

PREVENTION OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY:

The role of the church in schools

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DECLARATION

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I, VHULAHANI BETHUEL NANGAMBI declare that “PREVENTION OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY: The role of the church in schools” is my own work and has not been previously submitted in any form whatsoever, by myself or anyone else, to this University or at another educational institution for any degree or examination purposes. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1

1. ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Early childbearing particularly has negative demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural consequences (Philemon 2007: 1). Adolescent pregnancy is a worldwide phenomenon. Its causes differ from one country to another. It is found affecting many young girls age between 14-19 years. Most of them dropout from school. Data from 28 demographic and health surveys showed that countries in which enrolment was high were likely to report pregnancy as a reason for school dropout (NRC and IOM, 2005). The converse is true for countries reporting low enrolment; girls will not be in school during reproductive years. This relationship is clear when enrolment is below 20% but a mixed effect is evident when enrolment increases above 50%, suggesting that schooling, depending on the context, can have a mediating effect on reproductive health behaviour (NRC and IOM, 2005).

One of the greatest achievements since democracy in South Africa is the massive expansion in access to education, especially in the enrolment of African youth and women. Access to primary schooling is universally 100% and secondary school environment at 80% is high (Schindler, 2008). South Africa is characterised by both high enrolment and high rates of repetition, dropout, late entry and re-entry meaning that a significant number of older learners, well past the onset of puberty, can be found in lower grades (Schindler, 2008). This situation disturbs young learners in class, for example, old boys found disturbing young girls. They force them into relationships.

The relationships later influence their sexual behaviour and as a result, early pregnancy occurs. Then the question can be asked: Who are those learners? Studies found that teenagers who feel a sense of attachment or connection to school and are successful at school, are less likely to fall pregnant. School attachment, academic achievement and aspirations for education offer incentives to teenagers to avoid pregnancy (Kirby, 2002, Santelli et al, 2000). On the other hand, when the relationship with schooling is tenuous, either through dislike of school (Imamura et al., 2007), poor academic achievement (Cassel, 2002) or poor expectations of furthering education (Imamura et al., 2007) girls are more likely to become pregnant.

When we look at the given scenario above we find that teenage girls require information on biological changes, sexual issues and reproductive health services (Philemon 2001:1). This will avoid being misled by older boys. It is clear that teenagers need guidance from parents, teachers and church leaders. Teachers need to guard against the bullying of girls by older boys. Those boys are easily identified through their academic achievements. They always

record less marks in different subjects. Church leaders should also assist through moral teaching. Parents should also assist through the use of parental guidance. This model will reflect the movement away from a hierarchical view of pastoral authority in many churches and denominations during the modern period (Osmer 2008:18). This research suggests the need of bringing stakeholders together in order to prevent alarming teenage pregnancy in schools.

1.2 Background to study

It is true that in Tshivenda we say: “*ahunamudi u sinatshihole*” (meaning that there is no house without problems). This clearly indicates that the whole world is crying about teenage pregnancy. I agree with the views of Thomas Crow and Vijayan K. Pillai (2006:25) who in their research concluded that the U.S.A had the highest rate of teenage pregnancy. This happens despite its highest medical care in the world. Today the statistics dropped due to what Osmer (2008:18) called the “interpretive guide”. This means bringing knowledge to the people. As a principal I am experiencing this situation quarterly. The real reason in South Africa is caused by the inequality gap between the rich and the poor. For example, teenage pregnancy is rare among children of the middle income and the rich family group. The reason may be that their parents play a bigger role in their children’s life.

In Kwaggafontein teenage pregnancy is caused by poverty, lack of parental care and role models within the community. This affects the young people in the area. The church is failing to give support to schools and the communities. Therefore, it is against this background that this research is conducted to find a way in which the church can support schools in dealing with teenage pregnancy.

1.2.1 Country profile

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is a country located at the Southern tip of Africa. It has 2,798 kilometres (1,739 m) of coastline that stretches along the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. About 80% of South Africans are of black African ancestry, divided among a variety of family groups speaking different Bantu languages, nine of which have official status. The remaining population consists of Africa's largest communities of European, Asians, and multiracial ancestry. Black cultures are dynamic and experiencing changes due to the increase of a middle class population. According to Statistics South Africa (2014), S.A. has a population which is estimated at 54 million. The Black Africans are in majority (43,33 million) and White population is estimated at 4,55 million, Coloured population estimated at 4,77 million and Indian population at 1,34 million. Just over 51% (27,64 million) of the population is female.

1.2.2 Socio- economic condition

S.A. has a large inequality gap between the rich and the poor. Unemployment is estimated at 32% among the youth. The majority of people, especially blacks, are economically inactive due to the lack of education and they find themselves in poverty. Hoffman (2006), and Kirby (2007) describe teenage pregnancy as being characterised by the following consequences: stigma and discrimination, less supportive and stimulating home environment for children, increased behavioural problems, most likely to suffer abuse and higher rates of imprisonment among sons and children who are more likely to give birth as teens.

These suggest that teenage pregnancy does not affect young women for a short time but throughout their life history. This means adolescents who become pregnant are likely to be visible in the community and will forever remain bound with morality and stigma.

According to Abel and Zane (1990) stigma during or after pregnancy can lead to depression, social exclusion, low self-esteem and poor academic performance affecting the prospects of employment in future. Varga (2003) commented that even though girls are legally allowed to attend school during and after pregnancy in SA, they are often confronted by stigma from teachers and peers in the school environment.

Teenage pregnancy also affects the marriage prospects of young women. Unlike in the US, where young women who begin child bearing have high use of having more children over a short space of time, studies in SA have shown that young women significantly delay second birth and a high use of contraceptives (Garenne, Tollman and Kahn, 2000). This is done in order to improve chances of marriage. Teenage pregnancy is also associated with domestic violence and family disruption (Kissin et al., 2008). Teenage pregnancy also exposes young mothers to more economic vulnerability and they become more reliant on male partners (UNFPA). Lastly, the children of teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school, obtain lower grade point averages and report poorer school attendance records (Cassel, 2002, and Kirby, 2007).

It is also found that pregnancy among young South Africans is significantly influenced by the family structure, type of childhood residence, and incomplete education. Young people who grew up in families with both parents were least likely to experience early pregnancy. Presence of the mother is generally beneficial in terms of preventing early pregnancy (HSRC, 2009). In SA, it is found that young people who grew up in informal

settlements and rural areas have a higher risk of experiencing early childbearing compared to those found in townships and other urban areas (HSRC, 2009).

Age is another socio-economic factor which influence early pregnancy. In SA, studies have indicated that boyfriends of pregnant teenagers tend to be older. However, the 2003 RHRU national indicated that two thirds of young people were in fact involved in sexual relations with their peers. While only 9.7% females were involved with a male partner of the same age, 57% reported that their partner was 1-4 years older and 32% reported that their most recent partner was at least 5 years older (HSRC,2009). The researcher found that some of these cases are caused by economic security.

1.2.3 Education system

The inequalities of educational systems in SA, created an educational gap between Blacks, Coloured, Indians and Whites. The introduction of Bantu Education forced Blacks and Coloureds to have inferior knowledge, beliefs, and misconceptions about the use of contraception as a way to avoid teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy in SA, among Whites and Indians is very low or not there. If found the parents legalise abortion. While among the Blacks and Coloureds in SA, negative perceptions about contraceptives use, such as perceptions which always arise from false beliefs that condoms could slip off during intercourse and be left inside a women's vagina (Wood and Jewkes, 2006), a belief that condoms reduces sexual enjoyment (Maharaj, 2006), condoms are of poor quality and have fertility-related side effects (Varga, 2003) have more impact in the increase of teenage pregnancy in SA schools.

Inequality of education is also seen in SA schools where the former model “C” schools experienced no teenage pregnancy because of a sex education programme. While on the other hand rural schools, due to inequality created by apartheid education, have no programs on sex education. Poverty also forced some young women to engage in sexual relationships in exchange for lifts between home and school, and gifts and money for subsistence. Varga (2003) reported that Zulu girls from KwaZulu Natal cited economic security as one reason for having more than one partner, although multiple sex partners compromised their respectability.

These are the challenges that are facing my school at the moment. Therefore, this study is conducted in order to bring a solution to this situation.

1.2.4 Health care system

The health care spending in the country is about 9% of GDP. Only 16% of the population is covered by medical schemes, 20% by private health care and about 84% of the population depend on the public healthcare system.

1.2.5 Religion

S.A. has different types of religions. Christianity is composed of 79,8%, Muslims 1,5%, Hindus 1,2%, African traditional Religion 0,3%, Judaism 0,2%, and non-affiliates 15,1%

1.3 Historical past about teenage pregnancy

While I grew up in Venda, my family lived in the rural area of Gaba village in the Thohoyandou magistrate district of Limpopo. I attended my primary and secondary there. I didn't know any culture except my own. In my time it was a taboo to see a school learner

being pregnant. I don't remember any such sight. Maybe it was caused by the moral teaching we received from the story telling from our parents in the night while gathered around the fire, or the moral order we received from the church because by then most of the schools were under the control of the church.

I then attended my tertiary studies at the University of the North, which is where I learned about the different cultures of people. In the University, most of my friends were from Kwandebele who then recruited me to join them as a teacher after my studies. It was my first time in 1990 to see and live with people of a different culture. I discovered that the Ndebele are people who are proud of their culture and other people of their different ethnic groups. It was the year where boys were from the mountain school. I had never in my life before seen such a ceremony. Beasts were slaughtered from different families and we enjoyed meat. The same kind of ceremony also happened when girls are from initiation schools. I learnt a lot from their culture.

There was something surprising in this cultural ceremony, unlike in my own culture, where the girls initiation school is run by the church if the family is Christian, but amongst the Ndebele the church is not involved in the preparation of the celebration. Changes which are brought by the other cultures into their lives are not considered. Maybe this research will seek to know whether there is an impact from cultural activities which can influence teenage pregnancy. The other thing which I had noticed from this community is that, after a boy or a girl has undergone initiation school their parents build outside rooms for them. The interpretation is that they are independent from girlhood/boyhood irrespective of their age. This practice may sometimes add to the increase in teenage pregnancy.

1.4 Teenage girls residing in Kwaggafontein

It is reported that Mkokobola in Kwaggafontein has a population of 107,560 and the spoken language is Southern Ndebele and it covers 320.15 area sq.km (<http://census.adrianfrith.com/place/81204>). The municipality is located in the Nkangala District of Mpumalanga province in South Africa. It is a semi-urban local municipality consisting of 57 villages within which there are 5 established townships. This municipality is named after Thembisile Chris Hani, secretary General of the S.A. communist party, who was assassinated on 10 April 1993. This municipality covers an area of 2,384 km, that is where Kwaggafontein is located. It covers an area of 320.15 sq.km and has a population of 107,560. The community here is very poor and most of the people are commuters working in Pretoria, travelling about 120 km every single trip to work. About 90% of them are labourers and domestic workers. Their family structure is composed of parents who have a low level of education and also not participating fully in the education of their children. About 40% of the families have single parents. This is caused by the fact that some of them became pregnant in their teen stage. Statistics gathered from Mphalali Secondary indicated that nearly 15% of learners grow up in a single family. About 8% of the learners are under the care of their grandparents. At least 2% comprises of those learners who grew up in a child headed household. Teachers become second parents to their children. Teachers don't have enough time as they are travelling from Pretoria to Kwaggafontein. The time for supervising extra- mural activities is not enough.

Because they are bored by the lack of school activities, teenage girls became victims of the situation. They fight to find some space of alleviating them from poverty. The easy way of doing that is succumb to peer pressure and follow suit. This brings us to the situation of Sarah Mnguni (it is not her real name but pseudonym name was used for the

purpose of the study). She was staying with her grandparents who had a tavern. Her mother was a domestic worker who comes home once a month. She came to Mphalali Secondary to register for grade 9 and by then she was 15 years old. She was an average student in class but failed the grade due to level 2 of mathematics. The following year she passed grade 10 and became a truant. I started to become interested in her behaviour and decided to follow up and finally I discovered that her family situation is conducive for learning. My conclusion was that I discovered that Sarah needs assistance.

1.5 Research problem

Burns and Grove (2005:70-71) define a research problem as “a situation in need of a solution, improvement or alteration, a discrepancy between the way things are and the way they ought to be.

Teenage pregnancy is happening despite the fact that the government has prioritised health and education as essential departments. The research problem is that despite contraceptives being offered by the government to the public, teenage pregnancy is still increasing each and every year at our schools. This causes a high dropout rate in education. According to Crow and Pillai (2006:19-20) the effects of teenage childbearing have the following four outcomes, these outcomes include (1) not graduating from high school, (2) for daughters, becoming a teenage mother, (3) for daughters, having a teenage birth out of wedlock, and (4) being economically inactive at age 24. Teenage childbearing also has consequences in the health of adolescence. According to the National Centre for Chronic Diseases’ Prevention and Health Promotion [NCCDPHP] (1999:57-61), the possible consequences of adolescence pregnancy include:

- Social impact through leaving school thus resulting in lack of education or skill for a job and are unable to earn a living.
- Sexually transmitted infections because HIV poses a danger to women with STIs.
- Pregnancy and delivery pose a major health hazard for adolescents.
- Anaemia due to malnutrition, resulting in inadequate iron reserves as their bodies are still developing.
- Obstructed labour due to cephalous-pelvic disproportion, especially in very young adolescents (10- 14 years).
- Abortion, which poses the greatest direct threat to the young women's health.

Many researchers found these activities results in STIs, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortions and early childbearing (Karim et al 2008:18-22). This means that women under 18 years are at risk of pregnancy-related problems and complications during pregnancy and delivery.

From the background of this study, the researcher has identified four challenges within this community. They are classified as follows:

*Cultural background of a learner. We have seen that when they passed the stage of undergoing cultural rites, he or she is given adulthood status according customs rites. Maybe this can influence them into early sexual behaviour.

*Lack of pastoral leadership. The church is not taking leadership to protect those cultural activities which have values in the community. For example, girl initiation schools have been taken as the responsibility of the church in Venda. The independent churches were the front runners of this move after the traditional leaders became in favour of it. They saw the value of continuing with that practice.

*Lack of parental leadership. Working conditions of parents makes it difficult for them to give proper guidance to children.

*Educational leadership. Failure to implement sex education curricular increases teenager pregnancies.

1.6 Research question

After exploring the research problem of this study and also highlighting some problems found in this community, therefore, the following will be a suitable research question:

How can the Church partner with schools to solve teenage pregnancy?

In order to solve some of the problems, there are some research sub- questions which must be answered to bring us to a potential strategy to solve these problems. Here are they:

- What is the face of teenage pregnancy and the response of the church and school to this challenge in Kwaggafontein?
- What are the main causes of teenage pregnancy in Kwaggafontein?
- How can the church partner with schools to solve teenage pregnancy?

The research study was conducted in Kwaggafontein (Mkobola magistrate area). The local Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa was selected as a model for this research study. Mphalali Secondary school was selected to represent 12 secondary schools found in the circuit area.

1.7 Research objectives

Burns and Grove (2005:156) describe objectives as “clear, concise, declarative statement expressed in the present tense and for clarity with only one or two variables.”

Under these circumstances the researcher found the objectives of this study are to:

- Describe the face of teenage pregnancy and the response from the church and school.
- Describe the causes of teenage pregnancy.
- Develop a strategy for church partnerships with schools to solve teenage pregnancy.

1.8 Research design and methodology

The research background, research design problem, research question and research objectives have given us an indication of what is going on at Kwaggafontein. This study will focus on four questions designed by Osmer. Chapter two would describe what is going on. This is called a descriptive-empirical task because we observed and listened to the problems facing the church and the schools at Kwaggafontein. Chapter three would describe why it is happening. Chapter four would describe what ought to be going on. Chapter five would describe how the church respond. Therefore the purpose of this research is to evaluate how the church and the schools at Kwaggafontein respond to teenage pregnancy. Which strategy they might develop for a church partnership with schools to solve teenage pregnancy.

However, the main challenge faced by the researcher was pressure of time to finish according to the timeline allocated. Secondary data was supposed to be finally collected by May. But it was delayed until August due to some technical reason. Additional information from the Department of Education was finally collected by the first week of September. Another problem was the inclusion of Spirituality as part of the prevention strategy. It was very difficult to be clear with the topic since religion is about faith. Another challenge was from the collection of data from learners. It was difficult because

some of them were very sensitive when asked about things which concern their culture. Finally, the research did progress and findings were made in order for further research in future.

1.9 Methodology

Osmer (2008:49) describes quantitative research as research which concentrates on gathering and analysing numerical data to explore relationships between variables.

Unlike qualitative research (which deals with numbers to arrive at variables) quantitative research seeks to understand the actions and practices in which individuals and groups engage in everyday life and the meanings they ascribe to their experience. Quantitative research is helpful in discovering broad statistical patterns and relationships, while qualitative research is better suited to studying a small number of individuals, groups, or communities in depth (Osmer 2008:50).

Because this research aims at an in-depth view from teenagers about early pregnancy and also wishes to use small groups to get more information about teenage pregnancy, qualitative research is more preferable than quantitative research because of its nature of concentrating on bigger relationships within the groups. Osmer (2008:50) regards both these methods as continuum in variety of ways, he, therefore developed six strategies of qualitative research which are very helpful in this study. But this study focuses on narrative research. This strategy of inquiry focuses on gathering and telling the stories of individuals. Data is gathered through conversations in which people share stories of events in their lives (Osmer: 2008:50). The story of Sarah above tells us more about her socio- economic conditions at home.

Osmer (2008:51) indicated that sometimes these stories are found organised around “epiphanies” (significant events that have left their mark on the individual) or sometimes around settings and historical context. The work of the researcher is to listen for and draw out competing stories in people’s accounts of their lives. They also give people the chance to share stories on several occasions (Osmer2008:51).

1.10 Research plan

1.10.1 Setting

The research study was conducted in Kwaggafontein (Mkobola Magistrate area). The local Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA) was selected as a model of research for this study. Mphalali Secondary was selected to represents 12 Secondary schools found in the area.

1.10.2 Population

This research study targets adolescents or teenage girls between 10- 19 years, in Thembisile Hani Municipalities.

1.10.3 Sampling

Sampling was conducted at Mphalali Secondary school. Two teenage girls and boys were interviewed to get their in-depth views about pregnancy. They were selected from a group of 40 learners who were asked to give reasons why there is an increase in teenage pregnancy around the area. The reason of selecting them was to avoid disruption from a bigger group. Finally, a pregnant teenager was interviewed in order to get her feelings about falling pregnant at this stage in her life. The information gathered was used to represent all teenagers in S.A.

1.9.4 Data collection

Data collection is a systematic way of gathering information, which is relevant to the research purpose or questions (Burns and Grove 2005:421). The data was collected, written and submitted. It contains statistics from March 2013- March 2014.

1.9.5 Data analysis

Data was analysed using comparison of data gathered at Mphalali Secondary to represent all the secondary schools in the area. Primary schools (from grade 1- 6) were excluded. According to the stats the researcher received from Mphalali secondary school, they indicate that as from March 2013 to March 2014, 10 learners dropped out of school. These statistics are high because if 10 learners were lost in each of 12 schools per year (120 learners) which means that in 5 years 600 hundred learners won't matriculate. If taken throughout the country it represents a bigger number.

1.11 Reliability and Validity

According to Brink (2006:160) validity refers to “the degree to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.” In this case the researcher focussed on the content of validity, which is the degree to which the items in an instrument adequately represent the universe of the content. This was done by interviewing 5 learners at Mphalali Secondary in Kwaggafonte to review and validate the research question. Both teenagers, girls and boys, were separated but they gave similar statements such as money as a means of security, peer pressure, cultural beliefs and others.

1.12 Ethical consideration

Pera and Van Tonder (2005:4) define ethics as “a code of behaviour that is considered correct”. Therefore, this research study followed ethical conduct to prevent ethical

dilemmas. The researcher obtained permission from Mphalali school governing body to carry out this study. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, none of the names of the learners concerned has been used in this research.

1.13 Scope of the research

This research study is aimed at identifying and describing the face of teenage pregnancy and the responses from the church and schools to this challenge in Kwaggafontein. It also seeks to know the main causes of pregnancy in Kwaggafotein and what strategy can be employed to solve this challenge at the schools.

With the findings this research hopes to empower both the church and schools, to make informed decisions about their children's lives. The strategy which is going to be employed should focus on programmes that provide information to teenage girls in order to develop their life skills, so that they can continue with their education without becoming a drop out from school. In addition the findings of the study will contribute a lot to the department of education, not in Kwaggafontein alone but throughout South Africa. The church will be seen as a partner to change in both school and community. Moral teaching will come back to schools. Pastors, teachers and other members of the community will act as role models to young people.

1.14 Literature review

Polite and Beck (2004:88) indicated that a literature survey indicates what is known about an area of inquiring and suggests ways of conducting a research study on the topic of interest. Although the study focuses on teenage pregnancies, the researcher identifies four challenges within the community which is classified as the main causes of teenage

pregnancy. The challenges are as follows: lack of pastoral leadership, cultural practise, lack of parental leadership and educational leadership.

South Africa lacks proper school statistics on teenage pregnancy. The schools remain the main resource of official data. This the researcher found the school data to be authentic and could be used in this study. The data indicates the impact of teenage pregnancy in schools.

The literature review comprised of the following steps:

Keyword research was concluded for the general causes of teenage pregnancies, how schools and church should respond.

Studies also contained work dated between 2000 and 2009 and considered eligible for inclusion. However, seminal works prior to 2000 were also considered in this study. The reason behind this was to interrogate the work previously done by the scholars about this topic. This will help the researcher to draw a line of demarcation between the old culture and new culture of media.

The study based its theological interpretation on the work of Osmer (2008) in order to provide formidable research. The four questions to be answered by this study from the work done by Osmer are: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond? Finally, the researcher would provide an action plan for preventing teenage pregnancies

1.15 Research outline

Chapter 1 discusses the introduction to the study, background to the study, the research problem, research question, research objectives, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, scope of the research, and briefly outlines the study and defines key terms.

Chapter 2 discusses descriptive-empirical task – what is going on? Description of the context and the congregation within it.

It also discusses interpretative task – why is this going on? Delving more deeply into the context, that is, analysis and interpretation or sense-making. The main challenge is teenage pregnancy in Kwaggafontein schools. What role can the church play in resolving this problem?

Chapter 3 interprets and identifies the challenges of the context and congregation for an African Reformed praxis. It describes the research design and methodology, including the population and sample, data collection and data collection instrument.

Chapter 4 discusses the normative task – what ought to be going on? Deals with data analysis and interpretation. This is the reflective imagination: seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and conversation with Scriptures.

Chapter 4 discusses Biblical texts which casts light on teenage pregnancy. Reflection on teenage pregnancy and the Reformed tradition.

Chapter 5 pragmatic task – how might we respond? This is the findings and strategy to eliminate teenage pregnancy.

1.16 TIME LINES

- 24/05 – 08/06 – Focuses on small group interviews
- 9 – 13 June working out assignments 2/3
- 14 – 18 July – assignment s 2/3 submission
- 22 – 25 July – consultation week
- 1-5 September –submission of assignments 4/5
- 10 – 12 September – Integrative session and oral examination

- 10 October – submission of Dissertation for editing
- 17 October- resubmission for final correction
- 31 October deadline for submission of mini- dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND STUDY OF KWAGGWFONTEIN AREA

2.1 Introduction

My observation at Kwaggafontein.

Poverty in SA is found mostly in the rural areas and it is also associated with the rate of unemployment. Low socio-economic status is a significant predictor of teenage pregnancy among both young male and female parents. The concentration of poverty among African-American communities in the US means that young men from these communities are likely to father children while under the age of 20 compared to other race groups (Clark et al., 1984). Given the high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and teenage pregnancy among African and Coloured communities in SA, it can be reasonably assumed that early fatherhood would concentrate in these communities (HSRC, 2009). Who impregnates these teenage girls? Many studies have been undertaken regarding their real partners, others report partners being older. Larson et al., (1996) indicated that the mean age of male partners was 19.5 years, while Taylor et al., (1999) showed that teenage mothers were impregnated by males who were at least eight years older than themselves. The same thing was happening at my school because from the administration records we find that teenagers who fell pregnant were impregnated by older boys, mostly those who repeated grades more than once.

2.2 Teenage pregnancies

2.3 2.2.1 Kwaggafontein area

Kwaggafontein is comprised of 6 secondary schools which are Mphalali, Hlomani, Mafu, Entokozweni, Hluzinonao and Qibiliza. They are closely located at distance of 10 km apart. Parents of these learners are mostly working in Pretoria (Gauteng Province), which is about 120 km away from their homes. They travel daily to work and some of them sleep at work during the week and return home for the Week-end. Therefore, parental control is left in the hands of grandparents. Teenage girls are always exposed to sexual relationship at an early stage due to the lack of parental control, for the example data analysis collected from the Municipality from March 2013 – March 2014 indicated that 10 girl learners dropped out from school. This means that in five years, which would be up to matric level, over 300 learners will not reach grade 12 in record time. This is a huge concern for the researcher despite the fact that the Department of Basic Education research has indicated a decline in teen pregnancy, it looks like a gender issue where the Department is only concentrating on the girls instead of boys as well. It is against this background that this study would also want to investigate gender violence against children. This means the study would look into the emotional experience of the young father regarding pregnancy, would they dropout from school or not?

2.2.2 Socio-economic condition

Kwaggafontein population is composed of people who are semi-rural and are economically poor. Poverty is very high because most of the parents are domestic workers who use their skills in another province. Economically, there is not enough turn over although there is one shopping complex which is the only source of employment of casual workers. There are very few civil servants who are residing in this area.

2.2.3

2.2.4 2.2.3 Level of education

2.2.5 Level of literacy among the adult population is very low. The young adults are mostly drop out by Grade 12. This makes it difficult to find work in the market place. Those who manage to pass grade 12 satisfactorily are attending Universities in different areas, but they are lost to the community due to work scarcity. Therefore, they join other provinces, especially Gauteng to work.

2.2.4. Cultural activities

Southern “amaNdebele” community in Kwaggafontein is a community which likes to practice their culture in totality. The parents have played a significant role in the formation of their children’s character. Parents are the primary teachers and disciplinarians. They educate their children in the ways of their ancestors according to amaNdebele tradition.

They like to practise “*Mophato*” (*Ingoma*) where young men would be taught about what is expected of them in the community and also being responsible towards adulthood. Girls also have “*Mophato*” (*Liqude*). This “*Mophato*” is the initiation schools for both girls and boys. The aim of these schools is to give lessons about sexual behaviour and relationships including what would be expected from them after their graduation. There is a belief that if someone did not attend “*Mophato*” he or she will remain unacceptable within the community. Finally, “amaNdebele” people have a sense of “Ubuntu” because they accommodate each and every person within their communities. They uphold values like respect, honesty, and integrity. They tolerate the practice of cultural activities of other people.

2.2.5 Religions

“amaNdebele” residing in Kwaggafontein are pluralistic because they practise both Christianity and African Traditional Religion. This is clearly seen during the time of “*Mophato*” or “*ingoma*” where goats are slaughtered to appease the gods in order to handover the young men to adulthood. Over and above Christianity is traditional religion which is common among the people. This is found when there is a gathering; their meeting starts with a prayer. Both churches are found within this community (Independent and established churches). Christianity is also allowed to be practiced at different schools. There are no other religions accepted in their local schools.

2.3 Church response to teenage pregnancy

As background for this study, the researcher referred to the Tshivenda proverb which says: “*a huna mudu u sina tshihole*”. In English it is translated to say that there is no house without problems. If considered theologically, it will simply mean that as a Christian family we are also affected by the problem of teenage pregnancies which causes girls to drop out from schools at an early age. As noted above the Kwaggafontein area comprises of Christians, the researcher highlights this issue as part of a theological concern. As Christians we are one just like our father who is one with Christ.

Paul, understand this to mean we are members of the same family. Each member of the family is closely connected with each other. In Christ we are one Body in many parts (1 cor.12:12-31) Vs 26-says if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Therefore, the church of Christ has a responsibility towards one another. If

pregnancy affects one of teenager in the congregation, then it becomes the suffering of the whole church of Christ.

2.3.1 URCSA in Kwaggafontein

URCSA in Kwaggafontein is the Hlanganani congregation which is the biggest in the Middelburg presbytery. Hlanganani congregation was established in 1981 and with Kwaggafontein and Siyabuswa congregations being the two main branches. The congregation is ministered to by Rev.T.C. Nene. It comprises of 13 branches and has a membership of 2540 of which Kwaggafontein branch has 320 members. The congregation itself is involved in many activities through various sub committees such as the arrangement committee, Christian Women Ministry, Christian Women's League and Christian Youth Ministry. All these sub-committees are active in the church.

2.3.2 Their income level

Kwaggafontein congregation has a large in inequality gap between the rich and the poor. The statistics of income level of the members of the congregation as follows:

- Middle income – R10 000 and above mostly civil servants comprises only 20% membership.
- Lower income level – earning R3500 – R10 000 comprises 35% membership
- Unemployed comprises 50% of church membership.

This statistics indicate that most of the teenage girls are from poor families. They lack parental care as indicated above. Therefore, they are highly vulnerable to pregnancies in their young

stage. For example, the result of the interviews the researcher had conducted with different groups of boys and girls separately provided the following findings.

- Some of the teenage pregnancies are from the parenting of elderly people
- Peer pressure plays an important role such as receiving a social grant which is seen as the way to pocket money.
- Cultural activities, like *ingoma* and *liqude* has an impact on teen pregnancy.

These findings are likely the same with that of the Department of Basic Education although they might differ on the issue of social grants. The church does not respond to the socio-economic condition of people residing at Kwaggafontein.

2.3.3 Socio-political matters

Sexuality is a socio-political matter in the sense that it is male dominant. Throughout the bible sexuality has been described in terms of respect for ownership rights of men over women and children. Theologically the scripture is regarded as revelatory and sometimes counter-revelatory. According to Gudorf (1994:1) today the churches are still teaching theological conclusions originally based in ignorance of women's genetic contribution to off spring, ignorance of the processes of gender identity and of sexual orientation, and ignorance of the learned basis of most gender differences. This simply mean that the church is not involved in educating its members about sexuality.

There can be little doubt that the authors of Genesis 34, judges 19, and II Samuel 13 meant that the amount of the rape of Dinah, the Levites concubine, and Tamar were to be a clear message to the render that injury in Israel was to be avenged in order that Gods justice prevail. This in

another sense indicates to us readers that women were property whose welfare was not important in itself (for nothing was done to redress their loss) (Gudorf 1994:4). Therefore, the injury caused to these women was only important when they were being used to protect their male counterparts. The author of Leviticus 18:6-18 also presented a list of persons with whom a man is forbidden sexual congress and disregarding the status of women in the society. It is clear from the Old Testament reading that the status of women was subjected to an above and nowhere were their rights recognised over that of men. In the New Testament the researcher has a record of Jesus which tells us little about his approach to sexuality, either personally or pedagogically, except for his radical openness to women which he demonstrated by the inclusion of women in his travelling band, contrary to the practices of the day (Lk,8:1-3). What are considered feminine activities such as housecleaning (Lk15:8-9) and baking bread (Mt.13:3) were included in parables. Yet, he refused Martha's request to make Mary accept a domestic role for women rather than to join Jesus and his disciples (Lk.10:38-42). He disregarded customs which limited women's social intercourse to male family members (John 4:7-29, esp. 9 and 27).

However, the researcher found this touching that Jesus had given a special role to the women in his ministry. In the case of Martha, her requests were rejected on the basis that women no longer preferred to stay in a domestic role, instead they should join the other disciples in doing Jesus Christ's work. In the case of the Samaritan woman Jesus wanted to demonstrate that although politically and socially women were developed others in opposition had come to destroy this ideology. Verse 9: "you are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" this separation was a form of apartheid which the present teenage girls are feeling by being oppressed by the virtue of being women irrespective of the fact that they are created in the

image of God. Verse 27 indicates clearly that even they were surprised because they did not understand his calling of creating a special place for women in the leadership of his gospel.

2.3.4 Church and culture

Kwaggafontein congregation has many activities functioning in the church. Although the Christian Women's League and Christian Youth League are functional in the church there is still a patriarchal arrangement in the church. What is going on here is that women and children and particularly girls are not given the freedom to practising any autonomy in the church. They are still subjected to punishment if found pregnant while boys are not for instance.

This form of Christian tradition still plays a big role in the Kwaggafontein congregation. The church is failing to understand the chance given to Peter in the Acts of the Apostles when he was forced to admit Gentiles to the Christian Community. This means that the new Testament forces us to set aside the past in the Christian tradition for Paul in Galatians 3:28, says: There is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female, in the lord....Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church ... (Eph. 5:25). These indicate that Christian tradition influenced men to love their wives and women to respect their husbands (Eph. 5:33).

In the same vein, contrast I Timothy 2:15 "yet woman will be saved through childbearing," with Jesus words in Luke 11:27-28, "As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and cried, Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that gave you suck!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" This indicates that women are saved either by the exercise of their productive function or by following the path of discipleship laid by Jesus for men and women alike. However, it was the intention of the researcher to seek some

changes in the Christian tradition. The violence, abuse and rape which is directed to teenage girls should discourage at all costs.

According to Zellman (1981) traditionally schools and churches were often seen to have programs on sex education, contraception and abortion. Schools now find their programs to be demanding and requiring a lot of money and therefore decided to drop them. On the other hand churches are no-longer interested in school matters or programs, hence they also stopped promoting sex education programs. The other thing which makes things difficult for the churches to carry on with these programs might be the changes required in order to implement them within the Christian tradition. For example, today the churches cannot preach in favour of contraception and abortion because there are debates still going on in these matters. The church is not prepared to be liberated and remains conservative. Karl Barth quoted by Osmer (2008) referred the church to go back to reading the Bible with a Newspaper, meaning that the church should take account of the changes which are happening around it.

Zellman (1981) also noted that schools in both liberal and conservative communities tend to take for granted the existence of a special program they think is a sufficient response to student pregnancy and parenthood. They don't have policies in place for such programs. Therefore, it is against this background that the researcher seeks to investigate how the churches and schools can partner together in order to solve teenage pregnancies. This is the central question of this research project.

2.4 The researcher's response to teenage pregnancy

This study exposes what is happening regarding teenage pregnancy around Kwaggafontein. The response from Basic Education indicated that pregnancy in school is declining due to a low

fertility rate. But their research failed to address such issues of how to bring back teenage girls to school after they have given birth. Issues such as the stigma they might have to face, socialisation and school support were also not clearly addressed.

The researcher found it very difficult to overcome this problem, except if the level of literacy could be improved then there might be some hope of solving this problem of teenage pregnancy. Teenage girls must accept this responsibility that they are grown up and can handle problems relating to sex. Schools and churches if they can work together they can succeed in preventing teenage pregnancy.

Another matter which requires a response is regarding church tradition which sometimes is seen as politics within the church. Jesus Christ came to liberate us from the bondage of sin. No tradition or what so ever can stand between us and the love of God. Church tradition taken from the Old Testament and the New Testament indicates that a violation of women's rights is still a problem within the church. Women are still regarded as subordinate to men. The liberation which was brought by Christ is not yet accepted in the church. The churches still treat women as subordinates. Teenage pregnancies are still regarded as sinful, no matter what the circumstances.

Another problem is the religious culture of the church. Schools and churches are both failing with the problem of teenage pregnancy. There are some special programs which deal with pregnancies but schools and churches are not coming on board to implement such kind of programs. The main issue is with two things which are not being liberated and remaining conservative. Both these institutions fail to understand their calling. The schools remain unchanged. At the same time until churches do not want to be seen to loosen up its character by becoming too liberal by supporting contraceptives and/or abortion if a teenager happened to

become pregnant due to rape for instance. The scripture cannot be compromised. This situation leaves teenage girls in real predicament of not knowing what to choose. Therefore this leaves us with the two institutions in collaboration so that they can find a solution for teenage pregnancy.

2.5 Conclusion.

This chapter outlined the problem being addressed. The researcher indicated all views from different participants and tried to expose the problem of teenage pregnancy in Kwaggafontein. The element of traditional manhood surfaces throughout the discussion in such that women and children were oppressed by men.

CHAPTER 3

TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Why is this happening? This chapter deals with secondary sources. We shall be looking into how other scholars have conducted their research on teenage pregnancy.

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher discovered that teenage pregnancy is rife in our schools, especially in the rural areas. Although the Department of Basic Education research indicated a decline in teenage pregnancies due to the decline in fertility (HSRC, 2009). The focus has now been diverted to the awareness of HIV/AIDS campaign. Teenage pregnancy is now given little coverage if any. Researches such as Macleod, Scott-Jones Turner (2000) are concerned about the lack of coverage because it will lead the adolescent to a lower socio-economic life.

Studies from Furstenberg, Brodes-Gunn, and Morgan (1987) on the other hand, followed up on teenage mothers who were first studied by Furstenberg (1976) and concluded that the women who had become pregnant during adolescence are at risk of remaining at a lower level of education and income; comparable to women who had delayed pregnancy. It is found that those who delayed had a far better education and income level are than teenage mothers. In South Africa studies by Boulton, Brenda and Cunningham (1992) discovered that only 50% of their sample of Black adolescents planned to return to school after pregnancy. Then, the question will be what will become of the remaining 50%. The research found this as a challenge to the community.

Another concern which this research is noting is the failure by South African scholars and the Department of basic education to be clear about the situation of the boys who have caused teenage pregnancies. According to Mpanza and Nzima (2010:431-439) boys should also be held responsible for unplanned fatherhood. They said that they need to be involved in decisions regarding the baby. They, too, have to adapt to the role of fatherhood. The researcher agrees with these researchers on the basis that if not taken to task, they would continue to cause this problem and indicated by other research the effect of having a teenage pregnancy means that economically the boys would always outshine girls in the market place.

The last concern of this study would be the involvement of the churches and schools in preventing teenage pregnancy. The churches programmes, for instance availability of sports and social facilities in the rural areas can help to bring down teenage pregnancy. According to Gurdof (1994) most Christian families turn to scripture as a primary source of morality. They also refer to sexuality in terms of the Christian way. But what is happening now is that the churches and schools are operating separately and no programs are being implemented together.

3.2. Understanding Adolescence /Teenager

Adolescence is “the period between the onset of puberty and full maturity of youth” (Brooker 2006). Teenage pregnancy as an aspect of family dysfunction has been described in a number of ways. Heaven (2001) describes adolescence as a stage where one is always in crisis of self-identity which is caused by the result of the move from dependency to independence and it is mainly on sexual roles and gender identification during this period where adolescents are negative and in the process of becoming independent and always making friendships with others of a similar age and interests. Mazer (1972) found that pregnancy was one of the ways in which teenagers respond to family breakdown. He also found that both social class and income levels not to be relevant factors in determining which families were at risk of breakdown.

Waters (1969) suggests that teenage pregnancy is one indicator of the syndrome of failure to remain in school, to achieve the adolescent functions of separating oneself from one’s parents determination of sex role, development of a value system and choice of a vocation, the failure of limiting family size, the failure to establish a stable family, failure to be self- supporting, and the failure to have healthy infants. All these are found as things which can be given for a better understanding of teenage pregnancy. This indicates to us that many teenagers have not been adequately prepared to deal with a sexuality crisis

3.3 Causes of teenage pregnancies

Many scholars have given us causes of teenage pregnancies but most of them do not agree to a proper solution of handling teenagers who find themselves in that crisis. The church which has been regarded as the master mind of bringing social responsibility within the community also failed to produce programmes which will help to prevent teenage pregnancies, instead, it

punished pregnant girls and left the boys who are also responsible for those pregnancies. There are many factors which cause teenage pregnancies. These are some found as follows.

3.3.1 General factor

In societies where adolescent marriage is less common, such as in many developed countries, more mature youth have their first sexual experience at a later age. But if they do indulge in sexual relations without the use of contraception this is considered to be an unplanned pregnancy. In attempt to reverse the increasing numbers of teenage pregnancy governments in many western countries have instituted sex education programs, the main objective of which is to reduce such pregnancies and STD's.

3.3.2 Early Menstruation (*menarche*)

The earlier the occurrence of *menarche*, the earlier the biological possibility of conceiving. In most countries, most men experience sexual intercourse for the first time before their 20th birthday. Several polls have indicated peer pressure as a factor in encouraging both girls and boys to have sex. The increased sexual activity among adolescents is manifested in increased teenage pregnancy and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases. (Clapp et al, 2003) found that in Tanzania, the age of *menarche* was between 13 and 15 years, and was associated with increased sexual activity, which put teenagers at risk of unwanted pregnancies and STIs. In the South Hsho-Hho region of Swaziland, Dlamini, Van der Merwe and Ehlers (2003) found that the average age of *menarche* was 11 years, and their first sexual intercourse was reported to happen between the ages of 11 and 14. Due to the lack of knowledge advice and emotional support, the youngsters practised unsafe sex and were not aware that they could become pregnant or contract

HIV/AIDS. In South Africa teenage pregnancy is common between 14-17 years of age. But it is very much found from age 17 years (HSRC: 2009).

3.3.3 Socio-economic and cultural factors

Teenage pregnancy has been defined predominantly within the research field and among social agencies as a social problem. Poverty is associated with increased rates of teenage pregnancy. Countries which are economically poor have far more teenage mothers compared with economically rich countries (SIECUS). Blum (2000:5) regards factors like early dating, unconventional psychosocial attitudes and some risk behaviour, such as the early use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, school problems, delinquency, and physical aggression are associated with earlier onset of adolescent sexual intercourse. Other factors include lower family income, less supervision, parental modelling, and more permissive attitudes in single-parent families are also causes of teenage pregnancy. This also confirmed by Ellis, et al (2003:821) research which indicated that the fathers' absence had a greater impact on their daughters' sexual activity and teenage pregnancy than on other behavioural or mental health problems or academic achievement. This indicates the role played by the father in the family. Culturally the father is regarded as a head of the family in which his absence is easily felt.

3.3.4 Educational status

The lack of education on sex, whether it is from parents, schools, or otherwise, is a cause of teenage pregnancy. Many teenagers are not taught about methods of birth control and how to deal with peers who pressure them into having sex before they are ready. Many pregnant teenagers do not have any cognition of the central facts of sexuality (SIECUS). Venture, et al (2004:1-9) concluded that women with more education are more likely to delay child bearing.

For example, in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, more women with less than seven years' education have a child before they are 18 than those with seven or more years of education. This also applies in developed countries like USA, where approximately 30% of young girls who have less than a basic education fell pregnant before the age of 18. This means that education has an impact on teenage pregnancies.

3.3.5 Sexual violence

Studies have indicated that adolescent girls are often in abusive relationships at the time of their conceiving. They have also reported that knowledge of their pregnancy has often intensified violent and controlling behaviour from their boyfriend. Girls under age 18 are more likely to be beaten by their child's father than women over age 18. In UK, the study found that 70% of women who gave birth in their teens had experienced adolescent domestic violence. Similar results were also found in a USA study (SIECUS). In South Africa the statistics are also very high. An estimated one in five cases (21%) of sexual assault in the country occurs in the school setting (Leoschut & Burton, 2006:20).

A national school violence study revealed that nearly one in five (19%) of secondary school learners experienced sexual assault on two occasions at school, while a third (33%) experienced it on three occasions. Report rates of sexual abuse were higher for Limpopo than for other provinces (Burton, 2008). Girls are at higher risk of sexual abuse than boys (Van der Merwe, Dawes & Ward, 2011). (Madu & Peltzer, 2001) reported that 62% of cases of unwanted sexual intercourse involved peers. This indicates a higher rate of sexual violence against girls. A conclusion of this of sexual violence is often pregnancy which often causes a dropout from school.

3.3.6 Peer pressure

As children make the transition from childhood to adolescence and engage in the process of identity formation, their reliance on parents and siblings as the sole sources of influence and decision making begins to change (HSRC, 2009). Increased interaction with other role models such as best friends, peers, teachers and community members, begin to expand their sphere of influence. Peer attitudes, norms and behaviour as well as perceptions of norms and behaviour among peers have a significant and consistent impact on adolescent sexual behaviour (HSRC, 2009). Studies have shown that when teenagers believe that their friends are having sex, they are more likely to have sex and when a positive perception about use of condoms is perceived among peers, adolescents are more likely to use condoms and contraceptives (Kirby, 2002; Sieving et al., 2006). This indicates a very sensitive stage of adolescence. Pregnancy may occur due to the lack of information.

3.3.7 Role of drug and alcohol use

Several South African studies have found a link between alcohol and drugs and teenage pregnancy (Morojele & Brook 2006:6). In addition, substance abuse by parents interferes with their ability to care for and monitor their children. The teenage mother would be unable to care for the baby if she has taken drugs. The drugs with the strongest evidence linking them to teenage pregnancy are alcohol, cannabis, “ecstasy” and other substituted amphetamines. The drugs with the least evidence to support a link to early pregnancy are uploads, such as heroin morphine, and oxycodone (SIECUS). In SA teenage pregnancy is caused by the use of drugs like alcohol, poor performance at school and poverty (HSRC, 2009). The abuse of alcohol and drugs in the informal settlements and urban areas remains the main cause of pregnancy. The HSRC

(2009) also suggests that the SA history of racial classification, inequality to the access of education and economic opportunities as well as health services are major causes of the abuse of drugs by teenagers, mostly Blacks and Coloured in South Africa.

3.3.8 Lack of contraception

Adolescents may lack knowledge of, or access to, conventional methods of preventing pregnancy, as they may be too embarrassed or frightened to seek such information.

Contraception for teenagers presents a huge challenge for the clinician. Young women often think of contraception either as the pill or condoms and have little knowledge about other methods. They are heavily influenced by negative, second-hand stories about methods of contraception from their friends and the media. Prejudices are extremely difficult to overcome. Over concern about side effects, for example weight gain and acne, often affect choice. Missing up to three pills a month is common among adolescents (SIECUS)

Most of the surveys conducted in developed countries indicated that those involved in unprotected sex is due to the following three reasons: trouble obtaining birth control (the most frequent reason), lack of intention to have sex, and the misconception that they “could not get pregnant”. In other cases, contraception is used, but proves to be inadequate. Inexperienced adolescents may use condoms incorrectly, forget to take oral contraceptives or fail to use the contraceptives they had previously chosen. Contraceptive failure rates are higher for teenagers, particularly poor ones, than for older users (SIECUS).

But in SA the use or non-use of contraception depends on the beliefs of that particular community. Learners have enough knowledge about sex education but the myth of using contraception has more impact in the increase of teenage pregnancy we have in the country.

3.3.9 Age discrepancy in relationships

According to the Family Research Council, a conservative lobbying organisation, studies in the US indicate that age discrepancy between the teenage girls and the men who impregnate them is an important contributing factor. Teenage girls in relationships with older boys, and in particular with adult men, are more likely to become pregnant than teenage girls in relationships with boys of their own age. They are more likely to carry the baby to term rather than have an abortion. For example, studies by the population Reference Bureau and National Centre for Health Statistics found that about two-thirds of children born to teenage girls in the US are fathered by adult men age 20 or older (SIECUS). In SA pregnancy is found mostly in mixed gender schools (HSRC, 2009). It is true that one of its main causes is from older boys who are repeating one grade for many times. It is mostly found from boys who come from low income homes and seldom have the financial resources to support the child and the mother (HSRC, 2009).

3.3.10 Childhood environment

Women exposed to abuse, domestic violence, and family strife in childhood are more likely to become pregnant as teenagers, and the risk of becoming pregnant as a teenager increases with the number of adverse childhood experiences. According to Venture et al., (2004) study, one-third of teenage pregnancies could be prevented by eliminating exposure to abuse, violence, and family strife. The researchers note that family dysfunction has enduring and unfavourable health consequences for women during their adolescent years, the childbearing years, and beyond. Studies have also found that girls whose fathers left the family early in their lives had the highest rates of early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy (SIECUS). In SA the study from HSRC

(2009) found a similar way as the main perpetrator of teenage pregnancy. For example, family structure where the mother is the breadwinner.

3.3.11 Media influence

Sexuality in the media was also more likely to cause engagement in sexual activity. Many health educators have argued that comprehensive sex education would effectively reduce the number of teenage pregnancies, although opponents argue that such education encourages more and earlier sexual activity. Intervention, combining education and contraceptives appears to reduce unplanned teenage pregnancy, however, not one intervention yet stands out as most effective (SIECUS). But in SA, media like advertisement and Newspapers, influences sexual activities to take part. The main one is the lack of acceptability of services, such as the attitudes of health staff, and of the teachers as main causes because teens avoid them due to the stigma experienced.

3.4 Supportive environment for teenage girls.

To answer the question: why is this going on? The researcher came to the conclusion that there are some components within the community and the family which need to be consulted if one needs to prevent the spreading of teenage pregnancies.

3.4.1 Parents

In the past education was transmitted orally by word of mouth. Parents were responsible for educating their children according to the moral standard of their family and the community at large. A child learns moral values, respect and a sense of responsibility from home. Teenage pregnancy was taboo to the family and the community at large. Today things have changed due to industrialisation. Parents are working all over in order to support their children. The work of

parenthood is left in the hands of grandparents or other relatives who are not working. Most the parent will see their children is over the weekend. Let's consider the case of Sarah Mnguni she became pregnant due to the lack of sexual knowledge from her grandparents. Staying in a tavern was very dangerous at her age that is why she become pregnant.

Bkum (2000:1-5) emphasises that parents should mould their children's lives, know their friends, what their friends do, and who their friends parents are. This means the parents will able to correct their children against the use of drugs and alcohol which is seen as some of the sources of teenage pregnancy. According to Osmer (2008:104) drug use and alcohol use are viewed as by-products of certain psychological characteristics like low self-esteem high anxiety, shyness and less impulsive control. People use drugs and alcohol to cope with certain deficits in social life. Parents should also be able to explain to their teenage children the changes in their bodies like use of alcohol to cope with life. The father should help the boy child while the mother helps the girl child. Girls should have a clear understanding of ovulation, fertilisation, pregnancy and childbirth before the onset of menstruation (Marlow and Redding 2001:1122). This will help them to engage in safe sexual activity before they are 20. This will also help them to avoid the risk of contracting STDs and HIV/AIDS. According to Moore, et al (2004:1-8), having better educated parents, supportive family relationship, parental supervision, sexually abstinent friends, good friends and attending church frequently are all related to later onset of sexual activity. However the researcher found the lack of parental supervision, lack of educated parents and church attendance, and alcohol abuse in Kwaggafontein as the main cause of teenage pregnancy.

3.4.2 Community

The community is seen as a secondary educator. It is a place where information, communication and education exists through group participation in relation to the changes in teenage boys and girls. It is the work of community leaders to engage teenagers about sexuality and consequences there of. Teenagers are often poorly informed about sex and body functions and tend to see sexual intercourse as something mechanical, devoid of emotion. Often a teenage girl who gets pregnant is not close to her mother (Rolfe 1992). This is where the community should be seen playing a big role in placing programs which will help teenagers. But HSRC (2009:17) discovered that community participation among young people is very low in SA and the spread of large-scale interventions in the community such as loveLife is not optimal. In addition, given that stigma about adolescent sexuality and imbalanced gender relations are also generated at community level and replicated within homes and the health setting, instituting interventions to shift community norms may be an effective method to open up channels of communication about sex, to improve young people's access to health services and to foster equitable gender relations. According to Osmer (2008:106) teenagers at this stage need help because it is a time of many psychological changes indicating identity formation and increased reliance on the peer group. These kinds of development issues make teens vulnerable to drugs and alcohol.

3.4.3 School

Schools are regarded as a centre of learning and as such are not fully equipped with library information which is necessary for teaching. Girls do not know much about the consequences of early childbirth as such you find that a large majority of young woman have their first sexual experience while they are teenagers. Teachers also receive insufficient training on reproductive

health issues. They fail to implement the sex education programs provided. Issues such as stressing the importance of the father being the person to educate his son about sex, and outlines how a father can do this Rolfe (1992). Gender issues are a problem boys have and still regard themselves superior to girls. Because of this violence against girls is very high. Unreported rape due to forced sexual intercourse is also very high. The stigma girls suffer after pregnancy is not cared for and there are no programs to support the victims of pregnancy at school. For example Sara Mnguni was not provided with support to enable her to cope at school. It is against this back ground that the main objective of this research was to develop the strategy of averting this problem.

3.4.4 Socio-political and economic structures

Socially there is poverty resulting in a trade-off between health and economic security such as the reciprocity of sex in exchange for money or goods. During some of the interviews both groups indicated that some of the teenage pregnancies occurred with an adult man for money or other material things. They further narrate that some pregnancies are due to rape, sometimes from step fathers or biological fathers and cannot be reported to the police because their mothers are afraid for their marriages and it is an insult to report such matter to the police.

3.4.5 Church programs

The church programs should create a positive attitude towards discussion about socially responsible sexual attitudes and behaviour. Schaafma (SIECUS) said that a comprehensive sex education should include information about a positive and healthy attitude towards sexually transmitted diseases, media discernment and moral and ethical decision making. A communal discussion that affirms the goodness of sexuality while teaching management of sexual disease

and drives could play a vital role in reclaiming the beauty and decency of sexuality in a culture that does much to ruin both.

3.4.6 Health providers and government

Health providers, like clinics and other health counsel centres have failed to assist parents on the value of sex education and the consequences of giving birth to a child in the early stage of teenage development. Parents also have no knowledge of the importance of displaying moral values and delaying sexual activity and encouraging the use of condoms and contraception for those who are sexually active at an early age. The government should also continue to develop strategies to assist adolescents by having clinics with services that are accessible, affordable and friendly where they can be counselled about reproductive issue.

3.4.7 Cultural support

The influence of teenage pregnancy needs to be considered according to different cultural perspectives. In certain cultures, teenage pregnancy is accepted and welcomed (Kirby, 2002 & Melby, 2006) and this can impact on teenage attitudes towards pregnancy and, in turn, their behaviour. For example, Jewkes and Christofides (2008) cited the silence of literature on teenage pregnancy among Indian and White South Africans. Understanding the protective factors in these groups could offer important lessons for preventing early childbearing among Black and Coloured adolescents. Anecdotal evidence suggests that pre-marital pregnancy is not accepted in these groups, due to the level of stigma as well as the high incentive to continue education and achieve financial aspirations and so forth. This makes most White and Indian adolescents avoid pregnancy. When it does occur, pregnancy is either terminated or couples get married and share

financial and social responsibility for the child (Jewkes & Christofides, 2008). This reduces early pregnancy among them.

The research conducted among Black adolescents found early pregnancy occurs due to power imbalances in sexual relationships between men and women. Sexuality among Blacks and Coloured is associated with violence, cultural constructions of feminist and masculinity (Eaton et al., 2003). While sexual activity is the norm and encouraged among friends, having an early pregnancy is regarded as poor female decorum and subject to severe stigma by family and friends. Young women are stigmatised as “bad”, ruined, a failure (HSRC, 2009).

3.4.8 Education and communication

Teenage pregnancies are happening because of the lack of knowledge according to Khoza (2004:39) adolescent girls should be educated because education can reduce fertility. This can happen by:

- Removing a girl’s domestic environment where early marriage is being encouraged.
- Allowing women to gain skills and education that may give them greater independence and social freedom
- Encouraging women to achieve educational ambitions and marry later.

Adolescents also need to gain knowledge on reproductive health issues like preventing pregnancy at an early stage. They must also learn that sexual relations come with the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS when it is practised without using condoms. Sometimes boys are ready to use condoms, but the girl are not because they have poor knowledge on the use of condoms. In the research conducted by Paltzer (2000:40) it was found that the majority of secondary school respondents indicated their source of condom information was the radio, television, educational

talks, newspaper social health magazine, poster and pamphlets and health care providers. This information in South Africa is supplied freely.

Teenage pregnancies may also occur due to the lack of sex education in the schools or community. According to Khoza (2004:40-41) sex education has been found to be successful in promoting abstinence, decreasing sexual activity increasing the use of safer practices, increasing teenage sexual responsibility and increasing sex-related knowledge towards more responsible sexual decision making. In addition, delaying the age at which the first sexual encounter occurs, and not encouraging earlier sexual activity or multiple sexual partners.

3.4.9 Adolescents knowledge about the consequences of early pregnancy

Studies have been carried out regarding the consequences of early childbearing on the life course of adolescents internationally. Few studies have been conducted in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet the outcome of teenage pregnancy can be vastly different depending on the context (Falk et al, 2006). However, the general consensus is that since teenage pregnancy is mostly unplanned (Cassel, 2002), and often coincides with other transitions such as schooling it can result in negative consequences for the teenager and particularly for the child (Kirby, 2007).

In order to see the impact of early pregnancy and a lesson from it Hoffman (2006) and Kirby (2007) gave the following summary corresponding to the health and socio-economic consequences of teenage pregnancy:

Health Consequences	Economic Consequences
Elevated risks of maternal death	Lower family income

Risk of obstetric complications	Increase dependency ratio
Low birth weight	Exacerbated poverty
High risk of infant mortality	Children most likely to be poor
School dropout	Stigma and discrimination
School absenteeism	Less likely to be married
Poor academic performance	Most likely to suffer abuse

The table makes it clear that teenagers need to know the results of having early pregnancy in order to avoid it before it happens.

3.5 Spirituality

This concept is mostly ignored by most of the researchers of teenage pregnancy. Spirituality is one of the vital aspects which can be used to prevent teenage pregnancy. There is a link between spirituality, health promotion, and development of self-consciousness of a person. Human beings have an inner unmet need, which is more to be likely spiritual in nature. Spirituality may be especially important for adolescents' search for self-identity, life purpose, life direction, and meaning of life (Wuthnow, 1998). Spirituality is an ever-increasing search for and commitment to life purpose, a life direction and a meaning. Its main purpose is to construe our world-view, organise our day-to-day living and assess our way of life (Lowman et al, 1996).

Chatter (2002) states that spirituality and spiritual concerns are particularly important for understanding health-related behaviour which destroys young men and women's lives: like

smoking, drinking excessively and so forth. These were earlier identified as some of the causes of teenage pregnancy. According to a poll by Gallup and Jones (2000), teenagers say they believe in God (95%), they pray when alone (75%), and have a great interest in discussing the existence of God (64%). This indicates a high number of teenagers who believe in God.

Therefore, spiritual disintegration reinforces one's desire to engage in risky palliative self-absorption behaviour such as early and risky sexual activity (Taylor, Obiechina and Harrison 1998). Spirituality can help to reduce teenage pregnancies by building an individual self-consciousness of her existence as a human being created in God's Image.

3.6. Conclusion

The whole of chapter three was exploring why teen age pregnancies are happening. We have outlined the cause of pregnancy and also the environment which can be conducive to support teenager girls. We discussed the gender issues which prevents boys from giving support to prevent a pregnancy. Fatherhood is taken part in support of preventing a pregnancy.

We draw in the church into our discussion by analysing church tradition, poverty, education and communication and finally teachers. African spirituality as a final solution but remains ignored all the time, especially the URCSA. The researcher echoed the need of looking into this new concept which is carrying on within our churches. Finally, the researcher gave an over view of what he experienced as a challenge in our Christian life.

The next chapter 4 must answer the question, "what ought to be going on?" Osmer describes the question "Ought" as equal to say: "what shall we do?" in line with the first question: "what is going on? This leaves us in a situation where moral responsibility is demanded from us against

obedience to moral laws and command. We should be looking critically into the theological and ethical interpretation of what ought to be going on?

CHAPTER 4

4. CHURCH AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

4.1 Theological reflection on teenage pregnancy

In the previous chapter the researcher discussed all the factors which cause teenage pregnancy.

In this chapter the researcher imagines a world without teenage pregnancy. In his imagination this can be achieved if both institutions work together. The bible has some violent, patriarchal and oppressive structures which excludes women and children and often dehumanising them.

For example, the author of Deuteronomy (22: 28-29) records this: If a man happens to meet a virgin and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives".

This gives us another example that the bible is a sexist book which promotes only men; it is found to be oppressing women and children. Another indication is that teenagers were victims of sexuality. They can be easily raped by adult men as long as they have money to pay the damage.

This kind of situation still exists in our community at Kwaggafontein. When interviewing the group of students (boys and girls) they indicated that many teenage girls were impregnated by adult men (sugar daddies). The reason behind this was the search for money. Particularly in our place where the community is poor and parents are working very far away.

Another incident which makes the bible to be seen as an oppressive book was the pregnancy of the Virgin Mary, (Luke 1:26-38). Mary was a teenager when the angel Gabriel visited her in

Nazareth. This also indicates the oppression of teenage girls. The researcher may ask: Did Mary undergo church discipline? How can a church leader answer that question if it can be asked in the catechism class or in any community meeting? All these theological questions needs the discernment of God (what ought to be going on?).

According to Osmer (008:137) discernment is the activity of seeking God's guidance in the circumstances, events, and decisions of life. To discern means to shift or to weigh the evidence before reaching a decision. The apostle Paul also encourages his congregations to develop the practices of the prophets, to test the spirits, and to make decision and settle disputes in the community (Osmer 2008:137). This means that every Christian community may create its own interpretive guide for seeking God's guidance. For example, in Kwaggafointein the challenges facing the community are poverty, education, poor health facilities, service delivery and so forth. These factors are united as the main cause of teenage pregnancy.

From our previous discussion, one has seen how the bible oppressed women and children. Therefore, it is the calling of all Congregational leaders to develop a way of preparing comforting words to offer these suffering girls during their sermon or any other teaching conducted in the church. According to Osmer (2008:139) the Congregational leaders should first have to admit that they do not know what they are to say and do so in humility and trust, actively seeking God's guidance.

The Bible dehumanises women and children. The raping of teenage girls was very common. Girls were considered inferior compared to other human beings. The book of Luke (1:46-55) indicates clearly through the song of Mary -meaning a humble girl, though not much recognised in terms of Jewish law, is now going to be known by generations as blessed. This increases the

status of women in God's Kingdom. This means that violence against women and children is not in God's favour.

This can be done through the restoration of human dignity. This means self-worthiness as being created through God's image (Gen. 1:27-28). That their body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (I Corin.6:13). What then is true humanity? Stephan de Beer (Tshwane Leadership Foundation) has described it as having different interpretations from people. Some define true humanity as the maintaining of the *status quo*: others say it means to develop a new consciousness, the new awakening and a new movement henceforth. To development a new consciousness of feeling by teenage girls can help understand the development of her body and generate pride of becoming a women and a leader within society.

For example, from the interviews the researcher conducted with teenage girls at school, this question was asked of them: Do you really mean that you cannot be pregnant during your school days? The answers were: shame principal, I won't....."Minangiyazithemba", another one "Mina ngizithanda" – meaning I trust myself and I love my self. This indicates a sense of starting to understand themselves and it can also be called a sense of awakening.

Another example of the development of a new consciousness has been through the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan women (John 4:25-26). The women said, "I know that Messiah (Called Christ) is coming when he comes, he will explain everything to us". This suggests early teaching about self-worthiness and pride about the body – which belongs to Christ, for teenage girls knowing this can help to prevent teenage pregnancies.

After reading these verses one could suggest that sex was created for two things: First enjoyment and Second for bearing of children. It is within God's wedlock where sex is regarded holy. Violent sex occurs through rape and unprepared teenage sex is regarded as sexual impurity (Rom. 1:24). It is this kind of sexual relationship which we find in our communities. These particular relationships have severe consequences in the life of an adolescent and creates poverty on our communities. This happens through the drop-out of teenagers from schools. We have seen from the previous chapters that some of these girls do not come back to school after the birth of the child while others do return to school. But one psychological factor is that they fail to pass grade 12 and their children also will have pregnancy issues at an early stage. So what does the church say? Where is their dignity within the community? Can one say that they are predestined to that life by God? What does Jesus teach when he affirms the dignity of a woman who was to be stoned to death?

For example, in the past the churches and in particular our mainline church –URCSA had many youth camps. The main aims were to develop Christian morals and values within the youth. Speakers were invited to guide the youth towards a good Christian marriage and prayer was specified as the most upper devotion which a Christian should observe. Even today the only marriage URCSA recognises is marriage within the church. Teenage pregnancy was rare because girls and boys were encouraged to believe in themselves. This marked the development of self-consciousness because boys did not see girls as sexual objects. They were all taught to live in relationship with God and also with each other.

This form of relationships brought some positive results such as getting to know one another, sharing ideas and other material things, development of mental strength therefore encouraging a positive position on the value of delaying sexual relations until marriage. There was also a

project in the church for mentoring and leadership skills. Some, as the researcher said, have benefitted from such programmes.

The parents were expected to give family support and improve parent-child communication. This was mostly done during the evening through some informal teaching. Creative stories were shared in order to lay a foundation for life to teenagers. The stories encouraged the teenagers to engage with each other regarding their values and moral choices. The community on the other hand organised activities such as traditional dances, wedding preparations and so forth. Another thing which was emphasised was neighbourliness. These all come from strong biblical law: Love your neighbour as you love yourself. Any leader who engages with the above theological questions will find their way easier and also serving the lord with all his/her heart.

4.2 Gender issues and violence against women

The gender issues can be associated with the reclaiming of stolen dignity by women and children. The Bible says God created sex to be a beautiful and enjoyable expression of love, but only between a man and wife. The author of Genesis 1:27- 28 says: “so God created man in his own Image in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them, God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in numbers” further on in chapter 2:24-“for this reasons a man will leave his father and mother and be united to this wife, and they will become one flesh.”

After reading these verses one could assume that the reason that sex was created was for two things: first enjoyment and second for bearing of children. It is within God’s wedlock where sex is regarded holy. Violent sex occurs through rape and unprepared sexual relations (teenage sex) is regarded as sexual impurity (Rom. 1:24) it is this kind of sexual relationship which we find in

our communities. This kind of relationships have severe consequences to the life of adolescents and creates poverty in our communities. This is happening through the drop out of teenagers from schools. We have seen from the previous chapters that some of these girls do not come back to school after the birth of the child but others do return to school. But one psychological factor is that they fail to pass grade 12 and their children also may also become pregnant at an early age. So what does the church say? Where is their dignity within the community? Can one say that they are predestined to that life by God? What does Jesus teach us when he affirmed the dignity of the woman who was to be stoned to death?

Stephan de Beer said (Tshwane leadership foundation) the above theological questions can be answered by fostering the work of Black Consciousness, where Blacks are calling back for solidarity within their community of origin, as well as Black people who are still living with the scars of their stolen dignity while discovering their own humanity, giftedness and agency. Having said this, his statement dispels the above mentioned question on predestination which means that God has determine their life beforehand. Be it solidarity with the past. Will this enable us to give meaning to the same of practices which were used to prevent teenage pregnancies? This will include the role played by parents, communities and the church.

4.3. Breaking the Silence on Teenage Pregnancy

The researcher's vision is to try to depict the emancipation of young women from the bondage of being victims of teenage pregnancy into a world of economic justice. Some researchers have hinted that learners who become victims of early pregnancy are academically slow and always troublesome in class, teachers do not give them enough support because they disturb their

teaching. So theologically what does that mean? Should we allow them to be discriminated against?

Under these circumstances the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 12:12-30) talks strongly against discrimination. His reference to this situation is that all Christians are just like one body with many parts. For them to function well they need each other. Jesus Christ refers to this situation with the parable of the lost sheep in which the owner will leave ninety-nine sheep alone and go and look for the one that wandered off (Matt.18:10-14). Economically and socially they will also be deprived to participate fully. All this will happen due to sexual ignorance. Sexual ignorance becomes a problem in our communities because people are afraid to talk against it. They prefer to avoid issue rather than be victimised. The churches have found it difficult because parents fear that sex education may lead their children to sexual attitudes and different choices from their own (Richelt 1986: 95-106).

Sears (1992) says that there is an inadequate knowledge of sex education for our children. They know too little and furthermore says that the majority of children in our society receive no sex information from parents. This becomes a risk when young girls reach the time of menstruation or other signs of puberty without understanding the changes which their bodies are going through.

Hoffmer (2000) argues that girls who have menstruation problems sometimes are afraid to mention them to anyone. Some, already sexually active, have mistaken ideas about the conditions they under, where one can become pregnant. Cited one example that there is an illusion on the part of girls that one can only become pregnant from intercourse during menstruation. This kind of myth must be addressed to save the plight information about

nocturnal emission. They only get surprise when their mothers assured that they had been masturbating in bed when punishment is inflicted to them.

According to Kenney et al (1989), teachers are also afraid to have personal discussions with learners about sex education due to the fear of a parental backlash if the students take information and questions home. There is hardly an area regarding sexuality where our society provides inadequate information and this includes childbirth and all areas of parenting. We often hear of ignorance and fear about pregnancy and childbirth among teen mothers, yet despite this our society does not include teaching and information about pregnancy and childbirth necessary for adult life in our society (Gudorf 1994: 1-28).

One can conclude that in our society sexual information is obtained largely by chance. What is dominant in our society is the sexual ignorance of our children, silent parents and schools where there are no sex education programs. Theologically what does that mean? Is this sin?

From a practical theology perspective we find that church leaders still have more work to do transforming congregations to become more contextual. Teenage pregnancy is a result of a combination of things such as, the practical ignorance of the church, schools, parents and the community. God knows our destiny and want us to live in harmony with each other. The greatest command given by Jesus is to love your neighbour as yourself. The reason why teachers and pastors are avoiding breaking the silence is that they do not want to engage with the challenge of teenage pregnancy. The apostle Paul told the Galatian congregation that when you follow the desire of your sinful nature, the results are sexual immorality, impurity. (5:19)

Therefore God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin (1 thess.4:3-7). If sexuality truly is a part of the creation that God pronounced good, it will be called sinful if it is

practiced wrongly through the lack of knowledge. If the church leaders are afraid to break the silence they will be considered equally wrong and regarded as if they have sinned against God. What greater good does silence about sexuality achieve? The achievement we have gained from this silence is poverty and the dehumanising of poor girls, who are the greatest sufferers of all. By not breaking the silence should be understood as sinful.

4.4. The influence of culture on teenage pregnancy.

Culture is a source of social identity and provides individuals with specific meanings for behaviour and social relationships in their daily lives (UNICEF, 2009) however culture has good and bad practices sometimes which is harmful and undermine dignity, especially of women and children.

Presently, there is a call against virginity testing and *ukuthwala* which is found among the Zulu's and Xhosa-speaking people. Among the Southern Ndebele there is *Iqude* virginity testing and *Iqude* aims at reducing pregnancy before marriage because every family has to encourage their daughters to reach that ceremony without becoming pregnant. Therefore, every girl will have to wait for such a prestigious moment.

Then the critique against these ceremonies is that the constitution of the Republic of South Africa is against such practices because it is considered violence against human dignity.

Ukuthwala is a traditional marriage among the Xhosas, meaning that the girl child will be abducted to force two families to enter into negotiations regarding a customary marriage. But the wrong part of it today is that elderly men are the ones who are forcing this marriage. It is now a rape because the girl is about 14 to 18 years old and will be forced to marry an adult man under the pretext of culture.

Then, what is our theological interpretation about such practices? Theologically we find that the Bible comes to people and finds them with their cultural practices. Then conversion to Christ means to believe in him within your own culture. In the cultures mentioned above we find all these ceremonies were practiced in order to prepare teenagers for womanhood. Today due to our sinful nature, men have manipulated culture for their own sinful deeds. Church dogmatism is being used to justify evil deeds. For example, church dogma was used by the national party to justify apartheid in South Africa for many years. When something happens to those who are using *ukuthwala* to justify their abusive action against women and children, then they must be condemned for their evil action.

Jesus himself, in John chapter, crossed the cultural boundaries by talking with a Samaritan woman. His disciples were shocked when they heard him talking with a gentle voice. Some researchers went even further suggesting that he had sex with her. This means that theology is beyond cultural boundaries. The same thing happened to Peter during his vision. He was told: “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean”. This means that if a cultural ceremony is conducted for the good of the community, there are women who can stop that. This means that all cultural activities had been designed by men to justify this evil deed.

The apostle Paul (1cor. 6:9-11) came hastily to the congregation about their behaviour. In verse 11- second stanza brought hope to them by saying; “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God”. This does not imply that when you become a Christian you must leave culture behind. Through our sanctification by our lord Jesus Christ then we have all authority to claim our inheritance into the kingdom of God. Finally, our cultures has been sanctified, therefore, we have the right of practicing it without fear and prejudice.

4.5. Church role in schools

The church has been seen as a home for many. Christ has always been associated with poor. His contact with the Samaritan woman demonstrates that the poor have a special place in his kingdom. The suffering teenage girls have also a special place in Jesus Christ's heart.

Therefore, there is some assistance the church can give to the schools to help prevent teenage pregnancy. This may be through human experience. According to Pettenge (1994:13) we must not only discern God's intention for human sexuality but we must also integrate our sexual experience into broader human experience, which is our principal resource for discerning who God is and how God works in our world.

God works through human agents. The intention of God is to use human experience to solve the problem of teenage pregnancy. Then how can the church partner with the school to solve teenage pregnancy? First, the church must have an in depth knowledge of social analysis this means a knowledge of the political, social and economic situation of an area. In the previous chapters we have seen how teenage girls are trapped in a situation like this. Therefore the role of the church is to assist the teenage girls to define themselves in terms of who they want to be? They must also consider how much they are worth? This is the development of self-consciousness.

Second, the church ought to assist the schools to address the question of gender violence issues. K. Wood et al (w.d) pointed out that certain portions of adolescent women are regularly assaulted in their sexual relationship. The 2003 RHRU survey reported that 2% of 15-24 year old males and 10% of females had been physically forced to have sex. In a case control study among pregnant teenagers in Cape Town, Jewkes et al. (2001) demonstrated that only a quarter

(25.7%) of pregnant teens reported having sex willingly the first time; Z out of were persuaded (42.4%) and a third were raped (31,9%). In fact 72% of pregnant teens in the study reported coercive sex and 11.1% reported rape. Forced sex or coercion is often accompanied by physical assault. Therefore the church ought to conduct workshops against gender violence. For the apostle Paul says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry” (colos.3:5). But I say, walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal.5:16) by doing this they will be learning to take sexual behaviour seriously. James Nelson (1988:14) has effectively argued that taking human sexuality seriously will allow a person to appreciate the incarnation in full, more meaningful terms, also to grapple more adequately with the significance of resurrection for human lives.

Third, the church needs to encourage parents to talk with their children about sex and morality within the context of their traditional faith. Many researchers like Blake, Simkin, Ledsky, Perkins and Calabrese, 2001; Dittus and Jaccord 2000, and so forth have hinted that positive, open and frequent family communication about sex can be linked to postponement of sexual activity. Similarly, parent-child communication is vital for the prevention and reduction of teenage pregnancy (Hollander, 2003). This communication needs good timing because some adolescents my rebel.

Fourth, the church ought to make sure that the children and teenagers understand what the tradition of their church says about sex, love, and marriage in general and teenage pregnancy in particular. URCSA is compelled to include teaching about teenage pregnancy in their catechism classes. This must be clearly understood because their church tradition believes that sexuality is a God given gift (Genesis2, 4, 5). This means that the purpose of marriage is to give birth.

Therefore, teenage pregnancy is immoral. The apostle Paul says that nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Fifth, the church should assist schools to address the question of socio-economic status and poverty which is another problem of teenage pregnancy. In analysed household survey data collected in 2001, Holman (2004) found that social-economic disadvantage significantly increased the likelihood of a range of unsafe sexual behaviour and experiences, especially for females. This includes early sexual debut, multiple sexual partnerships and lower levels of condom use in most recent sexual encounters (Dinkerlman et al. 2008). Poverty also raises young women's chances of experiencing coerced sex, both at their sexual debut and during their lifetime as well as engaging in transactional sex (Hullman 2004). Therefore, the church should help the schools by creating some projects, like agricultural projects, poultry projects for those families who are unemployed. These will help to reduce poverty and unemployment. This kind of foundation can assist church members to support themselves.

Sixth, the church should also assist the schools to develop positive attitudes amongst learners. As children make the transition from childhood to adolescence and engage in the process of identity formation, their reliance on parents and siblings as the sole sources of influence and decision-making begins to change. Increasing interaction with other role models-best friends, peers, teachers and community members, begin to expand their sphere of influence. Peer pressure starts to increase. (Kirby, 2002). In a study on the risk factors related to teenage pregnancy in Cape Town, Jewkes et al., (2001) reported that sex often happened because most adolescents perceived that people of their age were sexually active. Therefore, the church ought to organise supervised group activities for teenagers. This can be parents or any adults who can

conduct workshops on advantages and disadvantages of too-early sexual activity and pregnancy. The topic about choosing a right partner should also be discussed.

Seventh, the church should also assist the community by developing the socio-economic status of communities; a sense of socio cohesion in the community that allows for information, social control as well as the role model offered by adult members of a community can have a bearing on the sexual behaviour of adolescents. Social disorganisation, high levels of disadvantages and poor achievement of members of a community increases the likelihood of young people engaging in sex earlier and having early pregnancy (Kirby, 2002). Therefore the church must organise facilities like parks where children will play together in the community this will also create good environment for learning.

Eighth, the church should assist the schools to learn about contemporary youth culture of using mass media. They should know what young people are interested in, listening to, watching and doing. This can be an easy way to make build communication with teenagers. According to NRC and IQM (2005) mass media is an appealing strategy to influence young people's sexual and reproductive health because of its ability to reach large numbers of young people. The church should know that media is part of the culture of the youth. You must know the music that young people enjoy, watch the television programmes they watch so you will know which characters they may be trying to emulate. Take a look at the magazines they are reading. This information will able you to explore the new cultural message they need to receive. The use of mass media like radio, television, newspapers, and so forth can help the church and the schools to send a message of the disadvantages of an early pregnancy.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH STRATEGIES TO PREVENT TEENAGE PREGNANCY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Locally and internationally teenage pregnancies remain the problem. The study found that the whole world agreed that early pregnancy is caused by poverty and poor school performance. Pregnancy is the end point, the study discovered that teenage pregnancy causes school dropout in order to give birth and many learners never return to school.

There are several factors which cause young people to dropout from school. In our research problem we have identified four challenges. But now due to further research we have broken them down into some small parts as follows:

- ❖ Economic barriers – poverty forced young people to leave school early for example, girls could engage in sexual relationship and end up by getting pregnant while boys would join the labour market and end up impregnating teenage girls at school because of financial strength.
- ❖ Poor school performance learners do not anticipate good things in their future. They consider what is happening around their life at the present as their future. They end up seeing no purpose from school. They are characterised by high absenteeism, truant and not doing school work. Girls would end up by getting pregnant and boys end up by impregnating girls.
- ❖ Environment where they grow up also has an impact on teenage pregnancy poor home setup such as where parents or guardians are the owner of taverns this may cause the learner to be unable to cope with school work. Due to the lack of home support, the young girl end up being pregnant

- ❖ Parental support – lack of parental support for young people has an impact on teenage pregnancy. Parents who do not discuss sex openly with young people also encourage teenage pregnancy. They learn about sex from their friends and other people from outside of the home. Hence this study found that parents are the best educators that children can trust. Therefore, the failure to educate children on sexual matters could lead to young people becoming involved in sexual behaviour at an early stage.
- ❖ Imbalance in relationships where the man is older than the female then sex might occur without the females consent. This type of relationship is considered to be rape. Then it could end up with an unwanted pregnancy.
- ❖ Material needs. This is the type of relationship where young people trade off their body for money. This may also end up with an unwanted pregnancy

5.2 Prevention strategies

5.2.1 Implementation of broad based sex education.

The implementation of sex education should form a critical component of a comprehensive strategy towards teenage pregnancy. When implementing this consideration should be taken to improve the focus, quality and level of programmes in schools. These includes development of the curriculum content. The curriculum should be in line with effective sex education. Another step should address the knowledge and myth beliefs about the use of contraception, and focusing on responsibilities of parenthood, knowledge and skills required for successful parenthood.

The third step would be based on the adoption of a comprehensive approach to address both abstinence and safe sex practices. This programme should be drawn and implemented by expert

researchers. The focus should be on development of learners rather than grades. Another step would look into biological and social risks like gender, poverty and early school dropout due to pregnancy. The last strategy would look into the role which can be played by peer educator or youth organisations, as a support to teachers outside the school environment.

5.2.2 Strategy to retain girls in school

Finance and high levels of repetition are regarded as the reason for dropout in SA schools (HSRC, 2009). In addressing financial barriers to schooling, plans should be put under way for these learners. This can be done by enrolling them into alternative schooling like FET and ABET to address the gaps left by formal schooling.

5.2.3 Intervention by NGO'S

This strategy can be cost effective since its aim is to empower the youth. This includes promoting community participation among school going learners and providing much work experience for young people- a prerequisite for employment, while concomitantly offering protection to productive health (HSRC, 2009).

5.2.4 Intervention from communities

This can be done through youth empowerment on economic security and women empowerment on risk and sexual violence. Community should create role models with which the youth would desire to follow.

5.2.5 Intervention from health

Despite better programmes designed by health departments to help young people to access health services, young people are still confronted with the negative and stigmatising attitudes from

health staff. Therefore, adolescent friendly services should be rolled out to meet emergency contraception and also by providing mobile services like voluntary counselling and testing for young people.

5.2.6 Intervention by the parents

Parents are regarded as the primary educator for children about sex. Parents should talk openly about sex to their children. Parents should also be empowered by both knowledge and skills of sex education- this includes programmes which promote open communication between parents and children to talk about sensitive subjects and foster strong parent-child relationship bonds as well as teach parents how to set and enforce rules (HSRC, 2009).

5.2.6 Intervention by mass media

Mass media can play a vital role in reducing teenage pregnancy. For example, the HIV campaigns through loveLife, Soul City and Khomanani have reached high levels of coverage among young people-the former two above the 80% mark required for high intensity and high frequency coverage (HSRC, 2009). Evidence for the success of these campaigns was with the high use of condoms today. If this same strategy can be applied to campaign for the prevention of teenage pregnancy it can also reach a high volume. This can work as helpful strategy.

5.2.7 Intervention strategy by the church.

The church can contribute positively to the prevention of teenage pregnancy. This can be done by forming a partnership with other stake holders like schools, community and other congregations. Partnership building is gaining momentum across the globe. It is has been found that if the local community can work together they can build more sustainable support for children, youth and families.

The first step to partnership between the church and the schools is to develop, or to build a comprehensive programme on sex education. Through their catechism classes the church can develop a teaching manual about sex education such as the development of the body of adolescents. The youth would learn all the changes which will happen in their body. This can reduce the chance of early pregnancy.

The church can learn some positive things from the local faith community. For example, how does the Catholic Charity movement handle teenage pregnancy? The church can learn how to acknowledge and respect the values of other local congregations such as their traditions, beliefs, and perspectives. Knowledge of these values would allow them to solve the problem of teenage pregnancy together. They can tackle this problem of teenage pregnancy through involving other stake holders like schools, and community to draw up a programme which is based on their local needs. For example, the needs of working with homeless families, needs of providing religious education, working with athletics, child care, working with victims of teenage pregnancy and so forth.

The church should select potential partners, for example, those who have already shown an interest in working with the youth like loveLife (HIV). Their experience can help them to outreach those children who have little knowledge about teenage pregnancy. The church can also engage the community on issues which deals with youth social problems: drugs and alcohol abuse, violence against women and children, poverty, tobacco use and so forth. Such initiatives would help them to prevent teenage pregnancy.

The church can reach out respectfully and carefully to the youth by using mass media and social net-working. It can be done through newspapers, radio, face book, and so forth. They can reach many more young people than expected. The church can reach out to parents through their

organised ministries. They can teach them knowledge and skills for handling teenage pregnancy. This can be done by inviting experts on youth development to guide them on how to offer better parenthood to adolescents. The church can also use peer education to outreach other youth. This can be done through the use of youth ministries to tackle the problem of teenage pregnancy.

Summary table of prevention strategies.

	Prevention method	People involved - responsibility	Care-focus	After care
School	School based sex education	Expertise in theory research	Teenage pregnancy focuses on learner behaviour – e.g use of condoms gives a clear message on consequences of child bearing	Support care from department of health e.g adolescent friendly clinic initiative (AFCI)
	Outsource from other department e.g Health	Get expert like psychologist and social worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address sexual risk behaviour - Protection from various diseases - Change of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publicise the program like Lovelife - Get parent permission to go on with their

			attitude - Self esteem	children
	Pilot the project	Get experts like teachers, community base volunteers	Teaching methods and behavioural messages	- School extra mural activities - Found action of sex education
Church	Church policy - Develop new catechism which includes sex education	Church leaders	Training methods of new catechism classes	C.Y.M C.W.M C.M.M
	Christian camp	Parents	Address sexual risk and protective factors that affect sexual behaviour (knowledge, value attitudes, and norms	- Church publication - Obtain consent from parent

			self-worthiness.	
Community	Socialising agent for children	Parents	Create open discussion about sexuality	Facilities – like parks where teenagers play together
	Sources from other departments	Community leaders social worker psychologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of early childbearing - Combating poverty through education agricultural project and so forth - Neighbour watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support care form department of health (AFCI) - Support care from department of agriculture “let’s go back plough”
	Peer programmes	Group of young people e.g serving as role models for healthy behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training them on skills development on adolescent sexuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of condoms - Mass media campaign

5.3 Reflection and Recommendation

The notion that teenage pregnancy increases due to cultural activities like *ingoma* and *Iqude* among the Southern Ndebele in South Africa is unfounded. The study reveals that the most prevalent causes of teenage pregnancy were socio-economic and educational aspects. Poverty and lack of knowledge about sex education were seen as the main culprits. The study also found that things like information dissemination, family planning service, and expanding access to education have not been affectively implemented. Because both nurses from the clinics, teachers from schools, church and community leaders are afraid to open dialogue about sexuality. Sexual violence against children was seen as the main problem of teenage pregnancy.

The study found out that intervention efforts to address violence against children is not effective. For example, primary prevention includes efforts that aim to prevent violence before it occurs like identifying specific risk factors in communities, school, homes and individuals and addressing the risks prior to any negative experiences were not considered. Secondary prevention focuses on more immediate responses to violence which includes emergency services and treatment after the assurance of a negative experience like teenage forced rape.

Parents are also not prepared to break the silence about sex education from home. Teenagers struggle to get information, and so they get it through experimenting, that is why pregnancy occurs.

Yet, the study also discovered that the rate of teenage pregnancy remains unacceptably high despite high levels of knowledge about modern methods of contraception, there is a large cohort of young people who do not use contraception. It also found that the attitudes of nurses in

different clinics force adolescents to shy away from taking contraception or condoms. Over two thirds of young women recorded their pregnancies as unwanted because it destroys their educational aspirations and imposes greater financial hardship in a context of high levels of poverty and unemployment.

Education plays a big role in the life of young people despite having early pregnancy, young people struggle to return to school. Poverty and poor school performance have been pointed out as the most likely cause of school dropout. An early return to school might help the young mother to delay a second birth. The study found that only a third of teenage mothers return to school. This may be related to the uneven implementation of school policy, poor academic performance prior to pregnancy, few child caring alternatives in the home, poor support from the families, peers and school environment, and social stigma of being a teenage mother.

Both studies locally and internationally have a growing interest on the position of young fathers. International research suggests that the profile of young fathers is no different from young women they tend to come from low income homes, have poor school performance, low educational attainment and seldom have the financial resources to support the child and the mother (UNIEF, 2009)

South African statistic shows that young men experience a strong emotional response about their impending fatherhood and always deny paternity they also have a deep sense of responsibility for the child and willingness to be actively involved in the child's life. They end point is to exist from school for the purpose of getting a job to support the child. This happens because the research found that the young father is often about 8 years older than the young mother.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the previous assessment of the reflections of teenage pregnancy and the above given prevention strategies the following recommendations were made for intervention from within the church and school. Some of these strategies are similar to those recommended by the department of education but the difference would be the inclusion of the churches to support the school in implementation.

The first step is to have the implementation of sex education in church schools as a first comprehensive strategy towards teenage pregnancy. The programmes should target learners from between the ages of 15-16 which is the beginning of grade 10 -11 and the church school target group of 13-14 years because this is the outreach of the catechism classes. The focus should be on teenage pregnancy and its consequences. The focus should be on addressing both abstinence and safe sex practices, biological and social risk factors (such as gender power relationship, early school dropout). The program should address community perceptions and stigma and improving teacher willingness and readiness to deliver the programme. In the church the programme should be run by parents after consultation with other parents in order to avoid tension within the church.

The second step is to target the high risk group, these groups are those who are living a seriously poor conditions. At school they are those who have poor grades because of frequent absence from school, learners with a history of childhood sexual or physical abuse, learners who use substances and learners living under the conditions of extreme poverty. Those learners seek support from school and church. Those who are not church members, the task of the church is to outreach to them.

The third step is to outreach those learners who are dropouts from school. A system is required to re-enrol them in school or into an alternative system of education the church can play an important role by making their buildings available to be used for extra classes over the weekend or during the evenings. The church can even organise student teachers to take these classes from within the community.

The fourth step is to use voluntary services which are linked with the school curriculum. This includes organising Saturday classes for the school learner and resources used should be church buildings and schools. Other resources found this move has shown some positive effects on sexual activity and pregnancy.

Fifth step is the use of the community to organise facilities where young people could play together. This would definitely help the young people to form good relationships. The church can add to this by organising Christian camps where they teach youngsters different life skills.

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