affects people's attitude towards honesty, responsibility, and hardwork. A selfish survival attitude is noticeable in people who experience internal displacement and harsh situations as refugees in neighboring countries. It is also evident in people who suffered exploitation from unscrupulous officials in many sectors of society (customs, security, governance). The exploited decry such attitudes or internalize them as part of a survival strategy. Solidarity recognizes the value of interdependence.

b. **Solidarity as Interdependence**

It is opportune to reiterate what was stated in the introduction about the importance of mutual interdependence in most African societies. Speaking in the Theological Theological-Pastoral Week in Mozambique, Kalilombe underscored that, "In traditional society many customs and institutions were aimed at promoting the values of cooperation and attention to others. When, for one reason or another, such customs change, there is danger that the values of mutual help and cooperation may also be lost."[534]

Most Mozambican societies had their ways of regulating abuses from bloodsuckers and lazy members who could easily linger from one place to the next, abusing the

---

[533] Adriano Langa, "O lobolo e o seu significado na tradição e hoje [Lobolo and its meaning in tradition and today]," in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio*, 157.

[534] Kalilombe, "Inculturated Christian Marriage Pastoral," 37

hospitality and solidarity of the family and clan. Indeed, "A lazy person is a disgrace to the family and lineage."[535] First, the extensive networking, family visits, and communication among the clan made it possible to identify and ridicule abuses. Second, on the third day of arrival, the visitor began participating actively in the work of the household according to his/her age, hierarchy, and skills.[536]

The household would emulate the presence of the newcomer and make good use of her/his skills as an added asset to the household. In fact, a visitor is encouraged to feel at home. Third, through proverbs, songs, and jokes, the family would convey a warm, welcoming message and an invitation to openness to what the visitor can bring. A popular proverb states, "It is a guest who discovers the cracks that can ruin a household," which means that a family has challenges and possibilities that only a visitor can help to unveil and solve.

Ndege pointed that "The telling of stories serves to inculcate certain desired values in young people. ... The stories are meant to emphasize certain virtues, a sense of unity and collective identity, relations between sexes, individual responsibility and accountability, honesty, courage, and hard work. Thus, storytelling went beyond mere entertainment."[537] Such a mindset encourages the guest to put her/his skills at the service of the host family.

c. **Solidarity as Quick Responsiveness**

Situations that endanger or weaken the enjoyment of life, such as lightning that kills family member or cattle, natural disasters, such as wildfire or flood, a life-threatening

---

[535] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 87. See the section entitled, "Assessing Maturity through Hardworking, Discipline, and Responsibility," which is featured later in this chapter.

[536] Cf. Ibid. "Roles are hierarchically organized and are based on age and gender"

[537] Ibid., 40.

sickness, or death receive a prompt response with empathy and solidarity. Ndege captured

such a spirit when he pointed out that "During hard times such as drought, famine, or floods

in one part of the country, relatives who live in places that are unaffected usually help those

extended family members who are economically stressed and need assistance." [538]

People show solidarity various situations of life; for example, in the construction

of a house, "Members would volunteer their time an energy by digging holes, cutting grass

or reeds, mixing mud/clay and transporting materials to the construction site at no pay.

Helping one's own family member was the most significant factor… The volunteers would

also be helped when their turn came to construct a house."[539] Other times, solidarity could

come as "a helping hand during planting, weeding, or harvesting as well as myriad other

chores. In certain demanding situations, members come together to offer such services to

an individual to ease his/her burden."[540]

Life-threatening situations are given priority over other important aspects of social

life. The Portuguese colonial-administrator in the Northern Nampula, claimed that even in

those days, Westerners are mesmerized by the time, energy, and resources people spend

with friends or family members.[541] For Mozambicans, friendship and family loyalties have

high significance. A true friend and a true brother or sister are those who appear first in

one's house in distressful situations of life. A true friend and family is the person who will

be present at one's funeral and burial when nobody else is there. These loyalties, connected

---

[538] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 98.

[539] Ibid., 58.

[540] Ibid., 97.

[541] Cf. Alexandre Cancelas, *Contributo para uma política social moçambicana* (Braga, PT: Editora Pax, 1972), 203 and 156-163.

to the strong sense of solidarity, are part of Mozambican values in life, which favor readiness for solidarity.[542] Traditional societies meant to educate children and the families that those in distress and suffering need a prompt support and comfort of each and every one. In this sense, "Solidarity also has a pedagogical component."[543]

Kenyatta's illustration about the capacity of Gikuyu to quickly and effectively organize a network of solidarity and mutual help also applies to most Mozambican societies even today. Kenyatta explains,

> Owing to the strength and numbers of the social ties existing between members of the same family, clan and age-group, and between members of different families and clans through which the tribe is unified and solidified as one organic whole, the community can be mobilized very easily for corporate activity. House-building, cultivation, harvesting, digging trap-pits, putting up fences around cultivated fields, and building bridges are usually done by the group; hence the Gikuyu saying: '*kamoinge koyaga ndere,*' which means collective activities make heavy tasks easier.[544]

The desire to value solidarity is reflected somehow in Mozambican legislation. The ministry of work, in line with the contemporary demands of employment, had to establish some days for home life according to the degree of kinship with the deceased. A failure to do so would render the value of solidarity a hindrance to production in the workplace and negatively affect sustainable development, which the country eagerly wishes to attain.

d. Legislation Endorsement of Solidarity

Recognizing the importance of solidarity in society and as an encouragement to maintain a such value, the 2004 New Law of the Family requires the older children to assist

---

[542] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 58 and 85-86, 97-98.

[543] Ibid., 86.

[544] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 116-117.

their parents, grandparents, uncles, and cousins whenever they need help and solidarity.[545] The Law puts solidarity among family members as a duty that children have not only towards their parents but to other members of the extended family who need help, including younger siblings when orphaned and abandoned.[546]

The legislation recognizes a deep-seated value of solidarity and protects it as a duty to maintain and cherish. Reappraising the traditional sense of solidarity emulates and benefits the extended family. A reappraisal of solidarity in contemporary society keeps families in a better position to cope with normal problems of life, enables them to care for their vulnerable members, and ensures a safe environment against any domestic violence.[547]

Whether the law is put into practice or not, it is an issue that deserves scrutiny. However, Mozambican legislation recognizes the importance of solidarity and protects it under the law in a way that favors motherhood, fatherhood, marriage, and family. For instance, a worker is exempt from work for five days for the marriage celebration or a death of one's spouse or close relative such as a parent, child, stepchild, sibling, grandparent, or stepfather or stepmother. An employee has home leave of two days for the death of in-laws, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, or grandchildren. An employee's absence from work is justifiable when a wife/husband is seriously ill or when a wife is recovering after delivery.[548] This legislation goes alongside the value that Mozambican society gives

[545] Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique, Lei Da Família, Lei N.º 10, August 25, 2004, art.. 206, accessed September 20, 2017, http://www.wlsa.org.mz/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Lei_da_Familia.pdf. Thereafter, this source will be referred to as "The New Law of the Family."

[546] *New Law of the Family*, art. 281.

[547] Cf. *New Law of the Family*, art. 4.

[548] Cf. Assembleia da República, "Lei do trabalho: Lei no. 23/2007, de 1 de Agosto [Labor Law]," (2007): art. 103, accessed February 20, 2016, https://slides.tips/lei-do-trabalho.html. Henceforth, it will be cited as Mozambican Labor Law.

to solidarity at the service of life, marriage, and family. The Church cannot help but commend Mozambican legislation and sensibility and find a way to apply it as part of her pastoral approach to marriage and family.

5. Assessing Maturity through Hardworking, Discipline, and Responsibility

a. <u>Signs of Maturity</u>

Before encouraging someone to marry, the community will assess whether the person is mature enough and ready for marriage. Maturity does not mean only biological growth, which happens after puberty. Maturity encompasses psychosocial and mental growth and stability with clearly verifiable characteristics. Bujo, a prominent Congolese moral theologian, argues,

> Showing hospitality to friends and strangers, caring for orphans or one's own younger brothers and sisters, and respecting the elders are the desired <u>signs</u> [*sic*] of maturity. The ability to keep secrets proper to the family or ethic community, self-control and courage in a critical situation are other desirable qualities. Such qualities when they are present, are enough for the community to decide in ones' favor regarding a possible marriage.[549]

Among the signs of maturity indicative of the readiness for marriage are hospitality, respect, confidentiality, self-control, and courage. Without a socially acceptable degree of those qualities, a person will be encouraged to grow before considering marriage. Indeed, a family will not encourage one's member to marry unless he or she is mature enough for marriage.

The rites of initiation and all the process of socialization helped young adults to acquire the necessary maturity for marriage. "The rites of passage, which qualifies them as adults who understand the meaning and seriousness of marriage with all its attendant

---

[549] Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 95.

responsibilities."[550] Furthermore, the traditional education gave to young adult the necessary confidence to take the responsibility of an adult life with courage and joy. Sacrificing for ones' family was a virtue that any person gladly endures as a way of transmitting and celebrating a life which God bestows through the mediation of the ancestors and the collaboration of each man and woman. Maturity was a requirement for marriage. There were clear signs indicating such maturity.[551]

b. <u>Hardwork, Courage, and Responsibility</u>

Besides the qualities above mentioned, traditional society values hardwork and responsibility. All those qualities are integral to a mature and well-educated person. Ndege satisfactorily captures the way in which traditional Mozambican society values hardwork. He explains, "Work is highly valued across the entire Mozambican society. It is considered honorable and is the only means through which people produce food, trade, build homes, raise their livestock, and defend their communities in case of attack." [552]

The entire process of socialization since childhood, passing through the rites of initiation, encourages boys and girls to develop the necessary skills to be at ease with work, to enjoy it, and to look at work as the means to acquire the resources necessary for enhancing and celebrating life in the family and the larger community. In fact, "a family and lineage that produce hardworking and well-behaved girls are usually admired across the land."[553] The same is said about boys. Once again, Ndege explains the importance of hardwork in the process of socialization and in marriage and family.

---

[550] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 101.

[551] Magesa, *African Religion*, 103.

[552] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 87.

[553] Ibid., 84.

The need to work is instilled in all children from an early age regardless of gender. At the household level, everybody has a contribution to make toward the family workload. Laziness is condemned, and an indolent person has no honor. Such an individual is the subject of gossip, scorn, and shame. A lazy person is a disgrace to the family and lineage. In contrast, a hardworking person is a source of inspiration or young people and brings pride to the family, both immediate and extended.[554]

Even the sick and older members of the community have work according to their abilities. An old person may stay at home to nurse the kids and teach them "stories that extol societal values such as morality, courage, respect, and hard work," while other members are doing works that require psychical strength.[555] A lazy person will have a hard time finding a suitable partner.

c. __Maturity Requirement for Marriage__

Magesa argues that the initiation process "is meant to signify and effect the initiates' physical and moral maturity, that they have been approved by the ancestors of the clan and ethnic group."[556] The rites of initiation train and make sure that the person is qualified to be considered an adult in the society. Magesa goes on to explain that "a version of the instruction given by a father to a newly initiated son sums it up. Using partly coded language, the young man is first told that he now is ready for adult responsibilities, the most important of which is marriage."[557]

In a 1967 British movie, *To Sir, with Love,* Sidney Poitier stars as Mr. Thackeray, an engineer graduate who works temporarily as a teacher in a low-income school with an unmotivated staff. Most of the students are from broken and dysfunctional families and are

---

[554] Ndege, *The Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 87.

[555] Ibid., 107.

[556] Magesa, *African Religion*, 103.

[557] Ibid.

sent to that school as a last resort.[558] The students "certainly seem "indifferent, disengaged, and defiant."[559] Mr. Thackeray puts all his abilities to educate his young students to become mature people capable of facing the challenges of adult life, as Roger Shouse explained, "soon-to-be working adult citizen students."[560] The turning point in his class was when he decided to change his pedagogy by announcing to his stubborn students: "From now on, we will treat each other as adults, responsible adults… girls, soon boyfriends and marriage will concern you. No man like a sluggish for long, only the worst type will marry one." Then, when asked what marriage is, he replied, "To my mind, marriage is not a way of life for a weak, selfish and the insecure."[561] The teacher meant that marriage is not either for children or immature people or for people who are not responsible and serious enough with their lives as was the case with those students. The view of Mr. Thackeray resonates fully with the Mozambican understanding of marriage, a position that the rites of initiation convey to young people. It is not enough to be biologically mature. A person must acquire other skills through the rites of initiation and day-to-day experience.[562]

The traditional training aimed to help boys and girls for an adult life of which marriage was an integral aspect. Socialization helped in the acquisition of basic skills expected in any adult in Mozambican societies. Young boys and girls, since the early ages,

---

[558] Roger Shouse, "Taking Lulu Seriously: What We Can Learn from to Sir with Love," *Journal of Educational Administration* 43, no. 4 (2005): 361, accessed March 24, 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09578230510605414.

[559] Shouse, "Taking Lulu Seriously," 360.

[560] Ibid., 359.

[561] *To Sir, with Love*, directed by James Clavell (Columbia Pictures, 1967), video stream (Amazon Prime, December 15, 2016).

[562] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 101. See also the section "Padre Gwembe's Initiative," which was presented earlier in this chapter.

are encouraged to be hardworking, respectful to elders and their ancestors, trustworthy, and responsible.[563] When looking for a spouse, a boy or a girl and the respective families will prefer a person whose character exhibits more of those qualities. People appreciate a generous person whom the family and the community can rely upon in sickness, work, and celebration.[564]

6. Taboos as Guiding Principles in Human Sexuality and Life in General

> Taboos play a significant role in the ethical duty of transmitting and preserving life, and the breach of taboos endangers the health and well-being of society. Taboos relate to many areas of human life: such as things associated with death (for instance, corpses and certain diseases), sacred persons and things (chief or royal paraphernalia), and strange phenomena (for example, lightning or hail).
>
> —Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 149-150.

In most African societies, taboos are ease-to-understand guiding principles on human sexuality and in every important aspect of life.[565] They are moral values indebted to people's consciousness and expressed in the form of prohibitions, sanctions, and unquestionable maxims. Taboos encourage people to decency, modesty, discretion, and faithfulness. Taboos, as part of the metaphoric language, commend respectful relationships between boys and girls.[566] They encourage men to treat their sisters, mothers, and wives with great respect, which excludes any form of violence.[567] They taught boys from an early age that to mistreat a woman is cowardice and not a sign of masculinity or manhood.[568]

---

[563] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 79. and Lerma, *O povo macua*, 109.

Cf. Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 36; and Cabral Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio em África*, 147-48.

[565] Cf. Magesa, *African Religion*, 149-50.

[566] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 40.

[567] Cf. STV Soico, "STV JornaldaNoite 12 02 2017" (news video), posted on February 12, 2017, accessed February 14, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26jiNlMP1Ws.

[568] Cf. *Ndege, Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 34, 40, 77, 83-84, 87-88.

Taboos help people to be mindful of their differences as men and women, while at the same time appretiating how beautiful life becomes when each one brings such natural differences to the benefit of family, clan, lineage, and tribe.[569] Taboos and the entire process of initiation help boys appretiate being boys while enjoying the company of girls and vice-verse.[570]

a. Fostering Decency, Modesty, and Discretion

What Kenyata speaks about Kenya also applies to Mozambique. He rightly argues that "traditionally, public display of love such as kissing or holding hands in public was discouraged. There is an element of conservatism that pervades most African societies when it comes to the public display of love… This does not mean that couples do not show love to one another."[571] Kenyatta goes on to point out that "unlike Europeans, who are fond of kissing in public places, the Gikuyu consider such public display of affection vulgar. All matters relating to sex are done according to a well-regulated code of convention."[572] Most African societies have their ways and circumstances of showing love, closeness, and affection.

According to Kenyata, "kissing in public or holding of hands was viewed as sending a bad example to the young people, which is considered bad manners and is unacceptable. Good conduct and good moral behavior dictate that adults show little public

---

[569] Cf. *Lerma, O povo macua*, 104-105. Such awareness of being male and female, masculine and feminine, man and woman end up underscoring the value of motherhood, fatherhood, children.

[570] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 35, 40, 85. See also TAG, *Biblical Approach Marriage Family*, 11-13.

[571] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 103.

[572] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 156.

emotion on issues about love and sex."[573] Currently, the movies from Hollywood, the telenovelas from Brazil and Mexico, and TV shows from Europe are changing the traditional perception of modesty, decency, and discretion. "The situation is changing in the wake of exposure to Western media, movies, and music," said Ndege in 2007.[574]

b. Self-Control, Discipline and Sound Relationships

The first chapter showed that Europeans viewed themselves as superior in every aspect, and they derrogatively portrayed African people and cultures and claimed that they have nothing to learn from Africans. Consistent with such a view, Europeans, Kenyatta argues, erroneously concluded that self-control and discipline would not be possible among Africans in the same circumstances that Europeans found themselves unable to maintain self-control. Consequently, they looked with suspicion any closeness between girls and boys because that would necessarily lead to sexual intercourse. Thus, "many Gikuyu have been punished and regarded as 'sinners' by missionaries simply for having found sleeping in the same room with a girl for in their eyes such an act is sinful."[575] A eurocentric mentality could hardly understand that a

> Gikuyu man has been taught from childhood to develop the technique of self-control in the matter of sex, which enables him to sleep in the same bed with a girl without necessarily having sexual intercourse; while the missionaries' idea is, that since a white man would not be able to restrain himself under similar circumstances, so the African would not be able to, and so must be forbidden to sleep with a woman-friend in the Gikuyu fashion.[576]

---

[573] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 102.

[574] Ibid.

[575] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 158.

[576] Ibid.

In Mozambique, siblings, cousins, and nephews and nieces, both boys and girls, sleep in the same room as brothers and sisters, without engaging necessarily in any sexual misconduct. At the same time, people respected scrupulously the taboo against incest and the community punished severely those who broke or attempted to break this taboo. People have conservative ideas about sex, but they are spontaneous, free, and open-minded in their relationship with anyone. Such a sound relationship between sexes contrasts with Western societies that claim to be models of freedom but are confronted with dysfunctional relationships and harassment, as one can attest in watching just ten minutes of any TV program from any Western country.

How Kenyatta described Gikuyu contrasts noticeably with the message of the so-called developed world of the young adults who are led to believe that self-control, discipline, and sexual abstention are almost impossible and even unhealthy.[577] Besides, with the current uncovering of the rampant scandals of sexual harassment, society unwittingly teaches girls and boys to look at each other with suspicion as a cautionary protective measure. [578] Ironically, such an education forms a society that presents itself as liberal, open-minded, and free. However, in practice, the outcome is a sick and mistrustful

---

[577] See FWI, "Cultural Imperialism: The Sexual Rights Agenda" (documentary video), directed by Sharon Slater, posted December 4, 2012, accessed December 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INKAv4Y-lW4. In this video, Edward Green, PhD (former director of the AIDS Prevention Project, Harvard Center for Population and Development), explains how arrogant it is for the West to think that they know better when Africans, who were already doing better than what Westerners are doing. See also the ideology behind the comprehensive sexual education, which presupposes that sexual abstinence is impossible before marriage. Since Western societies failed to live according to this standard, they assume that it is not possible for Africans either. Since the African attitude is a reproach to their lifestyle, they spread their questionable ideologies to Africans.

[578] Cf. Anna-Maria Marshall, *Confronting Sexual Harassment: The Law and Politics of Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2017), Chapters Four and Five.

relationship. Unfortunately, such a dysfunctional approach to sexuality is exported to Mozambique in a variety of disguised ways.

c. Nakedness as a Consequences of a Society without a Taboo

Langa argues, "The west threw out, absent-minded and naively, much of her 'cloth' and now it is naked."[579] With this statement, Langa underscores one of the roles of a taboo and how some Mozambican scholars and pastors assess the impact the removal of taboos had in Western societies. Since the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, Western society has become metaphorically naked, suffering today the consequences of the absence of clear guiding boundaries in sexuality and human relationships.

The current discussion on sexual harassment, which has become epidemic and hysteric, is just one symptom of the widespread social sickness. Even worse, Western societies boast of being a *taboo-free* world of freedom, progress, and development. However, the consequences are regrettably noticeable in human relationships, marriage, and family. A *taboosless* Western society is seriously naked, shameless, and sick in its approach to human sexuality.[580]

Langa indicates that in Mozambican societies, taboos on sexuality are educative and regulatory. Through taboo, the young adults know when and how to display affection and which kind of gestures are appropriate for different people according to age, affinity, and hierarchy. Taboos socialize people to acquire common sense and an acceptable code

---

[579] Langa, "O lobolo," 169. "O ocidente deitou fora, distraída e ingenuamente, muita da sua 'roupa' e agora anda nu."

[580] Cf. Langa, "O lobolo," in *O Matrimónio: Actas Da 5a Semana Teológica* (2000), 169.

in modesty and respect. Unfortunately, the expression 'taboo' is often and wrongly associated with backwardness or unfounded prohibitions [581]

d. <u>Meaning of a Taboo in Foolish or a Wise Person</u>

> A fool looks at the finger and not at the moon where the finger is pointing at.
> —Mozambican Proverb

Westerners and Africans without knowledge about their African roots tend to disregard the educative and guiding role of taboos in Mozambican society. Taboos are morally effective because they have an impact on people's psyche and consciousness. Unfortunately, people not cognizant of the African mindset dismiss anything that seems unscientific and miss the message taboos convey. The above Mozambican proverb is applicable here.

Cabral Magaia, a committed lay Christian working in retreats of initiation and in the preparation for marriage in Amparo, one of the parishes in the outskirts of the capital city (Maputo), said that in the ceremony of the officialization of the relationship, "as agreed by the two families, the boy and the girl receives from one's family advices on how s/he should behave.[582] They were told not to do this and that because it is expressly forbidden. All heeded, and nobody dared to question why."[583] In such a ceremony, the role of a taboo

---

[581] Cf. *Collins English Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. "taboo," accessed November 24, 2017, http://www.dictionary.com/browse/taboo.

[582] When he delivered this paper in 2001, Magaia was a "Master of Retreat of Initiation." Padre Gwembe officially commissioned him in 1993. Since then Magaia has been working on the retreats and also in preparing young people for marriage. Cf. Odilo Gil, "Aspectos Pastorais Do Matrimónio Em África: Introdução À 6a Semana Teológica Da Beira," ed. Centro de Formação de Nazaré (Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2001), 18.

[583] Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 148. The text reads, "A partir do acordo entre as duas famílias os dois jovens recebiam conselhos, cada qual da parte da sua família de como se deve comportar, dizendo-lhes que vocês não podem fazer isto ou aquilo (*hikusa sayila*) porque é expressamente proibido. Todos cumpriam e ninguém se atrevia a perguntar (*sayila*) porque."

is evident. The concern for the listener was not to understand why but how to practice the teaching in the taboo to enhance their relation, foster stability in their future marriage, and strengthen the bond between the two families. The erosion of such an effective "primitive wisdom" has resulted in an increase in promiscuity, extramarital unions, domestic violence, and even incest.

Bujo argued that "when nowadays it is spoken everywhere of child abuse, in Africa we should call to mind our traditions, though they sometimes are expressed as taboos or transmitted through tales and myths. Their goal is always to teach the community and to lead to the ethical norms for the growth of Ubuntu."[584] Mary Getui, visiting professor at Hekima College, rightly argues, "Taboos therefore serve to help people maintain good morals. To break taboos therefore may bring disorder not only to the individuals but to the entire community."[585] Today, the older generation highly value modesty and decency. The younger generation tends to swallow more uncritically as valuable whatever is foreign, "resulting in alienation from the local reality."[586]

e. **Sexual Restrictions and Abstinence**

People were educated to abstain from sexual relations at certain times of their lives. Magesa explains that "there are certain times of the year when sexual relations are not permitted because it is deemed that they would interfere and disturb the rhythm of nature and so result in harm to the individual/or community."[587] Both men and women

---

[584] Bujo, "Vatican II Challenge Marriage," 11.

[585] Mary Getui, *Responsible Leadership in Marriage and Family* (Nairobi,: Acton Pubilshers, 2005), 17.

[586] Renato Sesana, "Mass Media and the Shaping of Modern African Cultures," in *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, ed. Maura Browne (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 191.

[587] Magesa, *African Religion*, 153.

scrupulously make an effort to respect this taboo because doing otherwise would have dire consequences for the person and disrupt the harmony in the community. Taboos enforce guiding principles for understanding and living sexuality in a way that enhances life and fosters harmony in the community. The process of socialization impacts this conviction in both young boys and girls. People believed in discipline and self-control in sexual matters and admired those who could exhibit such qualities but also punished severely those who were unable to do so.[588]

For instance, among the Gikuyu, during the rites of initiation, a boy and a girl could sleep together and fondle themselves but not be allowed sexual intercourse. This procedure was one of the many ways to train both boys and girls to self-control, discipline, and respect. If a boy forced himself into the girl, the community could reproach him strongly and no girl would be willing to marry him because he was an untrustworthy person without character, discipline, and self-control, all important qualities for a fulfilling adult life.

As Magesa argued, "the purpose of the prohibition of sexual relations, as with the taboos of incest, is to safeguard life."[589] When a taboo against incest was accidentally broken, the clan could perform rituals to restore the breach of harmony and prevent the consequences of endogenous relationships. The rituals were meant to maintain the vital force of the clan and cleanse it against disintegration.[590] At the same time, these rituals sent an unequivocal message that incest is unacceptable, intolerable, and destructive to the community.

---

[588] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 83-84, 99-100.

[589] Magesa, *African Religion*, 153.

[590] Cf. Ibid., 151-52.

7. Respect for the Elderly and Veneration of Ancestors

> A people that does not take care of grandparents, that does not treat them well has no future! The elderly have wisdom. They are entrusted with a great responsibility: to transmit their life experience, their family history, the history of a community, of a people. Let us keep in mind our elders, so that sustained by families and institutions, may with their wisdom and experience collaborate in the education of new generations.

—Pope Francis, December 2017 Pope Video

a. <u>Respect for Parents and the Elderly</u>

Popes Francis's presentation of the role of elders in society and the respect that they should enjoy concurs with the way in which Mozambican society, especially the traditional one, treat elders.[591] In Mozambique, there is a saying that the elders are a "living library of the people," a "mobile school" of life. People, regardless of formation, religious background, and political affiliation acknowledge their wisdom and prudence. They go to the village to benefit from the wisdom of their elder parents and enjoy their company. This fact highlights that "the elders are the custodians of societal values and their word on customary practices is considered final," says Ndege. As such, "the elder is supposed to be diligent, forthright, fair, and balanced in settling any dispute so that his verdict is beyond reproach."[592]

i. Education for Respecting Elders

From the early years of life, people are educated to respect, honor, and obey their elders. People appreciate even more when a person, after going through universities and is

---

[591] Cf. Hannah Brockhaus, "Pope Francis is Praying for Grandparents this December," Catholic News Agency, December 4, 2017, accessed December 7, 2017, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-is-praying-for-grandparents-this-december-73826.

[592] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 97.

well-placed in civil society, finds time to entertain an elder and is humble enough to recognize the practical wisdom of the elders. The elders remind the society that not every knowledge and wisdom are in books. This reminder is particularly important in a society in which much of its wisdom is transmitted from one generation to the next through the elders. Ndege rightly states, "Seniority in age is respected and admired. Such respect is because old age is associated with wisdom. Senior citizens are therefore accorded due respect because they are custodians of social values."[593]

Traditional society has high regard for an elder. It takes care of them and benefits from their wisdom. Respecting the elders, learning from them, and caring for the vulnerable ones are values to acknowledge and emulate, even more now because ot the reports of unhead abuses against old people in the society. The stress on respecting the elder also has a formative role in young people. Ndege underlines that

> families strive to take good care of senior citizens because it sets a good example for young people. By treating their elders well, parents send a message to their children that they too would like to be accorded that honor, respect, and good treatment in old age. Indeed, one of the important reasons for procreation in traditional society was to have somebody to look after you in old age.[594]\

ii. Disrespect for Elders as Disregard for Tradition

After 1990, with the end of the Marxist-Leninist ideology which tended to identify the elders with backwardness, superstition, and obscurantism, Mozambican society, even the urban one, resumed her respect for the elders. However, in the last ten years, there are growing number of cases of children accusing their parents, grandparents, or other older family members of witchcraft. Sometimes, children abandon their older family members

---

[593] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 86.

[594] Ibid.

when they are sick and even expel them from the house. These sad cases show how the traditional values of respecting and caring for the elder is corroding. Such an erosion is not a sign of progress or development but an execrable backwardness. As Francis rightly states, "A family that fails to respect and cherish its grandparents, who are its living memory, is already in decline, whereas a family that remembers has a future."[595] The good news is that despite the sad cases of mistreatment of the elderly, the society still respects the elderly in general.[596]

Situations of violence and disrespect of elders were very rare, almost non-existent, in traditional Mozambique as well as in most African societies. As Magesa rightly argued, "it is a crime, of often unpardonable proportions, for a child to disrespect one's father in any serious way particularly to abuse him verbally of physically assault him."[597] In Mozambique, to disrespect a father is unpardonable and to contempt a mother is almost close to cursing oneself. The Mozambican sensibility does not even condone jokes about one's mother or a slight sign of disrespect against one's sister. It is not infrequent in school to find children fighting because one has disrespected another's mother, but that is not the case about fathers.

One cannot underscore enough the importance of the elders for the stability of the family and their role in straightening the bonds between generations.[598] In general, an African elder is not isolated, does not feel lonely because s/he is always surrounded by grandchildren and other younger members of the family. Children enjoy visiting their

---

[595] AL 193.

[596] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 84, 89, 95-96.

[597] Magesa, *African Religion*, 118.

[598] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 97 and 86.

grandparents and benefit from the love and affection they receive. The elderly, in turn, feel rejuvenated by the presence of the children around them. Through stories and riddles, in a relaxing but serious manner, they transmit their wisdom to the younger generations.[599] *Amoris Laetitia* reminds that, "In highly industrialized societies, where the number of elderly persons is growing even as the birth rate declines, they can be regarded as a burden."[600] Indeed, in 2014, a Pew Research Center showed that "An aging population is a looming economic and social burden, particularly in Europe and Northeast Asia, and to a lesser extent in the United States."[601] In Mozambican societies, the elderly is not an unproductive person depending on social security but a source of pride, joy, and inspiration for the younger generation.[602] "Thus, it is not uncommon to find relatives who live far away travelling long distance to report an incident to the patriarch of the family for informational purposes or to seek his indulgence in solving a dispute."[603]

iii. Legislation on Respecting the Elders

Consistent with Mozambican mentality, the constitution of the Republic states that the elders have the right to protection, especially in their family, society, and state. The state should facilitate the creation of proper housing and healthcare for the elderly.[604] Elders are accorded special preference in public institutions, such as hospitals, transportations,

---

[599] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 40. See also AL 193.

[600] AL 48.

[601] Bruce Stokes, "The Countries that will be Most Impacted by Aging Population," Pew Research Center, 2014, accessed March 24, 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/04/the-countries-that-will-be-most-impacted-by-aging-population/. Bruce is the director of global economic attitudes at Pew Research Center. See also Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social* Context (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 123. Bujo speaks of loneliness in Europe.

[602] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 97.

[603] Ibid., 97.

[604] Cf. Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique, art. 124, and 95.

banks. The 2004 Law of the Family urged parents to transmit those moral, ethical, and cultural values that uplift respect for the family and the elders.[605]

The Law of the Family states that the family has the duty of "supporting and assisting older members by ensuring their participation in family and community life and by upholding their dignity and well-being."[606] In two instances, the Labor Law also speaks of the protection of the elderly through social security.[607] The point here is that Mozambican legislation captured the traditional sensibility of protecting, caring, and respecting the elderly. The church cannot but emulate such legislation, make it known, and take it as part of its policy of promoting life in abundance.[608]

That said, an elder is expected to behave in a way that dignifies his/her seniority. According to Ndege, "the respect and admiration also come with certain responsibilities. As an elder, an individual is supposed to be unemotional, sober, and focused during a crisis or stressful times. As an arbiter, an elder has to be candid and sincere in providing counsel. He is not supposed to engage in gossip."[609] Anyway, the elders are those who are closer to the ancestors, and soon some of them will become ancestors. There are specific requirements that qualifies one to be an ancestor. However, while alive, "seniority is synonymous with honor, respect, admiration, and wisdom, it is one's ability to manifest

---

[605] Cf. New Law of the Family, art. 291.

[606] New Law of Family, 5. "Amparar e assistir os membros mais idosos, assegurando a sua participação na vida familiar e comunitária e defendendo a sua dignidade e bem-estar."

[607] Cf. Mozambican Labor Law, arts. 55.k and 257.

[608] Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Gueru, ZIM: Mambo Press, 1984), 15-16. See also Charles Nyamiti, "African Christologies Today," in *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, ed. Robert Schreiter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 11.

[609] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 86.

these qualities in old age that gives an individual elevated status in society."[610] After departing, they are supposed to be an inspiration. Not every death qualifies one to be an ancestor whom most Africans venerate.

b. <u>Veneration of the Ancestors</u>

> Ancestors are highly regarded in the traditional Mozambique religions. They are not worshiped but are seen as intermediaries between the living and God. Their names are evoked during prayers – personal, familial, or communal. Ancestral spirits are praised and appealed to for intercession on behalf of the living so that God can respond to the requests asked of him.
>
> —Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*

Ndege gives an overview of Mozambican understanding of ancestorship, pointing clearly that veneration of the ancestor is one of the main features of traditional culture.[611] There is a relationship between the living and the death. The life of those who have gone continues to influence the day-to-day life of the living. A good relationship with the ancestor ensures that life goes smoothly from one generation to the next. Charles Nyamiti, a former professor at Hekima College, argues that although the beliefs on ancestors and the veneration devoted to them (can) differ from one place to another, there are "common ancestor beliefs in black Africa."[612]

Recognizing the role of ancestors in Africa, some scholars, such as Penoukou (India), Pobee, Kabasele, Sanon, among others, have built their Christologies based on the reality of ancestor.[613] Other scholars, such as Mbiti, Bujo, and Magesa, have given significant insights for understanding the veneration of ancestors in African societies.

---

[610] Ibid.

[611] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 26.

[612] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 15.

[613] Cf. Nyamiti, "African Christologies Today," 14. See also 3-23 and Bujo, *African Theology Social Context*, 85.

i. Requirements for Becoming an Ancestor

Nyamiti, in his doctoral dissertation, presents five main characteristics of an African ancestorship. To be regarded as an ancestor, a person must (1) belong to the same kinship, (2) through death, acquire supernatural powers (3) with which s/he can intercede to God for the benefit of the living, (4) have led an exemplary life, and (5) have gained a right of frequent communication with the living through prayers and ritual offerings. Among these characteristics, it is worthwhile to underline two: kinship and exemplary life.[614]

An ancestor is someone from the same kinship, "which can be from the same family, clan, tribe, religious or sacred society…. Such natural ties are believed to continue to exist even after the death of the individual."[615] An ancestor is expected to have died at a certain age (the older, the better), to have had children (more the better), to have had a "morally good life on earth," "according to the African traditional moral standards." S/he is expected to have had a normal and good death, that is, s/he died at an old age and had left his last words peacefully before death. For these reasons, an ancestor is regarded as a "model of behavior for the living" and "source of tribal tradition and stability."[616] He is also expected to have received a proper burial ceremony. Ndege rightly explains that the ancestors

> were human beings who lived and produced children. Their children and grandchildren in due course formed lineages and clans. While physically they are gone, the connection is not lost. It is believed that they look with favor on their

---

[614] Cf. Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 15-16.

[615] Ibid., 12.

[616] Ibid., 15-16.

descendants to ensure that they live their lives to the fullest and subject to the dictates of the society.[617]

If a person died in bitterness or was not properly buried, his/her resentful and unhappy spirit will linger around and disturb the peace and tranquility of the living as a silent manifestation of remorse and desire for vengeance or appeasement. Strictly speaking, the bad spirits are not regarded as ancestors, as Ndege calls them. They are just "bad spirits." Bad spirits can also be from people who in life were witches and evildoers. Ndege explains,

> These are usually believed to be the spirits of those who were witches. Also, those who were neglected in life and died in bitterness as well as those who are unhappy that ceremonies to honor them in death were not conducted fall under the category of bad spirits. Similarly, those who committed suicide belong to this category. Because they are angry and bitter, bad spirits do not wish the living well.[618]

ii. The Implication of the Veneration of Ancestors

At the end of this section, one could still ask, why is the veneration of ancestors so important in Mozambican society and most African peoples? Walter Hollenweger, in the forward of the book honoring John Mbiti, gives an insightful clue. He says, "Take the ancestors away from the Africans and you destroy their roots in the past, their culture, their dignity and their understanding of *communio sanctorum*."[619] The veneration of ancestors is at the heart of Mozambican identity and culture. The ancestor is part of traditional African religion, without which Christianity would be built on sand. Mozambicans see reality through the eyes of their tradition. Removing the tradition and replacing it with the most

---

[617] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 26.

[618] Ibid.

[619] Jacob Olupona and Sulayman Nyang, *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John S. Mbiti*, vol. 32 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), x.

sophisticated lens will be of no avail because the lens will not serve if one has removed the eyes.

Furthermore, veneration of ancestors draws people to lead a morally upright life according to their traditions. Veneration of ancestors has moral implications in the life of the people and practical consequences in the life of the community. "As a result, appeasing God and the departed ancestors is undertaken to ensure that peace prevails, and calamities are prevented from occurring. This is done by promoting chastity, fidelity, and societal cohesion as per the societal moral prescription and by making an offering to God and the ancestors." [620] Any attempt to remove the veneration of the ancestors should ask beforehand, what other value or symbol will replace it with the same or superior effectiveness? Furthermore, in what way can the veneration of ancestors be a preparation for understanding aspects of the Christian faith? That is why Nyamiti argues, "African teaching on ancestors is an excellent preparatory road for Christian doctrine on Christ and the saints."[621]

Ecclesia in Africa acknowledges the importance of the veneration of ancestors and its relationship with the love Africans have for life. The apostolic exhortation made a rhetorical question reiterating John Paul II's homily in the Eucharistic celebration for the opening of the synod.[622] It says, "The sons and daughters of Africa love life. It is precisely this love for life that leads them to give such great importance to the veneration of their

---

[620] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 26.

[621] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 148-49.

[622] John Paul II, Homily for the Opening of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, April 10, 1994, no. 3, accessed December 20, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19940410_sinodo-africano.html.

ancestors. They believe intuitively that the dead continue to live and remain in communion with them. Is this not in some way a preparation for belief in the Communion of the Saints?"[623] This passage leads to another important characteristic of most African societies: the capacity to celebrate life with joy, resilience, and fortitude amid suffering while working hard to overcome whatever hinders life.

8. Joyful Celebration of Life and Resilience in Difficulties

> There are thus many reasons for hope and gratitude. For example, despite the great pandemics which decimate its population – such as malaria, AIDS, tuberculosis and others – diseases which medical science is still struggling to eliminate once and for all, Africa maintains its *joie de vivre*, celebrating God's gift of life by welcoming children for the increase of the family circle and the human community.
> —Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*

The 2011 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Africae Munus* underscores one common aspect of African people, which is very strong in Mozambican societies.[624] Mozambicans celebrate life joyfully and face life's challenges resiliently. They face difficulties with hope and fortitude as beautifully expressed in the African-American gospel song "We Shall Overcome Someday," sung especially during the difficult times of the civil rights movement. Mozambicans, as most Africans in the continent or in the diaspora, exhibit a great capacity for resilience and hope for a better future. Such a quality explains why, despite so many challenges, Africa is still a sign of hope for humanity, as Benedict courageously recognized. He wrote, "I also see grounds for hope in Africa's rich intellectual, cultural and religious heritage. Africa wishes to preserve this, to deepen it and

---

[623] EIA 43.

[624] AM 9.

to share it with the world. By doing so, it will make an important and positive contribution."[625]

a. **Celebrating Life despite and in the midst of Hardships**

Mozambicans take any opportunity available to gather family, friends, and neighbors to chat about, commemorate, and celebrate the joy of life. The more people come, the better for the celebration. The more food, drinks dances there are, the better for confraternization. *Ecclesia is Africa* rightly captures the discussion of the synod fathers: "African cultures have an acute sense of solidarity and community life. In Africa, it is unthinkable to celebrate a feast without the participation of the whole village. Indeed, community life in African societies expresses the extended family."[626] Even in moments of distress, Mozambicans celebrate life.

Cancelas rightly noticed that after the invocation for the healing of a moribund or after burial ceremonies, people gather to sing, dance, and eat joyfully. At times, the joyful festivity may seem to overshadow the sadness of the mourning.[627] This aspect also has a healing effect in the community. People seize any opportunity available not only to mourn and decry the misfortunes in life but also to be together and commemorate as a community the precious gift of life. Such a practice is common even today, causing perplexity among non-Africans visiting Mozambique.

---

[625] AM 9.

[626] EIA 43.

[627] Cf. Cancelas, *Contributo política social moçambicana*, 203.

After coming back from the cemetery, people go the house of the deceased, wash their hands as a sign of purification and participation in the mourning of the family.[628] Then, they eat something, as small as it may be, which signifies sharing in the joys of the family, communion with the deceased, and the desire to move ahead.[629] Songs and dances follow. The ceremony means that society recognizes the challenges and hardships in life; however, it does not allow misfortunes to overshadow the joy of life. The celebration has a psychotherapeutic healing effect and reveals the spiritual and social character of the people. The ritual manifests resilience and hope for a better future to which everybody must contribute.

b. **Healing, Counselling and Resilience**

Even as a marginal note, it is worthwhile to present as a value the presence of *curandeiros*. These traditional healers, whom non-knowledgeable Africans confuse with sorcerers, witches, or practitioners of superstition, play an important role in the physical and psychological healing of people. *Curandeiros* are still influential, resourceful, and effective in people's life. Notwithstanding the unquestionable value of professionally trained psychologists and therapeutics, traditional society had a way to deal with stress, trauma, and suffering, which should not be dismissed but challenged when opportunists misuse it for selfish interest. In fact, as Ndege rightly notes, Mozambicans see no contradiction whatsoever in resorting to both modern and traditional medicine. He argues,

> It is not uncommon to find a Mozambican consulting a traditional healer, while at the same time visiting a mainstream modern healthcare facility. There appears to

---

[628] Cf. Lerma, *O povo macua*, 205 and 218. There are slight variations in these ceremonies from one ethnic group to another, but the message is the same. For example, the Macua people wash their hands nearby whereas in the South and Center, or in the town, people wash their hands in the house of the deceased. For other variations of the ceremonies, see Cancelas, *Contributo política social moçambicana*, 156-163.

[629] Cf. Lerma, *O povo macua*, 205.

be no conflict because of the belief that modern healthcare is significantly better than traditional healthcare in many ways, but yet still is unable to offer explanations pertaining to the many mysteries of illness or causes of death to satisfy the many who still value their traditional worldview.[630]

Furthermore, apart from the help from traditional healers and the guidance of the elders, the support of the entire community, the care from family and friends, all these human facilities help to overcome situations of stress, despair, anguish, the helplessness that people encounter in their lives, including in marriage and family. "In demanding situations, members come together to offer such services to an individual to ease his/her burden." For psycho-physical easiness, Ndege explains that "Successful medical practitioners are ones who can combat witchcraft, exorcise demons, administer herbal medicine, psychologically stabilize the patient, and be reassuring that all will be well."[631] All those traditional mediations help people to cope with challenges of life.

9. Lobolo: A Token of Appreciation and Guarantee of Stability

Lobola is a token of appreciation from the bridegroom and his family to the bride and her family. It is meant to be symbolic. Though a generous gift most of the time, it is not necessarily a "take-me-out-of-misery" gift to the bride and her family, as it happens in consumerist, extravagant, and exhibitionist societies of our time as described in Chapter One on the section entitled "Consumerism" and the "Show-off."

In this work, I will use interchangeably *lobolo*, *lowolo*, *lobola* and never bride-price, which is not an accurate rendering of *lobolo*, unless when underscoring the non-

---

[630] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 27.

[631] Ibid.

African view or the abuses that occurred in the practice of *lobolo*. Bridewealth is a partial and inaccurate translation of *lobolo*, though less negative than bride-price.

a. Token of Appreciation and Gratitude of Stability

i. Appreciation and Guarantee

According to Adriano Langa, *lobolo* is a gesture of gratitude to the family for having nurtured and educated the bride, taking care of her until the date of engagement. It is a sign of gratitude for the family to allow the bridegroom to be part of her daughter's life.[632] It is insightful that Langa, at a certain point of his reflection, translates to thank as *lowolar* (*agradecer = lowolar*), implying that the true meaning of *lobolo* is gratitude.[633] Second, for Langa, *lobolo* means security and stability. "*Lowolo* is meant to be a sign of guarantee of permanence and stability of marriage."[634]

Lowola is also a sign of honor and commitment that the family trusts that her daughter is ready to marry. Langa argues that if the family of the woman is suspicious of her suitability for marriage or believes she has a physical or psychological difficulty that may render marriage complicated, the family will not accept any *lowola* until the couple has children. Thus, accepting *lowola* is a public declaration that the woman is serious, committed, and worthwhile.[635] Langa explains that the woman's family can use part of *lobola* in the ceremonies that will follow to ask for God's blessings through the ancestors of both families.[636]

---

[632] Langa, "O lobolo," 141.

[633] Ibid., 142.

[634] Ibid., 142-43.

[635] Cf. Ibid., 144.

[636] Cf. Ibid.

ii. Gratitude and Legitimacy

Langa rightly underscores that *lobola* is not selling a woman to her husband's family. People consider insulting to speak of *lobola* in such a manner.[637] Such view is common in most African countries. The Nigerian woman theologian, Mercy Oduyoye, stated, "my maternal grand-uncle said to my husband: 'We are Akan. We do not sell our daughters.'"[638] She explained, "Feminist voices in Africa insist that these elaborate exchanges of gifts are intended to emphasize the worth of women, to provide community participation and social witness to the coming together of the two persons for the religious duty of procreation. However, this should not be construed as an economic transaction in which a man buys a woman"[639]

There is another verb to convey the meaning of selling which is disrespectful and offensive when used instead of *kulolowa*. The offense is so great that it may abort the process of marriage.[640] According to Langa, these linguistic examples indicates that for Mozambican societies, *lowola* does not have any mercantilist overtone of buying and selling. To apply buying and selling to *lobola* is disrespectful, offensive or ignorance of an important aspect of marriage in most patrilineal societies.[641]

Furthermore, "The *lobolo* confers the legality, the seriousness, the dignity and the consistency of the household in the Mozambican societies."[642] Concurring with this point,

---

[637] Cf. Langa, "O lobolo," 133.

[638] Mercy Oduyoye, "Feminist Theology in African Perspective," in *Paths of African Theology*, ed. Rosino Gibellini (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books 1994), 168.

[639] Ibid.

[640] Cf. Langa, "O lobolo," 133

[641] Cf. Ibid., 132-134.

[642] Ibid., 131. "O *lobolo* confere a legalidade, a seriedade, a dignidade e a consistência do lar nas referidas sociedades."

Ngundu, Research Assistant at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, argues, "An African valid customary marriage is contracted and considered legitimate only when the *lobolo* negotiations and transactions between the members of the lobolo-giving family and the lobolo-receiving family are entered into or completed." [643]

Ndege still uses the expression 'bridewealth' in speaking of *lobolo*. He argues, "It is important to note that bridewealth is not the buying of a wife, as erroneously portrayed in the West. It is a compensation to the bride's family for the loss of her labor that is going to benefit the bridegroom's family. It is formalizing the marriage and unites the two families." [644] Mbiti speaks of a marriage gift, which seems to be more appropriate than bridewealth. He rightly argues, "This marriage gift is an important institution in African societies. It is a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom's people to those of the bride, for their care over her and or allowing her to become his wife." [645]

b. Reprising the Significance of *Lobolo*

According to Langa, if the society reappraises *lobolo*, "The family, once so shaken and stripped of the true values of humanity, unity, and stability will be enriched and reinvigorated. Therefore, she will be that family that one-day God thought and formed." [646] Langa's insight is one of the most vivid appreciations of *lobolo*. He goes on in underlying the implications of *lobolo* not only in marriage but also on the extended family. He sees

---

[643] Onesimus Ngundu, "Mission Churches and African Customary Marriage," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 30, no. 1 (2011): 47, accessed November 17, 2017, https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/30-1_035.pdf.

[644] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 80.

[645] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy,* 140.

[646] Langa, "O lobolo," 170. "A família será enriquecida e revigorada, ela que anda tao abalada e despida dos autênticos valores da humanidade, unidade e estabilidade. Assim, será aquela família que um dia Deus pensou e formou."

abandoned family members and lack of cohesion as some of the consequences of an institution that lacks the role of *lobolo*. He advocates a reappraisal of the true meaning of *lobolo*. According to Langa, "*Lowolo*, well-guided, can make some contribution to this restoration so desired, at a time when its family members are disarticulated like pieces of a wrecked ship at sea. Maybe we would not see older people, parents, and in-laws of millionaires abandoned to their fate."[647]

c. **Misconceptions and Ignorance about *Lobolo***

In 2000, in The Theological Week in Beira on Matrimony, Padre Gwembe in the same line with Adriano Langa, above mentioned, draw attention to how a certain way of speaking shows ambiguities, ignorance, and misrepresentation about *lobolo*, misleading people, to consider *lobolo* as merchandizing a wife.[648] Such grievous misconceptions are evident in those writers who translate *lobolo* as bride-price or bride-wealth or in those presenting *lobolo* as demeaning women, as it was the case of the Marxist-Leninist government.[649]

John Mbiti explains, "The custom of presenting a gift to the bride's people is practiced all over Africa, though in varying degrees. Different names are used to describe it, such as 'bride-wealth', 'bride-gift', 'dowry' (wrongly in this case) and 'lobola'. Most of these terms are either inadequate or misleading."[650] Alongside Gwembe, Mabuiangue, and

---

[647] Langa, "O lobolo," 170. "O lowolo, bem orientado, pode dar alguma contribuição para esta restauração tao desejada, num momento em que os seus membros andam desarticulados como pedaços de um navio naufragado e desfeito no mar. Talvez não veríamos mais velhos, pais e sogros de milionários abandonados à sua sorte."

[648] Ezequiel Gwembe, "O casamento na tradição Africana" [Marriage in the African Tradition], in *o matrimónio*, ed. Centro de Formação de Nazaré, 165-168.

[649] Langa, "O lobolo," 131.

[650] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 140.

Mbiti, Michael Guy, a British missionary and scholar working in Kenya, explains, "There is a great significance in the use of words. Bride-price is a pejorative word, suggesting that the bride is being bought."[651]

The three Mozambicans Gwembe, Mabuiangue, and Langa concur that *lobolo* is a token of stability. The point is that, "*Lobolo* had and still has a different meaning from that the west and its cultural and mercantilist worldview gave and still give to it."[652] Gwembe recognizes that the market economy and Western influence brought imbalance in the relationships and abuses in the *lobolo* system. However, Gwembe appropriately contends that "the abuse should not take out the use."[653]

Ndungu underscores the abuses in the practice of *lobolo*. He argues, "Studies of African marriage agree that lobolo is the central piece of customary marriage. Unfortunately, due to human greed in the cash economies of modern Africa, lobolo has been commercialized."[654] The Isaacmans, though recognizing the significance of *lobolo*, are misleading when they state that "lobolo is not simply buying a bride. It is an agreement between two families which can give increased stability to the marriage."[655] *Lobolo* is not at all buying or selling a bride.

---

[651] Michael Guy, "A Cultural Approach to a Christian Theology of Marriage," in *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, ed. Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 81.

[652] Cf. Langa, "O lobolo," in *O Matrimónio: Actas Da 5a Semana Teológica* (2000), 132. "Isto para dizer ao leitor que o *lowolo* teve um significado diferente que o ocidental e o seu universo cultural e mercantil entenderam ou ainda entendem."

[653] Cf. Gwembe, "Casamento na tradição Africana" 108-109. "O abuso não tira o uso."

[654] Ngundu, "Mission Churches African Marriage," 47.

[655] Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 156.

Pauline Chiziane, the first Mozambican woman writer in Literature, states, "Every woman likes the *lobolo*, even the extremist feminist. The reason is that *lobolo* dignity, gives status and prestige to the woman."[656] She also deplores that a mercantilist-consumerist mentality tends to pervert lobolo.[657] Lobolo is not selling a woman nor a kind of "compensation to the bride's family for the loss of her labor that is going to benefit the bridegroom's family," as Ndege put it.[658]

Against the misconception of *lobolo* as compensation, Padre Gwembe avers, "Lobolo is not even, as some anthropologist name it, 'economic compensation' for the loss of the force of production labor and reproduction of the group."[659] Speaking of *lobola* as compensation, though less aggressive than that of 'bride price', still fails from the same limitation in understanding the deep meaning of *lobola* in Mozambican (or for this matter, in African) traditional societies.

d. The Significance and Implications of *Lobolo*

The ceremony of lobolo formalizes the consent of the bride, the groom, and their respective families.[660] *Lobola* validates marriage and makes the woman a wife to the man and the man a husband to the woman with full recognition in the two families. Refusing to *lobolar* (meaning, to present one's token of appreciation to the bride and her family) result

---

[656] Paulina Chiziane, *O Sétimo Juramento* (Lisbon: Editorial Caminho, 2000), 90. "Todas as mulheres gostam de lobolo, mesmo as feministas do extremo. Porque dignifica. Dá estatuto. Prestigia." Langa makes the same point. See Langa, "O lobolo," 131.

[657] Cf. Chiziane, *O Sétimo Juramento*, 91-92.

[658] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 80.

[659] Gwembe, "Casamento na tradição Africana," 108. "O lobolo *não* é sequer, o que alguns antropólogos chamavam de compensação económica' pela perda de uma forca produtora e reprodutora de um grupo."

[660] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 80.

in at least four consequences.

First, the man will not be fully accepted in the woman's family, and he will be considered a half-stranger. Therefore, he may not be allowed to participate in certain ceremonies of the family on his wife's lineage. Second, the man will not have full authority over his children to the extent that, in the likelihood of a death of the mother, the woman's family will take full responsibility of the children, even though the man has means to educate them. The woman's family will prevent the man to participate in important decisions in the life of the children. Third, the children will not be allowed to take the surname from their father's side.[661] They will use instead the name of their grandparents or their uncles on their mother's lineage. Under Portuguese influence, some families give to their children the surname from the lineage of both parents. For example, my middle name is the name of my mother's father, whereas my last name is the name of my father's father. Fourth, when a woman dies before the man offers his token of appreciation, his paternity will not be fully recognized unless he presents his gift posthumously. This creates an embarrassing situation which people foreign to the customs speak of paying a 'bride-price' for a deceased woman [662]

10. Traditional Structures for Solving Problems

The traditional structures for problem solving are more evident and effective in rural areas than in towns. Sometimes people from town will travel to their rural areas to consult the elders and family members for their problems.[663] Much has been written on

---

[661] Langa, "O lobolo," 145.

[662] Cf. Langa, "O lobolo," 145.

[663] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 97.

African *palaver*, that is, family and community meetings for discussing problems until reaching consensus and a commit to act according to the consensus.[664] Such a practice is also the case in Mozambique.

As soon as a problem arises in a family, traditional society encourages husband and wife to converse first before sharing the problem with someone else. It commends a certain degree of confidentiality of the couple and not to spread everywhere any difficulty that appears. When the two fail to solve the problem or when there are no conditions for a fruitful conversation, society encourages the two as a couple or each individually to visit their godparents from marriage. Each may discuss individually with one's godparents and then as a couple with the godparents of both sides. Sometimes the *allangizi*, the family counselors of the village, can also be present, depending on the seriousness of the matter.[665]

There is a fundamental assumption in these conversations that everybody, the wife, the husband, and the family want the marriage to succeed and that divorce is the last of the last resorts. 'No-fault divorce' is not part of Mozambican society, both traditional and modern. Commending traditional ways of problem solving and cherishing marriage and family will keep the society free from incorporating a mentality that regards easy divorce as a sign of freedom, autonomy, emancipation, and development.[666]

---

[664] Cf. Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community,* 58-92. His chapter entitled "Understanding of Conscience in the Ethics of Palaver" underscores the importance of community ones' decision making process.

[665] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique, 89*. He speaks of the elders in problem solving.

[666] Cf. Joseph Sorge and James Scurlock, *Divorce Corp.* (Jackson, WY: DC Book, 2013), 25-26. See the entire section entitled, "A Brief History of Divorce (and Monogamy)," in Sorge and Scurlock, 20-33.

CONCLUSION

> The values that still persist in the African family of mutual care, solidarity, marriage, and family as a communal affair and care for the vulnerable are an important first step in the evolution of the family that is relevant for Africa, and that could offer a contribution to the world church.
>
> —Philomena Mwaura, *The Gospel of the Family*

Mwaura summarizes the main argument of this chapter, a recognition of Mozambican values as a preparation for a pastoral approach that is relevant for marriage and family today.[667] This chapter presented ten values of traditional Mozambican society that (can) motivate and prepare young adults to strengthen their future marriage and family. The chapter also claimed that a reprisal of those values is a condition for a pastoral approach that will help people face the challenges of marriage and family in Mozambique today..

Ekeocha made an appeal which corroborates with the goal of this chapter. She stated, "This is an urgent and commonsense message to everyone that Africans keep what is best for us, which is our love for family, for life and our appreciation of marriage."[668]

This chapter builds upon the recognition of the changes that occurred in Mozambique and their impact on the way people view and live marriage and family, as shown in Chapter One. It considers what Vähäkangas rightly stated, "It does not help if we only blame either the tradition or the contemporary situation. It is impossible to return

---

[667] Philomena Mwaura, "The Gospel of the Family: From Africa to the World Church," in *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III*, ed. Orobator Agbonkhianmeghe (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 158.

[668] Cf. Obianuju Ekeocha, "A Passion for Preserving African Values," *The Guardian Nigeria Newspaper*, May 17, 2015, accessed December 12, 2017, http://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/ekeocha-a-passion-for-preserving-african-values.

to a life situation of a hundred years ago."[669] However, by presenting ten common values

that favor marriage and family in most Mozambican societies, the chapter underscored a

significant reminder of *Ecclesia in Africa*, that is, "while adopting the positive values of

modernity, the African family must preserve its essential values."[670] Ndege endorses major

assumptions of this chapter, "despite the preceding changes that characterize Mozambican

society; certain core values are still cherished by segments of the population regardless of

their educational, religious, and economic status."[671]

Once again, speaking on a way out of crisis Vähäkangas rightly stated, "The

changes in the society are there, but we can have help from the traditional values to

strengthen the marriages to our young people… many young couples realize the need to

find a way out of it, and they would be ready for the help from church and community to

protect their marriages."[672] One may ask, why is so important today to speak of African

values? The answer is that

> many of the reasons that have to lead to the situation of crisis are connected to
> traditional values. Because of this also the medicine could come from traditional
> ways of treating problems in the community. The young couples should get the
> support of the family and local community also in the contemporary situation. If
> the clan is unable to solve the problems, the church could take an initiative to help
> couples. The traditional way of counseling was through elder's council.[673]

Currently, African societies tend to look for the solutions of their problems outside

the continent while neglecting the richness of their traditions with so many potentialities

---

[669] Auli Vähäkangas, "The Crisis of Christian Marriage," in *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, ed. Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 43.

[670] EIA 80.

[671] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 93.

[672] Vähäkangas, "Crisis of Christian Marriage," 43..

[673] Ibid., 44.

that better respond to their needs.[674] The answers from outside, despite goodwill, are not effective because they disregard the African worldview with its values, which this chapter underscored. As Guy rightly argued, "Marriage has to be seen in the light of the culture of which it is a part.[675]

---

[674] Cf. EIA 48.

[675] Guy, "A Cultural Approach," 108-09.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON COVENANT AND TRADITIONAL

VALUES

INTRODUCTION

In 1966, Paul VI issued *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, an apostolic letter containing "norms for the implementation of the decrees of the Council."[676] Paul VI recommended studies "to investigate peoples' ways of thinking about the universe, man and his attitude towards God, and to give *theological consideration to whatever is good and true*."[677] According to *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, "such theological study should provide the necessary foundation for the adaptations which must be made."[678] This chapter will provide such a theological reflection by conversing the covenantal elements of Chapter Two with Mozambican values in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four will first underscore that the Mozambican values bear similarities with the Hebrew traditions as witnessed in the Hebrew Scriptures.[679] This chapter will also answer the question of whether the values presented are compatible with the gospel message and whether there are aspects that require purification before integrating them as

---

[676] Cf. Paul VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, Apostolic Letter on Implementing the Following Decrees of Vatican Council II: *Christus Dominus, Presbyterorum Ordinis, Perfectae Caritatis,* and *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, August 6, 1966, no. 18.2, accessed January 30, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p_vi_motu-proprio_19660806_ecclesiae-sanctae.html. Emphasis added.

[677] Cf. Paul VI, "Ecclesiae Sanctae: Norms for the Implementation of the Decree of the Second Vatican Council Ad Gentes Divinitus," (August 6, 1966): 18:2, accessed January 30, 2-18, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p_vi_motu-proprio_19660806_ecclesiae-sanctae.html. Emphasis added.

[678] Ibid., 18.2.

[679] Cf. Jesse Mugambi, "Africa and the Old Testament," in *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*, ed. Mary Getui, Knut Holter, and Victor Zinkuratire (New York: Acton Publishers, 2001), 7.

it will be the goal of Chapter Five, which will deal with the pastoral approach.[680] By underscoring the similarities and the compatibility, the chapter will also be showing how those Mozambican values are covenantal and contribute toward a pastoral approach that responds to the challenges that marriage and family face today. As integral to the theological reflection and as a preparation to Chapter Five, such comparison helps to underscore the compatibility of traditional values with Christian faith. There are four other reasons why such a comparison is so important.

Mbiti articulated satisfactorily one of the reasons. He argues, "The social-political life of the Jewish tribes has many echoes in African life… The similarities make them feel that they have place in the Bible, that the Bible speaks about their situation. In any case, they understand better the passages which 'rings a bell' in their own culture, and such biblical passages have a greater impact."[681] Therefore, underscoring the similarities invites Mozambicans to see that as God spoke in different ways to the Hebrew, God also spoke in multifaceted forms to Mozambicans through their beliefs, costumes and rituals.[682]

Second, drawing attention to similarities serves as a corrective measure of the colonial-missionary mentality which, according to Magesa, stressed "aspects of discontinuity between Christianity and African cultures and traditional religion to such an extent that they excluded the aspects of continuity."[683] Mugambi concurs with Magesa

---

[680] Cf. SECAM, "Recomendations on Christian Family and Marriage in Africa Today," (June 29 - July 5 1981): 171, no. 1.5.. Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 20 speaks of "compatible with the Gospel," and EIA 62 speaks of "compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church" as aspects to consider in the process of inculturation.

[681] John Mbiti, "The Bible in African Culture," in *Paths of African Theology*, ed. Rosino Gibellini (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis **B**ooks 1994), 35.

[682] Cf. Heb 1: 1-5.

[683] Magesa, *African Religion,* 11.

stating, "Euro-American missionary education in Africa has tended to emphasize discontinuity between the Bible and the African heritage."[684] As explained in Chapter One, such an emphasis led to the derogatory views on Mozambican lifestyle and values.

Third, such a reflection will help the Church in Mozambique overcome the reluctance, hesitation, and uneasiness to take those values as a springboard for an inculturated pastoral approach on marriage and family.[685] Lastly, it will assist the Church leaders in Mozambique to encourage institutions of training for the lay, clergy, religious, and the society in general to speak boldly and positively about traditional values without fear of accusation for promoting practices against the Christian faith.[686]

Chapter Three presented ten Mozambican values and explicitly underscored the "Interdependence between Marriage, Family, Life (Children), and Community. It also explained how all elements, in one way or another, contribute in preparing, celebrating, accompanying and strengthening marriage and life in such a way that traditional marriages enjoy much greater stability than Christian marriages.[687] Chapter Four will show that these ten elements are compatible with the Christian faith. They will be presented under seven sections, which are, Traditional Appreciation for Marriage (1), Engagement (2), Motherhood, Fatherhood and Community Life 3), Traditional Education (4), Respect for

---

[684] JesseMugambi, "Africa and the Old Testament," in *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*, ed. Mary Getui, Knut Holter, and Victor Zinkuratire (New York: Acton Publishers, 2001), 7. "Euro-American missionary education in Africa has tended to emphasize discontinuity between the Bible and the African heritage."

[685] Cf. SECAM, "Recommendations on Christian Family," 171, no.1.5. See also EIA 20 and 62.

[686] Cf. EIA 62. See also EIA 20 which speaks of "communion in a diversity compatible with the Gospel."

[687] Cf. Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 156.

Parents, Elders and Ancestors (5), Solidarity and Interdependence (6), Mozambican Sense of Belonging and Community (7).

The 2016 "Order of Celebrating Matrimony" states, "whatever is honorable and not indissolubly connected with superstition and errors should be sympathetically considered and, if possible, preserved intact, and in fact even admitted into the Liturgy itself as long as it harmonizes with a true and authentic liturgical spirit."[688] It will be impossible to follow that guideline while not recognizing those values as compatible with the gospel.

1. **Traditional Appreciation of Marriage as Consistent with Our Faith**

> Let marriage be held in honor among all and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.
> —Hebrews 13:4

a. **Appreciation of Marriage in the Light of the New Testament**

This passage from the Letter to the Hebrews commends marriage against movements and cultural trends that viewed sexuality and marriage negatively as explained in Chapter Two.[689] The Christian community continued to value marriage and encouraged her members to marry and form a family. The First Letter to Timothy reproaches false teachers who forbid marriage or negatively speak of marriage.[690] The letter encourages "younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us."[691] Such appreciation for marriage was relevant in those days as it is in the current situation of Mozambique where ideologies of various forms and shapes as

---

[688] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 43.

[689] Cf. Chapter Two, in the section entitled "Marriage as a Covenant in the Catholic Tradition."

[690] Cf. 1 Tm 4:3.

[691] 1 Tm 5:14.

well as social-economic changes force young adults to postpone marriage, to just cohabit, or give up the prospect of marriage.[692]

Amoris Laetitia points out that such situations are aggravated by "the influence of ideologies which devalue marriage and family, the desire to avoid the failures of other couples, the fear of something they consider too important and sacred."[693] When there is no hope of marrying, some resort to get a child as a single mother through artificial insemination or other arrangements that can allow them to have a child.[694] The point here is that despite such situations, Mozambican appreciation for marriage and family finds an echo in both the Hebrew and Christian Scripture and therefore the Church could continue to do whatever it takes to motivate and prepare young people for marriage as well as support and accompany their marital journey.

b. Hints of Appreciation of Marriage in the Gospel

Perkins Pheme, a scholar on the Early Church and Johannine Writings at Boston College, underscores the significance of Jesus at the wedding in Cana by arguing, "The first of the miracles in the Gospel is referred to as one of Jesus 'signs' and is the occasion for a revelation of Jesus' glory that leads his disciples to believe in him."[695] The presence of Jesus and his disciples at the wedding in Cana shows his appreciation for marriage and

---

[692] Cf. AL 44, and see the General Introduction of this dissertation.

[693] AL 40.

[694] The Pew Research says that in USA, from 1997 to 2007, the number of simple parents has increased 13 percent.

[695] Pheme Perkins, "The Gospel According to John," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer, and Roland Edmund Murphy (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 953-54, no. 61:40.

family to the extent that he used such an occasion to reveal his glory and let his disciples believe in him.[696]

Using examples from family life to preach his message and mission, Jesus unequivocally expresses that he values marriage, family, and children. Julie Rubio, Assistant Professor of Moral Theology at Saint Louis University, explains that Mark 10:6-9 "is widely viewed as support for marriage and a holy union."[697] Though his celibate lifestyle and that of his disciples seem to place more value on the single and ascetic life than married life, Jesus suggests that it is more important to devote oneself to the values of the kingdom of God.

In its decree on the laity, the Second Vatican Council underscored the gift of marital life for the Church and marriage "as the beginning and basis of human society."[698] Furthermore, the decree states, "Christian spouses … help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children. Because of their state and rank in life, they have their special gift among the people of God."[699] Such a passage shows appreciation for marriage, an aspect reiterated in *Amoris Laetitia*.[700]

c. **Appreciation of Marriage in Official Statements of the Church**

---

[696] Cf. Jn 2:11. See the historical background of the usage of this text in Turner, *Inseparable Love*, 240, no. 184.

[697] Julie Rubio, *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 54.

[698] Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem,* Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, November 18, 1965, no. 11, accessed February 6, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html. Henceforth, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* will be cited as AA.

[699] AA 11.

[700] AL 1, 28. AL 40 deplores the influences of ideologies which devalue marriage and family.

Lumen Gentium says that regardless of one's status in life, each member of the Church, the people of God, has a specific mission and God calls all the faithful to holiness.[701] According to *Lumen Gentium*, "All the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect."[702] The laity (single and married), clergy, religious, and missionaries are called to holiness. Each one, according to one's state of life, contribute to the building up of the Church and of the society. It is worth underscoring that matrimony and priesthood are considered two sacraments of service, two distinct ways of living the call for service in the discipleship to Christ. *Lumen Gentium* makes explicit the Church's appreciation of the vocation and mission of marriage and family and their specific contribution in the Church and society.

d. <u>**High Mozambican Regard for Marriage Is Compatible with Catholic Faith**</u>

There is still some hesitation and even reluctance in speaking clearly and boldly that certain traditional practices are compatible with the gospel and therefore can be incorporated in any pastoral approach that purports to be meaningful and relevant for the Church in Mozambique. Though the prudence of the Mozambican Church leaders guided them to wait for the appropriate time, which began after the publication of *Ecclesia in Africa* and the Theological Seminars in Beira (2001-2002), it seems that it is high time to move for an approach that is creatively faithful and boldly apostolic.

Such a stance will require a public and official recognition of the sound values in traditional Mozambican societies beginning with those that motivate, prepare, and support

---

[701] Cf. LG 39.

[702] LG 11.

marriage and family. Fear of misunderstandings from the hierarchy of the Church or backlash from civil authorities during the Marxist-Leninist period led toward a reticent approach to traditional values. Now it seems the appropriate moment. Otherwise, the new forms of colonization will proliferate and harm marriage and family even worse than the disruption that the colonial and Marxist ideologies caused.

e. <u>**Understanding the Context to Understand the Problem and the Solution**</u>

> A daughter is a secret anxiety to her father, and worry over her robs him of sleep: when she is young, for fear she may not marry, or if married, for fear she may be disliked; while a virgin, for fear she may be seduced and become pregnant in her father's house; or having a husband, for fear she may go astray, or, though married, for fear she may be barren.
>
> —Sirach 42:9-10

The Book of Sirach shows the anxiety of a family when a daughter may not get married or find favor from her husband. The overly anxiety of the father expresses how the Israelites valued marriage, children, and an education that would prevent a girl from entering a relationship that would ruin her life. No family would like to see a springer or a woman that does not know how to take care of her household. Like in Mozambique, "a family and lineage that produce hardworking and well-behaved girls are usually admired across the land."[703]

Mozambican parents, more in rural than in urban settings, have a similar concern toward their children, especially for the girl because when the relationship falls apart, she is the one who suffers most and it's difficult to get married again and form a stable family. Single men are reluctant to marry a woman who was in a previous relationship unless the man himself was also in a previous relationship. Such situations explain the attitude of

---

[703] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 84.

parents, which I witnessed from the years 2003-2005 when I worked as a pastor in rural areas. Parents gave dispensations to allow their seventeen-year-old daughters to marry. There was no need for such permissions for boys because they were older than girls by two or more years. Parents promised to give the necessary support to the young couple. They explained that they did not want their daughters cohabiting before God's blessing in the Church and taught that it was to ask too much for a girl to wait three or more years after finishing primary school and with no opportunity to go to secondary school or a professional technical school.

Parents will prefer to permit their daughter to marry as early as possible rather than condoning cohabitation and having a grandchild out of marriage. Part of the challenge of early marriages in Mozambique can only be understood in this context, but the mainstream media do not present a full picture of the reality.[704] They do not speak of the insufficient and inadequate infrastructure for educating teenagers nor of the concern of the parents for young people cohabiting instead of forming stable families.

2. Mozambican Engagement, Hebrew Betrothal, and Gospel Values

In Mozambique, the expression for engagement is *anelamento*. In patrilineal societies, *anelamento* coincides with the *lobolo*. *Anel* is the Portuguese rendering of the ring. *Anelamento* means to put on a ring or the exchange of rings. In matrilineal societies, *anelamento* formalizes the consent of the couple and the respective families but without a mandatory token of appreciation (*lobolo*) of the patrilinear societies. In October 2017, I asked Cacilda, a young lady who had just participated in the marriage celebration of her

---

[704] Bénézet Bujo and Michael Czerny, *AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflections* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007).

older sister in the capital city, about the ritual of *anelamento*. Cacilda reiterated, "Here, there is no marriage without *lobolo*." Such witness concurs with the findings of the research from the Theological Advisory Group (TAG), already refered to in Chapter One. The TAG argues that the importance of engagement is consistent with Hebrew, African and Christian traditions. For TAG, "eloping is not Christian! Eloping without engagement in Africa is contrary to custom, unrecognized by statute law and offensive to the community. Nor does it follow biblical examples."[705]

The *anelamento* ceremony marks the official and recognized engagement between a man and a woman as well as the acceptance, approval, and commitment of the spouses' families to support the marriage. As part of the consent and pledge of fidelity, a major gesture in the betrothal ceremony is the presentation of a token of stability from the family of the groom to the family of the bride, as explained in Chapter Three.[706] TAG underscores that "engagement in Africa takes place only when the parents meet to agree to the pending marriage."[707]

It is worth noticing that the use of a ring in Mozambique is one of the legacies from Portuguese influence, which has become part of the ritual of the Christian celebration of marriage. However, other cultural symbolic gestures that express consent and faithfulness may be appropriate in the absence of a ring, and such gestures already happen in some rural communities.[708]

---

[705] TAG, *Biblical Approach Marriage Family*, 84.

[706] See the section entitled, "Lobolo, a Token of Appreciation."

[707] See the section entitled, "Lobolo, a Token of Appreciation."

[708] For a historical overview about the origin and meaning of the ritual of blessing and putting on rings, See Turner, *Inseparable Love,* 102-11.

a. **Mozambican Engagement and Hebrew Betrothal**

The meaning of betrothal among the Israelites has evolved. However, according to Geoffrey Wigoder, Skolnik and Himelstein, "in the times of the Bible and the Talmud, marriage was a two step-process. It began with the betrothal – *kiddushin* (or *erusin*) – and ended with *niss'in – marriage*."[709] Wigoeder explains that betrothal was called "*kiddushin*, or consecration, indicating that the woman becomes forbidden (inviolate) to all men except her husband..."[710] Through betrothal, man and woman promised to marry soon, and not to engage in the premarital encounter before that. The ceremony had legal implications, unlike the modern expression of betrothal which is a promise to marry in the future. Wigoder says, "Over the centuries, the traditional *kiddushin* became the placing of a ring on the bride's finger by the groom."[711] Later on, the ceremony included *ketubbach* , a kind of lobola but with written agreement. [712] Marriage, *Nisssu'in*, was a celebration in which "the bride moved into the groom's home, was accompanied by the recitation of seven blessings." [713]

Betrothal in Mozambique and most African countries bear similarities with the Israelite betrothal ceremony during Biblical times. [714] According to TAG, among the Hebrew, "the engagement was the most important step taken in the process of marriage."[715]

---

[709] Geoffrey Wigoder, Fred Skolnik, and Shmuel Himelstein, *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism* (New York: University Press, 2002), 506. The Talmud period is from 70 to 640 AD.

[710] Ibid., 506.

[711] Bernard Wigoder et al., *The Student's Encyclopedia of Judaism* (New York University Press, 2004), 222.

[712] Wigoder, *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism,* 506.

[713] Ibid.

[714] Ibid..

[715] TAG, *A Biblical Approach to Marriage*, 106.

Likewise, "in traditional Africa, the basic principles of engagement were similar to the Hebrew in the Old Testament. A legally, recognized marriage was impossible prior to engagement. And engagement involved an agreement concerning the exchange of gifts (dowry)."[716] Like in Mozambique, "engagement (betrothal) among the Hebrews was nearly as binding as marriage itself. Sometimes the engaged woman (w)as called 'wife' for she was under the same obligation of faithfulness as a married woman (see Deuteronomy 22:23-29)."[717]

b. Compatibility with or Preparedness for Gospel Values

In the New Testament, Luke's Gospel in the infancy narrative states, "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin *engaged* to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary."[718] Joseph and Mary were engaged and had not yet lived together, though they expected to be faithful to each other as a spouse to be.[719]

The Israelites treated infidelity after the engagement with the same regulations as married people. Mathew's Gospel stresses that Joseph was a righteous man. He highly respected Mary and did not want her exposed to the same shame and treatment of an adulterous woman when she was with child. Arguably, Joseph deep down in his heart

---

[716] TAG, *A Biblical Approach to Marriage*, 106.

[717] Ibid.

[718] Lk 1:26-17. Emphasis added.

[719] Reynolds explains, "It was a premise of rabbinic marriage law that a man's betrothed became his wife when their sexual relationship began (or at least be deemed to have begun)." Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church*, 332. Viviano, the Dominican Professor of New Testament at French Biblical and Archeological College in Jerusalem, says, "In Judea, betrothal included the right of cohabitation." See Benedict Viviano, "The Gospel According to Matthew," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* 672 (1990): 635, no. 42:11).

trusted Mary to the extent that he could hardly understand that she has been unfaithful. Therefore, he decided to leave her discretely.[720]

In most Mozambican societies, an engaged man and woman were expected to be faithful to one another. As in Kenya, behaving otherwise would dissolve the engagement and preclude marriage.[721] Likewise, a woman was also expected to be a virgin and a man was not to be a promiscuous person. As Bujo rightly stated, "Worth mentioning here is a custom among many ethnic groups that a girl must be a virgin if she hopes to marry, something that many westerners would despise as narrow-minded."[722] However, more than the biological aspect, the point is that both man and woman are expected to be persons with self-respect and with a sense of dignity and who are ready to enter marriage with an undivided self and prepared to give the best of themselves to their spouse during their marriage. The engagement is the officialization of a complete self-giving to the other in a way that enhances life, a guiding principle of all human behavior.[723]

The Mozambican ceremony of engagement (*anelamento*) bears similarities with the Hebrew betrothal in that both ceremonies legitimize the relationship between man and woman. *Lobolo* formalizes the consent of the couple and gives room for the two families to express their consent and approbation of the upcoming marriage. It underscores the communitarian aspect of marriage and commits the couple and their families to take their

---

[720] One sign may the fact that Mathew alludes to this account: "Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly." Mat 1:19.

[721] Cf. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 170. Among the Gikuyu people of Kenya, in Eastern Africa, after the engagement ceremony, the girl could "be taken to the boy's home as his wife at any time, without any further ceremony being performed at her parent's homestead."

[722] Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 179.

[723] Cf. Reference to Magesa, *African Religion*.

relationship seriously and to do what it takes to support and strengthen that relationship. For both Hebrew and Mozambican peoples, betrothal and marriage involve not only the two persons but the entire community.

The few references to betrothals in the New Testament, like that of Mary and Joseph, also show a positive view of betrothal in the early Judeo-Christian community. Therefore, with so striking similarities and so evident benefits that yield to the couples and the community, Mozambican engagement is compatible with the "gospel of life," the good news that Jesus came to proclaim to humanity. Thus, betrothal should be promoted to facilitate a stable and satisfying marital life among Christians.

However, the Christian community should present the token of appreciation (*lobolo*) in a way that underscores its symbolic value of appreciation and gratitude so that *lobolo* does not become a "taken-me-out-of-misery" or "pay-me-everything-I-did-for-her." These two expressions are abuses and misrepresent the meaning and scope of *lobolo*. However, it is worthwhile to recall what Gwembe said, "Abuse requires correction not the eradication of the use."[724] Furthermore, up to this day, nothing has been devised that can replace with the same effectiveness and stability, and binding what *lobolo* offers for marriage and family.[725] The benefits of a *lobolo*, when properly understood and implemented, surpasses any remnant of abuse that may eventually occur.

c. **Consent in the Mozambican Engagement and Christian Marriage**

The engagement ceremony manifests not only the consent of the bride and groom but also the consent and approval of the community. In a Christian ritual of marriage, a

_____

[724] Gwembe, "Casamento na tradição Africana," 109. "O abuso não tira o uso."

[725] Cf. Ibid.

person witnessing marriage asks the community whether someone has an objection to the marriage. Before the day of the celebration of marriage, there can be marriage banns, communicating that such a man with such a woman will get married and the community is invited to present any known objections against the marriage.[726] The marriage banns make "evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration" and encourage the participation of the community.[727] In case no objection is raised, the couple will get married. Marriage banns are announced at least three times before marriage whereas in the traditional setting they take the necessary time until the community is sure that nothing stands against the marriage.[728]

In most Mozambican societies, the engagement is a culmination of a long process in which family members of the man inquire about the family members of a woman, and vice versa, to verify whether there is an impediment. The *lobola* is a ceremony in which the two families express to the entire community that they approve the marriage and commit to supporting it. In traditional society, *lobola* fulfills the role of marriage banns and that of questioning whether the assembly has any objection to the marriage during the wedding celebration.[729]

The "Order of Celebrating Matrimony" recommends that "the entire Christian community should cooperate to bear witness to the faith and be a sign to the world of

---

[726] Cf. Cathy Caridi, "Why Doesn't the Church Publish Banns Any More?," Canon Law Made Easy, October 15, 2015, accessed January 20, 2018, http://canonlawmadeeasy.com/2015/10/15/why-doesnt-the-church-publish-marriage-banns-any-more/. According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, can. 1067, every Diocese or Episcopal Conference will determine whether or not it is opportune to publish banns. Henceforth, the Code of Canon Law will be cited as CIC.

[727] CIC, can. 1066.

[728] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 11, no. 26.

[729] Bernard Siegle, *Marriage: According to the New Code of Canon Law* (New York: Alba House, 1986), no. 1067 on "marriage banns," nos. 1067 and 1070 on revealing to the pastor any impediment.

Christ's love."[730] The consent as expressed in traditional Mozambican societies is more encompassing because it entails three consents: one between the man and woman, the second between the two families, and the third the consent of the entire community. This threefold consent underscores the seriousness of the commitment and the support of the community. Such seriousness concurs with the new ritual for celebrating matrimony. Turner comments, "The entire Christian community is involved in all the rituals. Here, the faithful are expected to participate through preparing the couple and in bearing witness to God's love."[731]

d. **Traditional Engagement as Covenantal and Consistent with Our Faith**

Chapter Three underscored the way in which marriage is not concerned only with two persons but also with the respective families of a man and a woman. Marriage involves the two families, the clan, and the entire community.[732] Marriage among Israelites as well as among Mozambicans is a covenant which binds together two families. Such a family bond commits the couple to take their marriage with seriousness and obliges the families to give the necessary support to the new family. The involvement of the family, friends, and neighbors, in general, contribute to the stability of traditional marriages and helps the couple with the challenges of life.

When it comes to an African value whose positive effects are visible among people, I concur with Bujo who promotes traditional practices that have a positive impact on people's lives. He asks a rhetorical question to those who persistently refrain from publicly

---

[730] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 11, no. 26.

[731] Turner, *Inseparable Love*, 27, no. 26. The number shows the part of the "Order of Celebrating Matrimony" is commenting.

[732] TAG, *A Biblical Approach Marriage Family*, 105.

admitting the wisdom of certain traditional practices but do not hesitate to commend

foreign practices that are ambiguous though acceptable elsewhere:

> Why should Africans leave behind a custom tried and tested by tradition and one that provides harmony in a community for some other very questionable modern practice? For instance, the tradition of virginity in Africa says that it is better to restrain one's sexual appetite and put it at the service of the three-dimensional community and not use it arbitrarily for private pleasure devoid of anamnestic dimension.[733]

3. Motherhood, Fatherhood, Community Life

a. <u>Mozambican Societies Emulate both Motherhood and Fatherhood</u>

Chapter One showed that Mozambican societies view motherhood and father as a

gift and not as a problem. The researchers find out that in Eastern Africa and in most

African countries (Mozambique included), "fatherhood cannot be a reality without

motherhood. It is the woman who enables the man to become a father, and it is the man

who enables the woman to become a mother… Together, they are co-creators with God."[734]

Men and women, wife and husband, journey together for building up healthy and happy

families. It also showed that Mozambicans have a high regard for children. Chapter Three

underscored the special place of motherhood in African society and Mozambique, in the

context of marriage and family.[735]

b. <u>Praising Motherhood in Mozambique and in Church Official Statements</u>

In different ways, the Church has always made official statements on motherhood

as an an important aspect of marriage. *Gaudium et Spes* speaks of children as "really the

---

[733] Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 178-79.

[734] Ibid.

[735] Cf. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 77.

supreme gift of marriage."[736] Recent significant statements are found in, *Familiaris Consortio*, *Ecclesia in Africa*, *Africae Munus*, just to mention few.[737] Indeed, *Amoris Laetitia* presents one of the most poetic and encouraging expressions of motherhood that I cherish. Francis states,

> With great affection, I urge all future mothers: keep happy and let nothing rob you of the interior joy of motherhood. Your child deserves your happiness. Don't let fears, worries, other people's comments or problems lessen your joy at being God's means of bringing a new life to the world. Prepare yourself for the birth of your child, but without obsessing, and join in Mary's song of joy: "My soul …" (Lk 1:46-48).[738]

Furthermore, Pope Francis lauds, "Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centered individualism… Certainly, 'a society without mothers would be dehumanized… Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith itself would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth…'"[739]

Chapter Five will underscore how to deal with such an appreciation of biological fecundity when couples face the problem of infertility. The chapter will argue that an Inculturated Pastoral Approach will encompass "Educating against Undue Pressure on Couples Facing Infertility," and it will present alternative ways of living the call to motherhood and fatherhood, through the fruitfulness of charity" or "spiritual fecundity." The Chapter will also highlight how an "overly love for children," without proper pastoral guidance, can threaten marital unity, stability, and faithfulness.

---

[736] GS 50. See also GS 48-49.

[737] FC 14, 33, and 41. EIA 43.

[738] AL 171.

[739] Extracts from AL 174.

c. **Women Emancipation as Integral to an Inculturationed Approach**

Chapter One explained the meaning of emancipation of women and the context in which it appeared in Mozambique. It suffices here to reiterate that the 1981 letter from the CEM devotes a section on the emancipation of women.[740] According to the CEM, "Emancipation is growth in the awareness of the responsibility and participation. It is an awareness of her dignity and that of others; It entails responsibility of her mission and that of others. It is participation in the common struggle for the integral development of every human being in the building up of a dignified society."[741]

The letter cautions against the misleading views which prevents a woman from taking care of her household, being a mother and wife, or encourages sexual permissiveness in the name of emancipation. Such behaviors disrupt marriage and families.[742] In fact, the letter echoes much of the concerns from pro-independence movements as explained in Chapter One, in the Section, "Factors Contributing for Emancipation of Women." Such a view resonates with Sharon who said,

> I strongly believe that the greatest role a woman in our society can play is to be a good mother. Mothers literally hold the future of any society in their hands. No other accomplishment can compare to a job done well as a mother. Dedicated motherhood is not just good for the children. It is good __ very good __ for the mother, the family and society as a whole. [743]

Such a view on emancipation makes sense within a family and community-oriented worldview. It concurs with *Familiaris Consortio* claims that "that women and men have the same rights and dignity. Therefore, "the equal dignity and responsibility of men and

---

[740] CEM, *A família cristã*, 14-16, nos. 12-14.

[741] Ibid., 15, no. 14.

[742] Ibid., 13-14, no. 13.

[743] Slater, *Stand for the Family*, 103.

women fully justifies women's access to public functions."[744]   However, "the mentality which honors women more for their work outside the home than for their work within the family must be overcome."[745]

4.   An Education Consistent with the Christian Formation of Character

a. <u>Traditional Teaching Similar to that of Hebrew Scriptures</u>

i. Modesty in the Light of Scripture

Modesty and decency made sure that a person not only does not display inappropriately one's nakedness but also does not attempt to uncover the nakedness of one's parents and step-family members. [746] Strict rules on modesty in the household and clan helped to prevent incidents of incest, undue curiosity, and harassment in a similar way as it prevented abuses among the Israelites.[747] The Book of Deuteronomy states, "A man shall not take his father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt."[748] The Letter of Paul to the Galatian's list decency and modest among the gifts of the Holy Spirit and presents "fornication, impurity, licentiousness" as the "the works of the flesh," which means lack of discipline or self-control. [749]

---

[744] FC 24.

[745] FC 24.

[746] Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 156. This also relates to restraint in showing public display. Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 102-103. See also Chapter Three of this dissertation, specifically the section entitled, "Fostering Decency, Modesty, and Discretion."

[747]Cf. Gn 9:22-23; Lv 18:6-19.

[748] Dt 22:30

[749] Paul speaks of the "works of the Flesh," in Gal 5:16-21 and the "Fruit of the Spirit," in Gal 5:22-24.

Sirach gives a series of wise advices to young men about the way they should relate to women of various ages and statuses.[750] Those guidelines aim at helping men to have discipline, self-control, and respect for woman and to bear the responsibilities of their actions. "Do not look intently at a virgin, or you may stumble and incur penalties for her."[751] Sirach warns people against adultery and relationships with women of dutiful conduct.[752] He advises, "Do not follow your base desires but restrain your appetites. If you allow your soul to take pleasure in base desire, it will make you the laughing-stock of your enemies."[753]

ii. Traditional Wisdom Similar to that in Hebrew the Scriptures

In most traditional societies in Mozambique, there still are to lesser degree strict principles that regulate sexuality. As presented in Chapter Three, these rules came in the form of *taboos*, proverbs, and maxims taught during the rites of passage and family gatherings and implemented respectfully in the community. Ndege explains that "sex was traditionally understood as a means of exploring, strengthening, deepening, and cementing the relationship that came with marriage. As a result, premarital sex was discouraged. That is not the case these days when premarital sex is more frequent."[754]

b. **Traditional Teaching on Self-Control in the Light of the New Testament**

> But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
>
> —Hebrews 3:3-5

---

[750] Sir 9:1-9.

[751] Sir 9:5.

[752] Sir 9:8-9.

[753] Sir 18: 30-31.

[754] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 100.

The passage above shows that the Letter to the Hebrews commends self-discipline, modesty, and purity of heart and mind. The same recommendation comes from the Letter to the Colossians, where Paul states, "Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry)."[755] These references underscore the fact that the high standard of sexual morality in most African societies do not only bear similarities with the moral code of the Hebrew people but also are compatible with the high demands of purity of heart and mind that Jesus taught to his disciples. There is much to commend than to reproach in traditional sexual morality.

Sexuality had a proper forum to be discussed and taught. There were people trained to form teenagers and young adults in the meaning, use of human sexuality and the responsibilities that are attached to it. Decency, modesty and self-control were part of the formation of character for adulthood. Such education is consistent with the Declaration of Christian Education, which encourages children and teenagers to "be also given, as they advance in years, a positive and prudent sexual education."[756]

In both Israelite and Mozambican societies, there was a sense of respect and decorum in speaking about sexuality. Vulgarity were not encouraged. Such a kind of education prevented promiscuity, incest, and banalization of sexuality. It gave knowledge on how to have a satisfying sexual encounter and how to take responsibility for the outcome of those encounters. In the long run, traditional education prepared people for a life of faithfulness, stability, and realization in marriage and family.

---

[755] Heb 3:5.

[756] Vatican Council II, *Gravissimum Educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education, October 28, 1965), no. 1, accessed February 6, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html.

Both the TAG and Bujo argue that traditional teaching on self-control is not only consistent with the New Testament writings but also with the practice of Christian wedding during colonial-missionary era where "purity before marriage was said to be the most important feature of a Christian wedding. Even as virginity was a traditional virtue among many African communities in the past, so purity has been a strong conviction in the Christian churches in Africa from the beginning."[757] TAG goes on to argue that "today immorality is accepted as a way of life, but the church has not replaced traditional values with strong Christian morals."[758] Bujo concludes that such traditional teaching so consistent with the scripture and with the best practices of colonial area should not be abandoned in favor of questionable practices of contemporary time.[759]

c. **Traditional Education Consistent with Official Church Teaching**

i. **Traditional Education in the Light of the Catechism**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) speaks of self-control in the context of chastity.[760] The CCC speaks of self-mastery as an ongoing process of growth and learning which requires special attention and effort during childhood and teen years. It explains, "Self-mastery is a long and exacting work. One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life. The effort required can

---

[757] TAG, *Biblical Approach to Marriage*, 79-80.

[758] Ibid., 80.

[759] Cf. Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 178-79.

[760] Cf. CCC 2339

be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence."[761]

During childhood and the teen years, young adults are in the process of forming their character according to the values acceptable to a given society. The catechism is realistic when it recognizes that "the process of growth in self-control can be marked by imperfections and sin."[762] Self-control "represents an eminently personal task; it also involves a cultural effort, for there is "an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society."[763] Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort.[764]

The challenge appears when a society presents its values in an ambiguous, contradictory manner or speaks of freedom, autonomy, and self-satisfaction devoid of respect, responsibility, modesty, and self-discipline. In fact, the CCC rightly states that "so-called moral permissiveness rests on an erroneous conception of human freedom."[765] An autonomy and self-centeredness without a corrective balance of responsibility and respect creates a society with the appearance of freedom but deeply wounded, resentful, and unhealthy in the way people relate to one another.[766]

ii. Traditional Education in the Light of *Amoris Laetitia*

---

[761] CCC 2342.

[762] CCC 2343.

[763] CCC 2344.

[764] Cf. CCC 2345.

[765] CCC 2526.

[766] Cf. Jaye, *The Red-Pill*: *A Feminist's Journey into the Men's Rights Movement; Documentary* (San Francisco: Jaye Bird Production & Gravitas Ventures, 2017).

In 2004, the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace stated, "The meaning of freedom must not be restricted, considering it from a purely individualistic perspective and reducing it to the *arbitrary and uncontrolled exercise* of one's autonomy." The document goes on to underscore that "far from being achieved in total self-sufficiency and the absence of relationships, freedom only truly exists where reciprocal bonds governed by truth and justice, link people to one another."[767] More than ten years later, *Amoris Laetitia* pointed out that a misguided sense of freedom, autonomy, and independence negatively impacts the capacity in young adults to form healthy marriages and families. Pope Francis says,

> Freedom of choice makes it possible to plan our lives and to make the most of ourselves. Yet if this freedom lacks noble goals or personal discipline, it degenerates into an inability to give oneself generously to others. Indeed, in many countries where the number of marriages is decreasing, more and more people are choosing to live alone or simply to spend time together without cohabiting.[768]

iii. Traditional Education as Holistic and Religious

The virtues mentioned above such as decency, self-control, resilience and so on, are possible with God's grace, unlike programs such as CSE, which begins with the assumption that thinking of self-control among teenagers is unrealistic and impossible.[769] The experience in traditional African societies and the transformative impact of the rites of

---

[767] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Nairobi: Paulines Publishing Africa, 2004), 111.

[768] AL 33.

[769] Cf. FWI, "The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda: Core Philosophies, Origins, and Goals," April 2016, accessed February 10, 2018, https://familywatch.org/fwi/CSE_philosophy.cfm..
See the list of agencies that promote CSE and radical ideologies in FWI, "What Is Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda (Cse)? Who Promotes or Profits from CSE?," March 23, 2016, accessed February 10, 2018, https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/english10.
See also FWI, "Organizations in Support of CSE," March 23, 2016, accessed February 10, 2018, https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/cse-facts/what-is-cse/organizations-in-support-of-cse.
See the methods those agencies use to reach African countries in FWI, "10 Steps to Manipulating the African Group to Promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)," 2016, accessed February 10, 2018, http://familywatch.org/fwi/documents/CSE_10_steps_001.pdf.

initiation and the "retreats of initiation" prove the contrary. However, three elements are necessary: training that balances tradition and modernity, a religious component (God's grace), and the support of the community. Proper formation through the rites of initiation, faith in the grace of God, and support of the community are factors that help to live one's sexuality in a way that is not promiscuous or disruptive to marriage and family.

In a globalized world that is increasingly secularized, it is worth pointing out that a religious component to life or having some sense of the transcendence or a teleological approach to life impacts the way humans view themselves and relate to others. Sexuality is also a way a person looks at oneself and relates to others, because it is "an interpersonal language wherein the other is taken seriously, in his or her sacred and inviolable dignity."[770] Mozambicans and most African peoples are religious by nature. Mbiti states, "The point here is that for Africans, *the whole existence is religions phenomena*; a man [*sic*] is a deeply religious being living in a religious universe."[771] Mbiti goes further and says, "In traditional life, there are no atheists."[772] In speaking about "positive values of African culture," *Ecclesia in Africa* reiterated the same point: "Africans have a profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, of the existence of God the Creator and of a spiritual world."[773]

Africans view life as a unified reality both sacred and secular; indeed, every aspect has a religious component.[774] The widely held veneration of ancestors is one key aspect of

---

[770] AL 151.

[771] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 15.

[772] Ibid., 29.

[773] EIA 42

[774] Paul VI, *Africae Terrarum*, October 29, 1967, no. 10, in *Modern Missionary Documents and Africa: Issued by Popes and Roman Synods*, ed. Raymond Hickey (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982).

that religiosity.[775] Chapter Three showed how veneration of the ancestors influence the seriousness with which Mozambicans take the rites of initiation. Guidelines from elders and ancestors are to be respected and lived. [776] This kind of education is consistent with Scripture, in line with the basic insight of the Church's teaching on human sexuality, and consistent with the radicalness that Jesus Christ brought to human sexuality and marriage.

d. **An High Standard on Sexuality Consistent with the Gospel Message**

i. Traditional Education on Sexuality and Jesus's Message

Jesus spoke of self-control, purity of heart and mind, and guarding one's senses when he said that it is not only psychical adultery which matters but also indulging in lustful thoughts and fantasies when looking at another person. "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."[777] The same applies to a woman who looks lustfully at a man. Elsewhere Jesus reiterated his message categorically and unequivocally commended purity of mind, heart, and all the senses. He taught that "if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell."[778] Such a high demand on self-control, discipline, and purity of mind and heart is both a result of personal work, a gift from God, and the support of the community and

---

[775] EIA 43. See an elaborate presentation of the veneration of the ancestors on Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation.

[776] Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, 198-99.

[777] Mt 5:27-28. See also CCC 236.

[778] Cf. Mk 9:47. See the entire section in Mk 9: 42-48.

the culture in which one lives.[779] Such an interplay of reasons may explain why Paul lists self-control among the fruits of the Holy Spirit.[780]

ii. Traditional Standard Conflicting with New forms of Colonization

Though such a high standard of morality seems ideal, very demanding, and even radical, it resonates with the kind of morality that the rites of initiation and other traditional forms of socialization commend as part of what it entails to be an adult. The rites of initiation are an appropriate channel to offer an education that fosters self-control, discipline, and respect. Above all, it provides an integrated and acceptable way of forming people to adulthood.[781]

One cannot underscore enough the importance of such rites because they were under severe attack for so long: during the colonial period, during Marxist-Leninist period, and today under new forms of colonization that indistinctively attack the rites of initiation and attempt to find any fault that could justify their dismissal. One example of new form of colonization is The Maputo Protocol and the Western donors' policy of attaching aid to developing countries to the acceptance of practices disrespectful to the best of authentic Mozambican values that enhance marriage and family.[782]

5. Respect for Parents, Elders and All Family Members

The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to

---

[779] Cf. CCC 3343-45.

[780] Gal 5:22.

[781] Lerma, *O povo macua*, 109. See Chapter Three, section, "Rites of Initiation and Education for Adulthood."

[782] HLI, "The Maputo Protocol." See also Boquet, "The Maputo Protocol."

the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it.

<div align="right">—Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2199</div>

a. **Mozambican Respect as Consistent with the Christian Faith**

The above quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church summarizes one of the main teachings of the Hebrew people, a teaching also reiterated in the New Testament. "The Lord God said to the Israelites, 'Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.'"[783] The wisdom literature, particularly the Book of Ben Sira and that of Proverbs, underscores the same teachings.[784] Sirach encourages young people to heed to the wisdom of the elders to gain self-discipline and the skills required to conduct themselves properly in life.

> If you are willing, my child, you can be disciplined, and if you apply yourself you will become clever. If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, and if you pay attention you will become wise Stand in the company of the elders. Who is wise? Attach yourself to such a one. Be ready to listen to every godly discourse, and let no wise proverbs escape you.[785]

Sirach is vehement in pointing that those who honor their parents "atone for sins," "will have a long life," and God will listen to their pleas in time of distress[786] According to Sirach, God favors with abundant blessings those who respect their parents.[787] These teachings find their way in the Christian Scriptures as seen in the Letter to the Colossians, which encourages children to obey their parents because that is pleasing to God.[788] On the

---

[783] Ex 20:12 and Dt 5:16.

[784] Sir 3: 13.

[785] Sir 6: 32.34.

[786] Ben Sira 3: 3.13: "Those who honor their father atone for sins, and those who respect their mother are like those who lay up treasure."

[787] Cf. Sir 3: 4.

[788] Cf. Col 3:20.

Feast of the Holy Family, the Church reads passages from the Book of Sirach and the Letter to Colossians. Both readings underscore that honoring, respecting, and obeying parents and the elders call God's blessing upon the children. The Mozambican sense of respect for elders and ancestors echoes the Hebrew Scripture and Church teaching, as is the case in the CCC.

b. **Mozambican Respect as Propaedeutic to Gospel Reception**

A Mozambican elder who has never gone to church but who eventually listens to the preceding scriptural passages cannot but be amused that they resonate completely with the traditional wisdom received from one generation of ancestors to the next. He or she can even be perplexed to realize that traditional wisdom, which has educated people to behave in a way that is so close to the Hebrew Scriptures, is swiftly and deliberately condemned as primitive, backwards, superstitious, and immoral. How can one explain the failure to recognize their similarities and their compatibility with the gospel message? The difficulty comes from the prejudice of "the general attitude of the whites… that there was nothing in Africa which deserved the name of human."[789] Chapter One, in the section entitled, "Derogatory Views of the Native People and Their Traditions," has already discussed the impact of such a mentality on the native people.

It is reasonable to ask even today, why doesn't the Church clearly and boldly, at least in Mozambique, declare that traditional wisdom is unequivocally compatible with the Hebrew Scripture, God's commandment, and the message of Christ in the New Testament and therefore commend and incorporate it in Christian teaching and ritual? The reasons

---

[789] [789] Bujo, *African Theology Social Context*, 39. See also Isaacman and Isaacman, *Mozambique*, 61.

behind the response is complex, some of which have already been alluded to in Chapters One and Three when speaking about the "prudent and wise" attitude of our pastors. This dissertation shows the positive aspects of traditional values and their compatibility with gospel values as a contribuition to answer the questiaon above. Additionally, it suggests how to use the covenantal elements of the traditional wisdom toward an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family today in Mozambique.

c. **Respect for Elders and Ancestors in the Hebrew Scriptures**

It is striking that the 1995 Catechism states that God's commandment "requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors."[790] Speaking of ancestors in an official document reiterates the positive appreciation of the cult of ancestors. It is an aspect that could not be more refreshing and encouraging for the African Church, which for centuries could not even mention ancestors in her liturgy or anything related to the Christian faith. In the past, speaking of ancestors was understood as condoning superstition and idolatry, as argued extensively in Chapters One and Three.[791]

Regrettably, the Eurocentric and colonial mentality of the time was unable to see any similarities between the veneration of ancestors and the liturgical celebration of the saints or even between the African invocation of ancestors and the references of an ancestor in the Hebrew Scriptures. Sirach, for example, has an inspiring hymn in honor of ancestors. He praises all of them altogether, and then he invokes some of them by name, remembering

---

[790] CCC 2199.

[791] Cf. Bujo, *African Theology Social Context*, 41. See all section on The Theology of Ancestors Starting point for a new Christology and a New Ecclesiology in ibid., 75-114.

the individual contribution to the chosen people of God.[792] Such a eulogy resembles the invocation of the ancestors in most Mozambican societies. Like Sirach, Mozambicans can say, "Let us now sing the praises of famous men, our ancestors in their generations."[793] For this reason, Nyamiti rightly argued, "African teaching of ancestors is an excellent preparatory road for the Christian doctrine of Christ and the Saints."[794]

d. **An Appeal to Acknowledgment and Integration in the Liturgy**

One of the reasons why the rites of initiation are effective is not only because of the quality of the formation but also because the formation has a transcendent dimension. The rites connecte the elders, the ancestors, and the community performing the rites. As Bujo eloquently explained, "All this makes it clear that love for one's elders is highly esteemed in African practice. Blessings, luck and a harmonious life depend on true love and respect, which one has to show to parents and elders."[795] Listening to the elders is to learn the secrets of a joyful and fulfilling life. The elders are close to the ancestors. Therefore, "the admonitions, commandments and prohibitions of ancestors and of community elders are highly esteemed inasmuch as they reflect those experiences which have made the community life possible up to the present."[796] Since an early age, people understood that from "these experiences depends on the fate of the individual, and also of the living and the dead of the clan."[797]

---

[792] Cf. Sir 44:1-50:16. Sirach devotes six chapters to sing praises to the forefathers of the Hebrew people.

[793] Sir 44:1. Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 146-49.

[794] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor,* 148-149.

[795] Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 198-99.

[796] Ibid., 188.

[797] Ibid.

Considering that respect for elders/ancestors gives legitimacy to transformative education from childhood to adulthood, that such an education has positive effects on marriage and family, and that certain traditional practices are compatible with the Christian faith, it is opportune to encourage those involved in family ministry to deepen their knowledge about traditional values so that they can speak publicly about them with appreciation and as a first step to integrate them in the way Mozambicans lives their Christian faith. As Bujo categorically indicated, those values "should not easily be dismissed in the name of modernity."[798]

6. Solidarity and Interdependence as Strengthening Marriage and Family

a. Similarities between Mozambican and Hebrew Views on Solidarity

The book of Ecclesiasticus says, "Give graciously to all the living; do not withhold kindness even from the dead. Do not avoid those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn. Do not hesitate to visit the sick, because for such deeds you will be loved."[799] What Sirach advises his fellow Jewish countrypersons is like any advice from a Mozambican elder or from the training that the rites of initiation give to children and young adults. The Mozambican elder would add something like this: for such deeds, people will love you but, most importantly, you will contribute to the well-being of your community and will enhance life that God gives to us through our ancestors. Your deeds will benefit the community and honor the ancestors, the founders of the community.[800]

---

[798] Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 188.

[799] Sir 7: 34-35.

[800] Cf. Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 188-89.

The point here is that solidarity in Mozambican and most societies has much in common with the teaching of Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Scriptures. Therefore, rather than looking for any limitations on solidarity, such as an abusive use of it as indicated in Chapter Three, I suggest that pastors, catechists, and scholars emulate and underscore the way in which these traditional values lead people to be close to one another and ultimately to God through the mediation of ancestors. As Christians, such solidarity should be encouraged not only because traditional societies say so but also and above all because solidarity is a way of following Christ's invitation of love and care for one another.

The main question that requires clarification is, why is the strong sense of solidarity among Mozambican societies so important in the context of marriage and family? The answer is that on the long run, as the Church in Mozambique through her SCCs reprises the sense of solidarity and integrates it as part of her discipleship to Christ, marriage and family will benefit by enjoying the mutual support of the community. Such support is of paramount importance for the stability and enjoyment of marital life as well as building up the society and the Church. Furthermore, there is enough evidence in the Gospels and other New Testament writings to indicate that solidarity is consistent with our Christian faith. That said, the next section will present a few examples revealing the similarities between solidarity in the Gospels and solidarity in Mozambican societies.

b. **Mozambican Solidarity as Consistent with the Gospel**

Solidarity is one of the expressions of love. God is love, and where there is solidarity, there is God.[801] In John's Gospel, Christ tells his disciples that a distinctive sign

---

[801] Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est,* Encyclical letter on Christian Love, December 25, 2005, nos. 1 and 30a-b, accessed January 31, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.

of discipleship is love. [802] In the first centuries, people recognized the followers of Christ by the way they love one another and others.[803] The Gospel of Mathew presents Jesus identifying himself with those who suffer or are in distress, and he encourages his disciples to be in solidarity with others and to do something for them: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me."[804] Jesus encourages his disciples to relate to other people as a neighbor is called to do, treating any person in need with compassion, care, and generosity, as the good Samaritan did with the assaulted and half-dead stranger found on the way to Jerusalem.[805] This passage indicates that solidarity encompasses empathy and mutual help.

c. **Solidarity as Consistent with Other Writings of the New Testament**

Paul in his letter to the Romans states, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."[806] Soon after, he underscores that unconditional help should follow empathy. "Repay no one evil for evil but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all."[807] It does not matter whether a person in distress is a friend or an enemy, a local or foreigner. Solidarity, as a Christian virtue, goes beyond any allegiance or categorization. It is unconditional and universal. It does not show partiality, exclusivity, or discrimination.[808]

---

[802] Cf. 1 Jn 4:7-21.

[803] Cf. Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 24.

[804] Cf. Mt 25:31-45.

[805] Cf. Lk 10:25-37. In this passage, Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan to explains that being a neighbor is to be in solidarity with those people in suffering that come across our paths. Solidarity is one of the expressions of love. Jesus told the story in a context where he was explaining the love that the disciples are called to live.

[806] Rom 12:15-17.

[807] Rom 12:17.

[808] Acts 10:34; 15:9; Rom 3:29.

Solidarity does not confine itself to the needs of a specific group of people, but it is all-embracing. Jesus says, "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?"[809]

The Letter to the Hebrews reiterates that solidarity encompasses both empathy and unconditional help. "Let brotherly love continue," says the letter, and "do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body."[810] Both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures underscore that even "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink…. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."[811] This scriptural teaching means that the call to solidarity should transcend personal preferences, provenience, and affinities. Likewise, the Mozambican sense of solidarity commends helping beyond the confines of family members, friends, and neighbors. Amazingly, it recommends greater solidarity with those people who were not so friendly or who had conflicts with us as though the act of solidarity reconciled the two. If one shows amazement, the one helping could just say, "God is the one who knows."[812]

---

[809] Cf. Lk 6:32-33 and parallels in Mt 5:4.

[810] Hb 3, 2-4.

[811] Rom 12:20-21. See the same appeal in Prv 25:20-21, Ex 23:4-5, 2 Chr 28:15, and 2 Kgs 6:22.

[812] *Mulungu adziwa ndiye*, in Chinyungwe, means God is the one who knows, as to say, let it be in the hands of God. It is believed that people who die angry, abandoned, or those who do not receive a funeral burial according to the tradition of his or her community, the spirit will not join in the realm of the ancestor but linger as a bad spirit tormenting the life of the living. The practical effect of this belief is solidarity, mutual care, and to give a give a proper burial to the deceived. It is a belief that leads people to practice the works of mercy as presented in Mt 10:10-41.

d. Solidarity as a Mozambican Value Consistent with Christian Teaching

In situations that threaten life, an adult is encouraged to give the necessary assistance to the suffering person, even if one does not get along with that person. In funeral ceremonies, sometimes those who were not so friendly may outdo themselves in attention, generosity, and sacrifice as they are expressing reparation or reconciliation with the deceased person. Such attitudes are eminently consistent not only with the Hebrew Scriptures but also and above all with the message of solidarity that Jesus Christ brought to people. Solidarity is a Mozambican value and a Christian virtue. As the Pontifical Commission on Peace and Justice stated, "*Solidarity is also an authentic moral virtue*, not a 'feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a *firm and persevering determination* to commit oneself to the *common good*."[813]

One may ask, how does it come that the Mozambican sense of solidarity is so close to the Christian notion of "love your neighbor," even though not all traditional societies received the message of the gospel? Paul gives an insightful thought in response to that concern. He recalls that God put in human hearts God's laws and commands.[814] The point here is to recognize that the sense of solidarity present in Mozambican and many other African societies is not just a seed for accepting the gospel message of solidarity. Rather, it is a way of living the gospel even without explicitly acknowledging so. As the CCC states

---

[813] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of Social Doctrine*, 106-107.

[814] Cf. Rom 2:15.

clearly, "Solidarity is an eminently Christian virtue. It practices the sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones."[815]

e. Concluding Remarks on Mozambican Solidarity and Christian Faith

The Mozambican sense of solidarity can be regarded as one expression of love to our neighbors as Christ summons when preaching the good news. Mozambican societies have a deeply felt sense of solidarity and mutual support as described in Chapter Three. Paul VI, in *Africae Terrarum*, said that solidarity serves as a constant "invitation to Christians to meditate on the love which we should have for our neighbor: 'For all of you are brothers' (Matt. 23:8)."[816]

Ecclesia in Africa states, "African cultures have an acute sense of solidarity and community life."[817] The Scriptural passages presented above show that solidarity is consistent with the good news that Christ brought to humanity. Solidarity enhances life, community bonding, and mutual care. All these aspects, which are already a part of Mozambican consciousness, cannot but be commended explicitly and boldly as compatible with the gospel. Emulating solidarity favors an environment that gives the necessary support for the stability of marriage and family.

---

[815] CCC 1948. See also the above document from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of Social Doctrine*, 106.

[816] Paul VI, "*Africae Terrarum*, 19.

[817] EIA 43. See also EIA 63 where it says that the image of the church as God's family "emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust."

7. **Mozambican Sense of Community is Consistent with the Christian Faith**

> Christian and Biblical ideas of marriage do not in any way conflict with the communitarian approach to marriage that is typical of African societies. On the contrary, the community would mean nothing if the personal aspect were lacking, for the community is the very field of personal relationships; and the person would mean nothing if he or she were not a person in community. The family is the basis of community.
> —Benezeri Kisembo, Laurenti Magesa, and Aylward Shorter, African Christian
> *Marriage*

a. **Summary of the Mains Insights of the Section**

The above statement satisfactorily captures the major point of this section. The Mozambican communitarian approach to life in general and to marriage is consistent with the Christian faith. Therefore, much of its wisdom should be integrated into a pastoral approach that is both Mozambican and Christian, that is, a pastoral approach which motivates, prepares people for marriage, and supports and accompanies them in their marital journey.[818] Marriage in traditional setting also called customary marriage is covenantal in the sense that it binds together two families, and that helps the stability of the marriage. As CROMIA points out, "African customary marriage was not a private contract between two individuals but an alliance between two family communities or lineage."[819] The communitarian aspect of traditional marriage helps couples to live according to one of the key insights of our Christian faith: God is a community of love.

b. **Mozambican and Christian Community-Oriented Life**

Chapter Three explained in which sense Mozambican societies have a keen sense of belonging and see marriage as both communitarian and personal. This section will

---

[818] Cf. Thesis Statement and Scope of this Dissertation in the General Introduction.

[819] Kisembo, , et al., *African Christian Marriage*, 202. See also 202-208, the section entitled, "The Communitarian Character of African Customary Marriage."

underscore how such a Mozambican approach to life is compatible to the Christian faith. The accounts of the first Christian communities in the Acts of the Apostles indicate the importance that Christians gave to a life of mutual support, sharing resources, and making sure that no person was in need. Luke says that "all who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had a need."[820] Christians were generous and gratuitous in sharing their talents and goods.[821] Consequently, in the community "there was not a needy person among them."[822]   The community, as a whole, took care of its weak and vulnerable members in a way that no one was deprived of support.

This communitarian interdependency, mutual care, and genuine solidarity resonates with the community-oriented life of most African societies, Mozambican ones included. In Mozambique, solidarity goes beyond the sharing of material resources. It includes consoling those in difficult situations, spending the necessary time to accompany or counsel someone struggling with an issue, and being present at critical moments of another's life while at the same time respecting the necessary privacy that one may need. For example, people will not want to intrude in a couple's life. At the same time, there is a way of availing oneself for any help that the couple needs. At times, one may express such availability by letting know the couple's godparents, or the the elders of the community that the couple faces difficulties and needs help.

---

[820] Acts 2:44-45.

[821] Cf. Acts 2:46, 4:34-34.

[822] Acts 4:34-35.

The Mozambican community-oriented life resonates with the ideals that the first Christians strived to mold their lives. All the elements of the community-oriented life of Mozambican societies point out that they are compatible with the spirit of the first Christian communities and are in line with Christ's teaching on love, mutual care, and solidarity. Even some documents of the Church speak of the Christian faith in a way that emulates the communitarian aspect of most Mozambican societies.

c. **Sense of Community in the Light of Official Church Documents**

For this section, two documents suffice to show that the Mozambican values of community, solidarity, and interdependence are not only consistent with the kind of life that the first Christian communities were living but are also consistent with key insights from authoritative Church documents, particularly *Gaudium et Spes*, *Deus Caritas Est*, and *Amoris Laetitia*.

i. *Gaudium et Spes*

Gaudium et Spes reminds us that "man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."[823] Thus, human beings are created to live in a community and are called to journey as a community to holiness.[824] *Gaudium et Spes* rightly explains that the history of salvation gives enough evidence that when God reveals Godself to or calls an individual for a mission, it is not merely for the sake of that person but for the good of the family and the community. "This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ."[825] When God made a covenant

---

[823] GS 12.

[824] LG 11. See also the section on "Universal Call to Holiness in the Church" in LG 39-42.

[825] Cf. GS 32.

with a person such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, the covenant bound God with that person, that person's family, and subsequent generations. "Covenants are intergenerational."[826] The familiar and intergenerational aspects of a covenant are evident in the covenant God made with Noah.[827]

Brinig and Nock underscore the intergenerational character of a covenant by explaining that "Biblical covenant relationships promote interdependence and stability, while covenant ideas should even be promoted by the human institution of covenant marriage. Keep in mind that unlike contracts, covenants need not extend only to husband and wife, but may also involve parents and children, even without the child's ability to consent.[828] Interdependence and stability form a group identity, and those characteristics are part of Mozambique society, as shown in Chapter Three in the section entitled, "Strong Sense of Solidarity and Interdependence."

ii. *Deus Caritas Est*

Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, praises all volunteer groups and organizations that help in different ways to alleviate the suffering of others. He states,

> Significantly, our time has also seen the growth and spread of different kinds of volunteer work, which assume responsibility for providing a variety of services. I wish here to offer a special word of gratitude and appreciation to all those who take part in these activities in whatever way. For young people, this widespread involvement constitutes a school of life which offers them a formation in solidarity and in readiness to offer others not simply material aid but their very selves.[829]

---

[826] See Dt 29:14-15 and Lenzi, "Hebrew Bible ANE World."

[827] Nock and Brinig, "Covenant and Contract," 14.

[828] Nock and Brinig, "Covenant and Contract," 14.

[829] Benedict XVI, "*Deus Caritas Est*: On Christian Love," (December 25, 2005): n.30a, accessed January 31, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html. Henceforth cited as Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est.*

The solidarity expressed by these volunteers is a living expression of love and gratuity, and it helps the formation of the character of young people. The same is true of solidarity, which exists among Mozambican societies as explained in Chapter Three.

iii. *Amoris Laetitia:* Community as Supporting Marriage and Family

Amoris Laetitia deplores "an extreme individualism which weakens family bonds and ends up considering each member of the family as an isolated unit, leading in some cases to the idea that one's personality is shaped by his or her desires, which are considered absolute."[830] Whereas the exhortation suggests that authoritarianism and imposition of any kind have no place in a Christian family, it nevertheless underscores that "many countries are witnessing a legal deconstruction of the family, tending to adopt models based almost exclusively on the autonomy of the individual will."[831] Excessive stress on autonomy and freedom neglects solidarity and interdependence, which are of paramount importance in marriage and family.

The increasingly globalized world emulates independence, autonomy, and personal rights as absolute values.[832] Such radical positions present the rights of children as conflicting with those of the parents, and the right of a wife as negatively interfering with the right of the husband and vice versa. On the other hand, the Mozambican sense of community, solidarity, interdependence, and sense of belonging can remedy and counterbalance such extreme forms of individualism and overly stressed individual

---

[830] AL 33.

[831] AL 55. See also AL 176 which speaks of a sound sense of autonomy of young people in relation to their parents, in that case, with their father. See also AL 261, which speaks of autonomy integrated with freedom, discipline and maturity. AL 320 speaks of a healthy autonomy between spouses.

[832] Cf. AL 33. The text is in the first sentence of the previous paragraph.

rights.[833] A reprisal of those values will encourage each member of the family to see one's talents, resources and rights in a way that builds up the family, lineage and the community. At the same time, each family member will find, from the family and the community, the needed support to cope with loneliness, helplessness, anxieties and above all, to cope with the challenges of marriage.

Amoris Laetitia states, "Families and homes go together. This makes us see how important it is to insist on the rights of the family and not only those of individuals."[834] The stability of marriage in traditional societies results, in great part, from the strong preparation that young adults receive through rites of initiation and from the support they receive from the community. Solidarity, mutual support, and interdependence makes marriage and family stable by creating an environment of support and peaceful resolution of conflicts that, sooner or later, will appear.

d. A Value Expressing God's Community of Love and Communion

The manifestations of love, mutual care, solidarity, and communion present in community-oriented traditional societies cannot be but expressions of God who is community of love and communion itself.[835] The Church Research on Marriage in Africa (CROMIA) states, "More important still, Christian revelation is being presented as a phenomenon essentially communitarian. The God, in whose image and likenesses mankind has been created, reveals himself as Trinitarian Community of abiding love."[836] The Letter

---

[833] See Bujo's reflection on "African Questions Regarding the European Thought on Human Rights" in Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 142-56.

[834] AL 44.

[835] Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 1, 12, 32, 39. God is communion

[836] Kisembo, et al, *African Christian* Marriage, 218.

to the Hebrews says, "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word."[837]

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Jeremiah and Ezekiel state that God will make a new and everlasting covenant, written not on tablets of stone but the human heart.[838] Jeremiah's prophecy found its fulfillment in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. As CROMIA rightly articulated it, "His purpose for mankind, revealed and effected through the life and death of Jesus Christ, is the reconciliation of all people and all things in himself, and the 'great commandment' bequeathed by Christ to his followers is the commandment of brotherly love."[839]

Paul reminds the Christians of Rome that the creator wrote in human hearts God's ordinances "to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them."[840] In light of the above scriptural references, and looking at various expressions of love, solidarity, mutual care, the sense of community, and communion as presented in Chapter Three, the logical conclusion is that those traditional values are not but an expression of the mysterious and loving way in which God communicates to God's people.[841] Those values point out to God, and they encompass

---

[837] Heb 1:1-3.

[838] Cf. Dt 9:11; Ex 31:18; Dt 4:13; 5: 22; 9:9-10; 10: 1, 10-11, and Kgs 8:9. Paul will say that the Spirit of the Lord will imprint the new law in human hearts.

[839] Cf. Kisembo, et al, *African Christian* Marriage, 218.

[840] Rom 2:25.

[841] Cf. LG 11.

traditional wisdom that for so long has been ignored and not sufficiently taken as a springboard to support marriage and family. For this reason, *Lumen Gentium*, in speaking of those people who "have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life," says, "Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel."[842]

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a theological reflection and conversation between the key elements of a covenant and the elements considered as sound values in Mozambican societies. The reflection underscored the way in which the covenantal elements presented in Chapter Two bear similarities with the main aspects presented in Chapter Three as Mozambican values. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the way in which such Mozambican values are consistent with the Christian message presented in the Gospels and other New Testament writings. Even more, the chapter showed instances where statements of the official teaching of the Church, though not directly referring to Africa or Mozambique, presented those values as a way of following the call of discipleship to Christ.

As part of the concluding remarks of this chapter, it is worthwhile to give an overview of Chapter Two and Chapter Three to underscore the conversation that took place in Chapter Four. Chapter Two presented the main features of a covenant and what marriage means as a covenant. Marital covenant is (1) both secular and religious, (2) irrevocable and permanent, (3) a faithful and a partnership of love, (4) a community, which builds identity,

---

[842] LG 11.

(5) and a binding oath. Furthermore, marriage is a covenant in the sense that (6) it binds not just a man and a woman but also their respective families, lineage, and community.[843]

The chapter underscored that when God establishes a covenant, it is not just with the person (e.g., Noah, Abraham, Moses) but with that person's family and subsequent generations. Hence, the covenant is personal, familiar, and intergenerational.[844] It unites families with future generations, and this fact strengthens the sense of identity, cohesion, and solidarity in the covenantal community. Consistent with such a perception of covenant, understanding marriage as a covenant implies acknowledging the communitarian dimension of marriage and the role it plays in preparing, celebrating, supporting, and strengthening marriage and family.

Chapter Three underscored that Mozambican societies are community oriented with a keen sense of belonging. They see the world as an arena where the living, the living dead, the born and unborn, and the sacred and the secular intermingle to enhance life. Marriage, family, life, and community are interdependent. The strong sense of solidarity and interdependence helps the community cope with the difficult and distressful situations of life. Respect for elders and the veneration of ancestors give a religious, sacred, and transcendent dimension to all aspects of life. Education through the rites of initiation and every process of socialization have a transformative impact on peoples' lives and motivate and prepare young adults for marriage and family. The keen sense of belonging, interdependence, and solidarity helps the couple to cope with the challenges and difficulties of marital life.

---

[843] TAG, *Biblical Approach to Marriage*, 105.

[844] Cf. GS 32. See also Nock and Brinig, "Covenant and Contract," 14.

The conversation that took place in Chapter Four was to stress that these elements directly or indirectly, in one way or another, not only motivate and prepare people for marriage but also support them in their life and help them to solve eventual problems. The values presented in Chapter Three are covenantal. They help Mozambican societies view and live marriage as a covenant, that is, a binding agreement between a couple and their respective families, a commitment to live faithfully to one another and with the other's larger family, and a willingness to enhance life through bearing children and educating them to adulthood.

The preceding chapters prepared the ground for viewing positively those Mozambican traditional practices that support marriage. After showing their compatibility with the gospel message as presented in the New Testament writings, the following chapter will suggest ways in which the Mozambican Church can integrate those covenantal elements present in Mozambican societies in a pastoral approach that responds to the challenges that marriage and family face today.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN INCULTURATED PASTORAL APPROACH OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

> Different challenges destabilize life especially when there is no strong pastoral strategy in place.
>
> —SECAM, Final Message of 17th Plenary Assembly

A congratulatory and encouraging song after the wedding reminds the new couple that married life is a joyful and satisfactory experience which also entails challenges and difficulties that an adult person should be prepared for. "Be patient with yourself and with one another," says the song, "and do whatever it takes to make your marriage succeed." This traditional song embodies key insights for a pastoral approach that helps newlyweds face the challenges they will encounter in their marital journey and family life. The song echoes *Amoris Laetitia*'s invitation to "help us reach the hearts of young people, appealing to their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage."[845] Being aware of the challenges and being prepared to face them are part of adult life.

The statement from the SECAM in the epigraph has significance for this chapter.[846] Given the fact that traditional supportive structures are diminishing, young people feel unprepared, scared, and reluctant to begin a family, though "the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant."[847] *Familiaris Consortio* rightly notices that "more than ever necessary in our times is the preparation of young people for marriage and family life.…

---

[845] AL 40.

[846] Mbilingi, "Final Message," no. 8.

[847] Cf. AL 1.

Marriage preparation has to be seen and put into practice as a gradual and continuous process. It includes three main stages: remote, proximate and immediate preparation."[848] *Ecclesia in Africa* states, "Dioceses will develop a program for the family apostolate as part of their overall pastoral plan," capable or helping "Christian witness in a society undergoing rapid and profound changes."[849]

Thus, an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family in Mozambique will have as its major metaphor marriage as a covenant. Chapter Two noted the fact that covenant binds not only the individual but the family, the community, and future generations make the notion of covenant appealing to Mozambican society, which has a community-oriented approach to life. Furthermore, Chapter Two underscored that understanding marriage as covenant has implications, which will direct the discussion of how the inculturated pastoral approach responds to the challenges of marriage.

Chapter Five has five parts. The first part will present the guiding presuppositions in an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family in Mozambique. Closely related and complementary to that is the second part, which highlights the prerequisites for such an approach. The third part will present a sample of a grassroot experience of inculturation in a parish in Mozambique. This sample will inspire and furnish elements for the fourth part of the chapter, which is on an inculturated ritual with traditional and Christian elements. The fifth and last part of the chapter will offer elements for pastoral support and accompaniment after the wedding. It will draw from existing experiences in Mozambique or elsewhere and insights from apostolic exhortations, among other sources.

---

[848] FC 66.

[849] EIA 92.

1. **Guiding Presuppositions in the Inculturated Pastoral Approach**

   a. **Using the Prerogatives of the Role of the Bishops**

   > In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.
   >
   > —*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 22,2

   Chapter One pointed out that one of the opportunities within the Mozambican context is the openness and willingness of Mozambican pastors to welcome initiatives that contribute to an inculturated approach to marriage and family. Related to that is their effort in working collaboratively and in consultation with all sectors of the Church: laity, priests, consecrated persons, and people of good will who are knowledgeable in traditional practices and in other sciences that help to understand and support marriage and family. Such openness is indispensable in an inculturated pastoral approach.

   Furthermore, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Africae Terrarum*, *Familiaris Consortio*, *Ecclesia in Africa*, and *Amoris Laetitia*, just to mention the recent and most significant documents, support such openness and willingness of the CEM. The 2016 Order of Celebrating Matrimony has provisions that allow bishops and respective conferences to make adaptations to the ritual as they see appropriate for the good of the people of their jurisdictions.[850] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states,

   > The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, must, in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and culture of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship.

---

[850] SC 22, 37-40, 63, and 77. See also CIC, can. 1067: "The conference of bishops is to establish norms about the examination of spouses and about the marriage banns or other opportune means to accomplish the investigations necessary before marriage." In case of necessity, "where there is a lack of priests and deacons, the diocesan bishop can delegate lay persons to assist at marriages." CIC, can. 1112.

Adaptations which are judged to be useful or necessary should then be submitted to the Apostolic See, by whose consent they may be introduced.[851]

The "competent territorial ecclesial authority" has permission "to draw up its rite suited to the usages of place and people, according to the provision of Art. 63. However, the rite must always conform to the law that the priest assisting at the marriage must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties."[852] Even the way of acquiring consent can be done according to the way people recognize as valid forms of consent.[853]

Furthermore, *Lumen Gentium* acknowledges that each bishop, in his respective jurisdiction, has the authority to make the necessary liturgical adaptations according to the sensibility, character, worldview, and values of the people in his jurisdiction.[854] Consistent with the principle of subsidiarity implied in the option for the ministerial church, an inculturated approach to marriage and family will require for such service of authority, consultation and collaboration with other priests, religious persons, the laity, and people of good will.[855]

The Theological-Pastoral Weeks of 2000-2002 referred to in the General Introduction and in the previous chapters glimpse such a spirit of consultation, collaboration, an experience that the Church in Mozambique should humbly and gratefully share with other Churches in Africa and elsewhere. To foster unity and respect for the diversity in the spirit of collegiality, *Lumen Gentium* states that while devoted to a specific

---

[851] SC 40,1.

[852] SC 77.

[853] For alternative expression of consent, see Turner, *Inseparable Love*, 80-102.

[854] Cf. LG 24.

[855] CF. Richard Gaillardetz, *By what Authority?: A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 74-90, 139-145.

diocese, the bishop should also be solicitous for the unity and good of the universal Church.[856]

The point is that the bishops individually, as pastors of their respective dioceses, have enough room for galvanizing the process of inculturation than they make use of. Sometimes, overwhelmed by administrative work and without enough personnel to assist and advise them in subjects of interest, the urgency of inculturation remains at the level of desire, with few isolated experiences without official knowledge or approval. The good news is that the bishops in Mozambique have been open to cooperation, and they are open to the initiatives for the inculturation of the Christian faith. Such openness is an opportunity to recommend and make use of it.

b. __Incorporating Traditional Values Compatible with the Gospel__

The fourth chapter showed the way in which certain traditional Mozambican values are not only compatible with the gospel but also prepare people to live responsibly and satisfactorily their marital life in the context of the community. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states, "Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes, in fact, she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit."[857] Consistent with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Nestorio Agirembabazi, in his doctoral dissertation, argued for "a need [to] go beyond the cosmetic use of African cultural expressions and symbols in the liturgy," which means integrating

---

[856] Cf. LG 23.

[857] SC 37.

authentic African values in the way people live their faith. Drawing from *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, he avers,

> We need to include in liturgy new rites based on people's philosophies and understanding of their world and social life. I refer to creation stories, *initiation rites*, the concept of sin, traditional ways of reconciliation, healing, the celebration of marriage, the place of a meal in traditional societies, and blood covenant pacts. Vatican II encourages the use of such practices provided they are devoid of objectionable beliefs and attitudes. [858]

c. Acknowledging Existing Initiatives on Inculturation of Marriage

> The marriage rite now found in the Roman Ritual is to be revised and enriched in such a way that the grace of the sacrament is more clearly signified, and the duties of the spouses are taught. If any regions are wont to use other praiseworthy customs and ceremonies when celebrating the sacrament of matrimony, the sacred Synod earnestly desires that these, by all means, be retained.
>
> — *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 77.

Inculturation entails acknowledging respectfully whatever is good, compatible with the faith, not superstitious or misleading, and admit "such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit."[859] The Order of Celebrating Matrimony explicates such orientation stating that, "In the usages and ways of celebrating Marriage prevailing among peoples now receiving the Gospel for the first time, whatever is honorable and not indissolubly connected with superstition and errors should be sympathetically considered and, if possible, preserved intact, and in fact even admitted into the Liturgy itself."[860]

---

[858] Nestorio Agirembabazi, "Liturgical Inculturation: Towards Integral and Radical Conversion in an African Context with Particular Reference to Uganda" (STD diss., Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, 2000), 121. Emphasis added.

[859] SC 37.

[860] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, no. 43.

Furthermore, the process towards an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family must consider experiences of inculturation that are already taking place at the grassroots level, without necessarily the official approval or wide divulgation in parishes or dioceses. If such experiences mirror authentic Mozambican values and are compatible with the gospel and favor marriage and family, they should be incorporated in the preparation, celebration, and ongoing support of marriage.

d. **Lay and Native Clergy Involvement, Indispensable for Inculturation**

Lwaminga goes even further in his reflection by suggesting that the process of inculturation should involve not only a collaborative effort and participation of every sector of the people of God but also consideration of two integral factors. First, the laity took an active role in the SCCs. According to Kalilombe, such lay envolvement prevented the foreigners and the Church authorities and leaders monopolizing the process of inculturation or "impose their interpretation and evaluations on the people."[861] Second, the native clergy should be involved and not "foreigners who are not really familiar with the deep intentions of the culture, dominate in the process."[862] Even foreign missionaries who have lived long in the country and are immersed into the culture of the people should work with the local clergy and religious men and women in the inculturation process.

Missionaries from other parts of the world should not arrogantly assume that they know the culture better than the native people and can therefore can lead, by themselves, the process of inculturation without the native clergy and religious. Such a position is

---

[861] Kalilombe, "Marriage among Christians in the African Context," in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio*, 82.

[862] Ibid.

unbecoming, unrealistic, and creates uneasiness among the local people. Besides, it glimpses the assumptions of foreign countries and agencies that go to Mozambique (and to other African countries) with ready-made plans because they think they know better what is good for the people and have no need to listen to the local people. The result is that their successful projects do not outlive the time of their proponents and, often enough, people embrace them superficially and with confusion.

The reflection of Schreiter on the role of "outsiders" (the expatriates) and "insiders" (the native people) in constructing local theologies is both clarifying and challenging. Schreiter clarifies that both are important in different capacities. "One can never know that culture as one does one's own."[863] The opposite attitude in the process of growth of the local Church would be the attitude of some overzealous native people who think that they do not need the collaboration of expatriates or that they need them only insofar as the local Church does not have enough native personnel. Such reasoning is impoverishing and neglects the catholicity of the Christian faith. Schreiter once again gives an insightful remark to bear in mind in the process of inculturation.

> The expatriate can also be the bearer of the lived experience of other communities, experiences that can challenge and enrich a local community. Without the presence of outside experience, a local church runs the risk of turning in one itself, becoming self-satisfied with its own achievements. The expatriate, as an outsider, can sometimes hear things going on in a community not heard by a native member of that community.[864]

---

[863], Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 22-23.

[864] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies,* 22-23.

e. Key Topics in Preparation for Marriage in an Inculturated Approach

i. Traditional Values Enhancing Marriage and Family

All ten elements presented in Chapter Three as Mozambican values that enhance marriage and family will and should be, in one way or another, part of the topics in the training of children and teenagers to adulthood. As a remote preparation for marriage, the rites of initiation in their inculturated version of "retreats of initiation," or any education closer to the pedagogy of the rites of initiation, will provide teenagers with the necessary ingredients for an adult life of which marriage is an integral element.[865] The immediate preparation in the Church, which currently precedes the wedding celebration, will continue by emphasizing the sacramental, covenantal, and biblical foundations of marriage and family.

ii. Covenantal Foundations in Marriage Preparation

An Inculturated pastoral approach will take the key elements of the metaphor of covenant, as presented in Chapter Two, the biblical foundation of marriage, and the covenantal elements in Mozambican societies as part of the formation to marriage and family. Ponzetti and Murth gives a useful insight for a pastoral approach. He argues, "While the endeavors of most people serving in some form of marriage ministry are well-intentioned and impact a large number of couples, their efforts are rarely informed by an understanding of Christian tradition. Many programs are simply based on personal experiences or popular psychological information with minimal insight into the rich tradition and meaning behind marriage as a covenant."[866]

---

[865] Cf. Chapter Two, section entitled, "Rites of Initiation and Education for Adulthood."

[866] Ponzetti and Mutch, "Marriage as Covenant," 27.

iii. More than Techniques in Communication and Test of Compatibility

The Center for Marriage and Family at Creighton University shows that among the topics couples found helpful in their marriage, there is no explicit reference to the biblical foundation of marriage, the Christian meaning of marriage as a covenant or sacrament, or the ecclesial-communitarian-social dimension of marriage.[867] The study says, "The topics addressed in marriage preparation that were perceived as most helpful were the 5 Cs: communication, commitment, conflict resolution, children and church (values and sacramental activity). A sixth C, career and especially dual career, was among those topics perceived as least helpful."[868]

These topics are important and should continue to be part of marriage preparation, but they are not enough for a Christian marriage. An inculturated pastoral approach will take as part of the preparation all that the retreats of initiation provide. It will also include the biblical foundation, underscoring the covenantal aspect of marriage; marriage's Christological, ecclesial, and communitarian aspect; and marriage as a vocation to holiness, a path to discipleship, and a service to the community.

f. <u>The Possibility of New Rituals and New Role of Lay Witnesses</u>

Chapter One showed that one of the opportunities that the Mozambican context offers for an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family is the active participation of lay ministers because of the option that the Church made in 1976 by

---

[867] Cf. Chapter Two, section entitled, "Community Oriented with a Keen Sense of Belonging."

[868] "Getting It Right: Marriage Preparation in the Catholic Church," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 1995, accessed March 12, 2018, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/marriage-preparation/getting-it-right-marriage-preparation-in-the-catholic-church.cfm.

structuring the life of parishes and dioceses into SCCs of diversified ministries. Chapter Two pointed out that bishops in their jurisdictions have the faculty to delegate "lay persons as official witness" of marriages in places where there is no sufficient priests or deacons.[869] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* explicated such a provision, which found its way in the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The 2016 Order of Celebrating Matrimony underscore those provisions.[870]

Another opportunity to explore in an inculturated approach is the provision *Sacrosanctum Concilium* gives to the "competent territorial ecclesiastical authority" to make the necessary adaptations not only in the language but also integrating traditional practices which are not superstitious or contrary to the faith but favor a proper understanding and celebration of the Christian faith.[871] The same document recommends that "when rituals are revised, as laid down in [SC] Art. 63, new sacramentals may also be added as the need for these becomes apparent."[872] It states clearly "that some sacramentals, at least in special circumstances and at the discretion of the ordinary, may be administered by qualified lay persons."[873] If need be, members of the Commission of Family can receive the permission to witness some of the preparatory stages to marriage and make use of sacramentals prepared for the occasion.

---

[869] Cf. SC 22, 63, 77, 79.

[870] Cf. SC 79. See comment about this provision in Siegle, *Marriage*, 135-36.

[871] SC speaks of competent authorities in SC 22,2 and the adaptations in SC 63, 77, and 79.

[872] SC 79.

[873] SC 79.

2. Prerequisites for an Inculturated Pastoral Approach to Marriage

a. <u>Creative Fidelity, Apostolic Boldness, and Official Statement</u>

I borrowed the expression "creative fidelity" and "apostolic boldness," or "missionary boldness," from the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata*.[874] I contend that there will be no possibility of an inculturated pastoral approach on marriage and family in Mozambique or elsewhere in Africa unless the Church, the people of God, meet three indispensable prerequisites. The first one is that the Church officially and unequivocally recognize the sound elements of traditional societies, as most pastors have already done timidly and reticently.[875]

The second prerequisite relates to the first: that the Church speak not just officially but positively and boldly about the way in which authentic traditional values (as presented in Chapter Three) support marriage, family, life, and community, and declare that those values are consistent with the Christian faith (as shown in Chapter Four).[876] The third aspect is that the Church take concrete steps or officializes the modest initiatives already happening timidly and unofficially. According to Mabuiangue, the Church in Mozambique should move from speaking about inculturation to take concrete steps on inculturation.[877]

An official word from the leadership will prompt a new era in the Mozambican Church towards an inculturated pastoral approach of marriage and family. Indeed, the 2000

---

[874] John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and the Modern World, March 25, 1996, nos. 37 and 87, accessed January 30, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031996_vita-consecrata.html.

[875] Cf. Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio,* 219. "Recomenda-se que se caminhe para a elaboração de um Directório Pastoral Matrimonial inculturado."

[876] Cf. Centro Nazaré, *O Matrimónio, Actas da 5ª Semana Teológica*, 219. "Recomenda-se que se caminhe para a elaboração de um Directório Pastoral Matrimonial inculturado."

[877] Mabuiangue, "Pastoral das situações matrimoniais," 139.

Report of the V Theological-Pastoral Week on matrimony recommended that the CEM make a public statement about those traditional practices that are authentic and integrate them in the Christian vision and rite of matrimony.[878] The CEM has yet to make such a statement. This research is one more contribution towards that goal.

Before the general peace agreement in 1992, the circumstances required circumspection as a prudent and wise measure in a context hostile to the Church, which was frequently remininded of her ambiguous or conniving position during colonization. Today, when the prophetic and positive role of the Church is recognized, keeping a circumspect attitude towards traditional sound practices could signal lack of "creative fidelity" and "apostolic boldness."

b. **From a Remnant Negativity to a Positive Appreciation**

Chapter One showed that the colonial ideology not only viewed native people and their cultures in a derogatory way but also attempted to instill in their minds and hearts shame and hatred for their people and their lifestyle with its customs, beliefs, arts, and any other traditional practice. Colonial propaganda induced the native people to pit and shame themselves for being black, for acting, living, and behaving like a black person. Instead, it taught the native to value whatever is white and European as a standard of civilization, culture, and humanity. Thus, telling someone that he or she is behaving like a black meant he or she was behaving awfully.

Despite the efforts from liberationists to deconstruct such a harmful mentality and from the native Church leadership, the colonial mentality is not yet expurgated. One of the

---

[878] Cf. Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio,* 219. "Que a CEM se pronuncie oficialmente sobre alguns elementos traditionais que já foram estudados e se apresentam seguros. Esses ja poderiam ser incluidos na visão do matrimónio, como no próprio rito sacramental do matrimónio."

signs of this mentality is the uneasiness in speaking confidently and respectfully about traditional cultures, which is noticeable even in Church institutions, such as seminaries, formation houses for consecrated life, and, to a certain degree, among certain members of the episcopal conference.[879] *Familiaris Consortio* encourages formation courses in these institutions and goes further in encouraging the participation of the laity and the use of lay professionals to help the family.[880]

Today, derogatory forms of undermining people's identity and cultures appear in different and enticing attires, which has come to be known as "neo-colonization," a topic developed at length in Chapter One.[881] To overcome such negativity, which impairs the process of inculturation, it is imperative to have creative fidelity, apostolic boldness, and an official statement mentioned above.

c. **Unwavering Integration of Sound Traditional Practices into Christianity**

Above, I pointed that one of the guiding principles for an inculturated pastoral approach is the incorporation of traditional and contemporary sound practices into the way Christians understand and live their faith. However, an unwavering integration of traditional sound practices into Christianity requires a reappraisal and an acknowledgment of the positive aspects of such practices. A positive appreciation will counterbalance and

---

[879] This finding was taken from my experience of teaching in minor Seminary in Beira (1997–1998), Inter-Diocesan Theological Seminary in Maputo (2005–2007) and as a Coordinator of the National Commission of Formation of Religious Men and Women (2005–2008). My position of leadership in the Society of Jesus (2008-2014) allowed me to interact with local Church leaders and hear their pastoral concerns in relation to the Mozambican traditional practices. Sometimes, seminaries were reluctant to discuss these issues and certain bishops deplored insufficient qualified staff to help them to articulate how to integrate sound traditional practices in the Christian faith. An emeritus bishop said to me, "Go to study so that you come to help our communities."

[880] FC 70.

[881] See also Obianuju Ekeocha, *Target Africa: Ideological Neolocolialism in the Twenty-First Century* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018), 137-155 and 175-194.

correct the negativity of a colonial mentality and that of neocolonialism, which still prevents the Church from appropriating traditional wisdom, even though experience has proven that it uplifts and supports marriage.[882]

To overcome the remnants of the colonial mentality and avoid the pitfall of neo-colonialization of African minds and hearts, Churu makes two compelling appeals. First, she recommends the education of young people and everyone else so that they can appreciate the cultural legacy of traditional societies as integral to the identity of a people. Second, she suggests reappraising traditional values, incorporating them into one's lifestyle, and speaking about them with appreciation as other people do with their cultural legacies. She rightly argues that without such a positive reappraisal, no real evangelization will take place.[883] Churu's recommendation concurs with Chauque, the Mozambican Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Action, who advised "communities to begin working with children and youth so that they can understand that the family is for social stability."[884]

---

[882] For more on how to appraise the positive elements of Mozambican tradition, see Peter Lwaminda, "The African Traditional Marriage Today," in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio*, 26; Kalilombe, "Marriage Christians African Context," 82; and Ester Lucas, "O matrimónio e a virgindade" [Marriage and Virginity], in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio*, 189.

[883] Cf. Beatrice Churu, "Elements of the African Marriage and Family that Can be Usefully Adopted for the Pastoral Care for Christian Families," in *The African Family Today*, ed. Giuseppe Caramazza and Beatrice Churu (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2015), 150. Churu has training in education and social science. Currently, she is the Dean School of Arts and Social Sciences at Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya.

[884] STV Soico, "STV PrimeiroJornal 15 12 2016," (news video), posted on December 15, 2016, accessed January 16, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhL1xzEngXQ.

d. Renewed Training of Ministers and Formation of Joint Team Work

> Along with a pastoral outreach aimed specifically at families, this shows the need for "an adequate formation... of priests, deacons, men and women religious, catechists and other pastoral workers". In the replies given to the worldwide consultation, it became clear that ordained ministers often lack the training needed to deal with the complex problems currently facing families.
>
> —Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*

i. Renewed Training of Ministers

An inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family will necessarily require a new dynamic in the training of seminarians, pastors, laity, and all those involved in the family apostolate.[885] In other words, the formation of the future ministers of the Church will include habitual classroom instruction, interaction with people involved in a marriage and family apostolate in parishes and family homes, and pastoral fieldwork where seminarians receive pastoral skills in real situations of marriage and family life.[886] An inculturated approach suggests that the curriculum on theological studies, whether in seminaries, Catholic universities, or religious institutes, include an introductory course on traditional Mozambican cultures.

ii. Joint Teamwork in Preparations for Marriage and Family

One of the greatest pastoral needs of most dioceses in Mozambique is the formation of lay ministers for the activities they are called to serve. The Pastoral Directory of the Archdioceses of Maputo recommends the Commission of the Family to prepare subsidies

---

[885] Such a view concurs with the above statement from Francis in AL 220.

[886] EIA 92 speaks of "family apostolate." For the sake of clarity and to underscore the interdependence of marriage, family, children (life), and community, I will use the expression "Marriage and Family Ministry" or "Marriage and Family Apostleship." Those devoted to this ministry will be Family and Marriage Ministers in an analogous way that the Church has Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

for the training and work of those involved in the apostolate of marriage and family.[887] An inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family will require joint teamwork to prepare and support marriage and family.

In November 1995, the Center for Marriage and Family of Creighton University conducted a study of marriage preparation in the Catholic Church and found that the preparation for marriage is more appreciated and effective when conducted by a team with diversified members. The research concluded,

> Marriage preparation should always be administered by a team. That team should always include a member of the clergy, for couples consistently judge the presence of clergy valuable and their absence detrimental. It should also always include lay couples, for a recurring complaint was that "priests who do not marry ... just don't know what it is like." There is here a suggestion for future research, to discriminate precisely what it is that the presence of clergy contributes to the perceived value of marriage preparation.[888]

What can be taken from this passage is the importance of teamwork and ongoing formation, as *Familiaris Consortio* had already recommended.[889] The presence of men and women religious, marriage couples, and committed laity are important. At the same time, perhaps even more because of the leadership role he has in the community, a priest's presence in the formation for marriage and family is of paramount importance. An inculturated pastoral approach will ensure that the training of future priests and people working in family ministry (that is, priests, religious, laity) qualify them to prepare, celebrate and accompany marriage.

---

[887] Francisco Chimoio, *Directório pastoral da arquidiocese de Maputo* (Maputo: Secretariado de Coordenação Pastoral, 2016), 128, no. 437,k.

[888] "Getting it Right."

[889] Cf. FC 49.

e. **Church Youth Formation Modelled on the Retreats of Initiation**

Chapter Three underscored the way in which the rites of initiation train children and teenagers for adulthood. It also stressed how the rites gave "a sense of responsibility to young adults, enabling and enforcing them to leave childhood behind and undertake their roles as young adults in the community."[890] The retreats of initiation have been a successful attempt of inculturation. They have yielded positive results and mustered approbation in the communities. Christians can take advantage of the solid formation of the rites of initiation in a context of their faith. Rites of initiation prepare young people for adulthood of which marriage is integral. Lwaminda presents the relationship between rites of initiation and marriage when he stated that

> In African society, marriage is considered so important that, as part of the puberty rites that usher young people into adulthood, the young people are educated into matters of sex, marriage and family life and are thus made aware of the responsibilities of adulthood. Before entering into marriage, the young people know what is expected of them regarding their roles in the marriage relationship.[891]

In this statement, Lwaminda points out why the rites enjoy such popularity. However, rather than relying solely on the good will of a parish priest, the inculturated approach will integrate the retreats of initiation in the formation project of any Mozambican diocese. Retreats of Initiation could be done as part of the training for the sacrament of confirmation or as a formation for those that have been confirmed but not had the opportunity to do the retreat of initiation.

The education of young adults will have a transformative impact when done according to the proved pedagogy of the retreats of initiation which encompasses three

---

[890] Churu, "Elements of the African Marriage and Family," In *The African Family Today,* 151.

[891] Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 22-23.

pillars: authentic traditional values, challenges of current time. Such a model of formation can also be enriched using digital media much appreciated among young people. It is worthwhile to relate sexual education in the retreats of initiation concerning God's design for human sexuality as expressed in the sixth and ninth commandments, with biblical foundations and the support of the practice of the Christian tradition. Such an approach will get approval of the local church leaders who are rightly concerned with the compatibility of traditional practices with the biblical faith and Christian tradition.

f. Overview of the Prerequisites for an Inculturated Approach

One key component of an inculturated pastoral approach will be the possibility of having a unified ritual for the celebration of matrimony. The same celebration will integrate, with some adaptations, in the current "Order of the Celebration of Matrimony" those sound elements of customary marriage and other traditional practices compatible with the gospel. The inculturated ritual will emulate and use the provisions of the Mozambican civil law so that the traditional and church celebrations receive civil recognition without necessarily undergoing another ceremony.[892] The law of the family makes such a provision as explained in the general introduction and Chapter One.

Church leaders, seminarians, and the Commission of Marriage and Family will deepen the content of The New Family Law and provisions in the Constitution which supports marriage and family. The General Introduction and Chapter One referred to those laws when speaking about motherhood, solidarity, and care for the elders, orphans and vulnerable. Those involved in family ministry also will explore the authentic traditional

---

[892] Cf. Chimoio, *Directório pastoral*, 128, no. 437, j.vii.

values presented in Chapter Three, underscore their compatibility with the Christian message and the way they prepare for marriage, as shown in Chapter Four.

It is worthwhile to recall what the General Introduction explained: the Mozambican Law of Family recognizes three types of marriage: traditional, civil and religious.[893] The New Law of Family recognizes the legal and juridical status of a church marriage provided the church follows two formalities: First, the state recommends church officers to send to civil authorities a duplicate of the marriage certificate with all the relevant information about the name of the bride and groom, witness, date, church officer.[894] The second requirement is that the Church marriage occurs without any impediments, in the presence of two witnesses and a church official.

One ceremony will be enough to fulfill the positive aspects that each of the three different celebrations try to preserve and people acknowledge as important for their marriage. Drawing from some the experiences of other countries such as Nigeria and Togo, Lwaminda argues, "African Christians, for the most part, consider their traditional marriage absolutely essential, while marriage in Church is considered rather as a blessing of their marriage which already exists."[895] As part of an inculturated pastoral approach, it is worthwhile to learn from the existing non-official experiences taking place in the country as I will indicated in the next section.

---

[893] *The Law of the Family*, arts. 24-26.

[894] *The Law of the Family*, arts. 75, 79-80.

[895] Cf. Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 29.

3.   Learning from a Grassroot Experience of Inculturation of Marriage

a.   <u>A Grassroot Experience of Inculturation of Marriage</u>

In the Theological-Pastoral Week of 2001 on Matrimony, which took place in Mozambique, Cabral Magaia, a married and committed Christian of the Archdiocese of Maputo, shared his experience of preparing and accompanying couples for marriage and the way he witnesses weddings at the Parish of Our Lady of Amparo, in Maputo.[896] Magaia is part of the team of masters of the "retreats of initiation," a group of lay people whom Ezequiel Gwembe trained for this service. He began working in retreats of initiation and in attempting an inculturated celebration of marriage since 1993.[897]

According to Magaia, the two experiences flourished in his Parish and, though timidly, are taking place in other parishes.[898] However, there is not much divulgation about such modest and successful attempts of inculturation. The celebration of marriage incorporates traditional practices that are recognizably sound and supportive of marriage and family, such as those values mentioned in Chapter Three. The parish welcomed the initiative, and more couples are opting for the experience because of what they see as celebrating marriage in a way that is both truly Christian and authentically Mozambican.[899] The celebration follows four steps.

---

[896] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 146-165.

[897] Ibid., 146.

[898] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 146.

[899] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 146 and 165.

b. <u>Four Steps for a Traditional Celebration of Marriage</u>

Magaia distinguishes four main steps in the traditional marriage: (1) choosing a partner, (2) officialization of the courtship, (3) engagement, and (4) wedding.[900] In Mozambican societies, there are differences in the steps, but all steps together have a purpose in marriage and family.[901] Magesa explains that "the rituals and ceremonies that take place throughout the process are intended to initiate, establish, and solidify those ties of mutual knowledge and understanding necessary for kinship."[902] According to Magaia, from one stage to the next, there was enough time for the couple and respective families to get to know each other.[903] Though having different emphases, most ethnic groups in Mozambique follow these main stages. For example, in matrilineal societies, the engagement does not entail *lobolo* but only the consent of the two families and their commitment to support the marriage.

The four steps play an important role in the preparation, celebration and stability of marriage and family. Though the first step, choosing a partner, may take different forms in a world where people also meet through mass-media, the basic inspiration of seeking their guidance from the family remains significant. Whatever is the process of choosing the partner (1), and the degree of involvement of the family and the large community, the three following steps, (2) officialization of the courtship, (3) engagement, and (4) wedding are can serve as a sample of integral aspects in the inculturated pastoral approach of marriage

---

[900] Cf. Ibid., 146-165.

[901] Magesa, *African Religion*, 127. Magesa states, "The stages in the marriage process differ from one ethnic group to another, but the intention is the same." What Magesa affirms about Eastern-Africa is also true about Mozambique.

[902] Ibid., 128.

[903] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 150.

and family. In an inculturated pastoral approach, the engagement-wedding will be a unified celebration taking place in one day or in two days or in one week, depending the circumstances.

c. **Choosing the Partner**

According to Magaia, there was a time that parents chose a spouse for their children, though there was always room for the children to accept or reject such a choice. He recognizes that nowadays, though parents may suggest or even recommend a partner for their child, sometimes young people choose their partners without the knowledge and approval of their parents. Magaia deplores the tendency of dating without necessarily seeking the advice of parents.[904] Regardless of the way one choses his or her partner, the courtship still needs a ceremony of officialization, that is, a family event in which the young man and woman are presented as girlfriend and boyfriend.[905] Anyungwe, the people from which I came, call the process of asking a girl to consider the possibility of marriage *kubvunzira*, which means "asking for."[906] Different ethnic groups have variations on the way such a process occurs, but as Magesa pointed out, all the ceremonies have the same goal.[907]

It suffices here is to make two points: (1) Correctly choosing a partner is an important step in the process of marriage. (2) People look more for the qualities and the

---

[904] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 148.

[905] Cf. TAG, *Biblical Approach Marriage*, 66.

[906] See a glimpse about courtship and marriage among Anyngwe in Silva, *Distrito de Tete*, 81-82.

[907] See the customs among the Tonga of the southern part of Mozambique in Junod, *Usos e costumes Bantu*, vol. 1, 108-28. For the way of the northern part of Mozambique, see Manuel Amaral, *O povo Yao* [The Yao people] (Lisbon: ME IICT, 1989), 67-77. For the customs of Kenya, see Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 163-72.

good character of the partner and the good reputation of the family but not much for physical attributes or riches. [908] Phiri underscores, "The parents' consent to the marriage of any of their children is based partly on their knowledge of the girl in question but more on the history of her family and its reputation."[909]

d.   Formalization of the Courtship (Pre-Engagement)

After choosing a partner, the young man, with some representatives of his family and friends, introduces himself to the family of the girl.[910] Such a move occurs after preliminary inquiries indicating that the family of the girl will accept him. In an inculturated pastoral approach, at this step, the Church should mark her presence through the Commission of Marriage and Family.[911] After the officialization of the courtship, the boy can visit the girl's family and vice versa. The community will expect that the boy will not be fooling around with other girls, nor the girl with other boys. If such situation occurs and the community does not see the seriousness in one or both, the community will not give approve the ceremony of engagement.

e.   Engagement as Integral to the Celebration of Matrimony

Chapter Three explained the meaning of *lobolo*, its significance, implications, misconceptions, and the necessity to reappraise its contribution to the stability of marriage,

---

[908] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 147-48.

[909] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 36.

[910] Cf. Luis Alberto, "Aspectos pastorais dos matrimónios em África: Entrevistas dos casais" [Pastoral aspects of matrimony in Africa: Interviews to couples], in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio,* 185. The author speaks specifically of the reality in Mozambique.

[911] Analogous to the extraordinary ministers of holy communion, those involved in preparing the couples for marriage could be called marriage and family ministers. However, for the sake of clarity, given that bride and groom are ministers to one another, I would rather prefer calling them 'marriage and family apostles', consistent with *Amoris Laetitia*'s expression "family apostolate." AL 7, 244. Other possible terms can be "agents of the family apostolate" or just Family Commission. AL 200.

the legitimacy of children, the bond between the couple's families, and creating a favorable environment for supporting and accompanying the couple. There is no marriage without *lobolo*. And in most cases, *lobolo* is identified with marriage. [912] Chapter Four explained how lobolo is covenantal and compatible with our faith. This Chapter presents how lobolo can be integrated in the an inculturated pastoral approach.

The first part of giving and receiving the token of appreciation would be conducted according to traditional practice. The ceremony takes place in the family of the prospective bride. The master of ceremonies, an elder from the family of the prospective groom, introduces the reasons that brought the two families together. Then, the priest or deacon will begin by invoking God's blessing through the intercession of the families' ancestor. Then, the ritual continues according to the tradition.

After the giving and receiving the token, the priest, deacon, or a marriage and family apostle would underscore the importance of the support of the families and the community for the stability and satisfaction of the upcoming marriage. At the same time, the priest would caution about the pervasiveness of undue interference of family and friends which does not respect the necessary privacy of the couple. Lwaminda clarified misconceptions about interference, saying,

> Some may speak of 'interference' in affairs of the couple by the lineage members. It must be pointed out, however, that, as far as the lineage members are concerned, they do not 'interfere;' they merely show an interest in the couple's welfare; they

---

[912] Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 129. "É um rito solene com e pelo qual se conclui toda a caminhada para o casamento. Sela-se a aliança entre as duas familias através de palavras e entrega de sinais que significam tanto o alto valor da pessoa que irá com o casamento deixar definitivamente a sua familia... como tambem gesto de gratidao e reconhecimento..."

want to say that they are always prepared to come to the aid of the couple, when necessary (i.e. financial, psychological or emotional assistance of the couple.[913]

Though traditional societies were careful in not unduly interfering, it is nonetheless important to stress such an aspect because of the abuses and pressures of all kinds that parents and in-laws can put on the newly married couple. Mabuiangue points out that in May 22, 2000, it was reported that three to five percent of separations occurred because the mother-in-law sent away her daughter-in-law because of sterility.[914] Family members can overzealously pressure separation when the couple faces infertility, an aspect that I will reflect on later in this chapter.

Engagement-Wedding ceremonies can occur in the same day. However, the general preference is to choose two consecutive days or, at most, during the same week.[915] When the ceremony of engagement and subsequent rituals of the wedding celebration occurs on different days and locations, the families will be instructed as not to prepare two big costly feasts as people tend to do, one for engagement and another for the church celebration. Such a situation renders the celebration of engagement-marriage unnecessarily costly, burdensome, and frightening, especially for those who do not prefer or cannot afford such an onerous celebration.

f. **Wedding: Learning from a Grassroot Experience of Inculturation**

i. **Introductory Rites: Entrance Song and Circle of Life**

According to *Magaia*, an inculturated celebration of marriage begins with a priest or deacon from the altar welcoming the bride and groom, who are at the entrance of the

---

[913] Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 26.

[914] Cf. Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 123.

[915] Cf. Ibid.

Church, with a liturgical greeting.[916] Then, he invites the couple to come into the Church. The assembly stands and sings. Then, the procession of the entrance begins. The groom's mother accompanies the groom, and the bride's father accompanies the bride. The bride, the groom, and the parents, with the godparents, stand still in front of the altar. The song stops, and the assembly sits.[917]

Then, the master of ceremonies, an elder, introduces the celebration and invites the groom's maternal uncle to draw on the floor a circle of life with a brick powder following the mark of chalk. The circle symbolizes a house, a home, a family. Then, the master of ceremonies invites the bride's paternal aunt to mark the same circle with maize flour. After that, the master of ceremonies explains the meaning of the circle and invites the bride and groom to enter the circle. Then, the master of ceremonies invites the godparents to take their places near their godchildren in the new home they are building. After this ritual, the master of ceremonies invites the priest/deacon to resume the celebration by saying: "Father, here are two families accompanying their daughter X and son Y who come to the Sacrament of Matrimony. With the approval of their parents, I ask you to proceed with the ritual."[918]

ii. **Listening to the Word of God through the Elders and the Community**

After the reading and before the homily, the priest asks the master of ceremonies, "Who are those people there?" The master of ceremonies invites the representative of the

---

[916] Cf Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 157.

[917] Ibid.

[918] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 157-158. "Senhor Padre, estão aqui duas famílias que acompanham seus filhos, Sandra e Jaime para o Sacramento do Matrimonio e, com a autorização dos pais, peço ao Senhor padre para fazer o rito."

groom, the groom's maternal uncle, to introduce the parents and godparents to the priest and the assembly. Then, the master of ceremonies invites a representative of the bride, the bride's paternal aunt, to introduce the bride, her parents, and godparents.[919] Then, the liturgy of the word proceeds as usual, with the homily.

The bride and groom will listen to the readings chosen for this occasion as suggested in the Order for the Celebration of Matrimony.[920] Then, the community will help them understand the implications of the scriptures in their marital journey through the voice of the elders (priest being one of the elders), representatives from the families of the bride and groom, a member of the Family Apostolate. For the representatives of the family, it could be enough to speak during the presentation of the symbolic gift as explained in the section, "A Grassroot Experience of Inculturation of Marriage." This part of the celebration has a pedagogical function for the community. It underscores the meaning of Christian marriage not only for the couple but also for the community. As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states, the sacraments "build up the body of Christ… give worship to God because they are signs they also instruct."[921]

iii. Consent, Blessing, and Rings

As an expression of the consent, the master of ceremonies invites the groom to close the circle with the brick powder and then the bride to do the same with maize flour. Then, the master of ceremonies marks a door on the circle, explaining that, from then on, their

---

[919] Cf. Ibid., 158.

[920] Cf. USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, nos. 55-57 and nos.144-87. See explanation in Turner, *Inseparable Love*, 74-57.

[921] SC 59.

holy house should be blessed with love, fidelity, respect, and harmony.[922] Magaia does not mention the blessing and the exchange of the rings. The ceremony of the circles already conveys the meaning of the ring.[923] However, couples prefer to keep the blessing of the rings because the rings will remain whereas the circles will vanish in a day. The ritual of the blessing follows the Order of Celebrating Matrimony.

iv. Symbolic Gifts of the Tools for Marriage

After the ritual of consent, there is an offering of the tools, which symbolizes the qualities that wife and husband should keep cultivating to make their marriage stable, satisfying, and life-giving. The tools remind the responsibilities of a wife and husband and of a mother and father in the family. As the uncle or an aunt gives a tool, he or she explains its meaning. The uncle will offer to the groom a stick, a machete, and a stool. The aunt will offer to the bride a *capulana* (cloth), basket, pestle, and mat. The stick symbolizes responsibility in protecting the family. The machete, or hoe ax, call attention to the importance of hard work. The stool reminds that the man should sit with his family, listen to the family, and dialogue and favor communication.[924]

For the bride, the cloth (*capulana*) symbolizes decency, self-respect, dignity, and femininity.[925] *Capulana* is far richer in symbolism than what Magaia alludes to in his presentation. *Capulana* is also a sign of sheltering the needy and taking care of a child, because with it a woman carries a child on her back. *Capulana* serves as a blanket for the cold, a cloth for the naked, a welcome to the needy, and first aid for the suffering and death.

---

[922] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 159.

[923] For a comprehensive overview of the use of rings and possible adaptations or substitutions, see Turner, *Inseparable Love*¸ 102-11.

[925] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 159-160.

The basket symbolizes working hard for the good of the family. The pestle symbolizes her role of nurturing and feeding the family. The mat symbolizes that a mother and wife should foster hospitality in the family.[926]

v. Offertory, Blessing of the Gift, Communion and Consecration to Our Lady

After the offering of the symbolic gifts to the bride and groom, the couple will take the gifts as an offertory to the Lord. The priest/deacon will bless these gifts and ask the Lord to grant the couple the necessary graces to accomplish what those gifts symbolize in their lives.[927] Unless local pastoral reasons advise otherwise, according to the orientation of the new Order of Celebrating Matrimony deserves attention. That is, the collection at the wedding is for the work of charity, reminding the couple to go beyond their satisfaction but to be always open to the needy.

vi. Prayers of the Faithful

During the prayers of the faithful, it would be appropriate to invoke the ancestors and the saints, our ancestors in faith, in an analogous way as in the invocations during baptisms, ordinations to the priesthood, and consecrations of men and women religious. As part of the invocation of the saints, an elder could also invoke the ancestors of the families of the bride and groom while asking the blessings upon the new married couple. Then, the celebration follows as usual with consecration and communion. The couple goes before Our Lady, and they pray or sing the "consecration to Our Lady."[928]

vii. Nuptial Blessing

---

[926] Cf. ibid., 160-161.

[927] Cf. ibid., 161.

[928] Cf. Ibid. During my pastoral fieldwork and as part of the research for this dissertation, I found this same ritual in the Brazilian communities of the Bay Area in California.

The blessing follows as suggested in the Order of Celebrating Matrimony. Martinez points out that this ritual is an important and ancient one. He says, it is "found in all Christian liturgies on the Christian celebration of marriage. Already documented in the fourth century at Rome and in the Eastern Churches, it became the normative prayer for the solemn blessing of marriage, and was already made compulsory during the night-tenth centuries for the marriage of clergy."[929] For Martinez, the nuptial blessing is so important that it is the climax of the celebration.[930] Stevenson argues that "the nuptial blessing belongs as soon after the consent and the ring giving as possible…. This is a needful part of the inner meaning of marriage, which is essentially about offering to God of resolve in order to ask for his blessing and strength."[931]

viii. Counseling and Final Blessing

After communion and the consecration of the couple to Our Lady, an older married couple gives to the newlyweds more advice about the new life they are embracing. After the counseling section, the parents of the groom and bride are invited to give their blessings to the couple, asking for them the protection of the ancestors and encouraging them to accept the gift of children as a coronation of their marriage.[932] Then, the priest or deacon gives the final blessing, which concludes the liturgical celebration of the sacrament of matrimony.

---

[929] German Martinez, *Worship: Wedding to Marriage* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1993), 142.

[930] Cf. Ibid.

[931] Kenneth Stevenson, *To Join Together: The Rite of Marriage* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1987), 223.

[932] This echoes GS 48.

ix. Concluding Remarks about the Celebration

Magaia ended his presentation in the following way: "Finally, I would like to say that these ceremonies have had a great deal of acceptance. People who have participated as guests in one of these ceremonies have expressed the desire to encourage their children to follow this accompaniment and marry according to these ceremonies."[933] I contented that the more the Church officially commends these celebrations and speaks positively and officially about them, the more acceptance such celebrations will have among the Christians.

4. An Inculturated Ritual with Traditional and Christian Elements

a. <u>Preparation to Adulthood</u>

One of the key aspects of an inculturated pastoral approach will be a formation as *Familiaris Consortio* describes it. "Marriage preparation has to be seen and put into practice as a gradual and continuous process. It includes three main stages: remote, proximate and immediate preparation."[934] *Amoris Laetitia* reiterated the importance of a preparation which goes beyond few classes before marriage. Francis states, "Both short-term and long-term marriage preparation should ensure that the couple does not view the wedding ceremony as the end of the road, but instead embark upon marriage as a lifelong calling based on a firm and realistic decision to face all trials and difficult moments together."[935] *Amoris Laetitia* points that preparation should underscore to the couple that

---

[933] Cf. Magaia, "Casamento e cultura," 165. "Finalmente quero dizer que estas cerimónias têm tido muita aceitacao e que, pessoas que têm participado como convidados em alguma dessas cerimónias , têm manifestado o desejo de que alguns dos seus filhos possam ter esse acompanhamento e casar com essas cerimonias."

[934] FC 66.

[935] AL 211.

"what is important is the love you share, strengthened and sanctified by grace. You are capable of opting for a more modest and simple celebration in which love takes precedence over everything else. Pastoral workers and the entire community can help make this priority the norm rather than the exception."[936]

b. <u>The Threefold Consent or Approval in an Inculturated Celebration</u>

> African consent is based on a holistic dimension involving both the couple and the community. In addition, consent is required every step of the way. We may say that African marriage is not accomplished with just one consent only but through one consent following another. Each consent at one stage presupposes that there was consent at the previous stage, so that each consent is only partial, presuming the one and preparing for the next.
>
> —Bénézet Bujo, *Plea for Change in Models of Marriage*

In Mozambique, as it is in most African societies, marital consent does not involve only two people: a bride and a groom.[937] Rather, there are three interrelated, complementary, and indispensable consents. One consent cannot be taken seriously if it lacks the previous consents, and all aspects contribute to stability and satisfaction in marriage and family. The inculturated approach would incorporate the threefold consent or approval by having (1) the approval of the Christian community, (2) the approval of the parents of the bride, and (3) the consent of the bride and groom.

In the 2000 Theological Week in Mozambique, Lwaminda explained, "In Africa, marriage is not merely an affair between two individuals who have fallen in love and planned to spend the rest of their lives together. It is a matter in which the lineage groups

---

[936] AL 212.

[937] Such an affirmation concurs with the above statement in Bujo, *Plea for Change,* 117.

of both man and woman are deeply involved. Marriage is a community affair. It is an alliance between two families/communities, or descent groups."[938]

The long history of the Church since middle age came to understand consent as referring to only the bride and groom. Such development was important to preserve the bride and groom from external coercion. Thus, for a valid celebration of marriage, the only consent required is that of a bride and a groom. The Law of the Family states that the desire to marry is strictly personal and of a mutual consensus of a man and a woman.[939] Consent of the parents is required in exceptional cases where the bride or the groom is only sixteen years old.[940] The Family Law purports to ensure that there is no coercion from parents, family members, and community. Such law concurs with the freedom required for a valid celebration of sacramental marriage. The Canon Law states, "A marriage is invalid if it is entered into due to force or grave fear inflicted from outside the person, even when inflicted unintentionally…"[941]

A valid celebration of marriage does not require the consents of the parents and the community. The scope of this dissertation does not allow further elaboration for the inclusion of the threefold consent as integral to an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage. However, it argues for a clear approval of the parents and the community before Church celebration, as it is already happening unofficially by recognizing the importance of *lobola* for the stability of marriage. Indeed, even canonically valid, a marriage without

---

[938] Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 24.

[939] The Law of the Family, art. 43. See Art. 50 speaks of requirements for Church marriage and Art. 51 for traditional marriage. These three marriages have legal status according to art. 52.

[940] The Law of the Family, arts. 30, 39, 73

[941] Siegle, *Marriage*, 120, can. 1103. See ibid., 103-104.

the approval and support of the community hardly will overcome the challenges of marital life.

The threefold consent or approval underscores a communitarian-oriented worldview in which personal decisions affect the community and the community inspires, guides, and supports individual decisions. In 2000, in the Theological-Week held in Beira, Lwaminda, explained:

> Many of us may be of the opinion that this communitarian aspect belongs to the past. The fact remains that this aspect is in force today. It does not constitute an obstacle to the development of a relationship of true love between husband and life. On the contrary, this communitarian dimension contributes positively to the development of marriage by preventing marriage from becoming individualistic, by protecting the stability of the couple, by bringing out the social values of marriage by helping the couple at the beginning of their marital life.[942]

Sarpons, from Ghana, explains that "in some places, the family of the bride is asked officially whether they would agree to give their daughter in marriage to this man and upon the answer, which normally would be yes, the marriage is performed."[943] In such cases, the question also had to be asked to the family of the groom. It is not only an agreement but also a commitment to support the marriage. According to Sarpong, "a marriage which is sanctioned in this way by two clans or lineages is ironically likely to be successful and lasting. The two parties have the backing of their people who are always there to give advice and encouragement."[944] Phiri states, "The new couple's success in marriage depends mostly on the constant help and guidance of their families and other trusted community

---

[942] Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 25-26.

[943] Peter Sarpong, "How Far is the Inculturation of the Sacrament of Marriage Possible?," in Centro de Formação de Nazaré, *O matrimónio*, 89. See also ibid., 41 on written consent.

[944] Sarpong, "Inculturation Sacrament Marriage Possible?," 90.

members."[945] *Lobolo* entails the approval of family members and community and their commitment to support the marriage.

In Mozambique, a pastor would be reluctant to bless a marriage without ensuring that the couple fulfilled the basic traditional requirements for marriage, such as *lobola*.[946] In countries such as Ghana, "the families of both the prospective groom and prospective bride agree to that marriage and express their consent in writing."[947] Phiri, speaking from a Malawian perspective, concurs with Mabuiangue from Mozambique and Sarpong from Ghana: "The involvement of the parents in the marriage preparation and their consent is very much oriented towards ensuring the success of the marriage. This success is no other than founding a family."[948]

5. Pastoral Support and Accompaniment after the Wedding

> We exhort all the Christian associations and pastoral organizations for the family to engage themselves more in accompanying couples before, during and after the celebration of the marriage.
> —SECAM, "Final Message of Plenary Session of June 2017"

a. <u>The Urgency of Ongoing Pastoral Support for Marriage and Family</u>

> After the preparation of engagement and the sacramental celebration of marriage, the couple begin their daily journey towards the progressive actuation of the values and duties of marriage itself… Therefore, it must be emphasized once more that the pastoral intervention of the Church in support of the family is a matter of urgency. Every effort should be made to strengthen and develop pastoral care for the family, which should be treated as a real matter of priority…
> —John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*

---

[945] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 43.

[946] Langa, "O lobolo," 131.

[947] Sarpong, "Inculturation Sacrament Marriage Possible?," 79. See also ibid., 41.

[948] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 36. See also Ibid., 39.

Phiri's insight concurs fully with the recommendation of *Familiaris Consortio* above, which is quoted fully in *Amoris Laetitia*.[949] In the section entitled "The Church Accompanies the Christian Family on Its Journey through Life," *Familiaris Consortio* underscores the urgent need for a pastoral intervention that accompanies and supports married couples and their respective families. Seven years after the publication of *Familiaris Consortio*, Kevin Gillespie, in his doctoral dissertation, deplored, "Marriage rituals and symbols are confined primarily to the wedding ceremony and speak very little to the marriage after the wedding."[950] For Gillespie, the opportunities available for supporting marriage and family were scarce. He stated, "Other than a wedding anniversary, the baptism of a couple's child may be the only other time when the Church offers a ritual to celebrate a couple's marriage."[951]

Familiaris Consortio advises that "the Church's pastoral action must be progressive, also in the sense that it must follow the family, accompanying it step by step in the different stages of its formation and development."[952] Concurring with and referring to *Familiaris Consortio*, the *Relatio Synodi* of 2014 noted that

> The initial years of marriage are a vital and sensitive period during which couples become more aware of the challenges and meaning of married life. Consequently, pastoral accompaniment needs to go beyond the actual celebration of the Sacrament (*Familiaris Consortio*, Part III). In this regard, experienced couples are of great importance in any pastoral activity.[953]

---

[949] See Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 43. Cf. FC 65. Such an insight also concurs with the epigraph from Mbilingi, "Final Message," 13.

[950] Kevin Gillespie, "The Sacrament of Marriage and the Experience of Indissolubility" (PhD Diss., Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, 1988), 107-108.

[951] Gillespie, "The Sacrament of Marriage," 107-108.

[952] FC 65.

[953] Synod of Bishops, *Relatio Synodi* of the III Extraordinary General Assembly on the Pastoral Challenges on the Family in the Context of Evangelization, October 2014, no. 40, accessed January 12, 2018,

Amoris Laetitia later takes this text to underscore the importance of accompaniment after the wedding ceremony and the inadequacy of existing structures for supporting marriage.[954] Whereas lack of support can contribute to the breakdown of marriage, lack of support in Mozambique leads to people not getting marriage altogether. They just opt for premarital cohabitation.

b.   An Inculturated Approach Takes Challenges as Occasions for Renewal

After the blessing of a marriage, communities in the rural areas of the Plateau of Angonia sing joyfully to the newlywed couple: *kapirire kumene wapitako… Kumeneko kuli ana, yeh... amamina... eh... kapirire.* It means, "Be patient and steadfast where you are going now…. There will be dirty and naughty children (meaning non-initiated family members), be patient." The music goes on to encourage endurance, resilience, and creativity in finding solutions to the problems that soon will appear. The music advises never to give up easily when facing difficulties. It is striking that during the joyful celebration of marriage, the community advises the couple to cultivate those attitudes that will help them to consolidate the joy they have just begun to cherish.

Endurance and patience are a result of a long process of preparation. Section Eight of Chapter Three pointed out that during the rites of initiation, teenagers undergo rough experiences designed to train them to face the hardships of adult life with courage, discipline, endurance, fortitude, and hard work.[955] The same chapter underscored how boys and girls are trained to celebrate life despite and amid hardships with fortitude, hope,

---

https://w2.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141018_relatio-synodi-familia_en.html#Accompanying_the_Married_Couple_in_the_Initial_Years_of_Marriage.

[954] Cf. AL 223.

[955] See also Chapter Three of this dissertation.

endurance, and resilience. Even though such training was sometimes too harsh, its transformative impact was noticeable in the young adults.[956]

Married people go to their new life fully aware of the challenges "without false expectations." The couples are willing to do what it takes so that their marriage succeeds. They go to marriage aware that they have the families of the husband and wife to support them. They also have the wide support of the community and God's blessings through the intercession of the ancestor.

Thomas David, with wide experience as a husband and lay theologian, concurs with the message of the song *kapirire kumene wapitako*.[957] He states, "Survival during good times and not so good makes a marriage. So one of the most important qualities in married life is that of resilience. This is the quality of life directly related to the ability to survive difficult challenges. By now, you might have noticed that I have adopted 'challenge' as a basic dimension of marriage in these times."[958]

Such a teaching cannot be underscored enough because, as Francis said, "Some crises are typical of almost every marriage."[959] It concurs with the advice Francis that "The life of every family is marked by all kinds of crises, yet these are also part of its *dramatic beauty*. Couples should be helped to realize that surmounting a crisis need not weaken their

---

[956] Cf. Gwembe, *Retiros de iniciação¸* 11.

[957] David Thomas is lay theologian and is married with seven children. He is the "codirector of The Bethany Family Institute. For over thirty years he was a Professor of Systematic Theology, Religion, and Family" in many Universities. For some time, he "served as a theological consultant to the United States Catholic Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family Life."

[958] David Thomas, *Christian Marriage: The New Challenge* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 48.

[959] AL 34.

relationship; instead, it can improve, settle and mature the wine of their union."[960] That is why, on a regular basis, a group of no more than ten couples should pray together, share their experiences of joys and challenges, and encourage each other. Such opportunities would benefit using texts about God's faithfulness to God's people and the reflection on the joy of marital love in the *Amoris Laetitia*.

c. <u>Prayerful Reflection and Sharing on Marital Love according to AL</u>

As part of an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family, I suggest that *Amoris Laetitia*'s well-articulated and pastorally crafted reflection on marital love based on the Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians be used as a resource for prayerful reflection and an ongoing criteria for evaluating how the couple is living their mutual love.[961] In regular meetings for married people, in the celebration of the anniversary of the wedding, and in retreats for married people, parts of *Amoris Laetitia* should be read and be a starting point for the couples to share their experiences in the light of the topic of discussion: endurance, faithfulness, and so on. Only an understanding of love as a commitment will equip couple faces their challenges. Francis says,

> Love bears every trial with a positive attitude. It stands firm in hostile surroundings. This "endurance" involves not only the ability to tolerate certain aggravations but something greater: a constant readiness to confront any challenge. It is a love that never gives up, even in the darkest hour. It shows certain dogged heroism, a power to resist every negative current, an irrepressible commitment to goodness.[962]

---

[960] AL 232. Emphasis added. See more on Pope Francis's reflection on crises in AL 232-239, a section entitled "Casting Light on Crises, Worries and Difficulties."

[961] See reflection on love in AL 38: it is not just "a purely emotional and romantic conception of love." Love is self-giving. AL 67, referring to GS 48-48. For more on marital love, see AL 70, 80, 89-119. Love is not static. A couple is called to grow in conjugal love each day. AL 120-164.

[962] AL 118.

It will be refreshing for the couple to keep listening on a regular basis that love is a decision and not just a feeling, which can pass with time; that love, which is strong, accepts that marriage is an ongoing challenge worth fighting for.[963] It will be encouraging for the couple to be reminded that "in marriage, the joy of love needs to be cultivated."[964] The couple needs a reminder that "marital joy can be experienced even amid sorrow" and how marital joy "involves accepting that marriage is an inevitable mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfaction and longings, annoyances and pleasures, but always on the path of friendship, which inspires married couples to care for one another…'"[965]

d. **Invocation of the Ancestors and Ongoing Prayers for Marriage and Family**

In a traditional setting, there are occasions for the invocation of the ancestors so that they will continue to intercede for the family and free it from anything that can prevent the transmission of life or disrupt the flow of life that the ancestors so earnestly promoted. As an ongoing expression of support and encouragement, the SCCs will make continuous prayers for marriage and family as integral to their celebrations and gatherings. Kenneth Stevenson recommends, "One of the ways is for couples who have been recently married to be prayed for in eucharistic bidding prayers. We pray for the hungry and the unemployed, the local bishop, and the civil authorities; *yet we seldom pray for marriage as an institution in the lives of millions of people today.*"[966]

---

[963] Cf. AL 124.

[964] AL 126.

[965] AL 126.

[966] Stevenson, *To Join Together*, 226. Emphasis Added.

An inculturated pastoral approach will make explicit that prayer is a part of a supportive structure. *Amoris Laetitia* says, "We pastors have to encourage families to grow in faith. This means encouraging frequent confession, spiritual direction and occasional retreats. It also means encouraging family prayer during the week, since 'the family that prays together stays together'"[967]

e. Formation of Marriage Group Support and Using Existing Movements

i. Forming a Commission of Marriage and Family

The inculturated pastoral approach will encourage the formation of a Commission of Marriage and Family in SCCs, parishes, and dioceses. According to the current provisions of the Archdioceses of Maputo, the Pastoral Directory rightly recommends that the team have at least four permanent members: a priest as a spiritual guide, a coordinator, a secretary, and a spokesperson.[968] I would suggest that depending on the circumstances, a deacon or a seminarian in theology can stand in for a priest. Apart from the consecrated person, a married couple would be preferable to just two laypersons. Notwithstanding the role of the priest, as Thomas put it, "The true experts in the spiritual and theological meaning of marriage are those who are married."[969] The more diversified the permanent members, the better for formation and accompaniment.

The parish leadership will organize the groups in line with what is known in the United States as "Marriage Encounter." Gillespie praises such initiatives. He states, "In

---

[967] AL 227.

[968] Cf. Chimoio, *Directório pastoral*, 102, no. 357. The Pastoral Directory of Maputo recommends that each commission be constituted by a priest, as a spiritual director, a consecrated woman, and ten lay persons, men and women.

[969] Thomas, *Christian Marriage: New Challenge*, vi.

fact, the Church offers very little ritual support for the celebration and the strengthening of a couple's marriage after their wedding. Certain movements, such as Marriage Encounter and the *Cursillo,* do provide evidence of how a faith community may support a couple's commitment to one another. Still, much more needs to be done"[970]

ii. Reaching Families through Existing Movements

> These might include: meetings of couples living in the same neighborhood, brief retreats for couples; talks by experts on concrete issues facing families, marriage counselling, home missionaries who help couples discuss their difficulties and desires, social services dealing with family problems like addiction, infidelity and domestic violence, programmes of spiritual growth, workshops for parents with troubled children and family meetings.

Amoris Laetitia states, "Parishes, movements, schools and other Church institutions can help in a variety of ways to support families and help them grow. These might include: meetings of couples living in the same neighborhood, brief retreats for couples; talks by experts on concrete issues facing families, marriage counselling, home missionaries who help couples discuss their difficulties and desires," and so forth.[971]

In most of the dioceses in Mozambique, there are movements such as Missionary Childhood, Apostleship of Prayer, Eucharistic Youth Movement, and Legion of Mary. Without precluding the possibility of creating a specific marriage and family-oriented group, the SCCs, parishes, and dioceses could make use of the existing groups and movements in a way that their formation and outreach encompasses an approach that is culturally friendly and family-life oriented.[972]

---

[970] Gillespie, "Sacrament Marriage Experience Indissolubility," 107-108.

[971] AL 229.

[972] Cf. EIA 93. The document encourages the promotion of lay movements among Christians.

More important is that these movements keep alive the faith of the children and help them to be open and sensitive to the suffering of others while being mindful of their limitations in life[973]. The various movements help children and teenagers to establish health relationships with others and not be imbued in "self-centered individualism."[974] Using another expression of Pope Francis, such experiences help them "to overcome a complacent individualism and to be constantly mindful of others."[975] For him, "An education that fails to encourage sensitivity to human illness makes the heart grow cold; it makes young people 'anesthetized' to the suffering of others, incapable of facing suffering and of living the experience of limitation."[976]

The movements corroborate in fostering a communitarian view of life so important in marriage and life. Even without apparent connection, such a religious education is a remote preparation for a life favorable to marriage and family. As Phiri put it, "Marriage and family life instructions last from childhood to the wedding day and beyond. The new couple's success in marriage depends mostly on the constant help and guidance of their families and other trusted community members."[977]

f. SCCs as Integral to an Inculturated Pastoral Approach to Marriage

An inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family will have, as one of its pillars, the SCCs. Chapter One presented how the SCCs after the first National Assembly in 1977 became a privileged locus for an experience of inculturation at the grassroots level.

---

[973] Cf. EIA 93.

[974] Cf. AL 174.

[975] AL 157

[976] AL 295. See also AL 187.

[977] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 43.

In fact, according to Lwaminda, a SCC is "a most appropriate locus for the Christian Family and Marriage Pastoral Ministry."[978] Concurring with the same insight, Kalilombe, as a pastor and professor, rightly argued, "Within these communities, the marriage partners could find guidance, support, and purpose."[979]

Pope Francis commends the work of Christian communities when he said: "I encourage Christian communities to recognize the great benefit that they themselves receive from supporting engaged couples as they grow in love."[980] An inculturated pastoral approach will invest in strengthening the the SCCs.

g. **Family Celebrations as Forum for Ongoing Formation and Renewal**

An inculturated approach will make sure that all available celebrations of the couple in the Christian community will be used as a forum for ongoing formation, renewal, and support for the life of marriage and family. For example, the SCCs will keep encouraging parents to baptize their children at an early age. The occasion of the baptism will highlight not only the importance of childbearing, nurturing, and educating a child in the Christian faith and the sound traditions of the ancestors but also to reiterate the value of marriage and family. When a couple comes to baptize an adopted child, the occasion will serve as springboard to underscore the importance of "spiritual fecundity" and the "fruitfulness of charity," as explained above.

---

[978] Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 22-23.

[979] Kalilombe, "Inculturated Christian Marriage Pastoral," 41.

[980] AL 207.

iii. Birth and Baptism of a Child

Phiri's description of an ethnic group called Kakokota, "among the Bemba tribe of the Northern Province of Zambia," resembles what happens in most Mozambican ethnic groups and "represents a constant commonality with other sub-Saharan Bantu tribes." [981] According to Phiri, "The birth of a child solidifies the marriage union and opens up deep relations between the families concerned. To this effect, there is a particular ceremony to incorporate the young couple in the homes of their in-laws."[982] To underscore the importance of the birth of a child, he argues that "irrespective of the number of years that a married couple stays together, it is never integrated into the family of their parents in the same way that a couple was born a child is."[983] Magesa makes the same point. "At the conclusion of the marriage through the birth of a child, husband and wife belong completely to one another, and the bond between the two families and communities is sealed."[984]

In Mozambique, as in most African societies, the birth of a child solidifies marriage in the sense that makes the integration of the two families stronger.[985] Besides, there is a ceremony of the presentation of the child to the community. During this occasion, there is a naming of the child after an elder of the family or an ancestor.[986] The ceremony shows

---

[981] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 41.

[982] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 41, 43.

[983] Ibid., 43.

[984] Magesa, *African Religion*, 127.

[985] Cf. Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 41, 43.

[986] Cf. Bujo, *African Theology Social Context*, 77-79, especially the section entitled, "Jesus Christ as Proto-Ancestor." It is worthwhile to read the Part Two entirely in ibid., 75-130, where Bujo outlines African theology based on "The Theology of Ancestors as the Starting Point for a New Christology" and a "New Ecclesiology" and the way such a Christology and ecclesiology can impact the process of the inculturation of marriage.

the connection between the living, the living dead, and the yet-to-born. It underscores the intergenerational character of marriage and family, which is an aspect of a covenant as explained in Chapters Two and Four.

The presider should explicitly reiterate the importance of the SCCs in supporting the couple in the education of the child. At the same time, the couple will take this occasion to renew their marital commitment, following the guidelines in the Order in Celebrating Matrimony and the fifth and last part of this chapter.[987] Therefore, the more a parish strengthens the SCCs, the more they will engage marriages and families and support their journey. Francis endorses such an approach when he stated,

> Often, however, we ourselves do not take advantage of those occasions when they [couples] do return, to remind them of the beautiful ideal of Christian marriage and the support that our parishes can offer them. I think, for example, of the Baptism and First Holy Communion of their children, or the funerals or weddings of their relatives or friends. Almost all married couples reappear on these occasions, and we should take greater advantage of this.[988]

A parish can take the baptism, a first communion of confirmation or a child, or anniversaries as opportunities to speak of the joys and challenges of marital life and growth in faith, hope and charity (love). Stevenson recommends "couples to come to mass at anniversaries. The 1970 Missal contains prayers for these occasions. No special ceremonies are needed on these occasions.[989]

---

[987] USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 167-77.

[988] AL 230.

[989] Stevenson, *To Join Together*, 228.

h. Dealing with Appreciation for Children and the Problem of Infertility

i. Always Underscoring the Value of Children and Motherhood

An inculturation approach to marriage and family will uncompromisingly estimate the high regard Mozambicans have for children and at the same time help couples facing infertility to find their call for fruitfulness in other ways than the biological mothering or fathering a child. Chapter Three underscored that Mozambicans (and Africans in general) have a high regard for children. As *Ecclesia in Africa* stated, "The African loves children, who are joyfully welcomed as gifts of God. *The sons and daughters of Africa love life.*[990]"

Bujo rightly argues that "*the positive attitude of African families towards children is to be considered a blessing and should be promoted.*"[991] Thus, the Mozambican church, in her role as "mother and teacher," should keep commending motherhood and fatherhood and the raising, nurturing, and education of children to adulthood as a joyful, yet challenging, and mysterious way of participating in God's creative design.[992]

ii. Educating against Undue Pressure on Couples Facing Infertility

An inculturated pastoral approach will first underscore the appreciation for children in the context of marriage and family. Then, it will caution against any possible collateral damage for overstressing the importance of children. Bujo, speaking about Africa from his Congolese context, captured accurately the drama of couples who are facing sterility in Mozambican families. He argues that the high regard for children leads family members to not "endure the infertile marriage, and who through their unceasing criticism and disrespect

---

[990] EIA 43.

[991] Bujo, *Plea for Change,* 120. Emphasis added. See also GS 50.

[992] Cf. FC 33. The section is entitled, "The Church as Teacher and Mother for Couples in Difficulty." FC 28 speaks of parents as "Cooperators in the Love of God the Creator."

of the partners force them to separate. Again, this relates to the idea that each marriage should contribute to the biological growth of the whole community."[993] After three years of marriage without a sign that a child is coming, family members, friends, and neighbors begin to remind the couple that children are important for the community, and they should do their part to make that possible. As the time goes on, the reminder becomes a pressure that may lead the couple to separate because of infertility.

However, the ceremony of naming indicates the belief that God is the giver of life, and that children are a gift from God and that only God, through the mediation of the ancestors and the collaboration a man and a woman, can give children for the perpetuation of the community.[994] After giving examples of naming, Bujo concludes, "An African person is well aware that the child is there only by God's power, and that no human being may say that by his power/her power he has fathered or she has born the child. In the same way, the African knows that biological posterity is not the only way to be a father and a mother."[995] The inculturated approach will highlight such an awareness to prepare the couple to accept the reality of infertility and not resort to situations that threaten marital unity and stability. Below I will present such situations because very rarely they are spoken of and yet have a disrupting effect on marriage.

iii. Difficulties with Infertility Threatening Marital Unity and Stability

Phiri rightly observes that "to most African couples' failure to become parents has been the cause of the breakdown, not only of married life but also of Christian lives of the

---

[993] Bujo, *Plea for Change,* 121.

[994] Cf. Bujo, *Plea for Change,* 122.

[995] Ibid.,

married partners concerned. To the same difficult, the Christian concept of children as God's gift has hardly provided a lasting solution."[996] Educating young adults, married couples, and the community on the value of spiritual fecundity will prevent undue pressure on couples facing infertility. For Phiri, "The recent growing emphasis on the fecundity of marriage beyond procreation is slowly, but considerably, contributing to the beauty and holiness of marriage, just in itself."[997]

Couples facing infertility resort to at least four situations that threaten the stability, faithfulness, and unicity of Christian marriage. The first situation is the use of *questionable* methods of artificial insemination.[998] It suffices here to reiterate what *Evangelium Vitae* stated,

> "The various techniques of artificial reproduction, which would seem to be at the service of life and which are frequently used with this intention, actually open the door to new threats against life. Apart from the fact that they are morally unacceptable, since they separate procreation from the fully human context of the conjugal act, these techniques have a high rate of failure" [999]

The second situation is the highly secretive practice of allowing a wife to have sexual relations with a friend or a family member and bear a child for the man who biologically cannot have a child. I was confronted with a similar case in my first years of priesthood as a pastor in a remote rural area. For now, it suffices to say that these cases are rarely shared in the community, and yet they disturb the unicity of marriage.

The third situation is when a woman, by her initiative, has extramarital relations

---

[996] Phiri, *African Traditional Marriage*, 78.

[997] Ibid.

[998] Cf. Bujo, *Plea for Change*, 123.

[999] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, Encyclical Letter on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life, March 25, 1995, no. 14, accessed April 2, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html.

without the consent of the husband, and gets pregnant. A man may not know that the child is not biologically his. Even if he suspects that the child is not his, he may just accept the child and keep quiet. According to the tradition and the law of the land, a child "belongs" to the husband. If he does not agree with his wife going out without consulting him, he can ask for separation, accusing her of adultery. In such cases, the biological father will be made accountable, pay back part or the total token of appreciation, and receive a strong rebuke.

The fourth problematic situation is to stay with a childless wife while having, according to Mabuiangue, an "unofficial," non-institutional, and clandestine polygamy, which is difficult to spot and fight.[1000] The General Introduction showed that Mozambican artists satirized such practice as a "second house."

Arguably, all these options threaten the stability, faithfulness, and unicity of Christian marriage. The general introduction explained how Mozambican societies increasingly rebuke polygamy. Consequently, the percentage of polygamous marriages in Mozambique keeps decreasing. Consistent with Bujo's argument, there are ways African societies can continue to have high regard for children while at the same time be understanding to couples who, for reasons beyond their control, cannot have biological children. An inculturated approach will continue to encourage alternative ways of exercising marital fruitfulness without resorting to those four situations.

[1000] Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 123. He says, "'Poligamia instituicional' e a 'clandestina' que são uma realidade e que merecem da parte da Igreja um estudo sério e mais profundo mesmo em muitos lares cristãos."

iv. Educating on the "Fruitfulness of Charity" in Couples with Infertility

An inculturated pastoral approach will encompass an education on the meaning of spiritual fecundity to help couples facing infertility. In Mozambicans societies, there were no street or abandoned children for the simple reason that the extended family took care of the orphans. Orphans did not suffer as much from the loss of their biological parents because their aunts, uncles, and older siblings took care of them. The Mozambican Church, as part of her pastoral approach, should emulate such sound traditional practice and present it as one expression of marital fruitfulness. Caring for an orphan will benefit the community, the lineage, and the society by contributing to the raising and education of good and responsible citizens.

If for any reason such a possibility of caring for a child in the extended family is not available, then the couple can consider the possibility of adopting a child from the wider society. Such a practice is consistent with the last two apostolic exhortations on the family: *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia*.[1001] Taking care of extended family members who are orphans and offering them a balanced nutrition, basic healthcare, good education, and parental affection is one way of being fruitful.[1002]

Familiaris Consortio gives a relevant pastoral orientation for couples facing infertility by encouraging them to consider not just biological fecundity but also "spiritual fecundity." According to *Familiaris Consortio*, "Physical sterility, in fact, can be for spouses the occasion for other important services to the life of the human person, for example, adoption, various forms of educational work, and assistance to other families and

---

[1001] Cf. FC 10, 41, and AL 179. See the entire section on adoption in AL 176-184.

[1002] Cf. FC 41: "Fruitful married love expresses itself in serving life in many ways. Of these ways, begetting and educating children are the most immediate, specific and irreplaceable."

to poor or handicapped children."[1003] Because such fruitfulness encompasses works of charity, solidarity, and mercy, the CCC uses the expression "fruitfulness of charity."[1004] *Amoris Laetitia* dedicates a long section on adoption as "a very generous way to become parents." Pope Francis encourages couples "who cannot have children to expand their marital love to embrace those who lack a proper family."[1005]

CONCLUSION

> An initiation process is needed, not only because the relationship cycle of engagement towards marriage is a significant transitional stage of life, but mainly the old cultural supports and social customs of the past generation (the art of courtship, traditional value-complexes, and family involvement) to a great extent have been lost. This is an opportunity for the church to create an effective process of marriage preparation which should provide for a true conjugal community of life and faith.
>
> —German Martinez, *Worship: Wedding to Marriage*

In 1994, Martinez captured in a satisfactory way the insight underlying Chapter Five: a pastoral approach which prepares young people for marriage and accompanies their marital journey with the same or stronger effectiveness as that of traditional societies.[1006] In 2001, Kalilombe rightly made the same argument in Mozambique. He argued, "Most problems affecting marriage and family life are due to the disintegration of traditional community life…. Now that these natural communities are losing their cohesion, it is in the church community that the marriage institution will be able to find that kind of support."[1007] In 2016, in its final message, SECAM reiterated that lack or inadequate

---

[1003] FC 10.

[1004] CCC1654. See also Mt 25:10-41, the discussion of Jesus about the final judgment.

[1005] AL 179. See the entire section on adoption in AL 176-184.

[1006] See epigraph in Martinez, *Worship: Wedding to Marriage*, 103.

[1007] Kalilombe, "Inculturated Christian Marriage Pastoral," 41.

pastoral approaches allow the multilayered challenges present in African societies to destabilize the family.[1008]

Ecclesia in Africa's guidance is appropriate in this chapter because with the disintegration of traditional structures comes other changes in society that affect marriage and family. *Ecclesia in Africa* states, "From the pastoral point of view, this is a real challenge, given the political, economic, social and cultural difficulties which African families must face as a result of the great changes which characterize contemporary society. *While adopting the positive values of modernity, the African family must preserve its own essential values.*"[1009]

Chapter One presented the way in which such a socio-cultural-political background affected traditional structures and, in general, disrupted marriage and family. Conversely, it also created opportunities that help to view and live marriage as a covenant. Chapter Five underscored elements that can motivate and prepare young people for marriage (parts one and two). Such elements can encourage the Mozambican Church to fully participate in the key moments of the marriage celebration (Parts Three and Four): courtship-officialization and engagement-celebration. Part Five indicates pastoral guidelines to support and accompany the marital journey. The chapter showed how to motivate, prepare, celebrate, and accompany marriage!

Parts One, Two, and Five of Chapter Five provide guiding principles and prerequisites for an inculturated approach while encouraging all sectors of the Mozambican Church to get involved, in one way or another, in supporting marriage and family. As SCCs

---

[1008] Cf. Mbilingi, "Final Message," nos. 1 ad 8.

[1009] EIA 80. Emphasis added.

and all the sectors of the Church support marriage and family, young adults will cope with whatever pressures them to "not to start a family," postpone marriage, cohabitate, or just give up altogether because they consider marriage and family "a lifelong burden" that they are not prepared to face.[1010]

Thus, for an effective preparation for adulthood, an inculturated approach proposes a formation modeled on the retreats of initiation, an successful attempt at inculturation that yields positive results and musters approbation in the communities.

This chapter underscored that one key aspect of an inculturated approach is to have an integrated celebration of marriage where both Mozambican and Christian elements blend in the same ritual. An inculturated celebration of marriage as presented in Part Four of this chapter has three advantages. First, it incorporates authentic traditional values and rituals that support marriage, with covenantal elements of the Christian faith as discussed Chapter Two. The proposed approach prevents an unnecessary dichotomy that leads people to view traditional sound practices of their Mozambican identity as conflicting with their Christian faith. Second, it underscores the covenantal dimensions of an inculturated Christian marriage, while correcting and avoiding the misconception that a church wedding is just a formalization of a marriage that already occurred in the tradition. Third, an inculturated approach lessens the financial burden by curtailing redundant feasts, traveling, and accommodations common in celebrations in three events: traditional, civil, and religious.

Overall, in the inculturated approach, marriage preparation will not be restricted to a few months before the celebration. As *Familiaris Consortio* puts it, "Marriage

---

[1010] AL 32, 37, 40.

preparation has to be seen and put into practice as a gradual and continuous process. It includes three main stages: remote, proximate and immediate preparation."[1011] Furthermore, an inculturated celebration is not just a single event of a few minutes in a church building. It goes from one to "even over a period of several days."[1012] It takes place both at homes and in the church, sometimes, only at home.[1013] All these aspects help the couple to have a satisfying marriage and equipped to face the challenges.[1014]

[1011] FC 66

[1012] Cf. USCCB, *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 17, no.44.

[1013] Ibid.

[1014] Cf. Bujo, *African Theology Social Context*, 116.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This dissertation attempted to answer one fundamental and relevant question: How can we reappraise the covenantal elements present in the authentic traditional values of Mozambique and in current Mozambican societies in a way that helps young people face the challenges they encounter in preparing, celebrating, and strengthening their marriages and families as Christians? In other words, as put in the general introduction, the five chapters responded to the question: How can the covenantal elements in the Mozambican conception of marriage ground a pastoral approach consistent to the Catholic and the Mozambican traditions in a way that responds to the current challenges marriage and family face? This dissertation argued that only an inculturated pastoral approach can address the decline in marital commitments, foster a fulfilling marital life, and empower couples to face the challenges they encounter in their marital life today.[1015]

The general introduction explained why such a question is important today. First, Mozambican societies, as most African ethnic groups, have a high regard for marriage and family. For them, "the desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people," and as *Amoris Laetitia* recommends, "this is an inspiration to the Church."[1016] Ndege rightly pointed out, "Mozambican societies considered marriage to be one of the most important stages in an individual's life."[1017] If that is the case, why are there more people who cohabit than those who are married? The Bishops of Africa and

---

[1015] Ref. to Thesis Statement in the General Introduction, 6.

[1016] AL 1.

[1017] Ndege, *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*, 77.

Madagascar admitted that the multilayered challenges of marriage and family "destabilize the life of couples and families" because of inadequate pastoral approaches.[1018]

Second, cohabitation is increasing. Nearly half of the Mozambican population is of marriageable age: those from 18 to 49 years old account for almost forty-nine percent of the population. Thirty percent of the population ranges from 18 to 35 years old, the age for one's first marriage. However, the percentage of premarital cohabitation ranges from forty-three to fifty-four percent, depending on the province.[1019] At the same time, Church marriages slightly decreased in the last 15 years, according to table 2.[1020]

Third, young people say that they want to marry but do not feel prepared neither for a church marriage nor even for a traditional marriage.[1021] As Mabuiange indicated, preparation means not only financial readiness but also having enough maturity to face marital life, particularly without sufficient support from the society and the Church after getting married. As a result, young adults opt to cohabit, to "not to start a family," to postpone marriage, or to just give up altogether because they consider marriage and family "a lifelong burden" that they are not prepared to face.[1022] When they opt for marriage, they hardly find support similar to one found in a traditional setting.

The general introduction also clarified how Mozambican societies understand marriage and family. Marriage is between one man and one woman, or one man and many women at the same time (polygyny), and a bond with the two families. It also clarified that

---

[1018] Mbilingi, "Final Message," no. 8.

[1019] Cf. Chapter One, the section entitled "Profile of the Mozambican Population."

[1020] Cf. INE, "Apresentação Dos Resultados Definitivos Do Censo 2007," 2009, accessed August 4, 2017, http://italcoop.org.mz/Allegati/Censo%202007%20NACIONAL.pdf.

[1021] Cf. Mabuiangue, "O casamento em Moçambique," 120-21.

[1022] AL 32, 37, 40. Cf. General Introduction.

marriage, family, children, and community are interconnected. The family is an extended family of the living as well as of the living-death (ancestors) and those yet-to-be-born, as table 3 has shown.[1023] This dissertation argued that such a view of marriage should be integrated in an inculturated approach.

Whereas part of the general introduction presented the situation of marriage and family in Mozambique in terms of statistics, Chapter One explained what the challenges of marriage and family are, their origins, and why they are difficult to overcome. Chapter One showed that the Mozambican socio-political-economic-ecclesial context does not only create challenges but also opportunities for marriage and family. Both challenges and opportunities invite the Church to think anew in the direction of an inculturated pastoral approach. Only such an approach, as presented in the final chapter of the dissertation, will be able to adequately respond to the challenges young people face by preparing them, celebrating with them, and accompanying them in their marital journey.

Chapter One also extensively described how the colonial mentality disrupted marriage and family and how it still affects marriage and family to this day, given that the national independence occurred in 1975, only forty-three years ago. Mabuiangue argued vehemently that one cannot understand the situation of marriage and family in Mozambique today unless one understands the impact colonization had on people's lives then and today.[1024] As Junod put it, the negative aspects of colonization outnumber the

---

[1023] Bujo, *Plea for Change*. See Bujo's assessment of Mercy Amba Oduyoye's critique of Mbiti's notion of "not-yet-born" in *Plea for Change*, 28-29.

[1024] Cf. Mabuiangue, "Pastoral das situações matrimoniais," 139.

positive ones. He deplored, "It is painful to notice with which regrettable facility these primitives embraced the vices of civilization."[1025]

Having noted that, it is worthwhile to mention three positive aspects: First, the colonization-missionary enterprise encouraged monogamy and fought against polygyny, which, in some respects, demeaned women. However, colonization-missionary practices used questionable methods and failed to recognize the values that polygyny attempted to preserve.[1026] Second, missionary activity underscored the equal dignity between man and woman and the sound complementarity of man and woman, wife and husband. It prepared young adults against forced marriages and sheltered those in such a situation. Third, missionary activity gave young adults additional skills needed for marriage and family. Women received instruction on balanced nutrition, hygiene, and first aid.

Chapter Two showed the sense in which marriage is a covenant, how the Judeo-Christian views on marriage as a covenant evolved, and how "the covenant metaphor is a better conceptual bridge builder in discussing marriage historically and today."[1027] The chapter argued that covenant is interdisciplinary, interreligious, ecumenical, and most importantly, sensitive to the way Mozambican (African) societies convey their messages efficiently. Additionally, as Du Pleiss and Amanda rightly explained, "A paradigmatic choice for the covenant avoids the necessity to choose one biblical principle at the expense of the others…. From this point of view, the covenant has a more extensive impact on

---

[1025] Cf. Junod, *Usos costumes Bantu*, vol. 2, 550-51.

[1026] Cf. Bujo, *Ethical Dimension of Community*, 112-14.

[1027] Witte, "Covenant of Marriage," 163.

pastoral care than any other paradigm."[1028]

Strikingly, the biblical "metaphor of covenant" expresses one of the best and most comprehensive analogies for conveying the Christian understanding of marriage as mutual agreement, trust, togetherness, and loyalty; faithfulness and exclusivity; "interdependence and stability."[1029] It "involves several generations."[1030] Furthermore, Chapter Two underscored that understanding marriage as covenant has implications. These directed the discussion in Chapter Five and were taken as integral to an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family.

Chapter Three, "Mozambican Values Enhancing Marriage and Family," presented ten elements in traditional practices and in current Mozambican societies that help marriage and family.[1031] As Paul VI stated, "The Church views with great respect the moral and religious values of the African tradition, not only because of their meaning, but also because she sees them as providential, as the basis for spreading the gospel message and begging the establishment of the new society in Christ."[1032] Borrowing from the expression of *Amoris Laetitia*, Chapter Three highlighted traditional values and elements in current Mozambican societies that help "marriages forge a strong bond between two wider families" and underscored those "clearly defined structures for dealing with problems and

---

[1028] Amanda Du Plessis, "The Covenant as Fundamental Building Block of Marriage," *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal= Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* 53, no. 1-2 (2012): 40.

[1029] Nock and Brinig, "Covenant and Contract," 14.

[1030] Ibid. 14.

[1031] Selvan speaks of "Honorable Aspects of African Marriage." See Sahaya Selvan, "Preparing Young People for Marriage in Africa," in *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, ed. Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 221. .

[1032] Paul VI, *Africae Terrarum*, 14.

conflicts."[1033]

Those values and structures, such as the interdependence between community, marriage, family, and life; the keen sense of belonging; respect for elders and veneration of ancestors; and a formation to adulthood with effective preparation for marriage and family, are covenantal. They support marriage and family as an alliance, a covenant, that binds together not only the two individuals but also their respective families and communities, as the Church Research on Marriage in Africa (CROMIA) indicated.[1034] Mozambican societies understand marriage as a covenant. In the 2000 Theological Week in Mozambique, Lwaminda explained,

> In Africa, marriage is not merely an affair between two individuals who have fallen in love and planned to spend the rest of their lives together. It is a matter in which the lineage groups of both man and woman are deeply involved. Marriage is a community affair. It is an alliance between two families/communities, or descent groups.[1035]

Chapter Four underscored that Mozambican values bear similarities with the Hebrew traditions which viewed marriage as a covenant.[1036] Chapter Four also showed that sound Mozambican values presented in Chapter Three are compatible with the Christian message, which evolved to understand the metaphor of covenant as expressing the meaning and relevance of Christian marriage adequately. For example, *Gaudium et Spes* speaks of "conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent," "a covenant of love and fidelity."[1037] By underscoring their similarities and compatibility, Chapter Four suggests that the

---

[1033] AL 38.

[1034] Cf. Kisembo, et al., *African Christian Marriage*, 202. See also 202-208, the section entitled, "The Communitarian Character of African Customary Marriage."

[1035] Lwaminda, "African Traditional Marriage Today," 24.

[1036] Cf. Mugambi, "Africa and Old Testament," 7.

[1037] GS 48. See Chapter Two, the section entitled, "Second Vatican Council: Marriage as Covenant."

Mozambican Church can integrate those traditional values into the Christian life without fear of syncretism, superstition, or unorthodoxy.[1038]

Chapter Five presented a pastoral approach which integrates covenantal and Mozambican values in the preparation, celebration, and ongoing support of marriage. Such an approach encompasses a formation of young adults modeled on the retreats of initiation. It recognizes Small Christian Communities and marriage groups as supportive structures for marital life. It permeates the covenantal values in every aspect of the life of the community.

Chapter Five also showed that an inculturated pastoral approach requires that the Mozambican Church officially recognize authentic traditional values that support marriage, declare them compatible with the Christian faith, and acknowledge modest initiatives of inculturation already taking place at the grassroots level. The CEM has yet to make such a statement. This research is one more contribution towards that goal. The chapter also underscored that incorporating traditional values compatible with the gospel is one of the guiding presuppositions in an inculturated pastoral approach.

Furthermore, drawing from the experience of an inculturated celebration, the chapter presented elements for an inculturated celebration of marriage. Such a unified ritual integrates traditional practices in the current ritual of celebrating matrimony. The last section of Chapter Five presented pastoral guidelines for accompanying young couples in their marital journey. The conclusion of Chapter Five gives an overview of the main aspects

---

[1038] Elochukwu Uzukwu, "Inculturation and the Liturgy (Eucharist)," in *Paths of African Theology*, ed. Rosino Gibellini (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 97. Unlike the openness of the Congolese Church, Ezukwu says, "The Nigerian local Church viewed it with apprehension as either a return to 'paganism' or infidelity to Rome." The case of Mozambique was first because of prudence, then, insufficient "resources" for the venture.

of an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage and family and the way such an approach integrates the existing structures of SCCs, parishes, and dioceses in a formation modeled on the rites of initiation as part of the preparation for marriage and family life. It is an approach which the Church participates actively in the key events of a marriage celebration, uses the existing structures of the SCCs, and calls others, if necessary, to accompany the couples. Thus, the couples are better equipped to face the challenges they encounter in their marital journey.

There are four situations regarding marriage and family in Mozambique that can be explored further but are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Three of those situations undergird the difficulty of dealing with a high appreciation for children in situations when a couple cannot have biological children. The first situation is the "unofficial," "non-institutional," and "clandestine" polygamy. The second aspect, which is related to the first, is a woman who resorts to "surrogate biological fatherhood" to bear a child for her husband. Sometimes that occurs without the knowledge of the husband. Other times, they occur with the permission or under the recommendation of her husband or family members. Little is known, spoken, or written about these situations and yet they disrupt marriages and families. The third aspect which deserves further research is how the notion of "yet-to-be-born" and the communitarian aspect of Mozambican societies, which ensure that there is no unwanted or abandoned child, can serve as a springboard to respond to the campaign of contraception-abortion-sterilization, which disrupts marriage and family. The fourth situation is the inclusion of the threefold consent as integral to an inculturated pastoral approach to marriage. However, this dissertation argues for a clear approval of the parents and the community before a church celebration, as it is already happening by recognizing

the importance of *lobola* for the stability of marriage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrahamsson, Hans, and Anders Nilsson. *Mozambique: The Troubled Transition; From Socialist Construction to Free Market Capitalism*. Translated by Mary Dally. London: Zed Books, 1995.

Agirembabazi, Nestorio. "Liturgical Inculturation: Towards Integral and Radical Conversion in an African Context with Particular Reference to Uganda." STD diss., Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, 2000.

Mozambique News Agency. "Corruption a Threat to Needed Reform - PM." *AIM Reports*, December 14, 2016. Accessed February 24, 2017. http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/newsletter/aim538.html#story7.

Alberigo, Giuseppe. "From the Council of Trent to 'Tridentinism.'" In *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, edited by Jill Raitt, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick Parrella, 19-37. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Alberigo, Giuseppe and Komonchak Joseph. *History of Vatican Ii. Vol. 5: The Council and the Transition, the Fourth Period and the End of the Council : September 1965–December 1965*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis/Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

Andrade, Ximena, Conceição Osório, Lúcia Maximiano, Levi Benvinda, and Maria José Arthur. "Porque é que a poligamia é inaceitável na lei de família, à luz dos direitos humanos [Why polygamy is unacceptable in family law in light of human rights]." *Outras Vozes*, no. 4 (2013). Accessed August 4, 2017. http://www.wlsa.org.mz/artigo/por-que-e-que-a-poligamia-e-inaceitavel-na-lei-de-familia-a-luz-dos-direitos-humanos.

Aringo, Margaret. "Work in the Old Testament and in African Tradition: Implications for Today." In *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*, edited by Mary Getui, Knut Holter, and Victor Zinkuratire, 171-174. New York: Acton Publishers, 2001.

Arnaldo, Carlos. "Ethnicity and Marriage Patterns in Mozambique." *African Population Studies* 19, no. 1 (2004): 153-57. Accessed September 21, 2016. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/3518/1/ep04008.pdf.

Arriaga, Kaúlza de. *The Portuguese Answer*. London: Tom Stacey, 1973.

Arthur, Maria José, Teresa Cruz, Yolanda Sitoe Silva, and Edson Mussa. "Lei da Família: Antecedentes e contextos da sua aprovação." [Law of the Family: Background and Context of its Approval] *Outras Vozes, nº 35-36*, no. 35-36 (Agosto-Novembro 2011). Accessed December 10, 2016. http://www.wlsa.org.mz/artigo/lei-da-familia-1-antecedentes-e-contextos/.

Barrick, William. "The Mosaic Covenant." *Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 213-32.

Bautch, Richard J., and Gary N. Knoppers, eds. *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015.

Beacham, Roy. "The New Covenant of Scripture in ANE Covenant Context: A Preliminary Paper." Paper presented at the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics, Clarks Summit, PA. September 23, 2009. Accessed October 6, 2017. http://64.106.241.238/council/documents/Roy_Beacham_ANE-Covenants-and-NC.pdf.

Beaty, Katelyn. "Toward a New Understanding of Modesty." *The Atlantic*, August 20, 2013. Accessed January 24, 2018. https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/08/toward-a-new-understanding-of-modesty/278652.

Belz, Emily. "Oversexed Ed." *World Magazine*, September 16, 2017. Accessed January 24, 2018. https://world.wng.org/2017/08/oversexed_ed.

Benedict XVI. *Africae Munus*. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace. November 19 2011. Accessed February 21, 2017. https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html.

———. *Deus Caritas Est*. Encyclical Letter on Christian Love, December 25, 2005. Accessed January 31, 2018. https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.

Berne, Linda, and Barbara Huberman. "European Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Behavior & Responsibility: Executive Summary and Call to Action." Edited by Sue Alford. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth, 1999.

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.

Boquet, Shenan. "The Maputo Protocol: An Anniversary to Be Remembered but Not Celebrated." Human Life International. July 6, 2012. Accessed February 24, 2015. https://www.hli.org/2012/07/the-maputo-protocol-an-anniversary-to-be-remembered-but-not-celebrated.

Bono, Ezio Lorenzo. "*L'idea di Persona nella Filosofia Africana Contemporanea*." PhD diss., Università Degli Studi di Bergamo, 2011. Accessed December 10, 2016. https://tinyurl.com/Bono-persona-africana

Bosio, John. *Why Get Married in the Church? The Life Long Blessings of a Catholic Wedding*. New London, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 2013.

Bouscaren, T. Lincoln and Adam Ellis, *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*. Milwaukee, WI.: Bruce, 1957, 447. Quoted in Jill Raitt, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick

Parrella, *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 211.

Bramwell, Bevil. *The World of the Sacraments: The Catholic Theology of the Sacraments*. Fairfield, OH: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

Brinig, Margaret, and Steven Nock. "Covenant and Contract." *Regent University Law Review* 12, no. 9 (1999): 9-26.

Brockhaus, Hannah. "Pope Francis is Praying for Grandparents This December." Catholic News Agency, December 4, 2017. Accessed December 7, 2017. https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-is-praying-for-grandparents-this-december-73826.

Brown, William P. "The character of covenant in the Old Testament: a theocentric probe." *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 16 (1996): 283-293.

Brummer, Chauncey. "The Shackles of Covenant Marriage: Who Holds the Keys to Wedlock." *University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law Review* 25, no. 2 (2003): 261-300. Accessed June 21, 2017. http://lawrepository.ualr.edu/lawreview/vol25/iss2/9.

Bujo, Bénézet, and Michael Czerny. *AIDS in Africa: Theological Reflections*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007.

Bujo, Bénézet. *African Theology in Its Social Context*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.

Bujo, Bénézet. "Distinctives of African Ethics." In *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*, edited by Stinton Diane, 79-90. London: SPCK Publishing, 2010.

———. *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998.

———. *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009.

———. "Vatican II and the Challenge of Marriage and Family in Africa." 2012. Accessed January 20, 2018. http://www.duq.edu/Documents/theology/_pdf/Vatican%20II%20Conference/Benezet%20Bujo_Vatican%20II%20and%20African%20Marriage.pdf.

Bulman, Raymond. "Introduction: The Historical Context." In *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, edited by Jill Raitt, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick Parrella, 3-17. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Busenitz, Irvin A. "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: the Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant." *TMTJ* 10, no. 2 (1999): 173-89.

Caetano, Marcelo. *Portugal's Reasons for Remaining in the Overseas Provinces: Excerpts from the Speeches Made by the Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano*. Queluz de Baixo, PT: Imprimarte, 1970.

Cancelas, Alexandre. *Contributo para uma política social moçambicana*. Braga, PT: Editora Pax, 1972.

Caniço, Hernâni Pombas. "Os novos tipos de família e novo método de avaliação em saúde da pessoa - apgar saudável." 2015. https://estudogeral.sib.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/25995/2/VOL%20I.pdf.

CARE. "Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights Knowledge Center." Accessed February 4, 2018. http://familyplanning.care2share.wikispaces.net.

Caridi, Cathy. "Why Doesn't the Church Publish Banns Any More?" Canon Law Made Easy. October 15, 2015. Accessed January 20, 2018. http://canonlawmadeeasy.com/2015/10/15/why-doesnt-the-church-publish-marriage-banns-any-more.

CEM. *Carta dos bispos de Moçambique aos seus presbíteros* [A letter to the bishops of Mozambique to their presbyters]. Lourenço Marques, MZ: Secretariado Episcopal de Coordenação Pastoral, 1971.

———. *A família cristã na igreja de Moçambique* [A Christian family in the Church of Mozambique]. Porto, PT: Tipografia do Carvalhido, 1981.

Centro de Formação de Nazaré, ed. *O matrimónio: Actas da 5a semana teológica, Arquidiocese Da Beira, 26-30 Junho 2000*. Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2000.

———, ed. *O Matrimónio em África: Aspectos pastorais - Actas da 6a semana teológica, Arquidiocese da Beira, 18-22 Junho 2001*. Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2001.

Champlin, Joseph. *Special Signs of Grace: The Sacraments and Sacramentals*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986.

Cheney, David. "Archbishop John Njenga." The Hierarchy of the Church. January 10, 2017. Accessed September 4, 2017. http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bnjenga.html.

———. "Bishop Emeritus of Pemba: Bishop Januário Machaze Nhangumbe." The Hierarchy of the Church. March 16, 2013. Accessed August 10, 2017. http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bmanh.html.

———. "Diocese of Quelimane: Affiliated Bishops, Deceased." The Hierarchy of the Church. March 16, 2013. Accessed August 31, 2017. http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dquel.html.

Chimoio, Francisco. *Directório pastoral da arquidiocese de Maputo*. Maputo: Secretariado de Coordenação Pastoral, 2016.

Cipire, Felizardo. *A educação tradicional em Moçambique*. Maputo: Publicações Emedial, 1996.

CNA/EWTN News, "Nigerian Bishop: Evangelize through Family, Social Media." Catholic News Agency. February 1, 2017. Accessed February 1, 2018. https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/nigerian-bishop-evangelize-though-family-social-media-71898.

Codina, Víctor. *Sacramentos de la vida*. Mexico, DF: Ediciones Dabar, 1993.

Correia, Francisco. *O métodomMissionário dos jesuítas em Mocambique de 1881-1910: Um contributo para a ihstória da missão da Zambézia*. Braga: Livraria AI, 1992.

Du Plessis, Amanda L. "The Covenant as Fundamental Building Block of Marriage." *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal= Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* 53, no. 1_2 (2012): 39-49. Accessed November 1, 2017. https://journals.co.za/content/ngtt/53/1_2/EJC125998.

Egerton, F.C.C. *Salazar: Rebuilder of Portugal*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1943.

Ekeocha, Obianuju. "An African Woman's Open Letter to Melinda Gates." Pontifical Council for the Laity, 2012. Accessed September 17, 2017. http://www.laici.va/content/laici/en/sezioni/donna/notizie/an-african-woman-s-open-letter-to-melinda-gates.html.

———. "A Passion for Preserving African Values." The Guardian, May 17, 2015. Accessed December 12, 2017. http://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/ekeocha-a-passion-for-preserving-african-values.

———. *Target Africa: Ideological Neolocolialism in the Twenty-First Century*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2018.

Empereur, James and Eduardo Fernández. *La Vida Sacra: Contemporary Hispanic Sacramental Theology*. New York, Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Essex, Keith H. "The Abrahamic Covenant." *TMTJ* 10, no. 2 (1999): 191-212.

Ferreira, Luciano da Costa. *Igreja ministerial em Moçambique: Caminhos de hoje e de amanhã* [Ministerial Church in Mozambique: Paths of today and for tomorrow]. Maputo: Private, 1987.

Filipe, Ribeiro de Meneses. *Salazar: A Political Biography*. New York: Enigma Books, 2009.

Francis. *Evangelli Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, November 24, 2013. Accessed February 28, 2017. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

———. *Amoris Laetitia*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family, March 19, 2016. Accessed May 21, 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

"Full Text of Pope Francis' in-Flight Press Conference from Azerbaijan." The Catholic World Report. October 2, 2016. Accessed February 27, 2017. http://www.catholicworldreport.com/2016/10/02/full-text-of-pope-francis-in-flight-press-conference-from-azerbaijan.

Family Watch International. "10 Steps to Manipulating the African Group to Promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)." 2016. Accessed February 10, 2018. http://familywatch.org/fwi/documents/CSE_10_steps_001.pdf.

———. "The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda: Core Philosophies, Origins, and Goals." April 2016. Accessed February 10, 2018. https://familywatch.org/fwi/CSE_philosophy.cfm.

———. "Comprehensive Sexuality Education Defeated at the UN Again!" September 2017. Accessed September 17, 2017. https://tinyurl.com/FHI-CSE-and-UN.

———. "Organizations in Support of CSE." March 23, 2016. Accessed February 10, 2018. https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/cse-facts/what-is-cse/organizations-in-support-of-cse.

———. "The War on Children: The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda." April 11, 2016. Accessed September 18, 2017. https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/english10/.

———. "What is Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda (CSE)? Who Promotes or Profits from CSE?" March 23, 2016. Accessed February 10, 2018. https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/english10/.

Gaillardetz, Richard. *By what Authority?: A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Gil, Odilo. "Aspectos pastorais do matrimónio em África: Introdução á 6a semana teológica da Beira," edited by Centro de Formação de Nazaré, 5-18. Maputo, Paulinas, 2001.

Girgis, Sherif, Ryan Anderson, and Robert George. "What Is Marriage?" *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* 34, no. 1 (2012): 245-87. Accessed October 20, 2016.

https://www.layman.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/what-is-marriage-george.pdf.

Greenberg, Blu. "Marriage: A Jewish Perspective." *The Family Handbook* (1998): 3-9.

———. "Marriage in the Jewish Tradition." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22, no. 1 (1985): 3-20.

Guinan, Michael. *Covenant in the Old Testament*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975.

Guy, Michael. "A Cultural Approach to a Christian Theology of Marriage." In *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, edited by Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan, 76-118. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004.

Gwembe, Ezequiel. "O casamento na tradição Africana." In *O matrimónio: Actas da 5a semana teológica, Arquidiocese da Beira, 26-30 Junho 2000*, [Marriage in African Tradition] edited by Centro Nazaré, 99-111. Maputo: Paulinas, 2000.

———. *Retiros de iniciação: Uma experimentação de inculturação* [Retreats of initiation: An experience of inculturation]. Beira: Jesuítas, 2000.

Haran, John P. "The Indissolubility of Christian Marriage." *Theological Studies* 2, no. 2 (1941): 198-220.

Hahn, Scott. "Covenant in the Old and New Testaments: Some Current Research (1994-2004)." *Currents in Research* 3, no. 2 (2005): 263-92.

Hanlon, Joseph. *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire*. London: Zed Books, 1990.

Harakas, Stanley Samuel. "Covenant Marriage: Reflections from an Eastern Orthodox Perspective." *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective* (2005): 92-123.

Hata, M. "African Marriage: Personal and Communitarian." *African Ecclesial Review* 23 (1981): 35-37.

Hickey, Raymond. *Modern Missionary Documents and Africa: Issued by Popes and Roman Synods*. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982.

Hillers, Delbert. *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*. Baltimore: JHU Press, 1973.

Holland, Joe, and Peter Henriot. *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. New York: Orbis Books, 1983.

Hugenberger, Gordon. *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi*. Vol. 52. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum. Leinden: EJ Brill, 1994.

Human Life International. "The Maputo Protocol: Clear and Present Danger." MenEngage Alliance. 2009. http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_Maputo_Declaration.pdf.

INE, MISAU, and ICF International. *Moçambique Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde 2011*. Calverton, MD: MISA/Moçambique, INE/Moçambique, and ICF International, 2013.

"Informe de los medios de comunicación: Depo provera se peligrosa para su salud." *Population Research Institute* 6, no. 29 (September 7 2004). Accessed November 4, 2016. https://www.pop.org/informe-de-los-medios-de-comunicacion-depo-provera-es-peligrosa-para-su-salud.

Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas. "Apresentação dos Resultados Definitivos Do Censo 2007." (2009). Accessed August 4, 2017. http://italcoop.org.mz/Allegati/Censo%202007%20NACIONAL.pdf.

———. "Estatísticas e Indicadores Sociais 2013-2014." 2015. Accessed September 20, 2016. http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-demograficas-e-indicadores-sociais/estatisticas-e-indicadores-sociais.

———. "Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde 1997, 2003, 2011." 2013. Accessed October 23, 2016. http://www.ine.gov.mz/operacoes-estatisticas/inqueritos/inquerito-demografico-e-de-saude.

———. "Mozambique in Figures 2014." 2014. Accessed September 20, 2016. http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/publicacoes/mocambique-em-numeros/mocambique-em-numeros_final_net.pdf/view.

———. "Relatório de Indicadores Distritais." 2007. Accessed March 10, 2016. http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/estatisticas-demograficas-e-indicadores-sociais/populacao/relatorio-de-indicadores-distritais-2007.

Isaacman, Allen, and Barbara Isaacman. *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900 - 1882*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press & Gower, 1983.

Jaye, Cassie. *The Red Pill: A Feminist's Journey into the Men's Rights Movement; Documentary*. San Francisco: Jaye Bird Production & Gravitas Ventures, 2017.

John Paul II. *Ecclesia in Africa*. Post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission Toward the Year 2000, September 14, 1995. Accessed December 8, 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html.

———. Homily for the Opening of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, April 10, 1994. Accessed December 20, 2017.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19940410_sinodo-africano.html.

John Paul II. *Familiaris Consortio*. Apostolic exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World, November 21, 1981. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html.

———. *Redemptor Hominis*. Encyclical letter on the Redeemer of Man, March 4, 1979. Accessed January 30, 2018. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html.

Jones, David "Marriage: Covenant or Contract." *Journal of Family Ministry* 2, no. 1 (2011): 4-7.

Jones, David, and John Tarwater. "Are Biblical Covenants Dissoluble?: Toward a Theology of Marriage." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 47, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 1-11.

Junod, Henri. *Usos E Costumes Dos Bantu: Tomo 1 and 2*. Maputo: Impressa da UEM, 1996.

Kenyatta, Jomo. *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu*. Vol. 219. London: Heiemann, 1979.

Kisembo, Benezeri, Laurenti Magesa, and Aylward Shorter. *African Christian Marriage*. London: Chapman, 1998.

Korn, Euegene.B., and John Pawlikowski, eds. *Two Faiths, One Covenant? Jewish and Christian Identity in the Presence of the Other*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 2004.

Köstenberger, Andreas, and David Jones. *God, Marriage & Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. 2nd ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Kostenberger, Andreas. "The Bible's Teaching on Marriage and the Family." Family Research Council, 2011. Accessed October 17, 2017. http://www.frc.org/brochure/the-bibles-teaching-on-marriage-and-family.

Kyalo, Paul. "A Reflection on the African Traditional Values of Marriage and Sexuality." *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 1, no. 2 (2012): 211-19.

Kyomo, Andrew A., and Sahaya G. Selvan, eds. *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*. Acton Publishers: Nairobi, 2004.

Langa, Adriano. "O lobolo e o seu significado na tradição e hoje [Lobolo and its meaning in tradition and today]." In *O matrimónio: Actas da 5a semana teológica,*

Arquidiocese da Beira, 26-30 Junho 2000, edited by Centro Nazaré, 131-70. Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2000.

Lawler, Michael. *Marriage and Sacrament: A Theology of Christian Marriage*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993.

―――. "Marriage as Covenant in the Catholic Tradition." *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective* (2005): 70-91.

―――. *Marriage and the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002.

―――. *Secular Marriage, Christian Sacrament* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1985.

Lenzi, Alan. "How Does the Hebrew Bible Relate to the Ancient Near Eastern World?" *Bible Odyssey* (2017). Accessed October 9, 2017. http://bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/bible-basics/how-does-the-hebrew-bible-relate-to-the-ancient-near-eastern-world.

Lerma, Martinez. *O povo macua e a sua cultura*. Lisbon: ME IICT, 1989.

Liloca. "A segunda mulher [The second wife]" (music video). Posted September 6, 2010. Accessed August 12, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWzcHNulCJ4.

Lopez, René. "Israelite Covenants in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Covenants." *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 9, no. 2 (2003): 92-111.

Lumbela, Dionísio. *Casamento cristão em Moçambique.* Maputo: ISSMA, 1999.

Mabota, Alice. "Alice Mabota na cadeira do boss" (video). Posted April 20, 2017. Accessed August 24, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeHzJp9LD3E.

Mabuiangue, Joaquim. "O casamento em Moçambique: Estado da questão [Marriage in Mozambique: The status of the situation]." In *O matrimónio: Actas da 5a semana teológica, Arquidiocese Da Beira, 26-30 Junho 2000*, edited by Centro Nazaré, 112-30. Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2000.

Macamo, Verónica. "Sejamos Solidárias Umas Com as Outras." *Noticias Online*, April 11, 2016. Accessed September 14, 2017. www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/index.php/politica/51445-veronica-macamo-e-o-7-de-abril-sejamos-solidarias-umas-com-as-outras.html.

Machel, Samora. "The People's Republic of Mozambique: The Struggle Continues." *Review of African Political Economy* 2, no. 4 (1975): 14-25.

Mackin, Theodore. *Marriage in the Catholic Church: What Is Marriage*. New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

Magaia, Cabral. "Casamento e cultura." In *O matrimónio em África: Aspectos pastorais - Actas da 6a semana teológica, Arquidiocese Da Beira, 18-22 Junho 2001*, edited by Centro de Formação de Nazaré. Beira: Arquidiocese da Beira, 2001.

Magesa, Laurenti. *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.

———. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africas, 2004.

Malunga, Awaji. *O Romeu É Xingondo E a Julieta Machangane*. Maputo: Imprensa Universitária - UEM, 2005.

Manion, Christopher. "Are We in for Another 'Gethsemane'?" *Population Research Institute Review* 28, no. 3 (July-August 2017). Accessed February 4, 2018. https://www.pop.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/PRIR-07-2017_web.pdf.

Marime, Benedito. *Arquidiocese De Maputo: Sessenta Anos De História (1940 a 2000)*. Maputo: CEGRAF, 2002.

Marshall, Anna-Maria. *Confronting Sexual Harassment: The Law and Politics of Everyday Life*. London: Routledge, 2017.

Martinez, German. *Worship: Wedding to MarriageI*. Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1993.

Matos, Luís Salgado de. "Os bispos Portugueses: Da concordata ao 25 de abril - Alguns aspectos." *Análise social* 29, no. 125/126 (1994): 319-83.

Martos Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*. Liguori: Triumph; 2001.

Mbilingi, Gabriel. "Final Message of the 17th Plenary Assembly of Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar." July 24, 2016. Accessed August 15, 2016. https://secam.org/final-message-17th-secam-plenary.

Mbiti, John. *African Religions and Philosophy.* London: Heinemann Educational, 1988.

———. *Love and Marriage*: London: Longman Group Limited, 1973.

McCarthy, Dennis J. *Old Testament Covenant: As Survey of Current Opinions*. Richmond, VA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1972.

———. *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978.

McElwee, Joshua. "Francis Warns against 'Ideological Colonization' of Family, Reaffirms Contraception Ban." National Catholic Reporter, January 16, 2015. Accessed

February 27, 2017. https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-warns-against-ideological-colonization-family-reaffirms-contraception-ban.

Miller, Michael J., trans. *Christ's New Homeland-Africa: Contribution to the Synod on the Family by African Pastors*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2015.

Mlenga, Moses. *Polygamy in Northern Malawi: A Christian Reassessment*. Muzuzu, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2016.

Mondlane, Eduardo. *The Struggle for Mozambique*. London: Zed Press, 1983.

Morier-Genoud, Éric. *The Vatican vs. Lisbon: The Relaunching of the Catholic Church in Mozambique, Ca. 1875-1940*. Bab Working Paper, no. 5. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2002.

Mosher, Steven. "Zombie Charities Push Population Control." Population Research Institute. June 29, 2015. Accessed February 4, 2018. https://www.pop.org/zombie-charities-push-population-control.

"Mozambique 2015 Data: Women in National Parliament." UN Data. 2016. Accessed October 31, 2016. http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?q=mozambique&d=MDG&f=seriesRowID%3a557%3bcountryID%3a508.

Mugambi, Jesse. "Africa and the Old Testament." In *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*, edited by Mary Getui, Knut Holter, and Victor Zinkuratire, 7-26. New York: Acton Publishers, 2001.

———. *African Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Kenya: Heinemann, 1989.

Mulago, Gua Cikala Musharhamina. *Traditional African Marriage and Christian Marriage*. Kampala: St. Paul Publications, 1983.

Munslow, Barry. *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary; Selected Speeches and Writings*. London: Zed Books, 1985.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. "The First Letter to the Corinthians." In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, 798-815. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Mwaura, Philomena. "The Gospel of the Family: From Africa to the World Church." In *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III*, edited by Orobator Agbonkhianmeghe, 145-58. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015.

Nave, Orville J. "Stoicism in the Bible." Nave's Topical Bible Concordance Online. Accessed July 29, 2016. http://www.naves-topical-bible.com/STOICISM.html.

Ndege, George. *Culture and Customs of Mozambique*. *Culture and Customs of Africa*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007.

Ngundu, Onesimus. "Mission Churches and African Customary Marriage." *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 30, no. 1 (2011): 35-54. Accessed November 17, 2017. https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/30-1_035.pdf.

Njenga, John. "Customary African Marriage." *AFER* 16, no. 1 (1974): 115-22.

Nock, Steven, and Margaret F. Brinig. "Covenant and Contract." *Regent University Law Review* 12, no. 9 (1999): 9-26. Accessed February 15, 2017. http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_faculty_scholarship/262.

Noller, Randal. "Marriage, Divorce and the Pauline Privilege." Catholic Culture. 2004. Accessed September 3, 2017. http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=7272.

Nyamiti, Charles. "African Christologies Today." In *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, edited by Robert Schreiter, 3-23. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.

———. *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective*. Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1984.

Oduyoye, Mercy A., and Musimbi RA Kanyoro, eds. *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005.

Oliphant, Baxter. "Women and Men in Both Parties Say Sexual Harassment Allegations Reflect 'Widespread Problems in Society'." *pewresearch.org* (December 7, 2017). Accessed January 24, 2018. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/07/americans-views-of-sexual-harassment-allegations/.

Olupona, Jacob, and Sulayman Nyang. *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John S. Mbiti*. Vol. 32. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993.

Palmer, Paul F. "Christian Marriage: Contract or Covenant?" *Theological Studies* 33, no. 4 (1972): 617-65.

Paul VI. *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. Apostolic Letter on Implementing the Following Decrees of Vatican Council II: *Christus Dominus, Presbyterorum Ordinis, Perfectae Caritatis,* and *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, August 6, 1966. Accessed January 30, 2-18. http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19660806_ecclesiae-sanctae.html.

———. *Populorum Progressio.* Encyclical Letter on the Development of Peoples, March 26, 1967. Accessed January 18, 2018. https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html.

Perkins, Pheme. "The Gospel according to John." In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, 942-85. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Pettegrew, Larry D. "The New Covenant." *TMTJ* 10, no. 2 (1999): 251-270.

Phiri, Khofi Arthur. *African Traditional Marriage: a Christian Theological Appraisal*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2011.

Pius V. *Council of Trent: Catechism for Parish Priests*. Translated by John McHugh and Charles Callan. The Catholic Primer, 1923.

Polanah, Paulo. "The Zenith of Our National History! National Identity, Colonial Empire, and the Promotion of the Portuguese Discoveries: Portugal 1930s." *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 9, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 40-64. Accessed August 17, 2017. http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue17/pdf/v9n1a03.pdf.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Nairobi: Paulines, 2004.

Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood. "History and Mission." Pontifical Mission Societies. 2018. Accessed March 1, 2018. http://www.ppoomm.va/index.php?mnu=opere&opera=POSI&lang=EN.

Ponzetti, James, and Barbara Mutch. "Marriage as Covenant: Tradition as a Guide to Marriage Education in the Pastoral Context." *Pastoral Psychology* 54, no. 3 (2006): 215-30.

PRI. "Depo-Provera and HIV." Population Research Institute. September 7, 2016. Accessed August 16, 2017. https://www.pop.org/depo-provera-and-hiv.

Raitt, Jill, Raymond Bulman, and Frederick Parrella. *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Reynolds, Philip. *Marriage in the Western Church: The Christianization of Marriage During the Patristic and Early Medieval Periods*. Vol. 24. Boston/Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001.

Ross, Susan A. *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology*: New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2001.

Rubio, Julie. *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family*. New York: Paulist Press, 2003.

Sande, Elias. "Conceito de família: Perspectiva Africana [The concept of family: An African perspective]." Olhos do Psicologo. 2011. Accessed August 4, 2017. http://eliassantaylor85.blogspot.nl/2011/11/conceito-de-familia-perspectiva.html.

Sarah, Robert. *God or Nothing: A Conversation on Faith with Nicolas Diat*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015.

———. "What Sort of Pastoral Mercy in Response to the New Challenges to the Family?: A Reading from the *Lineamenta*." In *Christ's New Homeland-Africa: Contribution to the Synod on the Family by African Pastors*, translated by Michael J. Miller, 13-33. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2015.

Schillebeeckx, Edward. *Marriage: Secular Reality and Saving Mystery*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1965.

Schreiter, Robert J. *Constructing Local Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015.

Scott, Kieran, and Michael Warren. *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*: New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Selvan, Sahaya. "Preparing Young People for Marriage in Africa." In *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, edited by Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan, 217-27. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004.

Serapiao, Luis, and Mohamed El-Khawas. *Mozambique in the Twentieth Century: From Colonialism to Independence*. Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979.

Serapiao, Luis Benjamim. "The Catholic Church and Conflict Resolution in Mozambique's Post-Colonial Conflict, 1977-1992." *Journal of Church and State* 46, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 365-87.

Sesana, Renato. "Mass Media and the Shaping of Modern African Cultures." In *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, edited by Maura Browne. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

Shore, Herb. "Mondlane, Machel and Mozambique: From Rebellion to Revolution." *Africa Today* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 3-12. Accessed July 14, 2017. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4185366.

Short, Randy, and Abby Martin. "Depo-Provera: The Drug Made to Kill Black Women" (video interview)." April 1 2015. Accessed August 16, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ajb487Y48gA.

Sorge, Joseph and James Scurlock. *Divorce Corp.* Jackson, WY: DC Book LLC, 2013.

Shorter, Aylward. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006.

Sierra. "How Creepy Conservative Christian Modesty Doctrines Harm Young Women." AlterNet Media. November 27, 2011. Accessed January 24, 2018. https://www.alternet.org/story/153227/how_creepy_conservative_christian_mode sty_doctrines_harm_young_women.

Silva, Pedro Augusto de Sousa e. *Distrito de Tete, alta Zambézia: Característicos, história, fomento*. Lisbon: Livraria Portugalia Editora, 1927.

Sithoe, Yolanda. "Opinião: Poligamia - Tudo em nome da 'tradição' [Opinion: Polygamy - All in the name of tradition]." *Outras Vozes* 26 (March 2009). Accessed June 6, 2017. http://www.wlsa.org.mz/artigo/poligamia-tudo-em-nome-da-tradicao/.

Slater, Sharon. *Stand for the Family: The Family Defense Handbook*. 5th ed. Gilbert, Arizona: Iglestone Publishing, 2009/2016.

Smith, Helen. *Men on Strike: Why Men Are Boycotting Marriage, Fatherhood, and the American Dream and Why It Matters*. New York: Encounter Books, 2013.

Sommers, Christina Hoff. *The War against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.

Sousa, José Augusto Alves de. *Memórias de um Jesuíta missionário em Moçambique (1960-2004)*. Braga: Livraria AI, 2015.

———. *Os Jesuítas em Moçambique 1541-1991: No cinquentençrio do 4o período da nossa missão*. Braga: Livraria AI, 1991.

Spaht, Katherine. "Covenant Marriage Seven Years Later: Its as Yet Unfulfilled Promise." *Louisiana Law Review* 65, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 605-34.

———. "The Modern American Covenant Marriage Movement: Its Origins and Its Future." In *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective*, edited by John Witte and Eliza Ellison, 239-64. Grand Rapids, MI.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005.

Stackhouse, Max L. *Covenant and Commitments: Faith, Family, and Economic Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

StandForFamilyNow. "Cultural Imperialism" (video trailer). October 1, 2012. Accessed December 10, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iQMcrC_L8I.

Stevenson, Kenneth. *To Join Together: The Rite of Marriage*. New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1987.

Sukuma, Stewart. "Vale a Pena Casar?" (music video). Posted December 12, 2010. Accessed August 4, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfBtTCBMV04.

Synod of Bishops. *Instrumentum Laboris* of the II Special Assembly for Africa on the Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, March 19, 2009.

Accessed November 27, 2017. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia//synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20090319_instrlabor-africa_en.html.

———. *Lineamenta* of the II Special Assembly for Africa on the Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, June 27, 2006. Accessed February 21, 2017. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20060627_ii-assembly-africa_en.html.

———. *Relatio Synodi* of the III Extraordinary General Assembly on the Pastoral Challenges on the Family in the Context of Evangelization, October 2014, no. 40, accessed January 12, 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141018_relatio-synodi-familia_en.html#Accompanying_the_Married_Couple_in_the_Initial_Years_of_Marriage.

TAG Research Team on Marriage and Family and Scott Theological College Theological Advisory Group. *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa*. TAG Theological Reflections. Machakos, Kenya: Theological Advisory Group, 1994.

Tarwater, John Kent. *Marriage as Covenant: Considering God's Design at Creation and the Contemporary Moral Consequences*. NY, Oxford, Toronto: University Press of America, 2006.

Taylor, Paul. "The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families." Pew Research Center. November 18, 2010. Accessed August 10, 17. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/11/18/the-decline-of-marriage-and-rise-of-new-families/2/#ii-overview.

Taylor, Scott. *Culture and Customs of Zambia. Culture and Customs of Africa*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006.

Teixeira, Francisco Nunes. *Presença De Justiça*. Porto, PT: 1958.

Thatcher, Adrian. *Marriage After Modernity: Christian Marriage in Postmodern Times*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

Thomas, David. "What Makes Marriage a Sacrament." *Family and Community Ministries* (2007): 4-13.

Thompson, John. *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament.* London: Tyndale Press, 1964.

Turner, Paul. *Inseparable Love: A Commentary on the Order of Celebrating Matrimony in the Catholic Church*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017.

UEM. *Moçambique no auge do colonialismo, 1930-1961*. Vol. 3. Maputo: Impressa da UEM, 1993. [Mozambique in the Hight of Colonization]

USCCB. *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony - Ritual Del Matrimonio*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016.

Vacek, Edward. "The Meaning of Marriage: Of Two Minds." In *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, edited by Kieran Scott and Michael Warren, 134-40. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Vähäkangas, Auli. "The Crisis of Christian Marriage." In *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, edited by Andrew Kyomo and Sahaya Selvan, 29-52. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004.

Vatican Council II. *Gaudium et Spes*. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, December 7, 1965. Accessed February 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

———. *Dignitatis Humanae*. Declaration on Religious Freedom, December 7, 1965. Accessed January 26, 2018. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html.

———. *Gravissimum Educationis*. Declaration on Christian Education, October 28, 1965. Accessed February 6, 2018. https://w2.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html.

Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Sacramental Theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992.

Vorster, Jakobus. "Marriage and Family in View of the Doctrine of the Covenant." *HTS Theological Studies* 72, no. 3 (2016): 1-8. Accessed October 2, 2017. http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v72n3/08.pdf.

Waite, Linda. "Marriage and Family." In *Handbook of Population*, edited by Dudley Poston and Michael Micklin, 87-108. New York: Springer, 2005.

Walton, John. *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan*. Grand Rapids, MI: Harper Collins, 1994.

Weed, Stan, and Irene Ericksen. "Re-Examining the Evidence: School-Based Comprehensive Sex Education." The Institute for Research and Evaluation. September 12, 2017. Accessed January 24, 2018. http://www.institute-research.com/CSEReport/CSEReport-Final_9-13-17.pdf.

Whitehead, Evelyn, and James Whitehead. "The Meaning of Marriage." In *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, edited by Kieran Scott and Michael Warren, 124-40. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Wijsen, Frans, and Peter Henriot. Rodrigo Mejia, eds. *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

Witte, John, and Eliza Ellison, eds. *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective*: Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005.

Witte, John, and Joel Nichols. "More Than a Mere Contract: Marriage as Contract and Covenant in Law and Theology." *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* 5, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 595-615. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1292998.

Witte, John. "The Covenant of Marriage: Its Biblical Roots, Historical Influence, and Modern Uses." *Review on Marriage and Spirituality* 18 (2012): 147-65. Accessed October 15, 2017. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2705616.

———, ed. *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

———. "Marriage as Social Estate in the Lutheran Reformation." In *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*, edited by John Witte, 113-58. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Zenit, "Human Person Isn't an Obstacle to Development." Zenit. October 6, 2016. Accessed October 7, 2016. https://zenit.org/articles/human-person-isnt-an-obstacle-to-development-holy-see-tells-un.