

ABSENT FATHERS DUE TO MIGRANT WORK:
Its traumatic impact on adolescent male children in Zimbabwe.

By

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my spiritual fathers the late **Rev R.P Muguwu** and **J Juru** along with **NZ Makwehe** now retired from active ministry of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and Late grandfather **Misheck Kumbuyo**: who mentored me to understand that *a boy knows that he is a Christian man only when he walks with Christian men.*

To My two Sons: **Simbarashe** and **Tayamika** who guided my thoughts in the research Journey.

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Finally, I would like to thank my Lord Jesus and the almighty God for the protection and strength in carrying out this research.

DECLARATION

I declare that a dissertation on

ABSENT FATHER DUE TO MIGRANT WORK:

Its traumatic impact on adolescent male children in Zimbabwe.

Is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed.....Date.....

ANANIAS KUMBUYO NYANJAYA

Signed.....Date.....

PROFESSOR: MJ MASANGO (Promoter)

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ACRONYMS

AIDS -	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCU –	Boys Christian Union
HIV -	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Ie -	That is to say
Jr -	Junior
MCU -	Men’s Christian Union
MDC -	Movement for Democratic Change
MCZ –	Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
SADC –	Southern African Development Community
ZANU-PF -	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front



KEY WORDS

Adolescent

Absent Father

Diaspora

Co-researcher

Identity

Migration

Narrative

Practical theology

Pastoral care

Theory

Qualitative

Quantitative

Sacred reality

Survey

ABSTRACT

Only men can initiate boys into men. Boys are prepared into men by men of integrity, for that reason, when a father is absent a male model has to be found. Lack of models is the number one enemy for our adolescent males in Zimbabwe today. The absence of adult role models means adolescent males are moulded by unsupervised, doubtful and inexperienced peers. In the past the bringing up of a child was a community responsibility. In the present day children are growing up as sheep without a male shepherd. The qualitative and quantitative research methods guided the process of this study. The study revealed that fathers are absent because they have migrated to other countries and that their absence has a negative impact on developing healthy adolescent males.

Migration of fathers to the Diaspora could not be resisted by men because of the socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe. Fathers have left the country for greener pastures. The exodus of fathers to the Diaspora has created a vacuum when it comes to mentoring and moulding of male children into adults. The study carried out with adolescent boys indicated that fathers in the Diaspora are engaged in some form of income generating activities. As a result, some of these men are able to provide material needs intended for their families back home. However, the absence of these fathers has made some children feel emotionally abandoned and betrayed, while others are disappointed by fathers who did not bid them farewell at the time they were living the country. There is another group that felt that the absence benefited them. The absence of fathers destroyed father – son relationships, generated anger, bitterness and lack of any future trust with fathers. When children are angered and bitterness resides in them, they would go against their father's potential assistance.

On the other hand, in the process of the study on the absent father, a Christian model of caring for an individual and community emerged. The church has been noted to be the only institution that would guide the society to value the job of caring for the people of God who are in needy situations. When the church cares for the adolescents it will be caring for itself as well as the body of Christ.

The author considered the views from James Fowler (1981) and Gerkin (1997) on the stages of faith development and the idea of seeing the church as a community of faith in order for this research to portray the community of faith as a Community of Love. This is because it is only by Christ's love that people are forgiven by God through grace. In addition, it is through love that people are nurtured; miracles of spiritual and numerical growth are realised.

Acts 2; bears witness of the power in love fellowships or communities. He states that in sharing the gospel of Christ in love fellowships each member becomes a part of Christ's body that spreads the gospel. The love fellowships make the church to be more than a preaching or meeting point. It becomes a family where all members have the opportunity to share their experiences at fellowship and individual levels. People will not depend on one person for spiritual growth but on each other for spiritual nourishment. Gerkin was important throughout the research with his pastoral care approach of caring for an individual and the communities of a Christian story in addition to guiding the researcher to create a model for a caring community.

Therefore, caring of boys whose fathers are absent requires both individual mentors and local communities to model them. The church has been found wanting by the boys in this study. Boys have indicated that the church was not aware of their pain. This shows that the church was unable to see the depressed and hear the silent voices in order to interpret their situation. This reveals that the church has some parts that need spiritual attention in order for the body of Christ to function optimally. Children will open their hearts in love fellowships in order to be healed, nurtured, sustained and guided through love. Faith will be expressed in a more mature and responsible way when all is done in love.

Faith in this study is the act of love that guides individuals and communities to an expression of freedom and responsibility in trusting God's presence in human situations. It aims at increasing love for one another and to God. For it is only through Christ's love that healthy memories are created.

Chapter one gives the background and context of the problem to the study. It reveals that the motivation to carry out the study emerged from the author's journey with his father and interactions with young people as a youth pastor. Therefore the socio-economic and political

situation in Zimbabwe created an environment for the study to be carried out. In addition, absences of mothers at church prompted him to consider carrying out a study on the: **Absent fathers due to migrant work: Its traumatic impact on adolescent males in Zimbabwe.** Many women went to collect money from their husbands who are in the Diaspora each month end. **Chapters two** demonstrates how a qualitative and quantitative method of carrying of the research is helpful. Listening to stories of the adolescent males enriched the research process. **Chapter three** dealt with the stages of human development coined by Erik Erikson with the intention to give the reader an understanding regarding the worth of adolescence stage. **Chapter four** explains father and fatherhood, the role of a father and impact of absence towards the up bringing of adolescent male children. Adolescent males develop their masculinity from their fathers for this reason every child should have a male model in order for him to be a man. **In chapter five** the researcher engaged in dialogue with adolescent males. **Chapter six** gave the concluding thoughts and recommendations to the study.

The church has been identified as central in guiding children at individual and group levels in this era. The church should be a component of the extended family that is unique but related to the family units without competing with it. Every son needs a biological father from whom he learns how to manage weakness and strengths in his life and act in response to the challenges of the global village. Therefore, a father ought to be a male person in Zimbabwe who fears God and loves his sons not an angel out of this planet. Finally every adolescent child needs Christian males to guide him for it is through Christ's love that healthy male memories are created.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one gave the background to the study of the adolescents by the researcher. It has revealed that the researcher's journey with his father, his role in the church as a youth pastor and the absences of mothers at the church prompted him to consider carrying out a study on the: **Absent father due to migrant work; its traumatic impact on adolescent males in Zimbabwe.** The question that emerged to the researcher is that; how can a male child develop into adulthood in the absence of his biological father in Zimbabwe? The researcher's journey into adulthood illuminated the positive experiences of adolescents when fathers are present. This is because growing up with his parents benefited him much. The objective to the study was to assess the traumatic impact of absent fathers on the adolescent males. The aim was to assist the adolescent males to identify the causes of their trauma and create a model that would support them in developing into healthy adults. The assumption was that children were experiencing trauma when fathers are absent and that only religion is able to answer the question of the purpose of life.

CHAPTER TWO

The chapter explained the methodology used in carrying out the research. It clarifies how qualitative and quantitative methods of carrying out the research were helpful. Listening to stories of the adolescent males enriched the research process. The boys connected their past experiences with what they were presently going through. The qualitative method of data collection helped boys to recount their experiences and face the realities of their pains which assisted them to modify the ideas that they previously held about their situation see Chapter six (item 6.11). The quantitative method helped the researcher to observe how each child responded to the questions in order to draw conclusions on the impact of the absent fathers towards their sons. Gerkin's shepherding model of caring for the individual and community facilitated the creation of the church's pastoral care model of caring for boys whose fathers are absent. Pastoral care as a sub-discipline of practical theology responded to the experiences of the adolescents by listening to them in order to create a model for caring. The chapter also showed how data was collected and analysed in chapter five.

CHAPTER THREE

The chapter presented the adolescent growth process with the intention to give the researcher and readers an idea concerning the value of adolescence stage. It also assisted the researcher to comprehend the phase which is the center of attention in this study. Nevertheless, the significance of this stage does not overlook the consequences of an absent father toward male children that may as well trap them during human development. The entire journey from birth to death is important to human beings. The chief challenges in the adolescent stage are the physiological, cognitive, spiritual and psychosocial changes that take place within a person while major decisions in life have to be made. Therefore, a plan to assist boys must be given by the father, church and community. When a child is growing the community provides the material that an adolescent uses for the formation of his identity. The failure by an adolescent male to draw his strength from the community resources leads to traumatic experiences in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it is through the community that a personal identity is realised. The community is important in identity formation in Zimbabwe. The failure by a child to draw its identity from the community leads him into traumatic experiences, because it is a disruption of one's normal growing environment. For that reason children who are the lifeblood of the society should be considered seriously during this stage of identity formation; if not when the crises of the previous stages are hooked on the adolescent stage with no models, they may lead to identity diffusion. Identity diffusion might lead to unhealthy behaviors in adolescents. The outcome of the observations confirmed that adolescents are affected by the absence of their fathers and that they need guidance in order for them to engage in helpful behaviors. Therefore, Erik Erikson (1968) was important in his human development stages for he assisted the author to be aware that absence of fathers poses a challenge in identity formation among male children. Furthermore, he assisted the researcher to engage Gerkin (1997) in creating a shepherding model that facilitates pastoral care for boys during their adolescence.

CHAPTER FOUR

The chapter confirms the impact of a father on his son. Parents have been described as key in the life of every child. Adolescent males develop their masculinity from their fathers, for this reason, every child should have a male model in order for him to be a man. The image of a father to a son enables the African sons to live in harmony with their world in which the stories of the God of their fathers are told. Parents have been identified as second only to God (see item 4:2). Therefore, the father's presence and role assists the boy child to master self and the environment correctly.

However, the political and economic environment in Zimbabwe has robbed the children of an irreplaceable background that emerges from the father and males within the extended family. The absent father environment has come out from the migration of males to foreign countries. Parents as second only to God play a very significant role in the lives of their sons. The father's failure or absence among the Africans in Zimbabwe generates unhappiness in a child because it is an absence of God. Although this chapter still maintains the key role played by the father in the life of the son the author does not take for granted the influence of other males in the extended family and society. The author recognises the central role played by biological fathers in the lives of their sons. For example, the father influences and controls the son's freedom of association. A father is a man who carries out roles that a biological father of a child plays. His activities go beyond the immediate family but it extends to the community.

Therefore, a man may be called a father even when he is not married and has no children because of his social role. This is because the designation 'father' is assigned to a man by society. The term father is used to represent fatherhood in Zimbabwe, though it can refer to any older man as a way of respect ascribed to a man by society. He is the provider of security, food, guidance and defines the family structure and its content. In the past, boys were mentored by males within the extended family and society. What is more important is that the bringing up of a child in emotionally close families does not exclusively fall on the biological fathers. This does not mean that the absence of the biological father is not vital, except that it is carried out by the males within the extended family. This chapter has revealed that true masculinity of a son is formed through a relationship with a God fearing father and caring community. Absences of fathers create irreversible challenges in most families and damage the future of many sons.

CHAPTER FIVE

In this chapter the researcher engaged in dialogue with adolescent males. In narrative research a researcher listens to stories of his co-researchers in order to take note of their inner feelings. The stories revealed the emotional pain that the adolescents were going through unnoticed by the church and other members of the society. The experiences expressed, confirm the theory which states that, lack of a male role model is traumatic and leads to identity confusion in adolescent males.

Trauma has been expressed in two major ways; the first was a longing for the father which was revealed through anger and tears. The other was the comfort of being with the mother and wanting to learn to be a man from women, while wanting to be provided for by the father. In one situation an adolescent felt his father should continue to live out of the country in order to provide for the family. When the father visited home this child did not share stories with him, he instead requested things through his mother. In his view he thinks what is important is the father-mother relationship. He depended on his father for his material needs and on his mother for the emotional support.

Many adolescent males did not verbally express inner feelings, but the sign of hurt, frustration and distance could not be concealed from the researcher in the research journey. Tears could not be controlled in view of the fact that the God built inland dam that is in every human being spilt over and destroyed the man made cultural walls in boys (of being silent sons). Culturally, boys are supposed to be strong and should not cry nevertheless the hurt in the boys allowed the uncontrolled flow of tears. The chapter also revealed that the impact of absence of fathers towards the adolescent males is disturbing or upsetting and that anger and bitterness are enemies in the lives of many sons. The chapter furthermore noted that when fathers are absent adolescent males become imprisoned in the women world. Consequently the circumstances may lead to loss of a male image in boys which may be expressed into inner conflicts in their adulthood. The study revealed that male children are affected by the absence of their fathers during adolescence.

CHAPTER SIX

The research on: **Absent fathers due to migrant work: Its traumatic impact on adolescent males in Zimbabwe** was worth taking. It is through this research that adolescents in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe have contributed to a plan of caring for children whose fathers are working far away from home. In addition, through this research the church will recognise adolescents whose fathers are in nonattendance to the emotional, spiritual and social needs of their sons.

Furthermore, the study confirms that **African adolescents are injured by the absence of fathers** especially with the changes that are taking place in the family structure due to political and economic and social challenges in the global village. Significantly, the research has identified opportunities for complementing the father's role by revealing its programme to families that adolescents live in.

Through group discussions with adult males, peer groups and individual contacts, the church should empower the adolescents whose fathers are away due to migrant work. The identified roles make the church to recognise the community of faith (itself) as the most appropriate instrument in supporting adolescent males to cross into adulthood when their fathers are absent. Additionally the church stands as the voice to the society and government in creating awareness of the risks of unguided entry into the man's world by the adolescents. This is due to the fragmentation of the family structures. Therefore, the recommendations in chapter six (see item 6.10) will aid churches to complement the role played by society in caring for adolescents. It is however the role of the church to guide adolescents through lessons on respect, forgiveness, love, choice of friends and the security that Jesus Christ provides in their lives when they understand him as their chief model.

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1:0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background to the problem, states the problem, objectives, assumptions, significance of the study, and limitations of the study. It also defines and explains important terms used on the document. Included are the research Gap and preliminary conclusion.

1:1 BACKGROUND

The researcher in this study is a minister of religion. He was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in Zambia where he did his primary and secondary education. After his secondary education, he was employed by World Vision International in Zambia, where he worked as an accounts clerk. While there, he responded to God's call to ministry. He then did his theological studies at United Theological College in Zimbabwe and a Bachelor of Science degree in Counseling with Zimbabwe Open University. He later did his postgraduate studies in Trauma Counseling with the University of Pretoria in South Africa where he did a research on "Suppression of the grief process among males that leads to death."

In this research, the term author will be used interchangeably with researcher along with the pronoun 'our' as a passionate way of identifying with the issues that reflect his personal experiences. For example, in chapter three, the researcher illustrated how his absence affected his son's class performance. This came to light in the process of the research; therefore, it was not part of the motivation to the study but a benefit drawn from the research journey.

The researcher has worked with young people as a youth Pastor in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Therefore, in this study, he wants to assess the impact of absence on black African adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

The research focuses specifically on black African adolescents in Marondera district. Marondera is in the Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe. It is one of the provinces that suffered a lot of political violence leading to and post the 2008 presidential elections. Men had been leaving the country ever since 1998 because of the harsh economic and social challenges in Zimbabwe. A lot of men, after losing hope in economic recovery due to the 2008 political violence and drought, left the country in large numbers. This is a year the author became a Zimbabwean billionaire. The inflation rate of Zimbabwe had become second worst in the whole world (see appendix D). With his billions, the author could hardly feed a family of six for a day. Compounded with a drought period, many people competed for food with animals while others went for days without food. The details on the causes of migration will be covered later in chapter four (in item 4.3 on the conditions that made men to migrate).

The political and economic environments affected many lives in Zimbabwe. For example: hungry, desperate and poor people destroyed trees, killed animals for meat in game ranching farms; hence presenting a no rule of law scenario. The Author was concerned with the future of children who are exposed to political violence and growing up in the absence of fathers at such an early age.

The author discovered that in his congregations many mothers were missing from Sunday church services towards the end of each month because they had gone to neighboring countries such as South Africa or Botswana to collect food and money from their husbands.

Secondly, some children whose fathers were absent no longer attended church regularly and had little interest in church activities. This made the author to wonder as a narrative researcher. Narrative researchers are concerned with stories of marginalised people or stories that people give little attention to. It seemed the church and the author himself had not noticed that children were missing their fathers. It might be that they unconsciously thought that these children were better than those with resident fathers. The resident father is represented by the example in the above situation where the author as a Zimbabwean billionaire was unable to fend for his family. Therefore, the author wanted to understand how children were growing up in the absence of their fathers. He further wanted to find out from their experiences and how those experiences affected them. Having thought of adolescent children in general, the author decided to carry out a study specifically on adolescent males.

1.1.2 Justification for targeting adolescent males

The author wondered how a boy child in an urban environment can grow up into an adult male in the absence of a father. The author is also aware of how difficult it is to bring up a boy child even in a family where both parents are present. He became more concerned because he grew up in an environment where a father is respected and feared more than the mother. Moreover, whenever the author's mother wanted to stamp her authority, she would evoke a sense of fear by reminding him of his father. Growing up with his parents helped the author to form a gender identity drawn from his parents' influence. Today as an adult, he still recognises his father's teachings and influence. For example, his father told him to be a person who should not depend on gifts from people for his living. He used to say 'work

hard, do not depend on other people for all your needs, otherwise you will hate them for their sweat.’

As a minister of religion who has worked with young people for two decades, he sought to understand whether absence of fathers is traumatic to adolescent males among the Shona people in Zimbabwe. The findings would help the author to understand some of the behaviors that adolescent boys exhibit as he cares for them. Secondly, it will help him to work with the children to find a model that would be of benefit to the children in risky environments. Chapter six discusses what a risky environment is. It is not the aim of the study to specifically deal with the detailed effects of the father’s absence except to discover whether the deficiency is traumatic. This is because there are many factors that cause individuals to behave in the way they do. The experiences of absence of fathers may however disturb the process of human development at a period that a child forms an identity.

It is also important to find out what the children are experiencing as they cross from childhood into manhood. It is therefore essential to know how to care for them during this crucial period in their lives. The author, through a survey, has discovered that many adolescent males are involved in drug abuse, premarital sex, provocative utterances or violent activities. He further realised that girls are less likely than boys to engage in many activities that destroy them.

His interactions with young people form the background to the motivation of the study on the trauma that adolescent males go through in the absence of one parent. The author also recalls how he grew up under the guidance of his parents. In his journey into adulthood, he learnt what it means to be a father and what a good wife is like from each of these very

special people in his life. The pains and joys that he experienced as he journeyed with his parents are part of his life today. The author grew up in a society that believes in distinct gender roles. For example, only women are responsible to wash clothes and cook for the family. However, his father would help the author's mother with most of the duties that are expected to be done by women. This may be because as a young man he had worked for Mr. Brand, a white farmer in Kwekwe. While he was a gardener, he was also on several occasions requested by Mrs. Brand to assist with the cooking and other household chores.

Despite the fact that what he did was a deviation from what the society expects of men, his influence on the author has an impact today. The author himself finds it important to help his spouse and children, to wash the dishes and do other house chores together with his sons during those times when they are around; especially on Mondays. The reader has to be informed that the clergy in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe do take a day off each Monday. Monday is a day the author has set aside to be with his family. The life of the author's father impacts on him so much in his ministry of caring for the family and Christian community. In his position as the head of the family, he moulded and fostered the development of skills necessary for successful adult adaptation into the social and physical world. Out of these experiences, came the inspiration to carry out a study on the impact of absent fathers on adolescent males as they grow into adulthood without their father's influence and guidance.

Many adolescents are living on their own or with house maids, because their parents are out in search of greener pastures in order to sustain their families. In order for fathers to avoid poverty, they decide to leave their male adolescents at the time they need them most.

In the past, men used to migrate to South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia from Malawi to search for jobs in mines and farms while others, like the author's father, worked in the gardens and kitchens within the SADC region. This can be seen by the number of people of Malawian origin in many mines and farms in the SADC or Sub-Saharan region. These migrants left their families behind for many years before they returned to them. Some of these men did not return to their families as can be evidenced by the author's grandfather who did not return to Malawi when he had migrated to Zimbabwe. Whilst there, he married the author's grandmother and thereafter went to Zambia where he later died.

The present circumstances the author wants to deal with focus on the effects from absence of fathers from adolescent males when these (males) parents migrate to other countries. Absence, especially of parents, poses challenges in the development of children today in Africa, particularly in the SADC or Sub-Saharan region. This is because in African culture children should be guided by their parents who make it possible for the whole extended family and neighbors to raise them.

However, migration has made many of these children to grow up without adult supervision, unlike in the past where the mother and the extended family took up the role of the absent males. The children are now growing up without role models; especially where maids and strangers are left with the children. The village, in the past, was mandated by the elders to look after and discipline children as opposed to the present way of bringing them up where most children are not reprimanded by someone who is not their parent.

Consequently, the courts, through the children protection act or the legal framework outlines how children should be cared for. Therefore, the raising of children has become nightmarish for many parents since the legal frameworks have dictated for the society how

the children should be raised. Parents now fear to control their children because this can be construed as child abuse. The fright has caused anxiety everywhere to the extent of it penetrating to all facets of the community life that must nurture the child. This has made many caregivers and guardians in the urban setting to loosen up or compromise their role.

The father's absence can produce anxiety in a boy child who is looked upon as the future head of the family in African cultures. While talking to Mr. Astonishment Mapurisa on 22 June 2007, who is the National Director of Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Children Homes, it became apparent that when male children have no male role models,

‘.....disillusionment kills their spiritual lives and destroys their future marriages and creates uncertainty in their jobs, and other relationships.’ (Discussion between the author and Mapurisa)

This may be because they do not have a supportive community during the period their fathers are absent. The boy is socialised to be strong and to be a leader. In this case, he is seen as a leader without any traditional training or formal orientation. He is to lead as a father, charge lobola (bride price) for his sisters or looked up to when making major family decisions in the absence of the father. This is why he would be allowed to go to places of entertainment with little or no supervision at all. Unlike the girl child who is closely supervised lest she be abused by boys and men. Unsupervised behaviors are very common on a boy child whose parents are in the Diaspora. In Zimbabwe, guardians, in many instances, compromise their roles towards these children because they depend on the material support from their parents in the Diaspora.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some Social scientists such as Erikson, 1968, Furniss, 1994 or even a layperson knows that an issue is generally studied when a problem has arisen. The Bible tells us that prophets of the Old Testament (Exodus 3:7-10) and our Lord Jesus Christ (John3:16) were sent by God to nations to address a particular condition in society. Therefore, questions such as these are asked: What is the problem? Why does the problem arise? What are the conditions in which the problem arises? In this study the questions asked are: How can an adolescent male child develop a male identity in the absence of the father in Zimbabwe? Are African adolescent males affected when their fathers are absent in Zimbabwe?

This study seeks to assess whether the father's absence causes trauma on adolescent males. These men migrate to other countries with or without proper immigration documents due to socio-political and economic challenges in Zimbabwe (see chapter four (item 4.7). Absences, especially of fathers, pose great challenges in the lives of adolescent males today in Africa, where socialisation of the male children is the responsibility of the fathers and male adults in the extended family and society.

Our society has transferred part of the affectionate needs of its children to mothers and strangers because many modern families no longer live in their original rural homes. Consequently, most Africans have lost contact with their pedigree and children have become like "Potted plants" or "Fish in the pond" due to mobility caused by poverty, disease, death, the change in lifestyles and violent political environments. The mobility of male members of the extended family makes it difficult to develop the kind of relationships which one would depend upon during crucial times. As a result, children lack adult stories, supervision and warmth unlike in the past where the grandfather and other male relatives

would take up the role of the absent father in imparting family values. The adolescent males are growing up without adult male role models due to some of the reasons mentioned earlier on.

It is also unfortunate that courts as government machineries and the western influence have dictated for parents and society how children should be raised. Gerkin cites Lasch in the following way.

“Lasch was highly critical of the way in which the professionals in the field of childcare had invaded the homes of America, subtly undermining the authority of parents and setting themselves up as the “experts” on family life. The result, said Lasch, was a host of American parents who did not trust their own judgments: a state that can easily lead to frustration resulting in violence” (Gerkin, 1997:233).

This has led the males in the extended family relax or compromise their role by becoming passive onlookers. The fathers are not sure of what their roles are in this modern society. The father’s absence has also created anxiety during this very crucial period of adolescent development. The adolescent males are looked upon as the future heads of the family and breadwinner in the African culture; therefore, there is need for proper guidance within the African family structure. During the father’s absence, the mother plays the role of the father by teaching an adolescent what a man should do to be a father. This is a very unfortunate way of helping males to be men in a society that expects males to be leaders in the family. The boys need adult males to socialise them to be strong and to be leaders. Consequently, male adolescents make life difficult for their mothers; (see chapter 5 item 5:2).

The reader should note that in Zimbabwe there are some initiation ceremonies that were previously carried out for the boy's passage into adulthood. At present these ceremonies are sparingly being done in some cultures. The success of these ceremonies depended upon men. Regrettably, men who are supposed to explain and initiate these ceremonies to adolescents are not in attendance. In addition, children do not regularly visit their rural homes to be guided by male relatives, particularly when the father is absent. In some Zimbabwean towns, some men have "Men's Forums" (called Padare) which are being thinly attended by selected boys and men. Its main focus is not the upbringing of boys but empowerment of African men.

As a result many of the Diaspora fathers have materially supported their children in an effort to compensate for their absence (see item 5.3.1), exclusive of an enabling environment that assists the adolescent to develop into adults. It is in these children that societies are supposed to depend upon and entrust with its values. In Africa parents find meaning in life by investing their values and wealth children since they (children) are expected to look after them when they are in need and old. It is also because most Africans believe that they work for their children's future who in turn are expected to put all that is left to them into good use after their parents pass on (are no-more). According to African tradition, this implies that success has meaning only if the is a successor a well behaved and responsible male child.

In general, adolescence period is regarded as a transition between childhood and adulthood. Children during this period undergo physical, emotional, social and spiritual developments. Therefore, the role of a father is significantly valued at this point, as adolescents push for autonomy and search for identity. This is discussed in detail in chapter three (item 3.5).

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to assess the impact of the father's absence towards the bringing up of adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

This is because the way boys are brought up is crucial in helping society maintain its cultural values and curbing violent behaviors against women, children, themselves and their environment. Putting it in the words of Edward Wimberly on 16 August 2010 at Alexander contact class with post graduate students, "a hurting person hurts other." Therefore, a loving person loves others and himself. In both statements the father becomes important in guiding a boy child in all matters of life. For example, when children are growing up, they start making major decisions on various issues of life; like choosing a career to pursue, who to identify with, where to live and who to marry, therefore the father's guidance is extremely valuable during this period. Moreover, the bible recognises that parents are God's appointed authority over children in the following way;

"My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life" (Proverbs 6: 20-23).

The above quotation makes the author ask the questions: Who is guiding the male adolescents when the fathers are absent? Is it possible for an adolescent to keep the teachings of an absent father? The author further wonders whether the church and society are aware of the repercussion of the absence of fathers in the lives of their male adolescents in Zimbabwe. The incidents of absence of fathers due to migration challenged the author for failing to minister to the male adolescents whose fathers have migrated. While, Gerkin

further challenged the author on the role that the Christian tradition played in the lives of the people of God in the following way;

“For the prophets that meant confronting the people with their deviation from the will of Yahweh. For the Priests it meant faithful and reverent observation of worship and cultic practice. For the wise men and women it meant practical moral guidance in the affairs of living together as a community” (Gerkin, 1997:24).

The above quotation challenged the author to carry out this study in order to empower adolescents in the absence of their fathers, the Church and Pastors in ministering to the boy child in the society that seem to have over-looked his need for support and guidance.

It seems the adolescent male has been made to stand in the shadow of those who obviously need help. This becomes traumatic because he suffers in silence as he deals with the unfinished issues of adolescence (see item 5.9).

The African family depends on its males during the times of crisis. Males are expected to make major family decisions. They initiate and conclude funeral and mourning periods, give guidance and approval to wedding and other major ceremonies in the extended family. This indicates that the male’s role is important in bringing back the family to its healthy status during in times of crisis. Moreover, the social and physical changes that are taking place in the adolescent’s life need the father’s presence. The birth of a boy child, therefore, brings a lot of happiness in every African family for it promises growth, maintenance of the family name and values.

While the author was leading a funeral service on 10 January 2008, a father had this to say about the passing away of his son;

“I thought my son would be the one who would make our family grow since I don’t have any brothers.....” (the speech by a bereaved father at a memorial service of his son which the author was leading).

This simply shows how and what most Africans feel and believe about the family, its growth and how patriarchal Zimbabwe is, and yet the fathers who should mentor these young men are absent. The above bereaved father’s speech is understood by what Fuchs states about culture;

“Each culture had its ways of making males principal custodians of what is most valued in the culture, and of assigning to adult males the primary responsibility for inculcating in their sons the values and the rules of the culture enforcing and defending those values and rules against outsiders” (Fuchs, 2000:19).

The author, therefore, is challenged to understand the trauma that adolescent males inhibit as they grow to manhood when the fathers are absent; since fathers hold the key to the responsible behavior of their male children in Zimbabwe. Moreover, the bible recognise the duties that parents have in the education of the children when it emphasises the role of parents in every God fearing family in the following way,

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your Children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands

and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

The Bible informs us that fathers were present for their sons and their presence was purposeful. They moulded their sons and taught them about life. The process helped a boy child to become a man through this intentional relationship or presence with males of integrity. The process prepared a son to be a leader or take over the family when the father passes on. There is no other way that fathers can help their sons grow into men other than that which Deuteronomy gives. In spite of the new challenges that parents face, sons have to be supervised and guided by their fathers. But, alas, no one sits down or walks with these adolescents to teach them since fathers are in the Diaspora. The author having realised that many fathers have been forced to migrate from Zimbabwe due to the economic and socio-political situations, seeks to answer the following questions;

- ❖ Is the absence of fathers due to migrant work traumatic for adolescent males?
- ❖ What challenges do the African adolescent males face as they grow to manhood without their father’s guidance in Zimbabwe?
- ❖ What challenges do the adolescent males pose to the extended family, society, environment and to themselves when fathers are absent?
- ❖ What do these children miss in their fathers during the transitional period to manhood?
- ❖ How would the adolescent males be helped to grow into adulthood in the environment in which their fathers are missing?

It is through the above research questions that the objectives and aims of the study are formulated in order to guide the study on: Absent fathers due to migrant work: its traumatic impact on adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

1:3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The principal objective of this study is to assess the traumatic impact of the absence of fathers on their adolescent males. Although the causes and socio-economic consequences of migration to the home countries of emigrants may generally be suggested, it is difficult to determine in great depth its impact on African adolescent males as they grow into adulthood without such a research. The study will therefore:

- ❖ Explore and identify the impact absence of fathers has on adolescent males/or whether absence of fathers is traumatic in children?
- ❖ Explore and identify the pastoral role of the church in caring and guiding adolescent males whose fathers are absent.
- ❖ Investigate whether the impact would lead to mischievous and rebellious behaviors among adolescent males.
- ❖ Search and develop a methodology that facilitates pastoral care for adolescent males and to create awareness among migrated parents of the tragedy of their absence toward adolescent males.

1:4 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To help the adolescent males to draw their strength from the males in the community of faith in their journey to adulthood the absence of their fathers.

- ❖ To empower the adolescent males to create the image of a ‘good enough father’ (positive image of a father) through group discussions in order for them to be males as they grow to be adults and fathers.
- ❖ Make appropriate recommendations to the Church, community leaders and political leaders on caring for adolescent’s males whose fathers are absent?

The objectives and aims of the study lead to its significance and assumptions below.

1:5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Study findings are expected to benefit the following:

- ❖ Give the church, an opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their support systems on caring for adolescent males in their changing environment.
- ❖ The church as it will identify opportunities for complimenting the fathers and extended family’s efforts in supporting the adolescent males whose fathers are absent.
- ❖ It will benefit the adolescents by empowering them to live positively in the absence of fathers.
- ❖ It will benefit the society by building a healthy society with responsible fathers.
- ❖ Adds knowledge to the academic world on how absences of fathers impact the development of children into adults.

1:6 ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE STUDY

The study is guided by the following assumptions:

- ❖ The church is the most appropriate instrument in helping the adolescent males whose fathers are in the Diaspora. Denton (1986:26) articulates Freud in the following way:

“Only religion is able to answer the question of the purpose of life. One can hardly go wrong in concluding that the idea of a purpose in life stands and falls with the religious system” (Denton, 1986:26).

Additionally, Santrock subscribes to the role that religion plays in the lives of adolescents when he states that;

“Researchers have found that various aspects of religion are linked with positive outcomes for adolescents. For example, in one recent study of 9,700 adolescents, going to church was linked with better grades for students from low income-backgrounds (Regnerus, 2001). Religion is often an asset to the communities in which adolescents live” (Reams and Savin – Williams, 2003 in Santrock 2005:294).

Religion is integrative, both for the individual and society. To the individual, it provides a sense of meaning and an orientation to life. In the community, it binds people together and creates a communal way of seeing reality in accordance to shared values. The reader should be informed that despite its influence, religion can be harmful when it fails to be interactive within a wider community where the adolescents exist. The author cites Yancey to illustrate how a misunderstanding of some religious practices can be harmful to individuals and society.

“Historian and art critic Robert Hughes tells of a convict sentenced to life imprisonment on a maximum-security island off the coast of Australia. One day,

with no provocation he turned on a fellow prisoner and beat him senseless and killed him. Authorities shipped the murderer back to the mainland to stand trial, whereupon he gave a straightforward, passionless account of the crime. He showed no sign of remorse and denied having held any grudge against the victim. “Why, then?” asked the bewildered judge.” What was your motive?”.....The prisoner replied, “Well, I figure it’s this,” said the prisoner. I’m a Catholic. If I commit suicide I will go straight to hell. But if I murder I can come back here to Sydney and confess to a priest before my execution. That way, God will forgive me” (Yancey, 2008:161).

Nonetheless, the church is well placed in the society to give substance to Christian values of caring. It has the opportunity to motivate its members to take Christian values seriously. Through its structures, it influences the society to care for adolescents whose fathers are absent. Practical theology provides a basis for the interpretation and analysis of the situations in this study within the Zimbabwean context in order to create a caring model for the church.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has served as an important resource and support system not only in spiritual matters but in the development of social network as well.

Cultural pride is enhanced through the roles carried out by family members and the community as they help individuals and families cope with adverse socio-economic conditions, therefore;

- ❖ Adolescent males are affected by the absence of male parents.

- ❖ Funds will be available to carry out the research from the World Methodist church office in England.

1:7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following challenges and shortcomings limit the study findings:

- ❖ Self-report method (interviews) would be used to collect the data thus, some participants would respond to please the researcher.
- ❖ The interviews may open the wounds of some of the adolescents who have been injured by the absence of fathers and who may not be taking their fatherly role seriously.
- ❖ Descriptive statistics will be used to analyse the data, thus limiting the value of the findings.
- ❖ Only adolescent males from Methodist church will participate thereby limiting the generalisation of the findings.

1:8: 0 DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS

The terms below are defined and explained in order to help the researcher and reader understand the process and content of the research within the Zimbabwean context.

1:8:1 Attachment

According to Bowlby (1969) attachment is an enduring emotional bond a person develops towards another person, object, or institution. It is one of the basic needs of people. The need to be attached is important among boys whose parents are absent in Diaspora. This is

because they seem to share common aspects with regards to the absence of parents. Their situation creates a strong bond which may put an adolescent at the risk of substance abuse or protect him/her against destructive behaviors. On the other hand, he is less likely to begin to use drugs and more likely to stop using them if his attachment figures are against their use or are not using them. This depends on the nature / calibre of group members that the child attaches himself to.

An adolescent is more likely to engage in using drugs if he is connected to peers who promote the use and the abuse of drugs. Adolescents do not simply move away from parental influence into decision making world all by themselves. It is psychologically healthy for them to be attached to their parents. Secure attachment to fathers by adolescent males can facilitate the adolescent's social competence (Santrock, 2005:327).

1:8:2 Culture

Kottak, 2002; Triandis, 2000, in Santrock states that Culture is the behavior, patterns, belief and all other products of a particular group of people that are passed on from generation to generation. The product results from the interaction between groups of people and their environment over many years.

The understanding of culture in this research helps us to appreciate the impact of absent fathers towards African adolescent males in Zimbabwe. Santrock articulates it well when he stated that;

“By understanding the behavior and values of cultures around the world, we can interact more effectively with each other and make this planet a more hospitable, peaceful place to live” (Santrock, 2005:245).

This is an indication that the people's way of life differ and their situations should be dealt with and interpreted in the light of their culture.

1:8:3 Child abuse

Child abuse or neglect is the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 years by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances that indicate that the health or welfare is harmed or threatened. The schools psychological studies (1999) illuminates this view by defining child abuse as "the act either of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development" additionally, Browne, K.D., Davies, C and Stratton, P (1988) in Chiremba & Makore-Rukuni (2003:6) defined child abuse "as either active or passive." The reader should be informed that the causes of child abuse are numerous.

1:8:4 Neglect

It occurs as not providing food, clothing, education, safe environment, health care or time for and attention to the children. Neglect can be a result of poverty, mental illness or ill health in the family. The Oxford Paperback Thesaurus Dictionary 2006 defines neglect as to "fail to look after, leave alone: pay no attention to, let aside, not attend, to be remiss about, be lax, leave undone." While the schools of Psychological Studies in Zimbabwe (1999) states that "Neglect is an act of omission, which occurs when the care giver fails to give physical care and supervision, or fails to care for the developmental needs of the infant of child..." (Chiremba & Makore-Rukuni 2003:10). It is likely that fathers who have left the country did not prepare a conducive environment for the proper development of their

children due to poverty and lack of human resources that include relationship with the extended family members.

1:8:5 Trauma

It is defined as a Psychic injury caused by emotional shock, which continues to remain, unhealed and sometimes dissociated from the conscious memory, often resulting in behavioral and emotional disorder (Bell-Gadsby and Siegenberg, 1996).

1:8:6 Migration

Migration is an important population event, which can be defined as a change in residence by people. “Immigrants are people who cross national boundaries to take up permanent residence in countries in which they are not natives. They come to settle, work, and live in a new home land and usually, but not necessarily, become citizens in due time” (Corsini and Raymond 1994:130) This movement of people which can be both internal and international changes the size of population and the rate of growth of the two areas involved. In most cases, migration is rarely permanent, but may take a long period in order to justify the risks and costs involved in moving to work abroad. In Zimbabwe, most migrants are young adults. By this the author means men and women between 18-55 years of age.

1: 8:7 Motivations for migration

The common factors for migrating by Zimbabweans are economic and political that is; the desire to earn a better living. Fariyal Ross-Sheriff states that “Historically multiple emigration patterns and complex economic, social and political factors have resulted in the dispersion of Africans to other parts of the world.....” in Corsini and Raymond (1994:131).

In this study, migration is when the fathers temporarily or permanently move to another country which is not of their origin in search of improved living standards. The causes of migration vary. However, in this research, people from Zimbabwe migrate for socio-political reasons, while others are attracted by the opportunities in more affluent cities of the world. In some cases, skilled young people migrate by official invitation, though more often than not, it is the illegal exodus of professionals and skilled and unskilled men and women who go to developed countries.

1:8:8 Risks involved in migration

Many people who migrate find it difficult to acquire required documents that may allow them to reside in foreign land. There are some requirements that one has to meet before he or she crosses the boarder. The migrants may also find it extremely difficult to go to some of the countries of their dreams, due to some immigration restrictions of those countries.

The conditions in which the migrants live in may not allow them to support themselves and their families. Their inability forces them to take the risk of crossing the boarders illegally or as irregular migrants. An irregular migrant is a person who lives or works abroad without the correct documents. The illegal and irregular migrants face the risk of exploitation and mistreatment, deportation and dangerous discrimination such as the 2008 xenophobic wave of attack by the South Africans to foreigners where some foreigners lost their lives. Therefore, most of these people will either have fake documents or be doing a different job than that which is specified in the work permit. As a result, the illegal immigrant's stay in these countries restricts their movements and activities-

Migration has negative aspects to a nation because of the movement of professionals and skilled workers to neighboring and overseas countries. While the effects of migration are many, the author seeks to focus on how migration by African fathers has created a vacuum in the bringing up of an African adolescent male in Zimbabwe.

1:8:9 Validity

It is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure ‘in general Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of specific inferences made from a test score’ Pedhazur & Schmelkin (1991:30) in Makore- Rukuni (2001:67). The categories should have the face value or content validity; i.e. bear relationship to the purpose for which they have been devised. In addition, a validity technique measures what it is supposed to measure. In this study, it measures the impact of absent fathers on male adolescents. This is why a pilot test is conducted in order to give assurance to the author on the dependability of the instrument used.

1:8:10 Reliability

It is the main quality of a content analysis classification must possess. It is also the condition in which repeated observations of the same phenomena with the same instrument yield similar results. According to Babbie (1998), ‘reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time’ Makore- Rukuni (2001:67). In qualitative research methodologies reliability can be influenced by observer’s characteristics, such as perceptions, motivation and attitudes or characteristics of the co-researcher.

1:8:11 Random sampling

A sample is a limited number of observations from a population chosen in a way that allows that every possible observation (each member) has equal chances of appearing in the sample. Its purpose is both to save money and time. Random sampling was generated by selecting adolescents by chance or haphazardly using a table of random numbers (Bloom & Ottong 1987:54).

A list of names of adolescents from four urban Methodist Church in Zimbabwe congregations was compiled. The researcher chose the starting place arbitrarily and, the fourth person in the sample was the starting point in order to come up with a total number of boys for this research.

1.8.12 Social Integration

It is the ability to interact and make friends with other peers and be accepted by them.

1.8.13 Identity Confusion

This means that a person is not sure who he/she is because that individual is caught between two conflicting social systems upon which his/her definition is based on. It occurs when adolescents are indecisive about themselves and their roles (Erik, Erikson, 1968, Santrock, 2005). They cannot integrate the various roles, and when they are confronted by contradictory value systems, they neither have the ability nor the self- confidence to make decisions. This confusion causes anxiety as well as apathy or hostility towards roles or values (Meek, L et al, 2005: 426).

1.8.14 Superego

It acts as the governor, the social controller in the tower, which brings behavior within culturally acceptable limits. The superego operates as the moral arbitrator within the adult personality; it represents society's view of right and wrong. It judges and punishes in the way that the parent would. (Kissen, 1995).

1.8.15 The Developmental Stages of Children

The chronological periods that define the stages between infancy and adolescence have to be understood in order to deal with the separation of adolescence with their biological fathers. These stages might be different to what others in different cultures might practice : For example among the Ngoni of Malawi, the Shona of Zimbabwe and the Tonga of Zambia communities in the pre- colonial days ,Children up to five years were still breast feeding because they were perceived to be 'infants.' Moreover, in the African Culture a person remains a child until he dies.

For example, a fifty year old married man or woman would be referred to as Mukomana (boy) or musikana (girl) by their parents and Jesus at one time called his disciples children. These developmental stages help the reader to have a general understanding on why Zimbabwean adolescents require special attention in their journey to adulthood. It also reveals to the reader the developmental limitations that society should be aware of. Below are the developmental periods from early childhood, middle age and late childhood (Adolescence) as stated by Capuzzi, D and Gross G. 1991, Santrock 2005).

1.8.16 Infancy period

According to Santrock (2005:20), infancy extends from birth to eighteen, or twenty months. This is a period that the child goes through cognitive developmental stages during which they learn to accommodate and assimilate information from the environment: (Piaget 1952, quoted Mussen, Conger, Kagan, & Huston, 1984). Physical knowledge is accumulated from one's outside world through sensory integration or experience. For example; smell, taste, colour, visual tactile, social knowledge from the environment, culture and society's general rules of conduct and behavior such as greeting people: The parent is very important at this stage of development. The infant requires emotional bonding with parents in order to develop socially. This can be attained through their primary social context- the family, which provides them with; a) A sense of safety (security, stability, predictability). b) A sense of being positively valued. c) A sense of personal competence (Downey, in Woolfe & Dryden, 1998, Makore – Rukuni 2001, Santrock 2005:20).

1.8.17 Middle Childhood period

This period is crucial in the life of every human being. It stretches between twenty –four months to five or ten years Santrock (2005:20). The presence of parents who take parenting seriously is of great value to every child. Middle childhood period is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. At this stage, children go through biological, cognitive and socio- emotional changes. They more often use logic and reason to explain their feeling. They are no longer infants although they are limited in their ability to explain their emotions because they tend to blame others for their behaviors except in intimate relationships where they blame themselves

1.8.18 Adolescence

This is a period that those children from the middle childhood period are ushered into. The term adolescence derives from the Latin verb *adolescere*, meaning ‘to grow up’ or ‘to grow to adulthood’ (Gouw and Kruger 1995:3). In this study, these are children who are between 10 – 22 years of age. During the adolescent stage, children experience puberty, career interest, explore their identity, their relationships with peers and, parents are obviously changing, becoming more advanced and at times confusing. At this stage, children experience social and physical changes that can be traumatic to some (Newton, 1995). Their perception about self also undergoes change. For example; issues of identity loom large in adolescence when they want to know who they are and understand the changes that are taking place in their bodies and minds.

They are inquisitive about everything and at times are in conflict with parents. They even question the values they held in their middle childhood period. This can also be traced from Luke’s gospel which shows how the boy Jesus sat down with the Jewish teachers in the temple during his adolescence (at the age of 12) to listen and ask questions (Luke 2:46). Since the adolescent period is of great importance to developing children into healthy adults, the definition of adolescence requires a consideration not only of age but also of socio-historical influences in order to identify development to be just as central a prerequisite for accomplishing the adolescent developmental tasks in the company of caring male models.

1.8.19 Minister of religion

The term minister in this study means a person trained in theology, who is consecrated to administer sacraments and take care of the congregation that he/she is assigned to by his/her church. The term is used synonymously with Clergy, Pastor and Shepherd. According to Waite et al, (2006) the term refers to clergyman, clergywoman, cleric, ecclesiastic, pastor, vicar, rector, priest, parson, father, man/woman of God.

1.8.20 Steward

Refers to a lay leader of the Methodist church in Zimbabwe who is responsible for the local church. He/she is a link between the minister and the church members. According to Waite et al, (2006) it refers to an overseer, custodian or caretaker.

1.9.0 Literature review

The research for literature on this research topic began with the United Theological College in Zimbabwe libraries and the University of Pretoria in ATLA Religion database + ATLAS; Journals of Pastoral Counseling and narrative therapy on parenting among children and adolescents were carried out. A hand search and pre –designed strategy based on the Pre-selected list of key words was employed as a way to ensure that other researches of this nature were carried out, particularly on the research context under review.

Literature from the internet was looked at, but treated with caution. Matowa in one of the Zimbabwean national Newspapers; the Herald, states that;

“This is because Internet does not edit, censor or verify the validity and accuracy of the material facts posted on the internet. The web is becoming the platform to legitimize information as long as it is on the internet...” (Matowa, 2009:3).

Literature on the impact of the absence of fathers has revealed that adolescents generally respond to the absence or loss of love in various (differently) ways. Individual children’s responses to the absence of fathers will largely depend upon the emotional closeness of the adolescent to the father. Fathers have been identified by Lamb as having great influence on adolescent life of the children in the following way;

“Evidence suggests that father’s absence may be harmful not necessarily because a sex- role model is absent (sic) ,but because many aspects of the father’s role – economic, social, emotional go unfilled or inappropriately filled. It is essential to recognize the father’s multiple roles as breadwinner, parent, and emotional support for partner in order to understand how fathers influence children’s development” (Lamb, 1987:15).

Contemporary literature has indicated that boys are raised (and expected) to be strong and in control of their situations, confident about their world; courageous even in times of adversity; and be able to accomplish tasks, and endure stress and pain and be providers, but they are not given permission to openly, express fear, feel insecure or express loneliness, sadness or depression (Cook & Oltjenbruns 1998:109). The researcher, however, wonders how this can be learned by boys when those who should mentor them are absent.

1:10 Research Gap

While literature on migration has noted the economic circumstances of the families left behind, the challenges of the event (migration), the human resources which the family possesses at the time of the event and the family and community's perception of the event toward the upbringing of the adolescent males, has not been discussed from a practical theological perspective in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the psychological, social, emotional and spiritual impacts that the father's departure has on the adolescent male has been ignored or overlooked.

Adolescent males are growing up as silent sons because society has little or no patience with them. For example; when boys seek help, one would hear nurses, police officers and other members of the society telling them to respond like a man (to think quickly when making decisions), and telling them to be strong and not to behave like women. This adds to more problems of withdrawal shyness and anxiety (Horne 1988).

Information on parenting has revealed that in both western and African cultures a boy child is raised differently from the girl. It is, however, noted that the differences between the African and Caucasian boys is in their upbringing and nature of society. This is because of the nature of responsibilities assigned to them and their mode of perception or conceptions, arising from different languages, physical circumstances, traditions and values.

Literature search in Journals on the international studies and the University of Pretoria database and World Wide Web (though the quality of material has no quality control) shows that a research of this nature has not been carried out on adolescent males in Zimbabwe; a Sub-Saharan dominant masculine society. Moreover, most literature on

parenting and migration was written from a western and Asian perspective as can be evidenced in the bibliography.

1:11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter outline is the summary of what the author intends to do in the research on: The traumatic impact of absent fathers toward urban African adolescent males in Zimbabwe due to migration.

Chapter One: Provides the introduction background, aims and objectives, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations and limitations, definition of terms, literature review, research gap and preliminary conclusion.

Chapter Two: Provides the research methodology to smooth the progress of data collection techniques through personal interviews. Qualitative, quantitative and a survey method will be used. The development of research questions for the adolescents will be discussed.

Chapter Three: Discusses the whole question of adolescence development across the diverse field in social sciences in which the stages of development by Erik Erikson will be employed. Erikson's eight stages will help the author to understand the challenges or impact the adolescent males face when the father is absent. The researcher will also assess the challenges that the Zimbabwean adolescents face along the road to adulthood (the traumatic entry into adulthood).

Chapter Four: The focus in this chapter will be to identify the roles played by fathers and the impact fathers have on adolescent males. The "good enough father" will be discussed from a Zimbabwean context. The absence of a father is an underestimated tragedy of our time and yet a father is there to provide masculine aspects to the adolescent male which the

young men internalise in preparation for his outer world. Osherson articulates the author's view in the following way:

“If the fathers are not there to provide a confident, rich model of manhood for his sons, then the boy is left in a vulnerable position, having to distance himself from his mother without a clear and understandable model of gender upon which to base his emerging identity. Such a conflict can create in a young boy the inability to deal with personal (identity) authority and relationships to the outside world” (Osherson, 1986:18).

In Zimbabwe adolescent males are guided by their fathers and other male elders of the extended family and village in order for them to enter into adulthood. In more emotionally close families the absence of the father would be taken care of by the males in the extended family which include the elders of the village. But today, many males have left the country living the children with mothers or by themselves; hence posing the challenge to the upbringing of the adolescent males.

Chapter Five: The author will engage with the adolescents by listening to their stories on the impact of the absence of their fathers. The roles played by, the church, the extended family and the society in helping the adolescents whose fathers are absent will be discussed. These experiences with other perspectives are integrated in order to develop a therapeutic perspective leading to concluding thoughts. Fowler's stages of faith and Gerkin's shepherding models will guide the author in developing caring congregations (fellowships) for the adolescent males. “In a caring congregation its members will be offered the opportunity to care and be cared for” (Matthew S. & Lawson K 1995:115).

Chapter six: Focuses on the significance of the research journey to the researcher and makes recommendations and conclusions of the study. The author is aware that it is not possible for the society to go back to its traditional way of negotiating the rites of passage to adulthood for the adolescents. Therefore, a “Pastoral Care Model” will be designed for adolescents at risk and those who are wounded by the absence of their fathers. Group therapy will be measured in dealing with adolescent males who are acting out as they are not sure what of it means to be masculine. The model will prepare them to be adults and fathers in the community that expects boys to be leaders and males of integrity.

1:12 Preliminary conclusion

The success of the research will depend upon the willingness of the co-researchers to share their painful experiences with the researcher and the researcher’s positive regard and ability to explain and observe the ethical ground rules in the research.

The aim of each chapter is to help the researcher in coming up with recommendations (in chapter 6) that will empower the adolescent males whose fathers are absent to draw their strength from group counseling. The church workers and the Christian community will also compliment the extended family counseling practices.

The next chapter is the methodology that guided the researcher in carrying out the study on the traumatic impact of absent fathers toward adolescent males in Zimbabwe. The chapter will spell out the tools that will be used when conducting the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the theological design and methodology that will help carry out the research on “**absent fathers due to migrant work**” is presented. Qualitative, quantitative and survey research methods are described. The task of practical theology as a theoretical undertaking and its relationship with pastoral care is discussed and the interdisciplinarity dimension is recognised and valued in order to guide the process of carrying out this research.

2:2 AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design designates the logical manner in which individuals or other units are compared and analysed. It is the basis for making interpretations from the data. The purpose of a design is to ensure a comparison that is not subject to the alternative, but lays the foundation for conducting a study effectively and efficiently. In a broader sense, the term refers to the plan for data collection, data analysis and interpretation in all types of research in order to enhance the eventual validity of the research findings (Wilson 1989; Mouton & Marcus 1988:33).

From these definitions, it is clear that research designs are instruments which are used to collect and compare data.

“The choice and the elaboration of the research design can be seen as an explicitation of the empirical- theological question that the study is to answer. The nature of the questions will imply certain choices with regard to the population and

the sample, the data to be collected, the timing of the study, and the operational and analytical research methods. The research design is a comprehensive research strategy that covers all of these necessary methodological and organizational decisions” (Van der ven, 1993:127).

Basically, in this study. both the quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in combination as a frame work to collect and analyse data on a complementary basis. While the author has some knowledge of the subject, he cannot claim to understand what the children experience until they share their experiences with him. For example, in chapter 6, the author’s reactions to the experiences expressed towards adolescents gives evidence to this affirmation (refer to item 6:2).

It is through the qualitative and quantitative research processes that new insight will be revealed. This will help the adolescents to deal with unique experiences of their situations or what Michael White et al call “Unique outcome(s)”, which in narrative therapy refers to “.... ‘facts’ or events that contradict the problem’s effects in their lives and relationships” (White & Episton 1990:56). The reader has to note that what ‘fact’ means in this context of the research is that the research process will help the adolescents to understand their world and themselves better. The understanding will further help them to modify whatever ideas they held about themselves, their fathers and the world.

2.2.1 Quantitative Research

It is a research that deals with the quantity of things that involve measurement of quantity. Quantitative research deals with numbers and anything that is measured for that reason tables such as those used in chapter five and these findings are utilised to present and

measure the phenomena and their interaction. Therefore, the chief apparatus in quantitative research are physical things and processes.

According to Barker, Pistraing Elliot (1995:54) cited in Makone and Rukuni (2001:98) that the quantitative, hypothetic approach relies on empirical investigation where the researcher would observe, then draw conclusions after a series of observations, and the predictions based on the findings. The experience and knowledge gained through that process leads the researcher to draw conclusions.

2.2.2 Qualitative Research

This is a research which is not linear, which means that ~~is~~, it does not focus on cause and effect, but is discovery oriented. It is the research where data are not transferable to numbers and not comparable with statistical procedures. Rather it is, “processes of systematic enquiry into the meaning which people employ to make sense of their experiences and guide their actions” (Mcleod 1994:78). Macleod further states that qualitative research aims to describe and interpret what things mean to people which quantitative research require the use of numbers, where the researcher asks questions such as: How much? How many? From the above discussion, qualitative research helps to clarify the meaning of social action and situations. In this research, both the quantitative and qualitative research methods are employed as a framework to collect data and analyse it.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in order for the research interpretation of empirical stories, theological and interdisciplinary literature, and the Co-researchers’ interpretations, to develop into an alternative understanding. These research methods have their strengths and weakness For example, quantitative research technique

has its distinctive strengths and weakness. It yields normative scores, but will not give access to the richness and complexity of personal experience.

Face to face interviews generate sensitive qualitative data that are influenced by personality or interpersonal style of the interviewer. The researcher has, therefore, decided to balance these methods against each other's strengths and weakness in order to understand the trauma that adolescents go through. Therefore, a survey method was used.

2.2.3 A Survey Design

The survey method consists of establishing a descriptive and explanatory inventory by systematically questioning the adolescents about what impact the absence of their fathers has on them (Van der ven 1993:127) and then such questions were asked. In this research, a survey design was adopted for the study because the researcher wanted to identify and understand the rate and reasons for migration, and its effects on adolescent male children. According to Malhotra, a survey method is based on the questioning of the co-researchers (Malhotra 1999:178). In this research, co-researchers were asked questions as contained in the appendix A&B. The research design helped the researcher in obtaining the necessary information needed to deal with the research problem in practical theology.

Practical theology reflects critically on what happens in the congregation and on the religious actions of people, both within the church and in society at large (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:12, 13). An analysis of the church's action by the leaderships with regards to the emotional experiences of adolescent males, will guide its praxis in the society.

The researcher was also mindful of doing research on the participants rather than with them as to avoid taking the participants as subjects but as co-researchers who are trying to find a

solution to a problem together with the researcher. The researcher valued ‘the importance of dialogue in helping’ (Egan 2002:65), which leads to an outcome that benefits the participants.

Therefore, a survey is an instrument used to study social phenomena. Wortman and Laftus (1988) defined it as an attempt to estimate the opinions, characteristics and behaviors of the particular population through the investigation of a representative sample. In this study, a survey is simply a method which is used to collect data from adolescent males. Descriptive survey accurately looks at the phenomenon of the moment and precisely describes it.

According to Leed (1988), the descriptive survey design is used in describing the nature of existing conditions to make intelligent plans to improve them. A plan will be reached together with the co-researchers in order to deal with their existing trauma within the discipline of practical theology. This is because practical theology studies religious praxis, in order to reflect on the people’s praxis in their encounter with God as they search for meaning in the situations they find themselves in. In this study, a survey is simply a method which is used to collect data from adolescent males.

2.3 WHAT IS A THEORY?

A theory is based upon a hypothesis and backed by evidence. It presents a concept or idea that is testable. Therefore, a theory is not merely a guess, speculation or a hunch but a fact based framework to describe a phenomenon that provides a model to understand human thought, emotions and behavior. Its two major components are that it describes a behavior and makes predictions about the future.

According to McWhirter & McWhirter,

“.. theory is a hypothetical explanation of observed eventsWhich should lead to predictions of future events that have the same sort of behavior” (McWhirter & McWhirter, 1991:71).

This suggests that a theory is an explanation of occurrence in nature. A theory helps counselors to verify or confirm through empirical evidence the activities they do in their relationship with clients.

Additionally Nelson-Jones states that

“....theory is a formulation of the underlying principles of certain observed phenomena which have been verified to some extent” (Nelson-Jones, 1997:5)

This means that the researcher observes some occurrences in nature and systematically organises the information in order to confirm whether there are general rules that govern the occurrence.

2:3:1 The Function of theory in a research

A theory in any research helps the researcher to organise and understand data collected from the field. The author has tabulated some of the important functions of a theory in his research process in order to allow him to organise data into some pattern and to be more precise in what to look for: Below are the functions of a theory;

- ❖ It provides the language that helps us communicate to each other the meaning, importance of our observations and the method of doing a research.
- ❖ It assists the counsellor to describe how helpful and unhelpful behaviors of the individual are acquired.

- ❖ Theory helps us to explain how behaviors are maintained, and how to help the client to change and consolidate the desirable behaviors that have been changed.

Theory helps the counselor to avoid drawing conclusions based on opinions or untested assumptions; thereby, creating distorted images (Rukuni & Maunganidze, 2000:6-7).

2:4 THE ROLE OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY THEORY

The theoretical undertaking that builds on praxis makes practical theology central in assessing the impact of absent fathers on adolescent males. It is a theological theory of action with a methodology that is linked to social sciences. Practical theology is also referred to as a theory of crisis (Heitink 1999:4). The Christian faith in its praxis cannot escape the crisis or human conditions in Zimbabwe; where practical theology stands in between the politics and religion of the people as a theory of praxis because its horizon is beyond the Church.

Adraanse suggested that one part of theology should deal with the agenda (meaning things that must be done); while another should deal with the ‘credenda’ which means things that must be believed (Adraanse et al. 1987:89). This simply means that faith without good deeds is dead. James in his epistle warns the Christians that faith without works is dead for it does not benefit anyone (James 2:14). Therefore, Practical theology should be understood as an empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practices with reference to society and culture, and the church and individuals.

Practical theology has an empirical orientation for it chooses its point of departure in human experience; the current state of faith and the church (Heitink 1999:6). A practical theology which chooses its point of departure in the experience of people and the state of church and

society is indeed characterised by a methodology that takes empirical data seriously (Heitink 1999:6), for it keeps them in mind as it develops its theory.

2:5 Theory and Action

A lot of the confusion regarding the unique object of practical theology has to do with the distinction between Christian faith and the modern society. The Christian tradition has for centuries influenced the praxis of the society in Africa through educational, health institutions and other divergent developments within the society. In this study, Christian faith is (praxis 1) in the praxis of modern or contemporary society (praxis 2).

According to Hawkes, theory and praxis are intimately and inextricably connected in practical theology, (Hawkes 1989:29), Pieterse simply states that practical theology monitors the relationship and interaction between praxis and theory (Pieterse 2001:9). Therefore, the relationship between theory and praxis is considered to be central in practical theology because practice and theory inform and support each other in the mediation of Christian faith in both the church and society.

2.5.1 The Mediation of the Christian faith (Praxis 1)

Practical theology is focused on the mediation of Christian faith. This mediation has to do with the core of the Christian conviction; God's coming to humanity in the world (Heitink 1999:8). The mediation of Christian faith takes place within certain structures of the church, family and society. Practical theology studies how these processes take place, and how these structures can be adapted so that there can be a real transmission of Christian tradition.

2:5.2 The praxis of modern society (Praxis 2)

In the praxis of modern society, one looks at the description and explanation where the society would be described and explained as a praxis or a domain of action.

This is where individuals and groups that are motivated by their personal ideals and are driven by varying interests to make specific choices and to pursue specific goals in their daily experiences within the society. In this domain of action, one finds intentional actions with ethical implications, regardless of whether they are based on specific religious convictions or worldview (Heitink 1999:8). The word praxis is, therefore, broader than practice. It refers to theory because of the values, norms and interests involved (Heitink 1999:8).

2:6 THE ROLE OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

The mediation of Christian faith (praxis 1) has met a lot of challenges in modern society (Praxis 2). Modernity has created considerable and almost insoluble problems for the church as the community that is entrusted with a tradition. Modernisation solves and creates problems. In spite of the challenges faced in the mediation of Christian faith, Practical theology continues to reflect on the people's praxis from the view point of God's revelatory praxis in a way that is as scientific as possible (Van der Ven 1994:29).

This is because there is a link between theory of crisis and theory of action in practical theology. This makes it to be active by either being progressive or conservative in every human situation. It can never be neutral just as the writer of revelations when he warns the church of Laodicea for its lukewarm status (Rev 3:14). Instead, it (practical theology) is

aimed at the adaptation of people to existing conditions, or the emancipation of people to new situations.

Therefore, practical theology should find its point of departure in the existing praxis in its efforts toward improving concrete conditions in the society and in the church. It should manifest itself in the critical study of reality (Lammermann1981:51), for it equips the pastoral caregiver with the skills to help those people who are in various needy situations.

2:6.1 Pastoral Care as a discipline of Practical Theology

Pastoral care, like preaching, instruction, celebration and service, is one of the five sub-disciplines of practical theology (Heyns and Pieterse 1990: 12). Pastoral care has been part of the ‘action story’ of the people of God which involves a response to human experiences. Gerkin emphasises the importance of pastoral care on an individual and community in the following way;

“Pastoral care involves not only the care of the individuals and families, but also the care of the community itself. Pastoral care also entails the thoughtful reinterpretation of the tradition that shapes Christian identity as that tradition is brought into dialogical relationship with contemporary culture and its impact on the community of Christians as well as its individual members” (Gerkin, 1997:118).

This simply means that although the human experiences have changed with time and differ in context, pastoral care practices still engage with people in their environment. Pastoral care as a discipline of Practical theology then becomes relevant for members of the church as it will be addressing every day realities of the people of God. In that way, its impact is also felt by others in the society.

2:7 A PASTORAL CARE METHODOLOGY- (Charles Gerkin 1997)

Pastoral Care involves both the care of the Christian community and the care of persons within this community. Its functions are healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciliation. Pastoral care promotes change or growth in all aspects of human life. This change should be understood as an effective increase of love, justice, and ecological partnership throughout the psycho-systemic matrix. Pastoral care involves the responsibility to facilitate the maintenance and to the further development of the Christian community's story and its dialogue with its tradition, on the one hand, and for facilitating the growth and creative development of particular life stories, on the other (Gerkin, 1997:113).

2:8 THE PASTOR AS A SHEPHERD

In the history of pastoral care, the psychotherapeutic paradigm dominated. Pastoral care was problem centered. It should, however, be noted that the shepherd is alert for the evidence of human pain and joys where he/she is available to people as they share their human stories or situations with him /her.

The shepherd in Pastoral care interprets the conflicts and pressures, the contradictions and pitfalls of people's everyday encounters in the church and society. The shepherd further facilitates the dialogue between life stories and the Christian story in order to help them understand how life is to be lived in both environments. Samuel Park in his article recognises the Pastor as the;

“Guide of the interpretive process” explains both the Christian narrative tradition and the contemporary living situations encountered in ordinary lives. The transformation of life takes place when the pastor assists individuals, families, and

communities to transform and reinterpret their core stories in dialogical interaction with the primary images and themes of the biblical and Christian story” (pastoral psychology Vol. 54. No. 1 September 2005:58).

This shows that the shepherd’s task in the community or field is to think,-think ahead and influence his or her followers to make decisions and take actions that improve their quality of life.

Pastoral care has increased the awareness of problems that people go through such as child abuse, pollution, health issues, family life, politics; some of which have been hidden from us for long time. This is why the role played by a pastor cannot be ignored or overstated in caring for the church that should care for adolescent males in Zimbabwe whose fathers are absent.

2:9 Stages of faith development– (James Fowler 1981)

In practical theology, the object of study is people’s faith in God. God is not the object of study. It is how people relate their existence in light of God’s revelation that gives them a view of themselves and their world. According to Fowler, communities of faith are communities of shared interpretations. The stages of faith are not identical with and cannot be reduced either to cognitive or moral stages, or to some mixture of the two (Fowler, 1981:99) as conceptualised by Piaget and Kohlberg. Unlike Fowler, Piaget and Kohlberg have conceptually separated cognitive or knowing from emotions or affection by condensing it to logical inquiry.

According to Fowler (1981), conflicting situations are important on the growth and development of faith which result from life’s crises, challenges and all kinds of disruptions

that theologians call revelation. Each of these things brings disequilibrium and requires changes in our being in faith (Fowler, 1981:101). Conflicting elements are the very essence of life. Where there are no conflicts, there is no energy; therefore the experience of tension in human beings is universal.

It is important to note that in human development the adolescent stage has challenged many parents so much that they have hated the process of bringing up adolescent into adulthood. One would hear Shona people say *zera iri rinonetsa* (meaning children at this stage are a problem). There is a need, therefore, for parents to be prepared for the developmental challenges that children go through. It is crucial for parents to accord adolescents space and to understand their strengths and weaknesses. In this way, the probability of journeying together with less conflict will be high.

James Fowler (1981-1996) proposed a theory of religious development that focuses on the motivation to discover meaning in life, either within or outside of the organised religion. Fowler proposed six stages of religious development that are related to Erikson's, Piaget's and Kolberg's theories of development (Torney –Purta, 1993).

i. Stage 1. Intuitive – Projective faith (early Childhood).

At this stage, infants learn to trust their caregiver (Erikson's formulation) and they invent their own intuitive images of what good and evil are. As Children move into Piaget's pre-operational stage, their cognitive world open up a variety of new possibilities. Fantasy and reality are taken as the same thing. Right and wrong are seen in terms of consequences to the self. Children readily believe in angels and spirits.

ii. Stage 2 Mythical – Literal faith (middle and late Childhood).

As children move into Piaget’s concrete operational stage, they begin to reason in a more logical, concrete, but not abstract way. They see the world as more orderly. Children interpret religious stories literally, and they perceive God as being like a parent figure that rewards the good and punishes the bad. What is right is often perceived as a fair exchange.

iii. Stage 3. Synthetic-Conventional faith (transition between Childhood and adolescence, early adolescence)

At this stage, adolescents start to develop formal operational thoughts (Piaget’s highest stage) and begin to integrate what they have learned about religion into a coherent belief system. According to Fowler , although this stage is abstract than the previous one, young adolescents still mainly conform to the religious beliefs of others and have not yet adequately analysed alternative religious ideologies. Someone’s behavior that involves a question of right and wrong is seen in terms of the harm it does to a relationship or what others might say. Fowler believes that most adults become locked into this stage and never move on to higher stages of religious development. The faith of adolescents involves a personal relationship with God. God is thought as “always there for me”. At this stage, guidance is important in form of spiritual role models (spiritual fathers or leaders).

iv. Stage 4. Individuative –reflective faith (transition between adolescence and adulthood, early adulthood).

At this stage, individuals are capable, for the first time, of taking full responsibility for their religious beliefs, often precipitated by the leaving home experience. Young people begin to

take responsibility for their lives. Young adults now start to realise that they can choose the course of their lives and that they must expend effort to follow a particular course.

Individuals come face to face with decisions such as these: “Should I consider myself first, or should I consider the welfare of others first? Are religious doctrines that were taught to me when I was growing up absolute, or are they more relative than I was led to believe?” Fowler believes that both formal operational thoughts and the intellectual challenges to an individual’s values and religious ideologies that often develop in college are essential to developing individuated- reflective faith.

v. Stage 5. Conjunctive Faith (Middle adulthood)

Fowler believes that only a small number of adults ever move on to this stage, which involve being more open to paradox and opposing view points. This openness stems from people’s awareness of their finiteness and limitations. (Whatever you call it, it exists).

vi. Stage 6 .Universalising faith (Middle adulthood or late adulthood)

Fowler says that the highest stage in religious development involves transcending specific beliefs systems to achieve a sense of oneness with all beings and a commitment to breaking down the barriers that are divisive to people on this planet. Conflictual events are no longer paradoxes. Fowler argues that very few people achieve this elusive, highest stage of religious development. Among those who attained this stage are Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther king jr, Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu. Fowler (1981:105) as cited in Santrock summarises the stages in the following way;

- ❖ It means a commitment to take our previous decisions and actions to shape our character, as do the stories and images by which we live.
- ❖ It means a commitment to take seriously the fact that we are formed in social communities and that our ways of seeing the world are profoundly shaped by the shared images and constructions of our group or class.
- ❖ It means that faith development requires that faith must be a theory of personal knowing and acting.
- ❖ It means a commitment to relate structural stages of faith to predictable crises and challenges of developmental eras and to take life histories seriously in its study (Santrock, 2005:295-296).

The author will apply the stages of faith development that are coined by Fowler in assessing the trauma that male adolescents experience in the absence of their fathers. The approach should illuminate and clarify their patterns of faith during that period, though the stages only tell part of the story in their journey to adulthood. Rites of passages in Africa help adolescents to shape their lives through particular images, beliefs, symbols and themes of their faith; for they mark a qualification or identity in one's life. Gerkin and Fowler help in the understanding that as the Christian community cares for adolescents, it must take note of the level of one's faith; which is important in facilitating growth and change.

In order to engage the co-researcher with a sense of worth, a narrative approach is of great benefit for adolescents to recount their stories.

2.10 A Narrative attachment theory- Approach

According to Gerkin (1997), a narrative approach points us toward a recognition that in the long story told by the people of God, the metaphor of care has multiple origins. Its meaning embraces many roles within the historic community and varying emphasis, which from time to time have asserted themselves as being primary to the care of God's people in particular situations Gerkin (1997:25). Narrative gives adolescent males whose fathers are absent, a sense of worth, respect of their past and life as they recount their stories.

“Narrative therapy seeks to be a respectful, non –blaming approach to counseling and community work, which centres people as the experts of their own lives. It views problems as separate from people and assumes that people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives” (Morgan 2000:2).

According to Morgan, it is clear that each story on peoples' lives is unique even if the circumstances may be the same. It also means that people within the same context experience a particular event differently. For example; the absence of fathers is viewed negatively by some children while others see it positively based on material benefits. The author sought to find the impact of the absence toward the adolescent's development into adulthood.

While Holmes notes that:

“Attachment Theory has shown that self knowledge in the form of narrative is associated with a core state characterized by secure attachment. Narratives turn

experience into a story which is temporal, is coherent and has meaning” (Holmes, 1993:150).

This shows that when personal history is re-told, it helps the adolescents to link the past with the present and the future. The previously fragmented and broken stories are brought to mind and mended; thus making a person feel secure (Holmes 1993:150). John Bowlby (1989) argues that secure attachment is an important foundation for psychological development later in childhood, adolescence and adulthood; while insecure attachment is related to difficulties in relationships and problems in later developments. Similarly, in light of what has been advanced in the preceding statements, Willows et al, asserts that listening and telling stories can provide opportunities for both the revelation and the healing with merit. This can be summed up as follows:

“Practical theology has consistently given voice to the fact that listening to stories lies at the heart of all human experience and forms part of the fabric of Practical theology task” (Willows et al, 2000:15).

The author also realises that Jesus interpreted the activities of the people of his time through stories that revealed the beauty of the kingdom of God. One of the benefits of narrative therapy is the unpacking and unstuffing of emotions that lead to an improved feeling of well being, both physically and mentally.

2.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection was done through an interview Schedule and through Audiotape. Participatory (narrative) and depth interviews were used in order to assess how the context and experiences are informed by tradition and theology. In this research, the co- researchers

were the church stewards, youth pastors and male adolescents. The co- researchers were informed of the purpose of the study and the use of audiotape during the interview. The use of audio tape reduced the interruption which arise from notes taking, thereby, created a ‘Good dialogue’ that led to an outcome that would benefit both the respondents and the researcher (Egan, 2002:65). The researcher allowed the adolescents to express their feelings uninterrupted and helped them to cope with their inner and outer worlds more creatively (Egan, 2000:192) because a ‘good dialogue’ was expected to ‘Challenge the Predictable Dishonesties of Everyday Life’ (Egan, 2000:192).

2:11:1 Co - researcher

In this study, the adolescents and the church stewards are considered as co-researchers. This is because the research is a shared activity in which the author and the adolescents want to understand the world and themselves better. As such, the author in this research embraces a narrative approach that “strives for participatory interaction” (Muller, Van Deventer & Human, 2001:78) with the adolescents in order to understand the facts or events in their environment and lives. The adolescents and the author will together create a model that will help the boys to deal with the trauma of growing up in the absence of fathers. However, Kotze’ & Kotze’ warns and reminds researchers of the pitfalls of research processes when he states that;

“Research too often becomes an intellectual activity with researchers obtaining degrees on or receiving acknowledgement based on the suffering of others-with the latter most likely not to benefit from the research. We are committed.....to participatory action research that will primarily be to the advantage of the participants” (Kotze’ & Kotze’, 2001:9).

If this research is to be of value to the co-researchers, it should promote the welfare of the adolescents. This is only possible when adolescents see themselves as experts when participating and are involved in the process of creating a model that guides their lives.

2:11:2 The use and benefits of Interviews

The author chose to use an interview method to collect data in order to gather information of greater depth. As stated by Seale;

“The interview is a more flexible form than the questionnaire and, if intelligently used, can generally be used to gather information of greater depth and more sensitive to contextual variations in meaning” (Seale, 1998:128).

Therefore, the researcher listened to the co-researchers’ verbal and non-verbal messages because verbal language alone was incapable of expressing their inner feelings. In addition, several open-ended questions were used for probing purposes and recording spontaneous answers to ensure that all questions are understood and answered. Daily taped interviews were used to transcribe major views on the scoring sheet and descriptive statistics were employed to analyse data. Data was analysed as it was gathered in order to sensitively alter the kind of questions that were asked to those who participated later in order to accommodate what the researcher had learnt from earlier participants.

A survey design was adopted for the study because the researcher wanted to identify the current level of the impact absent father presented on adolescent males. Twelve co-researchers were sampled during the school holiday in the urban congregations. This is because most adolescents of this age are still at school. The age group of: 10 – 22 years was sampled for interview in order to identify how each adolescent male feels about their absent

father. The author also interviewed the “connexional” youth pastor, Rev Adam Nyawo, in order to have an appreciation of the challenges that are posed by the absence of fathers in caring for the adolescent in his role as a shepherd of young people.

The researcher discussed the data collection methods and ethical requirements with the co-researchers. Structured interviews were put together after a thorough literature review, and discussions with various interested people in the area of this research were held. Structured interviews were preferred because the literacy levels and language performance of most co-researchers were unknown and varied.

Two versions of the interview schedule were designed; one in English and another in Shona and two experts in these languages were asked to check the content validity of the schedules. Two theologians checked whether the interpretations represented the Christian language that constituted a theological dialogue. Both versions were pilot tested with people who were not part of the research (in the Sample).

2:11:3 Pilot tests

The purpose of a pilot test was to check on the value of the instrument to be used in order to produce valid data and to check to see whether any questions are ambiguous and interpreted differently by different adolescents (Seale, 1998:118). It was also to help the researcher to assess the amount of time that was assigned to each participant for the task, and expenses of coding and analysing the resulting data. In qualitative research, reliability and validity are very important tools that assist in ensuring consistence and accuracy in the way data is collected and analysed.

2:11:4 Acknowledgement of interdisciplinarity

In this research, interdisciplinarity is acknowledged for its interactive form of cooperation between theology and social sciences. Van der ven (1993) articulates this interaction in the following way; “The difference between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity is that the second concept (interdisciplinarity), unlike the first (multidisciplinary), stresses the interaction, i.e. reciprocity, between theology and social science. Multidisciplinary is characterised by a sequential relationship, interdisciplinarity by a cooperative relationship between the two disciplines. Or, to put in yet another way, multidisciplinary consists of a series of monologues, interdisciplinarity in a number of parallel dialogue (Van der ven, 1993:97, 98).”

The purpose of the interdisciplinary dialogue is to systematically explore, analyse, critically evaluate and justify the research data in order to come up with an informed interpretation on the situation.

Practical theology belongs to theology as well as to social science and constitutes an interdisciplinary dialogue between them and the person of the practical theologian. This means that the object of practical theological study is approached by one and the same person but using two different sets of paradigm, methods, techniques or so (Nipkow 1971 in Van der ven 1993:98). This is because such hypotheses are both social scientific and theological in nature (Van der ven, 1993:98).

The research and selection of literature was based on the general ideas on the impact of the absent fathers through personal observations, experiences, conversations and reading materials in the context of the research. Therefore, a critical thinking provided by theology

and social sciences influenced the study and enabled the researcher to formulate important themes and aspects in the research.

The research took cognisance of the social sciences and theological views of personality development because theology, Social science and Anthropology cannot survive without this interdisciplinary dialogue Clinebell (1972). Above all, the adolescent male is in psychotherapy at some point as he searches for answers on the meaning of life and wonders why the father seem so unloving, and runs head on into the religious questions to explore fundamental questions related to the nature and destiny of man ;and his ever present existential anxiety and guilt Clinebell (1972).

Therefore, both Erikson's psychosocial theory in human development and Gerkin's pastoral care model of ministering to the individual and community will be used in order to offer an understanding on the impact of fathers' migration has on adolescent males. Fowler's stages of faith and Gerkin's shepherding models will guide the author in developing a model of a caring congregation (fellowships) for the adolescent males. Matthew et al captures the above understanding by stating that;

“In a caring congregation its members will be offered the opportunity to care and be cared for” (Matthew et al, 1995:115).

The above quotation is further emphasised among the Africans in Zimbabwe when they say “*Chirere chigokurerawo*”. This means that, when parents have cared for a child, he/she will in turn care for them in their old age. Moreover, it is also true that as children grow, they also help us to grow in particular areas of our lives or, to put it in another way, as children develop in particular areas, parents develop an alternative understanding of them and life.

Equally, as the church cares for the adolescents, they will in fact be the beneficiaries of the positive outcome. Group therapy would be considered in an effort to find a model of helping adolescent males whose father's are absent to draw strength from group discussions.

2:11:5 Co- researchers' Positive self - regard

This refers to the value co-researchers allocate to themselves which the researcher will uphold in the research process and no conditions of acceptance should be set.

The worth and self- respect of the co-researchers were upheld, they were not manipulated directly or indirectly in the process. The author was also aware that the co- researchers are different and as a result, each member has different perceptions (own interpretation of their World), needs, fears and aspirations. Therefore, each individual's point of view was taken as a contribution to the resources for understanding the situation in this research (Winter, 1996, Maunganidze & Rukuni, 2001:124).

2. 11:6 Random sampling

A sample is a limited number of observations from the population chosen in a way that allows every possible observation (each member) to have equal chances of appearing in the sample. Its purpose was both to save money and time. Random sampling was generated by selecting adolescents by chance or by haphazardly using a table of random numbers (Bloom & Ottong, 1987:54). A list of names of adolescents from the Methodist church adolescents within four urban congregations was compiled. The researcher chose the starting place arbitrarily and the 4th person in the sample was the starting point in order to come up with a total number of boys for this research.

The research will focus on male adolescents from the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's urban congregations located in the high density areas of Marondera because most of these adolescents have parents who are lowly paid or unemployed. This reduced the risks of universalising the particular or, equally heinously, particularising the universal (Willows & Swinton, 2000: 72).

The following characteristics were considered from the respondents under this study: The age group of between 10-22 years with parents who are absent, and all respondents were to be African males. Twelve respondents were sampled from a population of 70 adolescents. The researcher was mindful of adolescents in single parent families during his selection of the co-researchers.

2.11: 7 Executing the Sampling Process

The minister and church steward under the study were contacted. The process was successfully completed a week before the interviews took place.

2.11:8 Challenges encountered

Two adolescents indicated that their fathers are no longer communicating. These adolescents think that the silence was leading to their parent's divorce. They wanted the researcher to break the silence between them and their fathers. These were special cases that led the researcher to engage in counseling. This also reminded the researcher of what his grandfather did in item 1.1 when he did not return to his family.

2.12.0 SCORING

Daily taped interviews were transcribed on the scoring sheet highlighting major views. The information collected will be kept safely at the University of Pretoria for fifteen years before it is destroyed.

2:12.1 Instrument used

Data was collected through an interview schedule and audio tape recording. Two versions of the interview schedule were designed, one in English and another in Shona. The Structured interview items were put together after a thorough literature review and discussions with various interested people in the area of this research. They were (Structured interviews) preferred because the literacy levels and language performance of most respondents were unknown.

The interview schedule comprised of ten items which were both in English and Shona (see Appendix A & B; Appendix C is the Informed Consent Forms). Experts, in English and Shona, who are based in Zimbabwe, were asked to check the content validity of the interview schedules. Both versions were pilot tested with people who were not part of the study.

The results of the pilot test revealed that the interview schedule could be used with ease, after reframing two questions which the respondents had sought some clarifications. By carrying out a pilot study or a testing of the proposed questions, the most common errors in doing a research were avoided and the formulation of the research problem was directed (Mouton, 2001:103 ., Devos et al., 2002:210) .

2:12.2 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the research data. According to Mouton (1996:163), descriptive statistics organise and summarise the data to render it more comprehensible. The age of the respondents and their relationship with the parents were considered.

2.13 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter discussed how data was collected, scored and analysed, and how the research sample was also identified and justified. The role of practical theology and pastoral care in the research were laid down. The respondents were told the reason, for the interviews and they gave their own consent to be interviewed. Qualitative and quantitative research methods and an interdisciplinary model were adopted in order for the empirical stories and the co-researcher's interpretation of their situation to be understood. The research focused on adolescent males from one denomination (the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe-Schools), in order to reduce the risks of universalising the particular and particularising the universal (Willows & Swinton, 2000:72). The next chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives of Adolescent males.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT GROWTH PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

The study on understanding adolescent growth process is valuable in this chapter, for it enables the researcher to assess and discuss the impact of absent fathers on adolescent males (in chapter 5) in their journey to adulthood. Several writers like Santrock, (2005), Farrar, (2006) and Erikson, (1968) suggest the importance of this stage in human development. The author shows various views on the challenges faced by adolescents in their journey to adulthood, a world of responsibility, freedom and high expectations from the society. In many African cultures, parents are often concerned that their influence on their children will diminish, that their values will become unacceptable and that their children will conform to the wrong groups with strange unsupervised values.

The adolescent stage is plagued by conflicting opinions from different cultures and studies of human development have indicated it to be so. It is viewed as a risky period by some, while others takes it as a normal transitional time of growing up. The author in this chapter shows and discusses biblical, historical, psychological and African perspectives on adolescent identity formulation and development.

3.2 A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The reader has to note that the adolescent stage was unknown among the Africans in Zimbabwe. Human life had three recognised stages, namely childhood, adulthood and old age. Childhood represented the beginning of life, while adulthood meant maturity and old age was associated with wisdom and the end of life. The preparation of a boy to be a man

began before or immediately after a boy is weaned, which is approximately between four to five years. At this time, boys would accompany men or sit where men are gathered as a way to learn. The men would also discuss issues that instilled masculinity on the boys. This was necessary as it should be today because guidance is important in this unkind world. In this way, boys received courage from stories and experiences that men shared when with them; particularly in the evenings.

Training was not strictly confined to a specific age though certain aspects of the tradition would be emphasised at particular ages. Training continues through adolescence period through to the death bed of the father, just as David did to his son Solomon in 1 Kings 2:2-3; when he said to him, 'Be a man. Keep the charge.' Walk in the ways of the Lord all your days. This is the role of an African father to his boy child. This is why among Africans the last words said by an old dying person are greatly respected if not honored because of their wisdom. In his book, *Mentoring Boys* Farrar states about the adolescent stage:

“The teenage years are dangerous. What is remarkable is that teenagers (sic), as we know them today, didn't even exist a hundred years ago. So if you have a teenager, you are dealing with a whole new breed of cat” (Farrar, 2006:223).

He further states;

It wasn't until the twentieth century that a whole new stage of development emerged- the period we now call the teenage period. The first time the term teenager was ever used was in 1941, and it really didn't take hold until 1950s (Farrar, 2006: 228).

The above quotations show us that the infancy and childhood periods were one and that children were taught responsibility earlier than in our changing environment, when

childhood is divided into infancy, early, middle, and late childhood. This historical shift in human development has brought with it some challenges which has resulted in the society to label a particular stage as being at risk.

Historically, fathers exhausted most of their time with their children through herding cattle, hunting and doing other male related jobs. Boys after their infancy would spend more time with male adults as a way of nurturing them into mature adult males. This is why the adolescent stage was a less pronounced period. In the past few years, this period has been punctuated by a work environment that required fathers to work long hours away from home (Farrar, 2006:230). The time spent by fathers with their sons was, therefore, disturbed. Children also spent most of their life with other peers at school which delayed the age at which children are viewed by society as adults. They have to acquire a trade for themselves or achieve certain qualifications in order for them to be considered for adult tasks.

This shift in how children were educated took their influence away from parents and the mentors that they chose for the children. With this shift, the influence would now shift from the home to peers, and to a group of “elite” educators, who in time would be proven to have a value system that often undermined what the child was learning in the home (Farrar, 2006:230).

This is why the author particularly wants to find out how these boys can be helped to enter this world with societal qualifications even when there is a crisis in parenting today in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe. The situation in Zimbabwe reveals that a lot of men have left their families due to various reasons ranging from economic migration to political uncertainty; thus creating another challenge in the upbringing of the African male child.

The author in this study is concerned about the trauma that the absence of fathers have on their children in the African cultures today. No one needs to magnify the importance of parents-child relationship and the husband–wife relationship. Children do not choose their fathers but God chooses for them. But fathers choose to leave the children behind as they go to the Diaspora. The author is challenging the reader to consider and count the gain of mentoring the boy child against supporting the wounded children. What does it benefit a man to materially support the boy child and socially and spiritually lose him to the world? There is no reason why we should ignore the influence of African fathers on their children; no true society can be built without them, for no true society can be built on illusions and opportunism of its God given responsibility towards its own blood.

African fathers find it difficult and painful not to have children, particularly a son who is expected to carry the father’s name after his death as already mentioned in chapter one. It is equally traumatic for the male child to grow up in the absence of his father, who is supposed to guide him into adulthood.

It is important that we get to the biblical norms and traditional principles that made us a people that depend upon each other and respect the roles played by everyone in the community. For it is important for the male children to have good manners, be people of quality, to know how to read and count, and to know and worship the Lord. It is wonderful for them to respect parents, and more valuable for them to obey God in order to create stable societies which are guided by heads of families who fear God.

The stable family is the primary government for education and stability in every person’s journey to adulthood. It is in the family that fathers should help boys grow into responsible male adults, hence the English saying which states that ‘charity begins at home’. Interest in

this study is paid on the adolescent male not on the whole topic of human development. Although there is a mention of childhood development, attention is paid on the ages between 10-22 years. This is a period when African male children are moulded into adult males and need parental support in many areas of their lives.

3.3 A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

In biblical times, parenting was considered to be a very important family and religious role that was carried out whole heartedly. The bible shows us that it is and was the responsibility of parents to teach their children how to live. The parents and society instructed children by word and example in technical skills and behavioral modes essential to the household life.

The home was indeed an educational institution –a place of parental teaching and child learning (Zuck, 1996:142). This shows that parents who neglect teaching their children the bible and biblical standards of living and leaving it to others, peers or in no ones hands, are deviating from God’s design for the upbringing of children.

Moreover, during the reign of Joshua after the Israelites had conquered Canaan, Levites were not allocated land. Instead, they were assigned to various cities to go and teach the people the law of God (Numbers, 35: 11-15; Joshua, 21: 1-42. Deut, 17:11 33:8-10). Zuck states that these Levites did not in any way eliminate the need for parents to teach their children in their homes. The Israelites valued parenting to such an extent that when Israel was taken captive by the Babylonians (605-536), teaching continued even in the synagogues; which were places of worship and teaching in Diaspora. This shows that the church and the family should work together in teaching and helping the children to grow into adulthood.

Furthermore, the Synagogue continued the teaching that boys and girls received at home. It did not replace the family instruction but it complemented what the parents did in homes. The old English Proverb emphasises the importance of the father as a major source of influence in the boy's life when it states that; "One father is worth more than a hundred schoolmasters" (Farrar, 2006:74). Farrar's concept connects very well with the Shona proverbs cited in chapter four (item 4.5) which states that the father's behavior is reflected in the son; hence the saying "like father like son." When a son is to make a major decision in his life, his point of reference is his father. It is, therefore, clear that in order to have a healthy society, sons have to be mentored by their fathers.

Zuck, (1996) affirms that among the Jews, Greeks and Romans, children at the age between 6 and 7 were taught by parents at home, those between the age of 12-15 were taught Greek literature; mainly Homer's writings, mathematics science, geography, writing, physical training and music, while those of the ages between 16-20 were put under a rhetor who taught them logic and rhetoric. Compare Acts 22:3 which shows that the Apostle Paul learned rhetoric under Gamaliel, a Greek Philosopher.

"The Church was not intensely concerned with schools as such. It was willing to use such schools as there were for the purpose of ordinary education. But the church was intensely concerned with the home. The Church saw that in the last analysis the only true teachers of any Child are the parents of that child....The school is at best only an adjunct to the home. It is the parent who is responsible for bringing the child into the World; and it is the parent who is responsible for bringing the child to God" (Zuch, 1996:146).

Zuck acknowledges John Chrysostom (AD 345- 407) in his essay on bringing up a boy child ‘Impressing on Christian Parents the Importance of teaching their Children properly,’ who wrote;

“What will become of boys when from earliest youth they are without teachers...? In our own days every man takes the greatest pains to train in the arts and in literature and speech. But to exercise this child’s soul in virtue, to that no man any longer pays heed,” He urged Christian parents to discipline their sons, to teach them by stories(the “ear gate”) and teach by means of the smell, eye, tongue, and touch”(Zuck, 1996:147).

Zuck reminds the author how his father communicated with him by coughing early in the morning as a sign to say it was time to wake up and to go to the fields. The author and his brothers distinguished between the ‘*wake up cough*’ from an ordinary cough. Jesus showed in his relationships with his disciples that his followers know his voice. Therefore, the father –son relationship becomes very important in the boy’s life.

The father is to be the role model and an authority to be obeyed by his male adolescent. The father must make every effort possible to create a learning environment for his children on how to live. The boy child acquires the beliefs , customs, attitudes, values and roles of their culture or social group in order to be integrated into their own and larger society with confidence, responsibility and freedom. This is because they will have been socialised to identify with their fathers and particular family or society figures that matter to them (community).

3.4 A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

The definition of adolescence requires a consideration not only of age but also of socio-historical influences. Historians view the period 1890-1920 as the age of adolescence (Santrock, 2005:11). The Great Depression brought with it a series of economic and political challenges thus, replacing the hedonistic values of the 1920s. This was followed by the World war 11 which was a serious life threatening event for the adolescents. The World war exposed the adolescents to military service and different cultures, thus promoting a great sense of independence and an alternative view to life which was different from what they were used to.

As already noted (see item 3.1), by 1950, the developmental period that is referred to as the adolescence had come of age. It did not only possess the physical and social identities, but legal identity as well. For, every state had developed special laws for the youths between the ages of 16 -20 years, although the adolescents of this period were viewed as a silent generation (Santrock, 2005:11).

The adolescent period is very crucial in this study because it gives us an understanding of the various historical and philosophical thoughts which aid our intervention strategies. Santrock, (2005) sees the adolescent period as being the transitional period in human life which links childhood to adulthood. This period concerns any parent who takes parenting seriously. The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, both, referred to the adolescents as the youths. Plato believed that reasoning does not belong to childhood, but to youth (adolescents). Even so, the youth were not fit for great responsibility unless they where trained to become mature. For this reason, Aristotle is quoted by Kierman as saying that;

“The young are not proper students of political science, as they have no experience of the actions of life which form the premises and subjects of reasoning” (Kierman, 1962:521).

To the contrary, in many wars and political campaigns worldwide, the youths are greatly involved because of their strength. In the bible, we learn that during the war between the Amalekites and Israelites, David was prohibited from joining the war because he was young. Instead, David insisted to fight Goliath whom he eventually killed because of his trust in the power of the God of Israel.

Equally, Plato states that children should spend their time in recreation (sports and music) while youths (adolescents) should study science and mathematics. He (Aristotle), a student of Plato, was summoned to Pella by king Philip of Macedonia to go and take the principal hand in the education of the king’s son, Alexander, who was then 13 years old.

Alexander was being prepared by his father, through Aristotle, to subsequently play an important role on the political stage the era as ‘Alexander the Great’. As mentioned above, Aristotle at the age of 17 went to study medicine in the city of Athens. Therefore, adolescent period is very crucial in philosophical thinking. For them to study, they obviously needed serious guidance. It seems that during Plato’s time, this period equally drew the attention of society as it did among the Jews and Africans, who trained adolescents to defend their tribes and clans. Interestingly, Farrar acknowledges that,

“The New England Puritans had a great passion for their families and often wrote very tenderly about their love for their wives and children. They were concerned that as their sons grew older; their close ties with their sons would tend to make

them too soft at a crucial time of maturity. It was common for a father to decide that it was time to send his son away around the age of fourteen. The Puritans looked for good men who could take their sons to the next step of growth and responsibility. Around the age of fourteen once a son had shown a leaning toward a particular career “calling,” he would leave home to work under a “master.” This was an older man who was skilled at his trade or craft” (Farrar, 2006:226-227).

It is, therefore, very clear that in the past, arrangement was done to equip children in various areas. The tutors to these children were carefully selected by the head of the family for it was the father’s duty to see to it that children are properly guided towards a healthy future. Fathers, who take the mentoring of boys seriously, guide their children when choosing the schools they should go to. Children are taken to good teachers for extra lessons and coaching, and by so doing, the father continues to be a good shepherd to his family; particularly the boy child.

Aristotle further argued that the most important aspects of adolescence are the ability to choose, and self – determination; which are the hallmark of maturity. According to Hopson (2005), Aristotle’s emphasis on the development of self determination encompasses independence, identity, and career choices, which are key themes during ~~in~~ adolescence. In spite of the adolescent’s need for self determination, Aristotle recognises that there is egocentrism during adolescence. This is reflected in the adolescents’ belief that they know everything and are quite sure about it. However, when adolescents are properly guided in their journey to adulthood, they mature emotionally and become interested in others.

Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau believe that human development has distinct phases even though their views or ideas lacked scientific exploration (Santrock, 2005). As already

stated elsewhere in this chapter, the development of the concept of an adolescent dawned between the 19th and 20th century. It should, therefore, be noted that the phases of human development from Plato to date vary but the challenges faced by adolescents have not changed much.

Today, the adolescence phase is largely dealt with by psychologists, urban reformers, educators, counsellors and society since these children would have reached a period during which major decisions should be made. Allen (2003) in Meek et al, (2005:387) claims that many adolescents appear to be passive during, this stage of human development and that they experience considerable turmoil within themselves. Hall (1918) coined this stage as a period of “Storm Stress” cited in Meek et al, (2005:387).

Stanley G Hall (1844- 1924) is described by historians as the father of scientific study who sincerely dealt with adolescents and issues that concerned the adolescence period. He believed that the adolescence stage covers the ages between 12-23 years; which is characterized by considerable upheavals. For Hall, the adolescence period is a turbulent time which is charged with conflicts and mood swings or it can as well be said to be a period of self-exploration.

Today’s adolescents challenge us to continue with studies on children because they mature early and our global village has exposed them to a world view of their own before time. Equally, parents are living in a society which emphasises materialism at the expense of good moral behavior for their children. This has led to the unguided and unsupervised moral behaviors of children and as a result adolescents become a threat to themselves and to others when they are not guided by adults. This belief in material emphasis makes parents the mere danger to children because they rush for the acquisition of wealth at the expense of

guiding their children in God's way. Chapter 5 of this thesis reveals how fathers left their sons without choosing mentors for them or creating an environment in which they can be moulded into responsible adults.

The early development and exposure of adolescents has challenged them to handle life's issues by themselves when they are not cognitively and emotionally prepared. There are biological changes which occur during adolescence that affect adolescents' behaviors and moods. For example, a boy child may discover that his body and voice are changing; this can be traumatic if there is no one to direct him to handle such issues. Children who fail to learn respect for the authority in the home usually have trouble in the larger society Santrock, (2005). It is important, therefore, to understand the stages of human development from Erikson in order to appreciate and understand the importance of the father's role in guiding adolescent males into adulthood.

3.5 THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES THROUGH ADOLESCENTS

It is important to note that the adolescence stage like old age, gender differences or any other stage in life can be misunderstood unless someone or the society takes upon itself the task of educating itself about it. The author, therefore, seeks to illuminate human developmental stages through adolescence as coined by Erikson (1968).

Erikson's psychosocial theory provides considerable assistance in explaining how children are affected by social relationships and environments. The eight stages that he coined help us to understand the challenges that adolescent males may face when the father is absent and how it may impact on one's adulthood later in life. According to Erikson, these stages are governed by what he calls 'epigenetic principle' Erikson (1968), which states that anything that grows has a ground plan and that out of this ground plan, the parts arise. This

is because each stage helps in the building and integration of one's personality. Below are the psychosocial stages that signify the crisis involved in one's life cycle; which the author considered in the study on "Absent fathers due to migrant work; its traumatic impact on the adolescent male in Zimbabwe."

Trust *versus* mistrust (infancy) - the infant is dominated by biological needs and drives. The quality of their relationship with caregivers will influence the extent to which the trust (or mistrust) in others and the world in general is sensed. The virtue of hope is associated with this stage.

Autonomy *versus* doubt and shame (early childhood) - social demands for self-control and bodily regulation for example: toilet training influence feelings of self-efficacy versus self doubt. The quality of will, the will to do what is expected and expectable, emerges at this stage two.

Initiative *versus* guilt (pre-school age) – Here, children begin to actively explore and intrude upon their environment. Will they sense guilt in these self-initiated activities or will they feel justified in planning and asserting control over their activities? The virtue of purpose – the courage to pursue personally valued goals in spite of risks and possible failure - now ascends.

Industry *versus* inferiority (school age) - The social context in which the first three crises are negotiated is predominantly the home and immediate family. In stage four, however, children begin formal instruction of some sort. They master the tasks and skills valued by one's teachers and the larger society is now the focal concern. The quality of competence (with the tools and ways of adult world) is said to develop.

Identity *versus* Diffusion (adolescence) –This is a pivotal step in Erikson’s scheme, when adolescents actively attempt to synthesise their experiences in order to formulate a stable sense of personal identity. While this process is psychosocial in nature- social fit or “solidarity with group ideals” must occur –Erikson emphasises the role of accurate self knowledge and reality testing. Individuals come to view themselves as products of their previous experiences; a continuity of experience is sensed. Positive resolutions of prior crises, being autonomous, willful, and industrious- facilitate identity formation, whereas previous failures may lead to identity diffusion. Fidelity, the ability to maintain commitments in spite of contradictory value systems, is the virtue that emerges during adolescence.

Intimacy *versus* Isolation (young adulthood) - In this stage, one must be willing and able to unite one’s own identity with another’s. Since authentic disclosure and mutuality leave one vulnerable, a firm sense of identity is a prerequisite. Love is the quality that ascends during this stage.

Generativity *versus* stagnation (middle adulthood) – This is the time during the life span when one strives to actualise the identity that has been formed and shared with selected others. The generation or production of offspring, artifacts, ideals, products, and so forth is involved. The virtue of care now emerges: generative adults care for others through parenting, teaching, supervising, and so forth, whereas stagnating adults are absorbed in their own personal need.

Integrity *versus* despair (maturity) –The final Eriksonian stage focuses on the perceived completion or fulfillment of one’s life cycle. When individuals become aware that death may be imminent, do they feel despair, either fearing or welcoming death, or do they

perceive the order and meaningfulness of their one and only life within a larger perspective? Wisdom is the last virtue to emerge. The wise person understands the relativistic nature of knowledge and accepts that one's life had to be the way it was; this final recognition permits no suppositions (Corsini 1994:502)

The last three adult stages (6 to 8) are directly affected by the identity achieved during adolescence. The reader has to note that the negotiation of the eight stages largely depends upon the quality of relationship with the significant others at each stage of development as indicated in the fourth stage. Therefore, each stage of childhood development must be lived through completely in order for the person to be prepared adequately for the next. This stage (childhood) emphasises that the environment in which development takes place is very important in the upbringing of a child. Therefore, it is important for the fathers to assess the environment in which their child is passing through lest he becomes stuck by its circumstances. Children need supervision within every environment because of their level of experience and maturity. The fifth stage, which is identity versus diffusion, can swiftly be negotiated and achieved depending on the successes in the first three stages. This shows that there are various factors that have to do with one's identity development as pointed out by Blois in Richard;

“Blois (1941, 1979) modified the traditional psychoanalytic theory, stressing the importance of the “cultural milieu and social stratum” (Blois, 1941, p7) in personality formation and positing a reciprocal influence between the individual and the environment. Although he insisted that adolescent development must be considered in the context of a particular culture and the family's “unique version of the culture” (Blois, 1941, p. 260), he – like his psychoanalytic predecessors – saw

adolescence as a transitional period that involves a recapitulation of earlier familial patterns of interaction. However, he considered this process to be qualitatively different from earlier developmental experiences because of the significant maturation of the ego (ego supremacy and ego differentiation) during the latency period (Blos, 1941). This ego development allows the adolescent in most cases to resolve the oedipal conflicts and the component infantile dependencies” (Richard, 1995:18).

Blos further states that individuation is the second process during adolescence which requires ‘normative regression in the service of development (Blos 1987:153), that is, only in adolescence is regression an essential and normal process (Richard 1995:18). Although the regression is a normal process, there is need for adult guidance in order to attain a health personality development.

Development depends upon each previous stage. However, each attained stage needs hard work and support from the adults in order for one to qualify to a stage that follows. Otherwise, a lack of a supportive environment could cause one to be stuck in this crucial stage. In many African cultures, guidance is enlisted from the society. Among the Africans, elders in the society would be asked by the father to guide their adolescents on various issues that may affect children; however, today this is not done among Zimbabweans.

Christian parents and guardians at this stage would bring their children to be counselled or would encourage their children to join youth groups. Each stage needs to be completed sufficiently in order for a person to benefit physically, socially and spiritually in this life. The needs during each stage provide opportunities for growth, learning, and the evolution

of individual identity. Failure to meet these needs may result in a deficit on identity formation and a person becomes stuck and this leads to an unhealthy personality.

3.6 DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN ADOLESCENCE

The chronological periods that define the stages between infancy and adolescence have to be understood in order to deal with the separation of adolescents with their biological fathers. These stages might be understood differently in different cultures. For example, among the Ngoni of Malawi, the Shona of Zimbabwe and the Tonga of Zambia communities, in the pre- colonial days children up to the age of five (5) were still breastfed because they were perceived to be ‘infants.’ This reflects why the adolescence period was a latent stage as mentioned in item 3.1

Moreover, the adolescent stage is considered important in Zimbabwe because at this period various changes take place on an adolescent child. Aschwanden articulates this view in the following way.

“A boy attains his full strength only in adolescence, when his seeds ripen. Although this process of maturing takes it out of the boy and makes him thin, he becomes tougher and acquires more resistance at the same time” (Aschwanden, 1982:51).

These developmental stages help the reader to have a general understanding on why Zimbabwean adolescents require special attention in their journey to adulthood. It also reveals to the reader the developmental limitations that the society should be aware of. Below are the developmental periods from, middle age and late childhood. The adolescence period is important because the key task of African fathers to adolescent males is to prepare them for adulthood.

In this study, the adolescence period is considered to be between 10-22 years of age, as already mentioned elsewhere in this study. Hall (1844-1924) considered the adolescence period to be between 12 - 23 years and that it is characterised by considerable upheaval (Santrock 2005: 8). The author has taken that range because among the Africans, a young person of 22 years and below is still seen as not mature enough to be considered a man to make his own decisions. More also, at this stage most of these young men will still be at school and still depend upon their parents for nearly everything. Possibly, if the focus had included girls, the age range could have been reduced because, from the African point of view, girls mature earlier than boys. According to Hall, this period has been described that as characterised by 'stress and Storms' (see item 3.5).

The author concentrates on the adolescence stage with the five levels of development as stated by Amanat & Beck, instead of all the stages of human development. The levels show what goes on during adolescence on the journey toward adulthood among the boys and girls, though this study focuses on the boy child. The levels reveal to the author the biological changes that take place in the life of the boy child. This revelation helps the author to assess the impact of the absent father as a boy child journeys through adolescence into adulthood at a time that he is forming a sense of identity by negotiating relationships with parents and peers (Meek, et al 2005). During this period, rapid physical, emotional, social, spiritual and psychological changes are also taking place although Amanat and Beck emphasise the physical changes and the human chemistry as shown below.



Level 1	
Boys 9-12 (Average 10)	Girls 8-11 (Average 9-10)
Hormones are beginning to activate although no visual signs of development are apparent.	Rapid growth may begin
Level 2	
Boys 9-15 (Average 12-13)	Girls 8-14 (Average 11-12)
1. Begin to change from child to young man appearance.	1. Breast buds develop.
2. Testicles and scrotum enlarge with no penis growth.	2. Areolas increase in size.
3. Pubic hair may begin.	3. Rapid height and weight growth.
4. New muscle tissue and fat	4. Hips broader and softer shape
5. Areola around nipple may increase in Size and darken.	5. Pubic hair may begin
Level 3	
	Girls 9-15 (Average 12-13)
1. Penis begins to grow in length.	1. Breasts continue to grow.
2. Testicles and scrotum continue to grow	2. Pubic hair darker and coarse.
3. Pubic hair darker and coarse.	3. Growing in height and weight.
4. Growth in height continues.	4. Menstruation may commence
5. Voice begins to change.	5. Normal whitish vaginal discharge.
Level 4	
Boys 11-17 (Average 14-15)	Girls 10-16 (Average 13-14)
1. Penis increase in width as well as length	1. Underarm hair
2. First ejaculation.	2. Breasts have grown

3. Voice deepens	3. May begin menstruation if not in level 3
4. Scrotum and testicles continue to grow	4. Ovaries are enlarging.
5. Underarm hair.	5. Pubic hair more adult like
6. Some chin and lip hair.	
7. Skin more oily.	
8. Pubic hair more adult like	
Level 5	
Boys 14-18 (Average 16)	Girls 12-19 (Average 15)
1. Pubic hair and genitals have adult appearance.	1. Breast and pubic hair fully Develop
2. Full facial hair.	2. Ovulation regularly.
3. Rapid growth is slowing.	3. Menstrual period well established.
4. Mature male physique	4. Probably at full height.
5. Nearing full height and weight	

(Amanat & Beck, 1994:4).

The stages coined by Amanat et al, show that children need parental guidance during at the adolescence period because of the human chemistry that is taking place in their bodies. Adolescents at these stages require proper guidance from parents due to biological changes that need a social model in a form of “a living document”(Gerkin 1997) in order for an adolescent’s behavior to be biologically and socially induced. Santrock states that “Adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture” (Santrock 2005:23). This shows that the transition from childhood to adolescence begins with the onset of pubertal maturation, while the transition from adolescent to adulthood is determined by cultural standards and experiences of elders in the society.

At this stage, adolescents are getting ready to be men and they need a God-given man (their father) to emulate. The adolescence period without guidance can be a very dark period for the young boys. Consequently, boys lose control of their world in the absence of a male model while the fathers lose their sons to the cruel material world.

In many families today, these children lack proper adult role models. Unfortunately, they assume adult roles and responsibilities without undergoing preparation from adults. Hence; unscrupulous and heartless members of the society entice them into illicit behaviors of robbery and political violence.

Worse still, when parents decide to migrate to other countries, there is no or less time to plan for the proper custody of their children. Therefore, the probability of leaving their children in wrong hands or with an anxious mother, who may be wondering what it would mean to guide these boys in the environment in which the father is missing, is very high.

In 2009, the author's younger brother was deployed for peace keeping mission in Sudan (the author's brother was informed about the use of his situation for the purpose of this study). The younger brother informed the author about his plans a month before leaving that he had decided to leave his 4 and 10 year old boys in the rural area with relatives and that the 2 year old young girl would remain with his mother in -law. This is how a lot of parents have left their children. His wife was also joining him on the Sudan mission.

In the above situation, the author's younger brother left his son at a time when the boy was approaching early adolescence, a period that needs the father's presence the most. The boy at this stage is beginning to change from a child to a young man's appearance as indicated above on level 2. The changes in level 2 may be so exciting and challenging to the boy

child especially when the father is absent. According to Erikson, it is the stage for identity formation. During this period, masculine behavior should be imitated by the child from the father. When fathers are absent, they expose their adolescents to a dangerous environment because they will be independent, in the absence of the father and confused about their masculinity in the presence of women and friends. The boys will end up resorting to an unapproved boy code, which may destroy their morals in which “Violence and the threat of violence provide the immediate lens through which young boys struggled to forge their identities.”(Ouzgane et al, 2005:212).

The adolescence period requires parental supervision and father’s mentorship because of the challenges presented by this period in the boy’s life. They are developmentally immature and lack specific cognitive and behavioral skills to successfully counter external pressures (Vallender I & Fogelman K 1987; Santrock, 2005). While at adolescence, children lack specific skills and this, a period when boys cease to be children. It is associated with such rights as to vote, drive, and choose a career of which they need guidance.

The author is challenged by the 2008 harmonised election campaigns, particularly towards the election “Run Off” when the youths (adolescents) terrorised people in an effort to force them to vote for the party that had hired them.

Male youths gang raped women, killed people and used dirty language in their campaign threats on elderly men and women. Perhaps some of these young people were well above adolescent stage, but could be understood in the context of lack of guidance during this crucial phase. The researcher observes four forces that were at work on these youths and these are; overly impressed by popularism, insensitivity when the will gets challenged,

irresponsibility when the world gets appealing, and instability when the world gets rough. The activities obviously have after effects especially to African people who believe in the avenging spirits and bad omens for insulting, beating elders and killing innocent people as inferred in chapter 4. These youths were not paid anything, and if ever they were, it was nothing meaningful other than food, beer and enjoyed the political immunity which protected them against any arrest; thus giving them the freedom to loot, rape and kill.

Although adolescence period is generally stressful, it also presents unique positive outcomes in children. For example, the physical growth and strength may mean that children are able to fend for themselves more effectively and are better able to defend for themselves from unscrupulous people; especially if they have adults to guide them and whom they look up to.

3.7 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

Identity refers to the individual's awareness of himself or herself as an independent unique person with a specific place in society (Santrock 2005:178). Therefore, development implies that adolescents need to define who they are, what is important to them, and what directions they want to take in life referred to as an identity crisis by Erikson that is a temporary period of confusion, during which adolescents explore a set of values and goals which lead to a formation of a personal and social identity (Erikson, 1968; Santrock, 2005:182-183). Erikson points out that the society allows adolescents a certain period of time called psychosocial moratorium in order for adolescents to find themselves and their roles as adults (Meek et al, 2005: 426).

During this period of identity formation, themes such as gender roles, relationships, marriage, religion, politics, an own value system, independence from parents, social responsibility and work roles, are important (Ackermann, 1990; Bester, 1990; Burns, 1988; Meeks, Heit, Page, 2005: 426).

This means that through self examination, self evaluation experimentation and formulation of an own value system and philosophy of life, they want to know who they are and what they want from life. According to Santrock, (2005:294) adolescents usually become faithful to their own values and principles in order to gain self confidence. As part of their search for identity, adolescents begin to grapple in more sophisticated, logical ways with such questions as “ why am I on this planet” Is there really a God or higher spiritual being, or have I just been believing what the church imprinted in my mind?” What are my religious views” (Santrock, 2005:294). It is during this period of identity formation that adolescents are likely to change their religious believes or to change from one church to another.

Although in Luke 2:44-50, we see Jesus in his early adolescence grappling with issues which children in our age wrestle with, he never identified with his peers as the parents expected him to, but he was with the elders to learn and seek clarification from them. He asked questions and projected his religious views to teachers and other religious leaders about God. The conflict that emanated when his parents learnt that he was in the temple was that of his mission which his parents were unclear of. Jesus found the issue of identity very crucial in his life. He understood who he was, what he wanted and was aware that his parents, community and disciples were not clear of who he was. In Matthew 16: 13-16, He asks his disciples about his identity whether people and the disciples knew who he was.

The Gospels show us that people did not understand him until after the ascension. The author does not intend to discuss the life of Jesus but to draw the reader's attention to the importance of Christ's relationship with the father who was and is in him and who actually confirmed that Jesus was his son; whom the earth and its inhabitants should listen to. If, then, one is to understand the role of the father in the life of a boy child, he should appreciate God's relationship with his boy child in this study.

The author is not losing sight of a girl child, Mary, the woman in whom God created space for Jesus' entry into the world. The focus in this study is to assess and find ways on how the boy child can be mentored into adulthood in the absence of his father; who is in the Diaspora.

During early adolescence, the young person forms a separate identity by negotiating relationships with parents and peers. This often happens at the same time that rapid physical changes are occurring typically between the ages of 13-15 (Steinberg, 1981, in Santrock, 2005:25). Conflicts between parents and adolescents reach their peak as conformity with peers increases, when the process of pubertal maturation is at its apex and then declines by later adolescence (Clark – Lempers, Lempers & Ho, 1991, Steinberg, 1981, 1988). It is a time of turbulence and emotional stress in which conflict is characterised by parent-child disagreement over everyday issues such as adolescent's personal appearance and choice of friends (Smetana; 1988, in Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R , 2005: 426).

Jesus' illustration of the prodigal son in Luke 15 affirms parent – child conflict during adolescence when He gave a lesson on God's love and forgiveness. This period of identity development is crowded by numerous conflicts emanating from different view points in life between parents and their adolescent children. During this period, the son thinks he knows

better than his parent while the parent feels that the son knows nothing much about life. However, the father gives his son time and space for self exploration and the son used his freedom irresponsibly. Though the story has many lessons that can be learned, the author identifies the issue of identity confusion as stated by Newton that,

“The adolescent often perpetuates the confusion by immaturely using this ambiguity for manipulative purposes” thereby leading to trauma that reveals itself in eating with pigs in the case of the prodigal son” (Newton, 1995:3).

During adolescence there is an increase in taking drugs and in committing various crimes if parents ignore their role of guiding the adolescents. The children learn from the father through what they see not so much by what they hear. The prodigal son was called home by his father’s love that he had learned during his stay with him before he decided to leave. When he returned, he confessed that he had sinned to God and his human father. This showed that charity began at home. Jesus articulates this method of teaching and learning in Matthew in the following way.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew, 5:14).

While Buchan states of his experience in the following way;

“There is no human relationship more important for a son’s journey into manhood than the relationship between him and his father. Whether the father knows it or not, a son will develop his idea of what a man is by who his father is. It is impossible for

a man to hide his true character from his family, who know his strengths and weaknesses...” (Buchan, 2008: vii).

This shows how during adolescence, fathers play an important role in guiding adolescent males by their life. Children learn more from our interactions with them at all levels. Fathers are the only light for a Christian family and society to their male children. They cannot hide their life from their children. Buchan valued his experience with his father because his everyday experiences with his father made him what he became in life for his own sons. Whatever the father portrays to his sons creates an idea of what a man or a husband is to be like. This can be negative or positive but the son will have learnt from the weaknesses and strengths of his father and negotiate for his own position in life. Moreover, that no father is an angel. The absence of the father would lead to identity formation or confusion.

Separation of legal status from biological maturity contributes to the confusion. The ambiguous status as half –child/half legal adult promotes a continuation of adolescent anger against authority. The adolescent often perpetuates the confusion by immaturely using this ambiguity for manipulative purposes (Newton, 199:3).

Newton shows that identity development is a complex multi-dimensional activity in which interaction between the cognitive, social and personality changes take place. These changes may lead to identity confusion that is traumatic in the development of a healthy adult if not guided. It is the father’s responsibility to help the boy child to be happy in life. When the son is well mentored by his father, identity confusion is avoided and he becomes responsible and mature because he will have learnt lessons from his father. Freedom without responsibility brings about identity confusion which leads to unhappiness, rebellion

and unresolved anger on a male child because he will lack self confidence in whatever he wishes to do (refer to chapter five items 5.6).

3.8 AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON PERSONAL INDENTITY

DEVELOPMENT

Mucherera, (2005) guides the reader and author to understand that a person in the African context is viewed in light of the community. He is considered as being whole if he belongs to a community. On the other hand, the community depends upon the individual for its survival because the community is made up of individuals. This is why the author looks at the trauma caused by the absence of the African father on an adolescent male child in this era when the community is faced with various challenges. The community and individual are important in understanding the environment in which African adolescents are growing up. When the child is growing up, the community provides the materials that an adolescent uses for his identity development. The failure by the male adolescent to draw his strength from the community resources leads to anxiety and trauma because it is a disruption of ones normal growing environment.

When a boy child chooses someone to marry, the family should approve of that relationship; otherwise a healthy married relationship is difficult to come by. An African adolescent depends and develops an identity through the involvement of a community of embeddedness that helps in building his identity. It is through the community that he is taught that the adolescent understands what it means to be a person and the importance of communal life. Proverbs riddles and stories that emphasise the importance of the community and how to build character are taught and repeated at appropriate times as a

child interacts with elders. For example, *Chara chimwe hachiurai inda*, meaning one finger can not kill lice. *Kana uchida kukurumidza kufamba, famba wega asi kana uchinda kufamba rwendo rwakareba famba ne vamwe* meaning that; If one wants to walk fast he should walk alone but he who wants to walk a long distance should walk with others, are said and explained.

The community builds and influences an individual's personal identity. In spite of the various role models from the community, the father's role to guide the boy child remains crucial and central. The adolescent child emulates a male figure in the family in order to be a man.

Identity development is community tailored and the community is involved in one's life from birth to death and from death to eternity. After death, it is the community that talks about the dead person and carry out rituals which help the person's siblings to value the role the deceased played in their lives when he was still alive. This makes the community more powerful than an individual. The role of the community is illustrated by Mbiti in the following way;

“In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to the other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole.

The community must therefore make, create, or produce the individuals, for the individual depends on the corporate group. Physical birth is not enough: the child must go through rites of the incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society. These rites continue throughout the physical life of the person, during

which the individual passes from one stage of corporate existence to another”
(Mbiti, 1997:139).

The dependability of African life guides us to understand that it takes the whole village to raise and guide an adolescent male. The adolescent male child is guided by both males and females in the development of an identity and mentored by males to be a man. According to Mbiti, physical birth is not enough because one should grow into an adult within a particular social context or culture. It is in this social context that one is said to be alive. Failure to hold on to the cultural values and to successfully go through the rites of passage would be considered as death. One would hear people say *hapana zvomunhu* meaning he is a person of no value.

Mucherera highlights Gelfand’s concept of the African thought in guiding and in the bringing up children by stating that;

“As Gelfand says, the next arbitrary phase extends from about twelve to eighteen years of age. Among the Shonas, this phase includes the physical and /or mental developmental changes in the child. Girls develop breasts and they have their menstruation. Boys develop deeper voices, pubic hair, and sometimes they experience their first ejaculation. This is a period in which the aunts, uncles, or grandparents do a lot of work to educate the adolescents about adulthood. The education is mostly done during the evenings.....Both boys and girls are taught about sexual relationships. Sexual intercourse before marriage is highly discouraged” (Gelfand, 2005:85).

The old women would call him (male child) “*Murume wangu*” which means my husband, and they would remind him of his roles especially what they expect of him when he gets married as indicated in chapter 5:3. They will be reminding him of what he will have been taught by the male elders at various levels. In some Shona traditional, communities perform particular ceremonies such as the circumcision of boys between the ages of 12-20 years.

The adolescents are also taught lessons such as self control and respect. In order to grow from childhood towards adulthood, adolescents have to accept to accomplish certain developmental tasks. The successful completion of these tasks will enable individuals to function optimally during adulthood. In modern Western societies, adolescents need to master the following developmental tasks.

- ❖ Acceptance of a changed physical appearance.
- ❖ Development of masculine or feminine gender role.
- ❖ Development of cognitive skills and the acquisition of knowledge.
- ❖ Development of an own identity
- ❖ Development of independence from parents and other adults(Granted among the African)
- ❖ Selection of socially responsible behavior.
- ❖ Acceptance of and adjustment to certain groups.
- ❖ Establishment of heterosexual relationships
- ❖ Development of a strong emotional bond with another person

- ❖ Preparation for marriage and family responsibilities
- ❖ Achievement of financial independence (in Zimbabwe one should own land or an animal.)
- ❖ Development of moral concepts and values that could serve as guidelines for behavior
- ❖ Development of a value system based on a realistic and scientific world view(African metaphysical world)
- ❖ Development of a philosophy of life
- ❖ Satisfy their sexual needs in a socially acceptable way so that it contributes to the development of their identity (Garrison & Garrison, 1975; Havighurst, 1972; Hurlock, 1980; Sebald, 1984).

These aspects are very important in the development of children into responsible adults. Adolescents reach a level of development where psychologically, and spiritually they could be regarded as adults (They will have developed their own identity and emotionally independent of parents and peers) While socially, they are still in the adolescent phase (ie, they are still economically dependent (Dacey & Travers, 1994; Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005: 385).

While the above aspects focus on Western adolescents, most of the expectations tally with what the Zimbabwean adolescents are expected to develop through. The noted difference is in the development of a value system based on the realistic and scientific world which may differ with African spirituality and environment. Hall (1904) acknowledges that the

environment accounts for more developmental changes during adolescence than in earlier periods and believes that hereditary interacts with environmental influences to determine an individual's development (Santrock 2005:8). This is the reason why parental control is valued because parents are "second gods" or second to God, therefore they are to be respected by their children-always. Though westernization and urbanization seem to have influenced African parental control and supervision, the belief in parental control is still strong among Africans.

3.9 THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGING TIMES

It is possible that Fatherhood is being denied or avoided due to economic and socio-political pressures in most African countries. The urban environment, which is the focus of this study, is faced by the crisis of parenting. Lack of a sense of community, which is created by the urban context, causes anxiety on parents who are raising children in an environment which is different from the one in which they were brought up. The importance of communal training, as it is known in the traditional community, is unknown or unacceptable by some of the young urban children. -Adolescents have no elders to train them into adulthood and their growth lack adult flavor; where traditional values are taught.

While the traditional African man emphasises communal life and is worried about poor relationships, the urban culture stresses an individualistic life influenced by competition and material success. The author recalls how his late grandfather encouraged that all male children above 5 years should eat their food with boys and that those who are over 13 years should eat with adults from one dish of sadza (African porridge) and another of relish. In modern Zimbabwe, each person, particularly in the urban setting, is given his own plate and glass of drinking water at each meal. Despite that, the urban people having adopted some

individualistic patterns of the westerners, the rural people have upheld some of the traditional practices that bound them together for centuries, particularly, in societies where old men are there to guide.

However, the reader should be informed that, in urban communities, it is common among the adolescents to sit in a group married to their mobile phones, radios, playing music or watching television. Individualism removes an African child from his fellow human beings and joins him to certain celebrities alive and dead through these Medias. The most important values that influence African identity formation, which include fathering, are now derived from the western standards. Unfortunately, most Africans have emulated the western patterns of living and accepted these to be the yardstick with which to measure their own lives. The Africans, have by so doing, neglected their values and have become detached and disengaged from their communal relationships.

Mwikamba cited by Mucherera notes the changes that the Africans are faced with, by stating the differences between African and Western cultures in the following way.

“.....it is clear that the Western identity and the African identity differ, and that they have different emphasis. Friendship, solidarity, respect for nature, respect for human dignity, the relationship within community and extended family, which includes both the living and the dead, are values regarded with high esteem in African traditional society. However, these values seem to be fading away from ‘modern’ African society.

Many of the so called ‘modern’ Africans are strangers to themselves, to other people and nature. The harmonious and symbiotic relationship between a person

and the object, between a person and the world, seem to be breaking down. In the past, the symbiotic relationship made an African world of experience to be personal, for the world could not be separated from the self. The self could not be separated from other people or from the world; and all of them could not be separated from God” (Mucherera, 2005:91).

In the Western individualistic culture, initiative and self – directional attributes are valued and a child’s autonomy is encouraged. In contrast to the traditional African cultures in Zimbabwe, obedience and conformity are valued. Parental control is more accepted and exercised. African adolescents respond positively to parental control unlike the Western youth. Although the values seem to have weakened, they are more evident among the Shona people in Zimbabwe.

The reader has to be aware that African families that have imitated the Western culture in parenting have not fitted well in their African communities. These parents have consequently cut ties with their extended family members. This is because most urban families are disturbed by poor grades than poor moral standards, while the traditional African gives more emphasis to high moral standards than on the academic achievements. Therefore, an African child needs a good quality Western education as well as a good training in progressive African culture in order to create a pendulous equilibrium in the society.

When the Africans talk of a person, they measure him or her against societal values. A person of good morals is of great value and high regard than a well educated professor without good morals. This would mean society may need one for his moral and the other for his financial resources. The one with good morals remains a source of strength and hope for

the adolescent's future. But he who combines both good morals and material comfort is an icon in the society.

It is generally believed among many African families that children who fail to learn respect for the authority in the home usually have trouble in the larger society as already mentioned elsewhere in this study. The author recalls how his father used to remind them how bad behavior would cost him and his brothers, when they will be away from home. To him, a good child is the one who combines good behavior, which was, respect for other people and academic excellence (hard work). Unlike many fathers who neglected their role of bringing up a well balanced African boy child, he was more concerned about the child's social, educational and career statuses. If the balancing is not taken seriously, the pendulum swings heavily in the direction that leads to risky behaviors to our sons.

An African adolescent child is faced with the necessity of meeting the demands of nature while at the same time working towards an understanding of an overall view of life. The elders create a normal environment that assists an adolescent to come to terms with the outside world and the demands of nature. Sexual matters are dealt with by the elders of the society. The first emission, which is an event that designates adolescent's life, is viewed as a happy event because it is a sign of fertility and growing up. The adolescent has to inform his uncle or grandfather of the nocturnal event and the uncle, in turn, informs the boy's father. The boy's father then performs or asks the grandfather to carry out a ceremony that represents the symbolic passing of the family's fertility from the grandfather via the father to the son (Aschwanden, 1976:75).

During this period of growth, the boy is given thorough instructions on sexual matters by older members of the family such as cousins, elder brother's wife (Aschwanden, 1976:75),

grandmother, maternal uncle (the brother to the boy's mother), grandfather, paternal uncles and other respected members of the society. The father guides his son through to individuals whose advice he should follow among the many family members who will be interacting with him. He plays a consultant role to his male child. The instructions involve what the adolescent should do and not do and the punishments and rewards of particular behaviors. Particular relationships allow for intimacies, which make a talk about sexual matters between the experienced women and the male adolescent easy (Aschwanden, 1976:75).

The boy's new social position is expressed by new duties and rights, and the symbols of childhood cease to be valid. At this stage, he is allowed to use an arrow and bow or the gun. The weapons which he could not be allowed to use before his first emission can now be used by him for hunting (Aschwanden, 1976:76).

In Zimbabwe, when a boy enters the age of puberty, he is expected to sit where the men sit in order to learn from their discussions and to be instructed on various issues of adulthood. He may not be expected to roam around aimlessly or as he likes but must start working diligently. He is also instructed on his duties within the tribe and, especially, his behavior towards elders and ancestral spirits or God in cases where parents are Christians.

The adolescent is told about his tribe's past and his ancestors to whom appeals are made in times of need and from whom punishment is meted out if they offend against the laws of the ancestors. On the other hand, Christian parents instruct their children on the importance of fearing God and trusting him at all times for he has guided them as a family. They relate how the almighty God guided and directs them in their lives. For many Africans, nothing is

done without remembering their dead; their religious world is not different from their every day life.

Their daily life is religious; this can be seen from their every day activities. Africans live in societies where religious and every day activities are strictly kept in unison. This helps the child's personality development and in his relationship with the outside world. A world that is divided from the everyday life constitutes a danger in personality development of a boy child. It can also be a threat to the process of growing a boy child into adulthood. Traditionally, there are many other standards that the adolescents are taught to observe to ensure a healthily environment for their development. Parenting can be summarised by Aschwanden in the following way.

“The influence of the whole group upon the child is decisive, but the most lasting influence is that of the child's father and mother. These two play different roles, and the child understands these. The father stands for authority, respect and severity, the mother for love and understanding” (Aschwanden, 1976:62).

While Aschwanden contends that the father and mother together are important in the life of every adolescent, the challenge today in Zimbabwe is the migration of fathers to other countries, living behind their children at a very crucial period of their lives, without preparing them for adulthood. Many adolescents are growing up in an environment in which their fathers are missing. Some of these environments have proved to be unfavourable for the growth of the child especially to a male adolescent who is wrongly thought to be surviving the absence of a father. An environment that has no deliberate influence from the older men of the society is difficult for the boy child to grow in.

The urban emphasis has made many men to leave the country for greener pastures, thereby, leaving the boy child in this study to grow in the community and out of the community that does not uphold the traditional way of life. In this environment, fathers are not available; they are out in the Diaspora to acquire wealth that would enable them to support their families. Consequently, the Diaspora has created emotional and moral boundaries between fathers and their sons.

3.10 LACK OF GUIDANCE LEADS TO IDENTITY CONFUSION IN ADOLESCENTS

Meeks L, et.al (2005), indicate that identity confusion occurs when adolescents are indecisive about themselves and their roles. When a father is not present for his son to provide guidance and discipline in matters of life, he robs his son of the God given potential and freedom to decide over his own future or develop an identity of his own. Learning to be a man in the postmodern world is being challenged by feminists who insist that male role model is not necessary in the upbringing of male children. The patriarchal society is blamed for developing an oppressive system of governance on women (Fiorenza, 1984:289). These feminist movements make it more confusing to fathers and boys in their mentoring relationship. As a result, new definitions of the Father are being recognised.

They (adolescents) cannot integrate the various roles, and when they are confronted by contradictory value systems, they neither have the ability nor the self-confidence to make decisions. This confusion causes anxiety, as well as apathy or hostility towards roles or values (Meeks, et al, 2005:427).

Therefore, fathers should understand what they are up against in order to graciously guide their sons from the damage that comes with changing times. They should discipline or train their children to be committed to integrity no matter the pressures exerted on them by unscrupulous individuals. Many of these individuals gain both economic and political mileages at the expense of the children; during this period of identity formation.

Identity confusion comes in when parents ignore this period of identity formation. The identity confusion if not managed, can lead to an identity forecast or a negative identity, contrary to cultural values. Negative identity foreclosure means the identity crisis is resolved by making a series of premature decisions about one's identity due to external pressures. Though Meeks et al., indicate that adolescents will, therefore, fulfill the roles simply to conform without really identifying with these roles (Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005: 427) they conform to please the significant others and in the process this causes confusion.

Erikson (1968) thought of identity formation as a process that continues throughout one's life, but he believed that identity "has its normative crisis in adolescence" (Erikson, 1968:23). While identity has its normative crisis, the probability of an irreversible damage cannot be ruled out if the child is not disciplined at a time that he is undergoing various biological and social changes in his life.

"Men are described as hard (*kuoma*), difficult, and annoying (*kunetsa*). They are stubborn and cannot be easily deflected from their purpose. A boy needs discipline because once he has become a man; he is like a grown tree and cannot be bent or formed to someone else's will..." (Ouzgane et al, 2005: 175).

The author contends with the view that during adolescence, boys need discipline (training or guidance) because most of them struggle with what is happening in their lives. Drinking beer, fighting for girls, food and enjoyment of other mischievous behaviors are considered as normal ways of growing up into adults. Therefore, when adolescent males are not guided, the circumstances they find themselves in can easily remove them from the social context of their community.

Erikson, (1968) like other psychosexual theorists, described adolescence as a period of turmoil and stress. He saw the turmoil and stress as a result of identity crisis, rather than a conflict between the ego and the identity. The identity is formed through the individual's psychological integration as well as the social environment which serves critical functions during this process. Various literatures have indicated that during this period of self definition, self-evaluation, and self- exploration conflicts may arise between the adolescent and the significant other; particularly parents (Erikson, 1968, Santrock 2005, Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005: 427). The adolescent's experiences of new freedom and sense of self and social awareness have resulted in rootless isolation for they are still in the discovery period.

The greater the freedom and choices, the greater is the possibility of making wrong decisions. This is because in their search for identity, adolescents do not know whom to identify with or what they would really want to do in their lives. The wrong choices that adolescents make create permanent damages to the adolescents' lives; thereby, producing a lost and wounded generation. Steinmann et al, State that.

“If identity is what it is all about, then here again today's younger generation is unique, for the adolescent quest for identity is, at one and the same time, much

easier and much more difficult than it has ever been before. Easier because today there are many more acceptable alternatives to choose from in every sphere of personal and social expression. Many of the old distinctions of class, color, and even sex, no longer restrict the opportunities for choice. Even within those distinctions that still exist to some degree, there are greater opportunities and freedoms. But apart from the physical and psychological facts of life that contribute to personal identity, there are the social values, standards and judgments that determine its dimension. And these, too, at least those moral concepts once reinforced by the authority of the family, church, government and the law, and the subtle pressures of society itself have begun to lose some of their form certainty. Hence increasing difficulty for a young person, boy or, girl to discover just who he is and where he would like to go. The greater the choice, the greater the possibility of making the wrong one. The fewer the “givens,” the greater the temptation merely to take” (Steinmann et al, 1974:156).

Steinmann et al convincingly show how many of the decisions that adolescents make are unguided and confusing to the young people, lead to dilemma. Most of these male children are affected by the unspecific and uninitiated stages of attaining adulthood. This is because their fathers have been caught or torn in between their traditional role model and the permissible Western model of parenting. Therefore, the period of searching for identity without a standard has made the adolescent males’ behaviors to lead to violent deaths from accidents, suicides, murder and sexually transmitted diseases. These greater freedoms and choices create difficulty to make healthy decisions.

This previously safe and healthy period, which society guided, has become an unsafe period in the lives of adolescents who are indicating a lack of adult role model and showing that parents are too busy and unsure of their role in the lives of their children today. The writer of the Epistle to second Timothy wrote that the love of material things would make people selfish; leading to stressful lives.

“But understand this that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy inhuman...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it”

(2 Timothy 3:1-5).

It is this love of self that has made society to have little concern to what happens to children as they grow into adults, thereby, leading to a crisis in the lives of adolescents. The writer, here, portrays the type of society that is created when fathers ignore their role of guiding their male child. He gives a picture of a lost generation whose behavior is irreversible if society does not revert to God’s standard of caring and loving. Future generations will repeat what their fathers did to them because there is no one to emulate. For example, the Bible tells us how king Rehoboam followed his father’s footprints as a leader of the people Israel. He married foreign women and was harsh to the people. Farrar states that;

“Solomon became harsh when he abandoned biblical authority. Instead of leading out of kindness and firmness, he became harsh. And he passed on his poor example to his son. Solomon was harsh. Rehoboam became even harsher than his father.

Solomon did mentor his son. He just mentored him in the wrong things” (Farrar, 2006:193).

Adolescents are more likely to hear, personalise messages, change attitudes and behavior if they believe that the messenger is similar to them and faces the same concerns and pressures, otherwise, there is a feeling of being misunderstood by others (parents), (Mpofu, W., Chiremba, W., Kent, D, 2003:135). Because adults are dissimilar to adolescents in a number of ways, they are often viewed as lacking a keen and deep understanding of issues facing adolescents. In most cases the parent – adolescent relationship has been made difficult by both parties. The inability to connect makes many parents wonder just what’s “wrong” either with them or their child (Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005)

The reason why communication seems to be difficult is that the adolescence period is not easy in today’s world where there are a lot of challenges and alternatives to many things in the adolescents’ environment; unlike in the past. Normal adolescence development brings a variety of unsettling biological, psychological and emotional changes. With all the pressures, adolescents feel that the community does not understand them. While on the other hand, parents don’t mean to react negatively to the growing independence that most young boys seek.

3.11 THE NUMBER ONE ENEMY IN OUR MIDST

A lack of adequate parental monitoring is the factor that is related to juvenile delinquency among male adolescents. However, the absence of a father is the number one enemy to male adolescents. Many parents have overlooked the importance of nurturing boys into men

of substance; instead, their absence has created non confident males. Lack of knowledge from either side makes adolescent parent relationship a problem.

This lack of knowledge on the adolescents' side and neglect from the father's side create a deficiency that frustrates the process of development among the male adolescents. It is unfortunate that parents expect adolescents to grow into socially mature individuals without their input. How can a plant grow without someone caring for it? The farmer should do his part on his maize field and leave God to bring the rains. In the same way, fathers should play their part of caring for the male children and leave God to fill the boy with the Holy Spirit.

Looking after children whose parents are absent creates a fertile ground for conflicts between couples, between the children and parents and between the guardians and the extended family members. For example, fathers who are absent may blame those who are living with the child for not administering discipline. At times, when discipline is administered, the absent father might feel that it was over done. As a result, a number of family members are unable to impart traditional values into these children; thereby, making it difficult for fathers to inculcate a good sense of African culture and tradition in their children from a distance.

Poverty is another factor and an enemy among Africans. The exodus of many African fathers to foreign countries are a result of lack of food, shelter, the inability to meet the educational needs of their children and the lack of access to meaningful medical treatment.

The relationships in many extended families have been strained because of the high expectations from the extended family members and the society on those in Diaspora.

Societies regard them highly, thereby, making it difficult for those who are not well-to-do to advise them and to correct or discipline their adolescents. These children do not fit well in the society because they form a class of those who are supported with the United States dollar.

The African concept of a person shows that a child grows better in a family that values interpersonal relationships. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, “*Munhu vanhu*” is a saying which translates to (a person is because of other people). While the Bemba people of Zambia say, “*Imiti iyikula empanga*” (meaning that the growing shrubs make a forest) and this is an emphasis of parenting which should be taken seriously. It is important to note that Africans take parenting seriously in every society. This is because children grow better when they journey together with their responsible parents into adulthood or guardians. In order for the forest to grow, there should be shrubs which should be taken care of. Mucherera cited Chidyausiku, a Zimbabwean writer, who stated that:

“We the Shona have a culture which is in danger of being forgotten. Nursed within a colonial context many of us have come to think that “the nanny is better than a mother;” We are now going through a period of transformation which affects all aspects of our way of life as it was in the past and it has persisted to this very day... It is very sad to witness how our heritage is now being eroded and in danger of getting lost. If we are not careful, our generation may become like a dying tree with broken roots” (Mucherera, 2005:57).

Chidyausiku is citing the challenges that Africans are facing in this period of socio-economic and political transformation. The transformation has made many people, who have left the country, feel contented to leave their children with guardians; regardless of

their age. The adolescent male child is considered by the community to be well looked after through the resources from his father in the Diaspora. This perspective leads him being neglected during his journey to manhood. To be a man; one needs to understand an African world view and philosophy of life that is community based, physically, economically and spiritually. It is through these aspects that an adolescent male gets his security, identity, health and interpersonal relationship with his world which fathers are missing.

It is what the community does and the person's positive response to the community values, morals and norms, which is understood to create a personal identity as already stated above. From birth to death, the community is crucial in providing interpersonal relations which contribute to the formation of a personal identity (Erikson, 1968 Mucherera, 2005:80). It is, therefore, important for the reader to understand the context in which the adolescents find themselves in relation to the traditional world view of the family.

Values which have guided the African people for years can be over hauled in one generation if Africa is engaged in the economical war, which is eroding the cultural value systems that had guided the extended families for generations. When society neglects its role, the cultural values are compromised and a lot is lost. Success is measured by having well behaved adolescents because children are the future of the African family. Those who determine what young people are taught, what they experience, what they see, hear, think and believe, will set the course for the future of our nation, if fathers neglect their responsibility of mentorship.

The current situation in Zimbabwe reflects the fading of the cultural value systems in Africa, and the upbringing of a well balanced child is becoming a doubtful process. The scenario reveals the task that lies ahead of civic leaders, church leaders, extended families

and the institutions of learning, to strengthen the sanctity of life. Otherwise, the research is igniting a sense of urgency to all who consider the upbringing of the adolescent males as a major human task.

3.12 A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY MADE DIFFICULT

Santrock, 2005 indicates that a large number of adolescents are searching for meaning at a time that they are considered rebellious, in crisis, pathological and deviant by parents and society. Actually, at this stage, they are trying to discover themselves in a society that is finding it difficult to understand them. The society's attitude to the young people reflects that many people have forgotten that they were once children who behaved in the same way as their adolescents do today. The confusions that are caused by the parent's failures to understand the adolescent period may also make it difficult for them to create a model to grow adolescents into healthy adults.

The search for meaning is associated with excessive isolation, loneliness or rejection that makes a young person to develop deep fears. He becomes anxious and fearful when isolated. This fear may turn into hate or self blame; especially when other children are living with their parents, celebrate birth days or are visited at school during the term. It is also possible that the fear may lead the adolescent to identify with the wrong clubs in order to be accepted.

This sense of rejection may account for great unhappiness or suicide attempts. It may create a vacuum in one's life. The adolescent then joins gangs of juvenile delinquency simply because they accept him (Molitor, 2004, Santrock, 2005:527). Children end up acquiring a new status of self-centeredness rebellion due to frustration. These social pressures lead a

boy child to the irresistible life of drugs, sex and love as a panacea that guarantees happiness and security. By this stage, adolescents set their standards of their social behavior and the guardians become objects of contempt because they are indifferent and unwelcoming in the child's world view.

As adolescents search for meaning, they need guidance before they can make their own irreversible destructive decisions. The first time the author got to the University of Pretoria, there was an orientation that was carried out by the University. The orientation was very important though it was not the only thing in which students needed guidance. It is, therefore, prudent for adolescents to have someone with experience and who belongs to their culture and family to guide them into adulthood. This can be evidenced by King Philip's engagement of Aristotle to guide his son, Alexander, into a mature Alexander the Great. As their search for meaning continues, adolescents should be guided and connected to people who would guide them, and who are approved by their father or adults in the society.

“The wounded boy or adolescent male may find himself picking stereotypic role models from the society in his search for meaning of masculinity. He is relegated to a conscious process because he was not able to obtain it naturally through receiving masculine nurturing. He imitates. He role plays. Gangs may become places of enmeshment ritualized through role playing and pseudo initiation experiences that result from a lack of connectedness in his life” (Horne et al, 1999:23).

According to Horne, there is likely to be an uninitiated boy/man searching for his masculine identity in all the wrong places. He must find a way to heal and to empower the masculine part of himself, so that he can take his place in mature relationships with women,

other men, and children. The culture's task is to put this young man in touch with his deep masculine power and teach him appropriate stewardship of that power.

It is, therefore, clear that when male adolescents search for identity in wrong places, they get wounded spiritually and emotionally in their journey into adulthood as they strive to make a choice between two unsatisfactory alternatives. This is because they will be partially aware of the behaviors that have been associated with men in the history of humanity.

On the other hand, they are aware of the psychological and social pressures from the feminist society, which demands the opposite. In their dilemma, they do not know what to do when their fathers are no longer with them to answer their questions and be their role models. The adolescent suffers the conflict and confusion that inevitably result from living an unguided life. The effects of these spiritual and emotional wounds affect their personal lives and relationships in the immediate and larger society, and in their roles as fathers.

In Zimbabwe, it is becoming of less importance to be a good person than to be a successful person; this is evident through the discussion in chapter 4 (item 4.4.2). This is adding to the confusion on what one should live for. Should one live for God or the riches? For, it seems that to be good is becoming less desirable, and less rewarding, than to be successful. If being good is to look after ones family, why is the father absent when he is needed to guide his male adolescents? Of what benefit is it to the father to gain the riches and lose his boy child to juvenile delinquency?

3.13 THE NEGLECTED ROLE, LOST SONS

The Zimbabwean adolescents, whose fathers are absent, lack ritualised discussions and ceremonies that help them to understand where they are coming from, and going to, as they

learn who they are, and what role they are to play in society. These discussions contribute to their achievement of a healthy adult status in a society in which they are active members. The absence creates a class of ‘Diasporas children’, which makes it difficult for healthy interactions within the society, with peers and with family members. Ritualised discussions teach them to be responsible for their families and environment. The fathers’ absences encourage the adolescent males to suffer resulting from unfulfilled roles which they did not learn from their fathers due to their absence.

When teachers are absent from classroom, pupils tend to create an image of a teacher. These pupils cannot pass their examinations because “Boys cannot initiate boys into manhood; only men can do that” (Horne, 1999:22). Through initiation, children are helped to make transitions from one stage to another (Steinberg, 1993).

Horne et al, (1999:22) states that the purpose of male initiation is the transformation from immature masculinity to mature masculinity because, to him, men are fixated at an immature age level of development. They suffer the loss of what Winnicott (1965a) calls the “holding environment”. They are destined to experience a premature, psychic separation- from care giving (Horne, 1999: 23). These children have not been given the opportunity to share in societal beliefs, attitudes, and priorities by their father’s absence.

A study in Britain showed that there is a correlation between child abuse and the type of family of the abused child (Fagan & Fitz Gerald, 1997:143). The safest and happiest environment for a child is with biological parents who are married and have an intact family. The rate of abuse was found to be higher where the child lives with biological parents who are unmarried or cohabiting (Fagan & Fitz Gerald, 1997:143).

The effects of today's child abuse and neglect will be tomorrow's most dangerous criminals as there is a significant link between child abuse and crime. Fagan and Fitz Gerald also reports that:

“The three most frequent factors in the history of a killer are physical or sexual abuse, a failure in emotional attachment to the mother and a failure to use parents as role models” (Fagan and Gerald, 1997:4).

The inadequate role played by the father to his son, makes the son a wanderer in a society in which he should be one of the family leaders. It creates confusion on him and leads to the avoidance of responsibilities which require masculine decisions that are involve keeping with the social values and expectations.

The Bible and World history have revealed to us that when fathers neglect their role of mentoring and guiding of their sons, the results are unbearable both to them, if they are still living, and to the society. The biblical examples are that of the Sons of Eli (1Samuel 2:12, 17, 22, 29), Samuel's sons did not please God (1Samuel 8:1, 3), Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was harsh to the people of Israel, loved riches and women; just like his father. These are just a few. History has it that Mugabe, Hitler and Stalin did not get a fair treatment from their fathers during adolescence stage. Mugabe's father left him when he needed him the most during adolescence (Meredith 2002: 12-23) and the absence affected his personality and political career in many ways. Holland states that,

“One of the consequences of Robert Mugabe having grown up in a dysfunctional family is his fragile self-image. He absorbed his information about political concepts like Marxism from dogmatic advisers and books, not from humanity and

human relations. His own mother dealt exclusively in abstractions- her idea of the man Robert would become had nothing at all to do with him as a person. If he was as easily influenced by others as Tekere suggests, it was because a frail sense of self made him so vulnerable that he listened to anybody who acted like a parent and seemed to offer valuable guidance.’ In addition Holland states; with his poor childhood development record, even minor criticism would be experienced as a wound by Mugabe. He is a person who cannot tolerate difference.....” (Holland, 2009:49)

Holland (2009:200), believes that by denying his (Mugabe) negative feelings, Mugabe projected them on to others and proceeded to punish them through the individuals and groups who became his implacable enemies.

Similarly, Adolf Hitler was often severely beaten by his father. One beating that Hitler received from his father left him in a coma for weeks.

“Adolf became very stubborn with his father and, according to his sister Paula, provocative. Probably the repetition of what had happened with his first son was too much for Alois. Paula said he beat Adolf daily and severely. Then, at ten, Adolf too decided to run away. On discovering this, Alois beat him so badly he went into coma. For days the family did not know whether he would live. Frequent or severe punishment conveys to children that they are evil. Being nearly killed by parents conveys that they are unworthy to live. Adolf began to experience himself as evil and worthless- feelings he would describe in middle age and be troubled until his death” (Victor, 2007:29).

This is one of the cases in point that show a background issue that was budding within the life of Adolf. More also, Stalin's father beat him on a regular basis when he was a young boy growing up. These fathers wounded the spirits of their sons and their sons, in return, tortured, maimed, (wounded other people's spirits) and murdered thousands and millions (Farrar 2006:244). The tendency is that a hurting boy will hurt others. This will depend on the type of wound and scar that the boy carries. However, emotional wounds take time to heal and their scars easily remind individuals of their past wounds.

In Zimbabwe, the children's protection and Adoption Act Chapter 33 (Government Printers: Acts 22/1972, 39/1973, 43/1973, 18/1974) is an instrument that promotes the welfare of children. This chapter protects children and young persons from ill-treatment or neglect, corruption, begging and their employment. The author, however, wonders whether this instrument on the protection of children is effective with regard to neglected children due to migratory work. It seems there is no talk about the trauma that is brought about by the father's absence toward his children in this instrument.

When the father is absent, the child does not know what his father wants. Without a learning journey with his father, a male child will not know himself in light of his father. And the father cannot say to the society and to the child in the presence of the child's late adolescence, like Jesus did to his father in the presence of his disciples when in his prayer he said: "for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me" (John 17:8).

What will our sons accept from fathers of value before they (fathers) pass on? What account will fathers give to God over the neglected responsibility of journeying with their male children?

Various authorities are , however , in agreement that the reason for the high prevalence of HIV/Aids cases , though complex, include historical and cultural causes of family separation, such as migrant labor, poverty, poor education, access to health services and acceptable gender norms(Woelk 1997, Bassett and Mhloyi 1991, Loewenson 1998 in Fieldman et al., 2002:7). African parents find it difficult to educate their children on the consequences of indulging in illicit sexual activities. This was done by grandparents who were expected to handle sexual issues of their grandchildren. However, with the changing times, the grandparents are no longer available for the task; hence the need for biological parents to facilitate the selection of mentors for their sons.

To help adolescents reach their full potential the father's parental role is to be effective because from his experience in life as they provide guidance to their adolescents in all honesty; and carefully choose their mentors. Fathers, who fulfill this important role, help their sons to avoid many pitfalls in the journey to adulthood. Fathers are to be managers of their son's journey to life. Santrock cites Parker and Buriel (1998), who stated that parents can play important roles as managers of adolescents, social relationships, and as social initiators and arrangers (Santrock, 2005:317).

When these adolescents are not managed, parents suffer emotionally and materially. This is because the adolescents may be involved in early sexual activities and drugs, as well as become a menace to the society, because unmanaged behaviors are a burden to the society. The spread of Aids viruses cannot be avoided or reduced if fathers do not see themselves as managers of their sons. The world has become a very risky and dangerous place; it is unwelcoming to many children.

The fathers should accept the stages of growth in the development of their children and take them seriously. There is a period that fathers can tell their children that something is wrong without much explanation. This period can be between 0- 5 years when the relation is that of a parent and son where the son is totally dependent upon the parent. When it comes to adolescence, the 5-10 years relationship becomes that of a father as teacher and issues such as HIV/AIDS can be discussed. During the 10-21years, the relationship becomes that of a friend and a mentor. The last stage is that of the father (parent) as a dependent (this is purely an African concept) when parents become dependent upon their children (see item 1:2). Migrant work has offered both the psychological and physical distances between the father and the son, while fathers assuage to Western and other foreign ways on a successful African man at the expense of their future male generation.

3.14 Preliminary conclusion

The author in this chapter, dealt with the journey of an adolescent male child. The biblical, historical, psychological and the African perspectives have been discussed. The African environment in which the child grows has been discussed as a way of showing the importance of the context in which the boy child forms his identity. The individual has been shown to be as equally important to the community because the community is made up of individuals who are born in biology and brought up in culture to form an identity. Though the challenges faced by adolescents are numerous, the roles played by fathers in guiding their sons cannot be overemphasised. In the next chapter, the author shows the roles of a father in guiding his son.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF A FATHER TOWARDS HIS SONS

4.1 Introduction

The author, in this chapter, introduces the sacredness of parents in the upbringing of African children; especially in Zimbabwe. He defines and discusses the Western and African perspectives of father, fatherhood and the roles played in both categories. The conditions in Zimbabwe that led to the migration of males to foreign lands are highlighted. He further underlines forces behind the absent fathers. The importance of the father and the influences he has towards his adolescent male children is discussed.

4.2 PARENTS: A SACRED REALITY TO CHILDREN

According to Streng, the term -sacred comes from the Latin word *sacer*, which means “set off” “restricted” (Streng, 1985:47). It originally designated something out of the ordinary or off limits to most people for the ancient Romans; it could be thought of as analogous to the restricted area of an electrical or nuclear power plant because of the danger for the person coming close to it or its destructive power for the community if the power were misused. Whatever that was sacred, was awesomely powerful. Therefore, the sacred reality is, like the Holy presence, the awaresome mystery; but unlike the Holy presence, sacred reality manifests an eternal, universal structure known either through the interaction of gods with

each other or human beings, as known by inspired seers or oracles or visions, or through special revelation in words and actions (Streng, 1985:47).

Parents are a symbol of sacred reality to their children in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, the Shona people say that “*Vabereki ndivo vanaMwari vedu panyika*” (meaning that, parents are our gods on earth). Therefore, parents who are second only to God have a central role in the upbringing of children. The responsibility of raising children is in their hands. Children are taught the importance of co-operating with others, obedience and acceptance of parental authority. They are further taught that parents should be respected at all times. As a result, a child who insults or beats his parent, especially a mother, would have committed a chargeable crime which should be paid for accordingly. If the child does not pay, it is believed that he or she would suffer in life. For example, he would have problems at work, in marriage, miscarriages, and chronic illness; just to name a few. Therefore, to insult a parent is to insult ‘a god.’

It is the parents who are primary in the formative age of every child. The child knows the parents before he or she knows God. Parents introduce children to the belief system which includes the teaching that there is a creator of earth and heaven. The parent instructs him what to and not to do. They teach him to understand that while they (parents) are important in the child’s life, there is a God beyond, who created them and controls the universe. They provide for the child’s wellbeing, thereby, becoming the source of the child’s life. It, therefore, follows that an adolescent male grows up into a man when he is following the examples of a God fearing father. By following his father’s footsteps, the son realises that he is one in spiritual, emotional and physical characteristics. As a result, the father image is introduced into the boy’s socio- cultural setting.

The Zimbabwean understanding of respect for parents connects well with the Hebrew practices, cited below, that remind all children to respect parents.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Deuteronomy 5:16; Exodus 20:12).

While in Proverbs, sons are taught to respect their fathers and mothers

“Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old” (Proverbs 23:22).

The Hebrew teaching is closely related to how the author has been socialised to accept that parents are ‘primary but, second only to God’ in the life of the child. Parents are considered so highly because they biologically created a person with God’s help.

These verses remind Jewish children of the obligations and benefits for honoring parents; see chapter one, item 1:2. The implication of this understanding is that parents may not be liked by all children and yet they are to be respected by all children. Children learn the respect of authority in the external world by firstly honoring their own parents.

The proper response of this ultimate reality can be seen when parents are involved during certain major events whether they had cared for or abandoned that child in life. For example, when a child wants to marry and have a wedding, he or she will ask the parents or family representatives of both parents to be present and be involved at such functions. In spite of the role played by a parent in the life of the child, a parent would still be given a portion of the *lobola* (dowry) that is perceived to be for them. This simply shows how the African children feel in spite of what happened in life; parents should be respected.

The image of a father enables the African children to live in harmony with their world in which the story of the God of their parents is revealed as the God of their clan, nation and the world (Mucherera, 2005:91). Therefore, the father's presence and role assists the boy child to master his environment and himself correctly. This perception guides the development of the boy's healthy inter- personal and intra – personal relationship in his environment. Subsequently, children see life beyond their biological parents and appreciate that parents, who are primary in their lives, hold a second place only to God in their lives.

However, the socio-political environment in Zimbabwe has challenged parental influence, thereby, forcing the children to grow in the absence of their second gods (the parents). They, instead, grow up in the presence of strangers or by themselves. The author wonders whether these children, who are growing up in the absence of their fathers, are noticed by the society as lacking the providers of love. Secondly, can the children reveal to society that they are missing their fathers in this world of shame and guilty since they seem to be materially well-off?

Consequently, the family, which is the primary social context for the upbringing of children, has encountered political and socio-economical challenges that have led to its disintegration. The challenges that have been encountered in many societies due to migration have broken the fibers which connect an individual to the extended family and its environment. Therefore, the parents in the Diaspora are raising frustrated children, sons in particular, because these children enter a time of increasingly distress and darkness when they grow without role models and a community of embeddedness.

Parents play a very important role in the lives of their children. However, the author in this study takes a special interest on the role of the father in the life of his sons in Zimbabwe.

One would like to ask whether fathers are aware that they are role models to their sons. If they are, how have the African and Caucasian perspectives been of influence in the upbringing of the boy child in Zimbabwe? Furthermore, what have they done which is of benefit to the child before they left for the Diaspora?

4.3 FATHER AND FATHERHOOD

4.3.1 Father

It is important to understand what a father and fatherhood mean in Zimbabwe as compared to the Western world. In this study, the term father stresses the role played by a biological father which extends to the extend family and community. This gives a biological and social role to a man. A man may be called a father even when he is not married and have no children. What the society values is the role that one plays in the society.

The term father (BABA in Shona and UBABA in Ndebele) are used to represent fatherhood, though a father can be a man who impregnates a woman and cares for his children. The term father is also used to refer to an older person as a way of respect ascribed to him by society, and whose authority is backed by the community. He is expected to be respected by his family and community. He is consulted or informed of any major decisions that are to be taken in the family. A father (Baba) normally has positive influence to the young and old people whom he interacts with within the family and the outside world. The Western world, however, sees a father as a man who impregnates a woman. This understanding gives a biological explanation to the meaning of a father.

The Western understanding falls short of the African concept of a father that goes beyond the biological role, but recognises it as a collective, spiritual and social role. Moreover, the

advent of technological advancements poses a challenge to the Western understanding. For, it is possible to create human life without physical contact or sexual relationships with a woman or man. Richter et al state that;

“*In vitro* fertilization is now common. The law recognises that in some instances when a man’s sperm fertilises an ovum, he is not the father. This is the case, for example, when sperm is donated to a sperm bank. In short, modern technologies are forcing new definitions of what a father is” (Richter et al, 2006:13).

The reader should note that while *In vitro* fertilization might be practiced in the Western world, it is not necessarily used by most Westerners due to the costs involved, and reasons of ethical and religious nature. For example, what would the mother tell the child who the father is? Is *In vitro* fertilization the will of God? What is the psychological and social impact to a child born without male love or conceived in the absence of feminine and masculine emotions? These are some of the questions asked by African people who believe that every child should identify with a father or his family; which is possibly not so when the sperm comes from a sperm bank.

4.3.2 The role of a father

The role of a father is important in the life of a son. It is through a son that the name and pride of a biological father is positioned and remains. When a son succeeds in life, all credit goes to the father; and failure destroys his pride and name. This is because success illuminates the character of a father and failure humiliates every father.

This view is revealed in Proverbs 17:21, where the writer articulates the pain that fathers go through when their sons fail to live according to cultural and social expectations. The writer

to the book of Proverbs states that. “To have a fool for son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool”

Equally, among the Africans in Zimbabwe, fathers derive their position, pride and authority from cultural prescriptions of manhood. Society determines the roles and responsibilities of its members. In an African family, a father should provide for his family, be a leader and be able to protect the family from outside influence. If a man fails to provide material needs and guidance for his family, he is considered a bad father and he sees himself as a failure too. The defining feature of fatherhood is particularly measured by the ability to guide and economically provide for the immediate and extended families.

The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Rev S. Sithole in his Good Friday and 100 years celebration messages at Chemhanza High School, encouraged men as fathers to support the School by providing water to the School in the following way;

“to be a father is to provide, it is not the wearing of a pair of trousers that makes a man a father, one can call ‘*sekuru*’ (a grandfather) who provided for him ‘father’ therefore providing for the family is the man’s role...” (Bishop Sithole, April 3, 2010 Good Friday speech at Chemhanza School)

The implication of this statement is that fathers and mothers represent different roles in the life of their children. The function of the father continues to be of providing love, which he attaches to successful fulfillment of tasks by his son, while the mother’s remains unconditional. The father feels greatly pressured when his sons do not meet the tasks which he perceives as important in helping them to adjust to the external world. This is because it

is generally accepted among many people in Africa that the success or failure of a son reflects the type of a father one has.

To the contrary, African men blame the failures of both a girl and boy child to their wives while all successes are attributed to the father. The author believes that this is in line with the leadership position ascribed to men in the family by society that cause shame, which leads to feelings of blameworthy on the part of fathers, or feelings that are redirected by, husbands to their wives. It is generally thought by many people in all walks of life that when an organisation fails to realise good results, success and failure would be attributed to poor leadership skills or incompetence on the part of the manager (Marie-France Perrin Jossy, 2001). When sons fail in their tasks, fathers perceive themselves as having failed in developing an image which is supposed to be emulated in their societies through their sons. Moreover, it is human nature to blame others for ones failures or mistakes; compare how Adam avoided blame for his failure to keep the promise of God by accusing his wife for disobedience (Genesis 3:12).

Therefore, the father is responsible for helping the son to be ready for entry into the world. He sets expectations of consistent discipline that provide the son with the sense of responsibility and security. The father sets a tone for values in the son, and by his teachings and examples, he leads his son into the external world; a world beyond his village or country. A Zimbabwean News paper, *Sunday Mail*, articulates the important role of a father to his son when it narrates the role that one of the Zimbabwean's great Saxophonist (Musician) Oliver Mutukudzi played in the life of his late son Sam. The extract reads as follows;

“The hugely subscribed show was recorded live and the DVD was to set the tone for the younger Mtukudzi to stand on his own- as well as enter the global stage. The February show was to be followed by a series of equally significant shows where the father was taking his son to some of the places that he performed over the years, places like *Mushandirapamwe* Hotel in Highfield.

The series of shows was aptly dubbed *Perekedza Mwana* (escort the son) or *Nzou ne Mhuru Mudanga* (father and Son), where the two would share in some songs, with Sam showing his growing stature as a Saxophonist. Sadly, on Friday Mtukudzi will be performing in remembrance of his son, the son he was ready to wean off and present to the world. The series of shows that he was holding with his son gave many the feeling that he was preparing Sam for the day he would retire” (The Sunday Mail of April 4-10, 2010 p. L1).

Sam’s involvement in his father’s trade gives evidence that Oliver Mutukudzi’s commitment to fathering impressed on his son’s view of himself and the world. The father involved his son in his trade in order to prepare him for the future. The role played by the father prepares the son for the future, because the boy’s journey with his father helps his view of other men in light of the role his father plays in the society.

The father has a critical role in decision making, influencing the child’s career choice and the enforcement of standards through behavior modeling of his children as they grow into adulthood. He also connects his children to the extended family and guides them to participate within societal roles. This also means that the son’s connection with the extended family members in the rural area is influenced and enforced by the father. The sons learn from their father to love, forgive and not to quarrel with women or use violent

methods to resolve issues with women and other men. As is mentioned elsewhere in this study, the father should practice self control in every thing in order to have positive outcome in his role as a role model to his sons.

Fathers are teachers and custodians of such societal values. The fathers convey these societal values through their behaviours and attitudes on respect, hard work, concern, generosity, forgiveness and mercifulness towards their children and other people in the society. The male children admire, emulate or resent the non-verbal communication from their fathers. The father expresses his roles by being physically and emotionally available for his family. The situation in Zimbabwe has made it impossible and hard for many of these caregivers and role models to be available due to political and social environments (refer to Chapter 4.4.1).

4.3.3 Fatherhood

The different explanations of fatherhood guide the author to understand how the Western world, which has greatly influenced the modern African ways of thinking, views a father and fatherhood. Fatherhood stresses the social relationships between men and children.

In addition to the above Richter et al states that;

“Fatherhood is a role that is understood and exercised in different ways. One does not need to be the biological father to accept the fatherhood role and act as a father towards one or more children. Particularly in the context of the developing world, other categories of the Father –economic and social- are important. Economic fathers are men who contribute to the upkeep of a child. Social fathers include a range of men who live with and /or care for children who may not be their offspring.

Such men might be in situations of formal adoption, or in a living relationship with the mother of the children, or a member of an extended family who has taken on the role and responsibilities of caring for children (for example, a man's brother might see himself as having the responsibility of father when his male sibling is out of work, or because he is the older son)" (Richter et al, 2006:14).

While Richter et al., states that one does not need to be a biological father to accept the fatherhood role and act as a father towards one or more children and further noted that, in many African contexts, being a father has more to do with kinship ties than with medically established paternity (Richter et al 2006:13). In Zimbabwe, blood relationship in members of extended family is valued dearly. For example, a non biological child cannot be an heir to property of the social or economical father. Despite the African concept of communal life stated in chapter three that continually guides our understanding of caring for one another, in the Zimbabwean Shona culture a blood relative is the one who is responsible for the traditional rituals that may be performed for an individual. This shows that the training of boys to become men can be done by any male adult in the society while rituals are confined to blood relations. For that reason, fatherhood is both inclusive and exclusive because the training of a child can be done by a person who one is not related to while guidance and performance of rituals is exclusively directed by a relative.

The reader should further note that in times of serious illnesses or deaths; fatherhood has some limitations, because of the Zimbabwean religious belief system which takes cognisance of the role played by the departed in the lives of the living. For example, rituals are carried out to heal mental problems. The rituals are carried out by family members who consult those who have departed but living and are able to intercede for their living.

Therefore, fatherhood involvement in the lives of nonkin is mostly limited to matters that do not require African rituals. Browning partly articulates the Zimbabwean understanding by the term “kin altruism” which denotes that all creatures, including humans, are more likely to invest in and sacrifice for those who share their own genes than they are for nonkin (Blankenhorn et al., 2004:70).

While the author recognises Browning’s conviction and limitations, he takes the comparison between humans and animals with great caution though there can be some similarities in some of their behavioural aspects. Browning seems not to be aware that the Africans extend their role of caring to members of the extended families, some of whom do not share their genes. For example, a married man or woman cares for those of the spouse’s relatives as if for his or her own blood relatives.

Furthermore, Browning does not explain why people like mother Theresa of India and Nelson Mandela, the former South Africa president, invested and sacrificed so much for the people of all races or most whom they did not share their genes. Likewise, he does not give the reasons as to why some Westerners are so passionate about investing on the adopted children? While this is a civic responsibility derived from compassion, in Zimbabwe a national leader like the late vice president Joshua Nkhomo is understood to be the father of Zimbabwe because of his political carrier, and so in Zimbabwe fatherhood is ascribed by society.

One of the major reasons African men invest so much in their sons and those who are blood relatives is because they are the future of their family’s existence (see chapter 1:2). This shows why social and economical fathers in the Zimbabwean context are normally members of the extended family who can perform or initiate rituals. Step fathers, like

economic and social fathers, are limited in caring for the living child on issues that do not require African traditional rituals. The relationships between and among persons is found through the network of spiritual and familial relationships within which religion and views of transcendence are pervasive in all of life.

The spiritual and familial relationship in the African tradition creates the network that makes the biological father play shared roles together with other male family members in the life of his children. Serious issues that concern the children are dealt with by other male members of the extended family in consultation with the biological father. For example, matters of courtship and marriage concern the aunties, grandparents and the young brothers of the biological father to the children.

The reader has to be informed further that among the Africans in Zimbabwe when death occur, the bereaved biological parents do not play a leading role in funeral arrangements. Moreover, the bereaved parent's name is not included on the list of the speakers at the memorial service of the deceased; it is the young brother and the elder or young sister of the biological parents, relatives and friends who speak on their behalf.

Generally, in their typical speeches, the young brother and sister of the child's parents would say : *I have been hard hit by the death of my son, he is the one who I thought would bury me when I die.....* . It is, therefore, important to note that the term father would be ascribed to other males in the family and society.

The migration of men to the Diaspora is not something new among Africans in Zimbabwe. Historically, men did migrate to South Africa, Zambia, and other neighboring and distant

countries in search of employment. These men left the children within their extended family members.

In spite of the absence of the biological fathers, the children did not remain without someone to identify with as a father or who represented the father. Another factor is that in the extended family system, the responsibility of bringing up children does not exclusively fall on the biological fathers. This does not mean that the absence of the biological father is not realised and felt completely, but it is carried out by the males within the extended family. Through their care-giving and nurturing roles, the extended family members help the children adapt to the environment which their fathers are missing.

The Shona people say, *gomba harina mwana*, meaning a man who impregnates another man's wife is not the father of that child; this implies that a sperm does not beget a child; which is in contrast with the Western concept mentioned earlier on where a sperm is bought from the sperm bank. For example, in a situation where a child is born of a wife whose husband was in prison or away for a long time, the child would be considered to be the husband's son; hence the saying that *Gomba harina mwana* as already explained above that an adulterer has no child. This is because infidelity harms marriages and leads to fatherless children in the society. Therefore, African societies discourage a situation that allows a fatherless child. However, the only challenge in Zimbabwe in this case is that although the child can be taken as part of the family, he may not inherit from the man's property. This is because the man who impregnates someone's wife is considered as a thief who enters someone's house through the window. In the event that he buys food or leaves money in this promiscuous relationship, everything belongs to the owner of the wife. It is generally known that a thief does not own stolen goods because they are not his. In this case, an

adulterer cannot father a child born in an adulterous relationship. The point the author wants to draw is that father and fatherhood reflect the role that a man plays in the African family and society. More importantly, fatherhood in the Zimbabwean African culture is both an ascribed and achieved role.

Although a discussion on the African and Western concepts of father and fatherhood give the impression that they are the same when presented for discussion, they are not because of the cultural differences involved as mentioned above. This is because African spiritual world is understood differently from the Western in many aspects.

4.4 THE CONDITIONS IN ZIMBABWE THAT FORCED MEN TO MIGRATE

Migration, as stated in chapter one (item 1.8.6), is an important population event. In Zimbabwe, the movement of these men to the Diaspora was motivated by economic and political events.

The Political, socio-economical situations and conditions in Zimbabwe have scattered and broadcasted men and women of various age groups all over Africa and other continents. The mobility of parents means that children often leave far away from their close relatives or extended families. It also means that families may not have had adequate time to develop the kind of relationships with neighbors in the urban area that enabled them to take custody of the children. Therefore, new challenges have been added to parents who had broken ties with the rural folks. It is also not easy for children who have grown in urban areas to adapt to rural life and be looked after by relatives whom they had not visited or known. One

would like to obviously look at the political and social environment in which the children grow up into adulthood because the process does not happen in a vacuum.

4.4.1 Political events

In 1998, the government of Zimbabwe got involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo war. During the same time, ‘War Veterans’ were paid gratuities by the government. Furthermore, land and farm invasions by these War Veteran gained momentum. An unpublished article by Shamuyarira describes war veterans in the following way;

“It is important to note that the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWV) is a grouping of former freedom fighters and an appendage of the Zanu (PF) structures. It is a very important ally of the former ruling party which is familiar with all the goings of the party. So its assessment cannot be far from the truth” (Shamuyarira, 2010:1).

Accordingly, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, in his Newsletter on 12 August 2010 castigated the status given to a small group of people (Freedom Fighters or War Veterans) who are thought to have liberated the country when he recognised many who are silent both now and in their graves.

“We must acknowledge and celebrate the lives and the sacrifices of our departed and living heroes so that future generations could benefit from their deeds. In the same vein we must not forget our old and young, who for various reasons, could not be on the forefront of the liberation struggle but contributed immensely in some way to the cause. Some fed the gallant fighters; some clothed them while some sang songs to relax their spirits and inject confidence and boost their morale. This

therefore means that no one person or group can claim title to the liberation struggle. We all own the victory that came as a result of working together towards bringing Zimbabwe” (The Prime Minister, 2010:1).

The above quotations seek to reveal how a group of people have been elevated to higher levels at the expense of the masses that should benefit from the gains of liberation struggles. The war of liberation was waged to fight for freedom, democracy and respect for human rights; which are dishonored by the freedom fighters themselves. The Prime Minister shows that the country belongs to all Zimbabwean; therefore, all Zimbabweans should benefit from the gains of the struggle.

The activities by War Veterans bred corruption among leaders and eliminated the sense of love, caring, tolerance, truth and planted hatred and brutality to all humanity. In the process, the law was circumvented (Shamuyarira, 31 August 2010:3).

It was during this period that the economy of Zimbabwe saw the rise in inflation due to the unbudgeted spending and political instability in the country. Many companies started to close down, thus affecting those people who were employed. Investor confidence was threatened by economic speculation, political repression or patronage, hyper inflation, land reform programme that saw many white commercial farmers lose their land.

The land reform programme saw war veterans invading farms; thus displacing white farmers who owned vast acreages of land which they had taken from the black people during the colonial era. The land invasion became an option and a tool of promise to the populace to occupy land from the white colonial masters. Since the 1979 Lancaster house agreement of ‘willing seller willing buyer’ to the land failed to become visible, the

government had to grab the land as a way that would make many of the landless Zimbabweans own land. Holland summarises Lancaster House Agreement in the following way;

“This is a rather odd summary of events. Lancaster House enshrined the willing – buyer willing seller principle for 10 years – until 1990. Mugabe did not touch the concept until 1992 when he passed the Land Acquisition Act, making compulsory purchase a possibility, and no one except the white farmers cried foul. In the event, this Act laid down such complicated rules for acquiring a farm that nothing serious happened in respect of land redistribution until the farm invasions of 2000” (Holland, 2009:129).

The failure also created an opportunity for the government to use land as a campaign strategy for the year 2000 elections and thereafter. Furthermore, Mugabe felt he had been made a fool and tricked like Lobengula, who was double crossed by Cecil John Rhodes (Holland, 2009:130).

The issue of the land became central in the government’s campaign. This provoked the colonial masters because its citizens had been displaced and had no control of their properties in Zimbabwe. It is at this point that targeted sanctions on political leaders were imposed on Zimbabwe by Britain and its allies. These sanctions made the social conditions of many Zimbabweans to deteriorate because their leaders were not able to travel freely to countries that have the resources for helping poor and developing nations. The reader should note at the origin of the Zimbabwean crisis evolved long before sanctions came into play. Therefore, the researcher attributes it to bad governance and economic mismanagement.

4.4.2 Social conditions

While the researcher has indicated that bad governance, economic mismanagement and sanctions were the reason for immigration of the fathers, Zimbabwe's prosperity was not evenly spread throughout the population by the government. Secondly, corruption was the root cause of bad governance that made a few people to enjoy the gains of independent Zimbabwe. The white farmers, politicians, and the upper class city people in general, became wealthy largely by exploiting poor people, such as peasant farmers and the unemployed. With their wealth, came social and political power. Corruption in the law courts made it easy for them to do as they wished; since the law courts were corrupt, thereby, compromising the rule of law.

These cruel injustices gave rise to a new political party in the name of MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) which is led by a trade unionist, Morgan Tsvangirai.

Hudleston acknowledges by stating that;

“The MDC was formally launched, to massive public acclaim as well as concern on the part of government in September 1999 at a rally at Rufaro Stadium in Harare.....” (Hudleston, 2005:55).

At this time, the Zimbabwean crisis enlarged the number of Zimbabweans that left the country in search of greener pastures while, others were running away because of their involvement in politics. Most of these men and women left children behind. A Zimbabwean News Paper indicated that:

“At least three million Zimbabweans live outside the country, the majority of them in South Africa, Having fled political repression and poverty after a decade long

economic crisis blamed on president Robert Mugabe's controversial policies" *The Zimbabwean News* On Sunday, 7-14 June, 2009:3).

These figures might fall short of the facts on the ground because the statistics of the people who have left the country are difficult to collect. The people who have crossed the borders legally may be fewer than those who have gone out illegally. Some of these people may not want their whereabouts to be known for various reasons. It is this exodus of people that motivated the author to think of the male children that are left behind by their fathers who are role models to them. The fathers are to teach traditional values to their children. It is the father, as a leader, who should initiate this traditional role to his male children but he is absent.

4.5 ABSENT FATHERS

An absent father in this research is a man (Biological male parent) who has left the country leaving behind his male child with the mother, family members, and other siblings or by himself. In this way, he will be physically, emotionally and spiritually away struggling to be connected to his wife and children since he will be missing them. The absence of the father or masculine insufficiency of the father could mean a failure to activate the father archetype within the boy's psyche, so that if uninitiated into the masculine world, he is doomed irredeemably to languish under the dominance of his mother's complex (Richter et al, 2006:123). In Zimbabwe, many children are under the custody of mothers who are generally staying very far from their extended families; as already mentioned in chapter one.

The author acknowledges Richter et al., (p.123) for recognising that the absence disconnects the son from his father's emotions, thereby, making it difficult for the child to learn how to deal with his own emotions in a way that he would have learnt from his biological father. This is so because it is the attitude of the father toward studying, relationships, family responsibilities and care that guide the future behavior of his sons. A healthy son should understand his relationship with his father and mother in order to appreciate their roles and influences in his journey to healthy manhood. As already subscribed to elsewhere in this chapter, one of the commonly recognised and important functions of the father is the establishment of gender identity or gender consciousness.

The absence of fathers in the lives of their sons means that from birth to adolescence, children are exposed to the feminine side of life; which is likely to create confusion in their identity development. One typical example is that, a child is born of a woman, looked after by a house maid, guided by a female teacher at nursery school, taught by a female Sunday school teacher at church, taught by a female teacher at school from grade one to secondary school and finally marries a woman. In short, they are surrounded by a world of females all the time. This has impact on our sons in many ways, though one of their major challenges is finding it difficult to form a healthy male identity.

The reader should note that the author is not underestimating the positive impact of the mother –son bonding which is very important for the growth of the male children. He recognises the impact that comes with the absence of a father in the life of the male child, which requires the masculine influence. At the same time, the author recognises and acknowledges the role carried by mothers on their male children as indicated by Dobson in his book *Bringing Up Boys* when he states that;

“Researchers found that early bonding is vital. It is even related to physical health forty or fifty years later. Incredibly, 91 percent of college men who said they had not enjoyed a close relationship with their mothers developed coronary artery disease, hypertension, duodenal ulcers, and alcoholism by midlife years. Only 45 percent of the men who recalled maternal warmth and closeness had similar illnesses” (Dobson, 2002:96).

In addition, Nancy Chodorow (1978) recognised that women rather than men do most of the parenting as a result of social structures rather than an immediate product of physiology.

Dobson and Chodorow have shown that when the father is absent from home, the boy child grows up in the presence of the mother alone. The boy in such situations must derive notions about masculinity from the mother rather than from a personal involvement with his father. The author, therefore, wonders how a male child who has spent so much of his life in the company of women would learn to be a man. Mothers may find it difficult to explain to their sons at adolescence what to be a man means. It is the father whom the boy child can easily understand when he relates to how he as a father dealt with the feelings of masturbation, sexual drives, and abstinence, anger and peer pressures.

When fathers are absent, male children grow at the mercy of their mothers on masculine issues which are traumatic to both the mother and the son (refer to chapter 5 table 8). It causes trauma to the boy child in that he will be looking for a father for particular and crucial situations in his life as already pointed out above; the mother will be overburdened by playing the role of a father which she, in most parts, understands in theory while on the other hand, carrying out her motherly role in sincerity. The reader has to understand that there are things in life that men do not know about women and women do not know about

men or even understand about each other. These are the issues that matter and need fathers to explain to the male children as they grow.

Hammond et al (2009), in his book; *What Women don't know (and men don't tell you)* warns his readers of the following dangers in each person's life by summarising his book with the following statements;

“What You Don't know about Yourself Will Hinder You.”

“What You Don't Know about Men will Hurt You.”

“What You Don't Know about Relationships Will Cost You.”

Hammond et al., have highlighted important points that are crucial for understanding the importance of the intra and interpersonal relationships in a person's life. Though Hammond is helping to empower couple;, particularly women in relationships, he gives important insight to every person. What has been described by Hammond apply to people since we all live in a community that requires good relationships. For example, when the above concepts are applied in the lives of sons, these male children will be helped to grow into manhood. For it is important for every male child to know things which affect men and women in order to avoid the hurt. If boys are not prepared emotionally, spiritually and mentally, they are likely to wound and be wounded by others, for they will have missing information about the role of a father; who is one of the key people in their lives.

One is, therefore, forced to believe that when the father is absent, he is not connected to the emotions of his son. The physical and emotional absence of the father wounds the son and as a result, he finds it difficult to learn how to deal with his own emotions in a way that he has learned from his biological father.

The author is reminded of how his son, Simbarashe, found it difficult to be taught by a male teacher, for the first time in his fourth grade. Simbarashe is a very active and playful 10 year old boy, but he presented a very different attitude to his male teacher and that led to the deterioration of his class performance.

At the time, the author was struggling to find the cause of Simbarashe's sudden poor class performance and his wife attributed the decline of her son's class performance to the comfort he had found in being in the hands of women from the time he was born. The other contributing factor may have been because from the time Simbarashe was born, the author had little time with the children because of his studies in Zimbabwe and South Africa; in addition to work commitments.

The author's absence contributed to his son's fear of male teachers because he missed the father -son relationship. When the author realised the impact of his absence on his son, he discussed with his study supervisor, Professor Masango, how he managed his family life in his busy schedule. The discussion helped the author to balance family life with his studies in addition to work. The author took upon himself to help his son with homework and extra lessons and this has yielded some noticeable results to his son's performance.

Jesus shows how proud he was with his father over his identity. He (Jesus), at one time told Philip that he who had seen him had seen the father because the father is in him and the son is in the father (John 14:6). This is an indication that the father had developed a father archetype in Jesus' psyche; which made him (Jesus) to see his oneness with God. Adolescents need their fathers, though other schools of thoughts under-estimate the importance of the biological father. The above underestimation creates confusion in male children about what it means to be a man in the modern society.

Many children in Zimbabwe live with mothers or extended families due to divorce, abuse or death of biological fathers. The author is aware of these other factors that have created another category of absent fathers. It is common in Africa for a child to grow in the absence of his biological father due to migrant work; however, the presence of men in the family, who play the role of the father, is paramount. The collective or communal parenting system is conducive for normal or health growth of a child. However, the system is weakened by the absence of the fathers who are the heads of their families. In Zimbabwe, being a father means one should guide his family in African religious activities such as the initiation of funeral ceremonies that provide healing to the extended family members.

Historically, the absence of the father was created by the colonial era which did not allow permanent stay of the African migrant workers in urban areas. The prohibition by the employers towards these male workers meant that family members could not join these men because only ‘single quarters’ (or single-sex hostels) accommodations were provided for the workers (Richter, L & Morrell R ed. 2006). Many migrant male workers in the neighboring and distant countries have not gone with their families. The reader should note that this is traumatic to these fathers as well. This is because most of them did not intend to do so, for a number of reasons discussed below;

Accommodating a larger family may be difficult and expensive. It is not easy to raise a family in the foreign land away from the extended family members. Most African men look after one or more members of the extended families, who might be a burden to be looked after if gone with to the Diaspora (for example parents, grand parents, in-laws, orphans just to mention a few categories).

The Zimbabweans have hope and believe that one day they will go back home when the socio-economic and political environment normalises in Zimbabwe. With the negotiations initiated by SADC and brokered by South Africa, the Zimbabweans in the Diaspora and at home continue to pray the ‘thy kingdoms come’ prayer and have a trust in the new Zimbabwe. The question to ask is, will it not be too late for the boy child?

Another possible reason is to protect the properties which include land that they own at home. Many African men value rural homes even though some do not normally visit them; they take pride in having attachment with the place they call home. Those in the Diaspora invest back home, for, it provides a place for them to return to if they become economically inactive, due to health reasons or loss of job (moreover most of them are employed as contract workers).

The other major motivating factor for the Zimbabwean parents is the belief that children can be raised well; according to traditional customs. In Zimbabwe, it is generally believed that the father’s role is to protect his family from outside influence (see item 4:2:1). The fathers, therefore, find it important to protect their children from foreign influence because of the differences in cultural practices and beliefs. This is because many African men have an allegiance to an African cultural value system which they would like their children to own and remain in the hearts of their sons.

The unpredicted safety in countries like South Africa on the fate of foreigners due to the selected cruelty on the foreigners by some security forces and nationals makes these fathers fear for their families. Lack of official documents or work permits by those in the Diaspora creates uncertainty. A Zimbabwean Newspaper reported that; officials from Zimbabwe

were expected to travel to South Africa to assist the Zimbabwean nationals in South Africa, who do not have proper identity and travelling documents.

“The teams will be targeting nearly a million of our fellow Zimbabweans who have been living illegally in SA after their documents expired or were lost during xenophobic attacks against them” (Sunday Mail 4-10 April 2010.p.3).

It is further reported that.

“The programme is aimed at stopping SA police and immigration officers from harassing our brothers and sisters. Due to continued attacks against Zimbabweans, many continue to lose their identity and travel documents” (p.3).

It is, therefore, difficult for many Zimbabweans to be accompanied by their families due to the difficulties and challenges mentioned above. While it is clear that some lost their documents and others have expired documents, the reader has to note that there are some who crossed the Limpopo illegally and are surviving in ways that are threatening and posing danger to the South African citizens.

A Zimbabwean news paper, ‘The Standard’, affirms this assumption in the following way:

“BEITBRIDGE- Enock Madziro (36) was sharing a room with six colleagues from Zimbabwe at Westerberg Settlement in South Africa’s northern city of Polokwane when an army of men wielding iron bars burst in. The menacing South Africans were shouting: “Zimbabweans we want to kill you now! You are taking our jobs, you are raping our sisters and you are killing South Africans.”.....The attack was sparked by the discovery of a body of a South African woman who was raped in the

streets of Polokwane. Zimbabweans became prime suspects” (the standard’ 13-19 December 2009:.3).

While one would not ignore the suspicious activities of the unemployed Zimbabweans in South African, it should, however, be noted that every country has its nationals who are destructive to its own citizens as well. The allegations should, therefore, be taken as emanating from a few South Africans who have their own agenda and some Zimbabweans who are unemployed and surviving through criminal activities.

However, the major factor for the absence of the father is to fulfill the traditional role of being the provider and breadwinner, since the conditions in Zimbabwe do not provide them jobs and opportunities to fend for their families. Richter et al., points out the reasons that force fathers to continue staying in such difficult situations when he states that;

“When the father or both parents are unemployed, this has negative economic and psychological consequences for the family as a whole. Unemployment impacts negatively on people’s quality of life” (Richter et al, 2006:185).

Richter et al., show that these absent fathers are aware of an important component that they offer in the society because of their role in providing for the family, though their emotional and social absence is of consequences to their sons. While the father’s financial commitment makes family members appreciate their absence, it disrupts the numerous roles played by the father. Fatherhood has become more associated with material provision than the performance of other important functions in community such as that of being role models.

The father's integrity and personality is violated when one dimension of his role is valued at the expense of the whole person. The violation of the father's integrity which reveals itself when families see a man in his one role relay a wrong message about the role of fathers in the upbringing of their sons. The son who masters only one role from his father's life might find it difficult in return to mentor his sons into a responsible adult with other missing roles. The cycle will continue to the next generation.

The Zimbabwean society is becoming more materialistic on its view of the father. A person's value is being measured by what he provides materially to his family. This way of thinking that removes men's dignity and integrity illuminates the anguish of Zimbabwean males, for, it reduces them to objects of production depending mainly on the ~~with~~ availability of jobs. Consequently, their role is further threatened since most women are having economical means to provide for their children. While material provisions are important to the son, fathers are important to their sons in a very special way. Despite the fact that the author discusses the adolescent trauma, he is mindful of the trauma that fathers go through in the absence of their families.

4.6 WHY FATHERS ARE IMPORTANT

Traditionally, fathers have fulfilled numerous roles, including those of breadwinner' and 'protector' of women and children, they also direct family decisions and administer discipline to their children and other family members. When the heart of a father turns to his sons, our nation will become a healthy generation because the son's heart will turn to his father and the love and influence of the father remains in his heart. This shows that the father is not just a provider of material support but he is a confidante to his son; among many other factors.

The author recalls how the love and care that his late father showed is important and has a bearing in his life today. Highlighted are that he, bound our wounds, attended to our teething problems by removing some teeth, went fishing with us, administered discipline, and worked hard for us, taught us forgiveness, tolerance, firmness and how to respect other people.

The author also recalls how men in his village treated their wives. He grew up in a society which believes that a woman who had not been beaten at least once or twice in her married life was not loved. However, the author noted that these men did not stop the beating when it was done; especially if it yielded some seemingly perceived positive response in behaviour change of the wife. This patriarchal control of the weaker partners in marriage has promoted continued violence against women. If boys are brought up by fathers who fear God, society will benefit so much in dealing with family issues because violence is something that is learned from fathers and people we emulate.

When fathers take a lead in positive mentorship, the whole society will follow because they are the heads of their families. It is the role of fathers to explain issues that affect other people to the boy child; especially in this era when the law is against anyone who takes the law in their hands. The reader has to understand that not all males support violence against women in the African culture. The author remembers how his grandfather chased after his sons and wanting to beat them for quarreling with their wives (his daughters in laws). There were times when the author's grandfather would ask his daughters in law not to go back to their husbands until their husbands came to ask for forgiveness from him.

Violence against a wife (his daughters in law) humiliated the grandfather and other male folks in the family because it is generally believed that women should be tolerated; while

Paul's letter to the Ephesians 5:25-29 emphasises that they should be loved and not violated. For example, they should not be beaten but be respected just like any other human being. Moreover, other men in the society would feel so humiliated and angry that they would fight or beat a man who beats his wife in public. This sent a message to the author that violence can be tolerated in private by some men while it was not accepted at all times by some like his grandfather.

While violence is perpetrated by those who disrespect and disregard human dignity and integrity; for example when women and children are abused, it can also be used to protect the weak from the perpetrators as a sign of punishment as indicated above. It is, therefore, the role of the fathers to teach their sons to transform antisocial aggression into socially useful aggression. For example, men should use their strength to defend the weak and work for their families; and in that way, it is possible to engage assertively with the world without being destructive.

This information is important to the author because it helps him recall what he learned at adolescence on how violence against women was dealt with by the men mentioned above in the family and society in which he grew up. Secondly, the author learnt how women were defended against their own husbands by some concerned male members of the extended family and society. Thirdly, that it is possible for men to fight for the rights of women. Fourthly, that our adolescents can be taught to be non violent and that such a society is possible. One has to understand that not all families deal with abuse and conflicts in this same way. Each family is unique in the way it deals with family matters though it is a generally known fact that most women are suffering from abuse in most African societies.

Many of the male children who were brought up by their fathers will show their father's characteristics in their lives, if they fail to be mentored by people who are touched by Christ's love to love. The pain endured by sons as a result of their fathers' action manifests itself into violent tendencies/behaviors (The children become violent or are victims of violence). It is easy to pick up from the son's behaviour the kind of a father who mentored him. Jesus underlines the results and influences that come from particular attachments in life in the following way,

“By their fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit”(Matthew 7:16-18).

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7 reflects an analysis of one of the prominent musicians and his son posted in one of the country's Newspapers in Zimbabwe written by Mtandazo Dube in the following way.

“Like father like son.....Life has this sad tendency of imitating art. Whilst the above chorus has proved a hit at many a Suluman Chimbetu show, what is transpiring in real life is that, indeed, Suluman is walking in his father's footsteps. Literally in every facet of life. Whereas many rejoiced when the young man left the Air force career to concentrate on music, especially to take up from where his father had left, many did not see him mimicking his father's entire way of life.

Shona's have a proverb which, translated in the following way, equates to: like father like son, “*mhembwe rudzi inozvara mwana ane zhumu.*”

Simon “chopper” Chimbetu was very popular with the ladies, for he was always smart – and he loved them as well. Simon was survived by nine children, most of them from different mothers. And his son, Suluman (kanenge chopper) is proving to be like his father, not only in music but in his love life as well. He is embroiled in a controversial marriage set-up, where he has impregnated his wife’s elder sister” (The Sunday Mail, August 23-29, 2009, p.L4).

The son’s behavior reveals the kind of the father the son had. It is important to note that a responsible son is, generally, the fruit of a good father; though exceptional cases can not be ignored. However, such exceptions may have entered the son’s life at childhood. Therefore, the role of the father cannot be compromised for anything material if they are to be fathers of substance. No one else is primary to the son other than the father who cares for his son’s journey into adulthood. The son can learn from the father’s mistakes and improve his perspectives in life for the better. This simply shows that the father’s behaviour can influence the child from two angles, that of being indifferent or he becomes like his father in certain aspects in life. Denton states that;

“Whatever else is done to us by whom ever else will only add to his good root, or if evil, will be overcome by the father’s more basic example” (Denton,1952:191).

When fathers decide to migrate to the Diaspora as bread winners, they should count the cost of their decisions, and ask whether the tangible benefits are worth the possible cost of the loss of intangibles or whether going to the Diaspora is the perfect will of God.

Children should experience the openness and humility of a father that emanates from his love. The father’s love cannot be taught by word of mouth, instead, it is experienced

through the concern that is revealed in the way he cares for his family. As the boy child hears and sees the father talk about things that matter, he receives the basic structure of life in a natural way which will form the fabric of the boy's life. The author recalls very well how his father showed love to his mother and other members of the family; especially females. The big man had a large forgiving and generous heart that impacts the author so much.

There are times when one thought he would revenge when some family members treated him unfairly. For example, when his own brothers gave excuses when it was time to go and work in the author's father's fields, he would not give any excuses when it was his turn to go and work as a family in their fields. What disturbed and annoyed the author at that time enriched, benefitted and empowered him to appreciate the hard syllabi his father had created for him as the first born son in a family of 2 sisters and 7 brothers.

The author is convinced that children learn more from their parent's way of life than what they say, because of the consistent examples that he received from his father. Whenever he thinks of his late father, he remembers how he responded to situations and little of what he exactly said. The author believes that his father shaped the author's personal identity as a man.

4.7 SONS AND THE MEDIA

Fathers play a great role at a time when the media divert the moral values and principles of their sons. Peer pressure drives children at dangerous speed leading to evil deeds that damage human relations. The electrical gadgets and toys are slowly replacing the father's role of guiding their sons in what it means to be a man. For example, children can eat their

food with their earphones on. They spend more time watching the television, playing games or on the internet watching pornography. At times, a child can spend the whole day in bed playing games and listening to music alone. The media has robbed our young people the richness of fellowship.

The father's love, humility and faithful responses to life situations have an impact on the future life events and circumstances of his sons. Unfortunately, parents have been made to believe that gadgets would help their children to be modern. The failure by fathers to show love for their sons compromises their role of caring. Fathers care for their children by teaching them to love, through their lives. The care of male children is in the father's hands.

Sandford articulates this view nicely when he states that,

“The children's blessing waits upon our invitation, without it, though God wants to help our children more than we do. Consequently a boy without his father's blessing wanders in a spiritually arid and fruitless land” (Sandford, 1984:247).

Sandford shows how the love of the father is important for his sons' care for themselves and others. The author found out that society is faced with various challenges which derive from the lack of knowledge of what is good for the children. When people believe that toys and other gadgets can give happiness to their children, then our society is not spared from the sin of the Israelites of worshipping idols (Deuteronomy 32:16). It is amazing to see young people leaving their cell phones on during the church service. Some of them will be playing games on their phones in church.

However, Means draws the researcher to an understanding that the existence of evil in many cultures at various levels leads to harmful practices in the following way:

“The first indication that is present is that people are hurt, which can occur on many levels: intellectual, emotional, physical, psychic, relational, or spiritual. Evil can attack one’s possessions, relationships, sacred objects and beliefs, character and self-esteem, physical well-being, and even one’s contexts of meaning, while hurt takes many forms, it leaves a wound and a scar, and people are never the same” (Means, 2000:38).

Means draws the attention of every father to the consequences of evil in the world. It is clear from the quotation that evil should not be ignored when training our sons. We should keep them (sons) alert of its existence, if they are to be safe. When fathers disregard their role of training their children in the way they should go due to their absence they will be hurting them. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians connects this idea nicely when he states that:

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The absence of fathers may cause brokenness on which evil builds its war zones that suffocates the process of the upbringing of sons. As families have fragmented due to various reasons already mentioned elsewhere in this study, fathers have remained the only hope for their boy child; despite the fact that the Diaspora has made many children grow up without parental love as it should be the case.

While these sons understand that their fathers as breadwinners who went to the Diaspora to fend for them, they may not know the impact and how catastrophic that is to their future. They may not know how to love their own children when they have their families because

they would not know how to give masculine love since they had not received and experienced it from their fathers in a natural way.

However, the presence of Christ has placed men as role models of their families, particularly; their sons. For, it is in Him that fathers find the deepest need and meaning in caring for their sons. Evil contaminates the cohesion and good will among people, for, it devalues, intimidates, degrades and destroys the sacredness of communal life. It is evil that makes fathers turn against themselves and their sons when they are in the Diaspora.

For example, the gadgets that they buy for their children as a way of compensating for their absence have destroyed their sons instead of building them into good and responsible children; they relate more to the gadgets more than human beings. The gadgets have drilled the minds of these children to such an extent that they have pressurised their fathers to buy them harmful toys. The fathers have bought toy guns for them without realising that they are fulfilling the child's wishes for violence. The television programs are full of sex and violence which at times makes it difficult to watch television as a family. The compensated lives that have created comfort zones for these boys have come with high costs which are realised later in life by both the fathers and their sons. Many of these children are irresponsible because of the freedom they have and the amount of material support, which excludes the emotional attachment, which they may be receiving from their fathers.

Consequently, some of the boys have more money than their teachers and at times they lend money to some of these teachers, and peers; they pay their peers to do home work for them and laundry. They are naughty and disregard the advice from their mothers. While in other situations, the mothers are frustrated by the absence and the lack of communication resulting from distance; which may lead to suspicion. As a result, the mothers of these

children may be unwilling to correct these boys. Absence has compromised the sanctity of marriage; especially when the children discover that their father is cohabiting.

The false freedom would be traumatic when the boys realise later in life that their fathers were building them a future on sinking sand. The reader has to note that the above characteristics may depend on the level of relationship between the mothers and other male members in the extended family; which may vary as there are other factors that come into play in such situations. However, the frequencies of the above traits, although written from a Western perspective, have revealed themselves in many situations among boys than girls (Corsini & Raymond 1994:27) in Zimbabwe.

4.8 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter showed that every father is responsible for moulding his sons, although the extended family members may complement the father's role in shaping the male child, the father plays a crucial role. The fathers, who have left these children in the hands of mothers to play the undeserved role, have made their boy children grow without a masculine identity. Several extracts and the author's experience of his father have revealed that as the father carries out his traditional roles, the male children will describe, learn and imitate what they have observed from their father. Other members of the society are important in fathering as well. However, family relationships have been noted to focus in the caring of one's own blood today and beyond the grave.

Many family members have put resources together so that one of them goes to the Diaspora with the hope that he will support the family back home. The Diaspora has brought with it

irreversible challenges in most families and has damaged the future of many sons. The forces behind leaving their mother land are numerous.

It should also be noted that the conditions in which these fathers are working has created some uncertainties, thereby, making it difficult for these fathers to be joined by their family members and children. A father should be a man of integrity and strength; who provides for his family. He provides material resources such as food, shelter and clothes. He also provides security for his family in the form of protection from damaging ideologies or influences. He provides guidance to his family by transmitting his values to his sons. He provides love to his sons. He provides an opportunity for his son to learn how to handle his own life.

This chapter revealed that healthy masculinity is formed through the son's relationship with a God fearing father. In the next chapter, the author will listen to the children themselves on how they feel about the absence of their fathers. This helps the author to understand and appreciate how male children feel about the absence of their fathers. It will also test and verify the theory that states that the absence of a father emotionally and spiritually affects the child's positive view of himself as a man (absence wounds the child) or lead to identity confusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONFRONTING ABSENCE THROUGH STORYTELLING

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter revealed the important roles played by fathers in the lives of their sons. It has been argued that fathers play a critical role in the process of ushering the adolescent male into the external world. However, changes in the urban society have imposed demanding social and economic priorities on the contemporary fathers. It is in the scope and vein of this chapter to assess the impact of the absence of fathers through dialogue with adolescents themselves. The emotional and physical boundaries created by the absence of the father, particularly leading to social inadequacies in the upbringing of boys, will be discussed. Therefore, therapy in this chapter is expected even from the process of storytelling.

5.2 ENGAGING BOYS IN STORYTELLING

In this chapter the author has engaged in dialogue with male adolescents in order for them to share their experiences, feelings and views about their absent fathers. Story telling is crucial in this study. Through storytelling, boys will realise that their fathers are not angels by any practical definition or understanding, but that they are human beings who want to fend for them. As subscribed by Jarema,

“Storytelling heals. By its very nature, storytelling confronts dysfunctional family and societal rules that violate healthy human relationships in our homes, work places, and the world community. Storytelling breaks these vicious and crippling

cycles for keeping “secrets” and lying and confronts the three laws of an addictive system: don’t talk; don’t feel’ don’t trust” (Jarema, 1994: 157).

In spite of writing from a Western world perspective, Jarema informs the reader why African parents in Zimbabwe value storytelling. The bible reveals how our Lord Jesus Christ and the Old Testament prophets engaged with their audience in order for them to understand his teachings within their contexts. For example, the prophet Nathan drew King David to repentance of the adulterous sin with Bathsheba, Uriah’s wife (2Samuel 11:1-5). Stories shed light on particular themes in our lives so that individuals or groups join the scattered fragments of a dysfunctional situation in human existence, in order that healing takes place.

Equally, the Zimbabwean government has set aside two days in August of each year, to commemorate the fallen heroes and heroines of the war of liberation. During this period, the Zimbabwean society shares its experiences about the war of liberation; how it was waged and won. The process in itself helps people who participated in the war to appreciate God’s power during the war. One would hear the former freedom fighters say; *takatungamirwa nava dzimu na Mwari*; meaning we were guided by the ancestors and God. Those who lost relatives find time to remember them as they talk about their experiences. As the people share their stories, they and the nation connect with what happened and the healing process continues. By talking of their past experiences, friends and relatives are reminded of the painful memories of their losses. In this research, the adolescents will retell their experiences, based on the absence of their fathers, as a story that reconnects them to their past. The process of remembering, gives value to what happened. It also helps them to plan for the future.

Moreover Jerema further states that;

“By revisiting experiences of the past, we begin the process of reconciliation that allows us to embrace grief at its most intimate moments. By remembering our stories, we relive blessed experiences, or, for the first time, feel the pain of the wounded memories that previously were too difficult to deal with. When we remember, we relive the past and we embrace the fruit of the past. Doing so helps us to enhance the present. Storytelling allows us to savor and to reminisce about our life. An old Jewish proverb says, “To remember is to become divine.” When we allow ourselves to remember and revisit our past, we capture those blessings again through storytelling” (Jerema, 1994:158).

Jarema illuminates why it is important for adolescents in this study to share how they felt when their fathers were living the country. The reality of the absence and projected benefits will be assessed in order to find out whether the initial feelings and expectations were maintained and realised. The author will observe and listen in order to determine the state of the trauma that children are experiencing when their fathers are absent.

5.3 CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN CONCEPTS IN SOCIALISING BOYS

Between the ages of 10-13 Children missed their fathers more than those who are between 14 -22 years. Adolescents, who are between 14-22 years, do not want to be controlled by their mothers because they feel that they are old enough to decide what they want in life. This reflects on how they may react towards other members of the extended family and society when corrected on anything. The author mentioned in chapter three that in Zimbabwe a person remains a child as long as there are elders that he/she is living with or

around him/her. Therefore, mothers still believe that their sons are still children who should be guided and who should take orders from them.

Consequently, it is generally assumed that boys, especially adolescents are able to protect their mothers and look after other family members when their fathers are absent. A Zimbabwean Newspaper had a story with a heading; A SON CAN MAKE LIFE EASIER: In this story, a woman who was finding it difficult to fend for herself said;

“I hope to have a son who will look after me when I get old, I need a son who will help me with food and fetch water for me. At my age, I find it difficult to fend for myself” (The Sunday Mail of 20 June 2010: D5).

This explains the general African view about how boys can be of use to their mothers, particularly as they take the role of the absent fathers. While boys are helpful in various ways in some families, it should be known by the reader that if they are not guided from childhood, the dreams of parents, such as the one quoted above, may be shattered. This then shows that the way children are socialised to carry out their roles can be of great benefit or concern to the family and society.

It is also clear that from birth a boy or a girl child is socialised to be aware of his/her gender identity and importance. For example, when a daughter in-law gives birth to a boy child, the mother in law would immediately address him as ‘*murume wangu*’; in Shona meaning my husband or ‘*mudzimai wangu*’; meaning my wife by a grandfather. To that effect, the daughter in law and her husband would address their son as their father in law. This is because he has been given the status of husband by his grandmother, who is the mother of his father. When he is disciplined by his mother, the mother in law (grandmother) would be

disturbed or get angry; normally to beat a child in the presence of his grandparents or old people is a sign that shows disrespect to them, for, he is addressed by their status in the family and society. The grandson represents them and they see themselves in light of their grandchildren.

When African concepts such as those described above are misunderstood by boys, they create conflicts between mothers and their sons. This makes it difficult for boys to be disciplined or trained by their mothers; when fathers are not present. It is like a woman disciplining a man; which is perceived as an embarrassment in a patriarchal society. One of the boys in this study, illustrates this view during the interview in the following way,

“.....you are also aware that someone who can discipline me is around; at least you hear a male voice which reminds you that you are not the boss of yourself...”(interviewed by the author on 8 May 2010).

This shows that when fathers are absent, mothers suffer at the hands of their sons due to some African concepts that children take without an understanding of the enriched meaning behind it. For example, when this is understood in the context of training children on male roles and not authority over parents, children will continue to honour their mothers in the absence of the fathers. Moreover in Zimbabwe, a child who beats a mother is cursed for life by the mother’s relatives and their ancestors. Therefore, in order to restore the relationship, a beast would be given or paid to the mother or her brothers. It is, therefore, important that the society should take upon itself to train and explain to the boys the meaning of African concepts in order to socialise children to be responsible members.

5.3.1 Challenging blind spots in sons

When fathers are absent, male children suffer the absence in silence as they pretend to be in control. In the author's view, silence and lack of knowledge are some of the blind spots that children have to deal with in order for them to benefit from the process of this study. It is important that the author is conscious of the possibilities of blind spots when sharing with these boys.

According to Egan, the blind spots are dysfunctional ways of thinking and acting as boys (clients) don't seem to see, understand, realise and appreciate what they are doing to themselves—(Egan, 2002:177). Boys may fail to see how some of the realities that they construct for themselves which are self limiting and cause conflict by assuming that they are old enough to practically guide their life. The process of sharing their experiences, will enable them to erase the blind spots and move their -naiveté and become more socially and emotionally competent (Egan 2002:177). In order for that to happen, the author explained the purpose and benefits of sharing their experiences to them and the future generation. He further made them to be aware of the blind spots. Moreover, Farrar illuminates the danger of silence as a blind spot in the following way;

“Many sons won't verbally express their feelings, but the signs of hurt and frustration and distance are there for all to see. If dad doesn't pick up on it, he can lose his son” (Farrar, 2006:192).

While the author subscribes to Farrar's point of view, he, however, wonders whether the fathers in African families notice the inexpressive feelings of children through their absence. If they have picked up the feelings, how have they responded in order to win their

sons? The secrets that males keep have damaged them, leading to male dilemma in showing intimacy to others. Jarema, like Farrar, acknowledges that males do not verbally relate their painful feelings because they believe that no one will understand.

“Many men admit that the original abuse may have ended, but the trauma and paralysis continue in various forms. Men who carry their secret of sexual, physical, or verbal abuse keep their story hidden because they believe that no one will understand. Perhaps in their confused thinking it wasn’t really that bad. Perhaps it didn’t really happen at all. The fear of retribution if they reveal the abuse, the confusion about what they did to deserve this abuse, and the numbness that serves to hide the depth of the pain carried deep within them all prevent the survivors from speaking about their trauma” (Jarema, 1994:163).

The above extract on how males deal with issues that affect them, reflects responses of fathers on traumatic situations. If fathers cannot express their pain in a clear and open way, how would they encourage or teach their sons when faced with similar situations which need shared experiences in order to heal? It is important to note that what an adult accomplishes or fails to achieve is determined by the ability to identify the blind spots among adolescents that may be self limiting.

The author sought to find out from the adolescents themselves whether they thought the society, as proposed by Farrar, see in them the signs of hurt, frustration and distance. The reader has to note that boys are taught to be strong and not to express feelings in the same ways as girls. Nyanjaya in his Masters Dissertation ‘Suppression of the Grief process by males leading to Death’; states that;

“Children do not participate or do not ask questions on what affects them instead they should be silent sons” (Nyanjaya, 2006: 35).

Nyanjaya shows that his father taught him to suppress emotions during the process of helping him to grow into a strong man. In this study, contrary to the above view, he involves the male children in finding a model in caring for the boys whose fathers are absent. It is important for boys to break the silence that destroyed their parents and the author himself. When boys become silent sons, they portray identifiable traits that include a difficulty to maintain interpersonal relationships and to keep a job. These boys are easily angered because silence kills their spiritual lives and creates a lot of uncertainties in their lives. In their pain, they may also have good traits such as being good under pressure, adventurous, independent, task focused, hardworking and good at solving problems (Ackerman, 1993).

Guy Corneau cited by Jerema had this to say.

“Our fathers’ silence has become our own. Although we have been inducted into the mafia of hereditary silence, our awareness of the suffering this has caused us (and our fathers) should discourage us from passing it on to our own sons. The challenge facing men today is to break this tradition of male silence. It is perhaps the most truly revolutionary act we can ever accomplish. Those who can should start dialogues with our (their) real fathers, despite the fear, frustration, disappointment or rejection this may lead. We must fight against falling into the same silence our fathers did; we must try to bridge the gap; we can begin to heal the terrible division between the abstract, disincarnated minds of men and an increasingly cruel world” (Jerema, 1994:158).

It is the aim of this study is to access the views of male adolescents on what it means to them to live in the environment in which their fathers are missing. This will help the author to do the research together with the adolescents; as opposed to taking them as objects of research; as stated in chapter two. The advantage of taking the adolescents as co-researchers helps them to contribute and be part of the research. Below data is presented analysed and interpreted.

5.4 PRESENTATION OF DATA

Table 1: Age range and feelings of Children with fathers in the Diaspora

Characteristics Age range	Frequency	Percentage %	Remarks/opinion
10-13	7	58.33	Miss fathers so much. All boys spoke with tears in their eyes.
14-17	3	25	Miss fathers. Not all shed tears. Mother too much control.
18-22	2	16.67	Miss father but the absence helps them. It allows them freedom and know who they are in life. Problems with mothers.
General remarks/Totals	12	100	Mid and late adolescents feel they are old enough to dictate the way things should go in their lives. Hence conflict with mothers.

Most of the children who spoke with tears in their eyes were between the ages of 10-13.

This reflected that 58.33% of the co-researchers were left when they were still young.

Table 2: Countries fathers migrated to:

Characteristics Countries where fathers have gone	Frequency	Opinion/remarks
South Africa	7	Parents visit. One parent has not visited.
Australia	2	Both parents have not visited since they left.
United Kingdom	3	One parent has never visited. 2 parents visit Children each year. One child visits UK each holiday
	12	

Many fathers are in South Africa. This may be because it is near home and easy to go to.

Table 3: Reactions of Children when fathers were leaving the country

Characteristics	Frequency	Opinion/remarks
Boys' Initial feelings		
Excited	6	Promised visits and material provisions
Not excited	1	Disturbed because was sent to boarding
Not sure how they felt	5	3 not informed, 2 were still very young.
Total	12	Some boys were angry due to denial of information. Not visited

Half of the co-researchers were excited when they learnt that their fathers were leaving the country; while the other half was not because of their ages or for being left alone.

Table 4: Fathers and Children Visits

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Opinion/remarks
Visits		%	
visited by father and visit father each year	6 2	50 16.67	6 visited by father 2 visited fathers
Children not visited fathers. father not visited children	4	33.33	No visits since father left the country.
	12	100	In spite of visits children miss their fathers.

A considerable number (66.67%) of children interacted with their fathers through visits; while 33.33% did not have that privilege.

Table 5: Parental Relationships

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Opinion/remarks
Father – Mother Relationship		%	
Good	6	50	Provides, visits, visited by family
Bad	6	50	Insults her, no visit irresponsible,
Not sure	Nil	-	Nil
	12	100	Bad parental relationships signals a dark future to children

Half (50%) of the co-researchers continued to benefit from the good parental relationships; while the other 50% experienced trauma due to bad parental relationships.

Table 6: Role played by friend in the absence of fathers

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Opinion/remarks
Friends		%	
Helpful	3	25	Encouragement and support.
Not helpful	6	50	do not tell friends that father is in Diaspora Discuss school issues only Some have no close friends
Not sure	3	25	No discussion
	12	100	Boys have not engaged friends because of. Shame, labelling, ignorance of the benefits of sharing. Lack of trust.

There are mixed feelings on the role of friends. Most co-researchers are not comfortable or willing to share their experiences of the absence of their fathers.

Table 7: The role played by the church to children when fathers are in Diaspora

Characteristics-	Frequency	Percentage	Opinion/remarks
Role of Church		%	
Cares for them	1	8.33	Pastor asked to visit by father
Not sure- Do not mention them as in need of anything	11	91.67	Church assumes they are materially supported and not miss their fathers.
	12	100	The assumption may be; many children are orphans in custody of widows, grand parents or child headed families.

The church has not played a clear role in the lives of the co-researchers, when fathers are in the Diaspora.

Only one child indicated how he has benefited from a pastor.

Table 8: Role Models of Children when father is absent

Characteristics- model	Role	Frequency	Percentage %	Opinion/remarks
Father		2	16.67	Visits, talks to children, loves mother and them
Mother		4	33.33	Provides, disciplines,
Grandmother or aunt		4	33.33	Provides, guides
Brother		1	8.33	Provides, guides
Not sure		1	8.33	Due to parental conflicts
Total		12	99.99(100)	66 % female models - traumatic to mother and the boy child.

Most of the co-researchers have found women to be their role models when fathers are absent; 66.33% of the boys are guided by females

Table 9: Adults who took custody of children in the absence of the father

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %	Opinion/remarks
Guardian			
Children staying with mother	7	58.33	Father in Diaspora
children staying with grandmother	2	16.67	Both parents in Diaspora
staying with aunts or any other female adult	1	8.33	Mother cross border trader
staying alone	1	8.33	Both parents away. Given the boy too much freedom too soon.

The table shows that children are generally staying with mothers, female family members and one of them alone.

5.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.5.1 A Practice within a family system

It is reported that some fathers did not inform their sons when they were leaving the country. One parent left at night and making the child believe that he was going to his rural home only to be informed two days later that he had gone to the Diaspora. Consequently, these children felt betrayed by their fathers and their absences make them doubt their love.

The reader has to note that in Zimbabwe, some families still believe that a journey should not be announced until it is taken. It is commonly believed that an enemy should not know the time that a person travels; lest they harm him or sabotage the journey or event.

There are also some issues that are kept a secret within a family system or reserved to particular family members. For example, it was and is common practice among some African people in Zimbabwe to keep it a secret to a child whose mother has died. If the child is very young, he or she would be given to one of the women in the family to carry on the role of the deceased mother. This is kept a secret to the child for as long as it is not told. The practice absorbed the orphan in the extended family, for the reason that the loss of a mother leaves many maternal women who play the mother function. In such families, no child is an orphan. The communal system has social links available within the family, which members would take advantage of if they so wish.

Chapter four defined the roles of all male members of the extended family to a boy child. These same roles apply to all elderly women when it came to carrying out the maternal function to children. The underlying factor is that a child belongs to the family not to an

individual couple. Since any elderly person can be referred to as father or mother, depending on gender identity, it would not be easy to tell who an orphan is.

Secondly, the reader has to be aware that it is common among African families in Zimbabwe to move to a new accommodation in the evening or at night, travel with a corpse in the evening or night to its rural home for burial the following day and that a newly married girl would be given to her husband at night. It is a secretive culture which is reflected in the Old Testament. For example, the Prophet Ezekiel figuratively expresses the nocturnal or Nicodimus way that reflects the Zimbabwean practice of doing things in the following way:

“The word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people.....Therefore, son of man, pack your belongings for exile and in daytime, while they watch....During the daytime, while they watch, bring out your belongings packed for exile. Then in the evening, while they are watching, go out like those who go into exile” (Ezekiel 12:1-4).

The Prophet Ezekiel, therefore, illuminates the Old Testament practices that are still held by some individuals and families in Zimbabwe. In this way, no one else, apart from harmless people, would know of what is happening.

The reader is reminded that since there was political violence in the country, those who were leaving the country would not inform many people or children. Moreover, these boys indicated that when they grow up, they would respect their wives and love their children. One of the boys repeatedly said he would not kill people. This is just to emphasise that

some fathers left the country due to their political involvement and malicious activities while others for the purposes of fending for their families.

Therefore, the Diaspora for some Zimbabweans is analogous to an exile. This is because many people have gone there unwillingly. They have been forced by the unbearable conditions created by political leaders who are rebellious to African virtues and to God; who emphasise respect and love for one another. The nuclear family can no longer accommodate the above practices because it lacks the human resources within its system in order to protect children from traumatic experiences.

5.5.2 THE BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE DIASPORA

In this study, two children did not know what it felt like when their fathers left the country. The fathers of these children have not visited since. Table 4 shows that the total number of fathers who have not visited comes to four; one is in the United Kingdom, another in South Africa and the other two in Australia. In spite of them not visiting, they provide material support to their children. Two of these children were excited when their fathers were leaving the country. The initially happy time translated into painful feelings because they are now missing their fathers.

The children indicated that the relationships between their parents have deteriorated. They doubt whether their parents will ever come back to Zimbabwe or meet them again; despite the promises that these fathers have made; refer to table 5 below.

The benefits and challenges experienced by children when fathers left the country are illustrated in table 4 above.

In this study, some male children who are in their early and late adolescence stages have indicated that, initially, it was exciting to learn that their fathers were going to work out of Zimbabwe. This was because their parents were struggling to provide food, shelter, educational and other family needs. Almost all the boys believed that when their fathers go to the Diaspora, life would be bearable.

The children believed that they would have their needs met and a privilege of visiting their fathers in the Diaspora. Some of these children realised their dreams because basic needs have been met and dreams fulfilled. Most of these fathers meet the needs for their children. Three of the children said that when they give a list of items to their fathers, their fathers would provide for them without fail.

Two children indicated that fathers are important to them only when they provide for their basic needs. They do not see it as a challenge to grow up in the absence of their fathers. For them, it is important that fathers work out of the country. This is because they get the privilege to visit the Diaspora. There are times when they each visited their fathers in the United Kingdom and South Africa. These two children believe that they learn to be men from their mothers and other adults in the society (refer to chapter 4 item 4.5).

5.5.3 The danger of compensating for absence

When fathers give their sons everything they want and whenever they want them as indicated by the boys in Table 5, there is a danger of not guiding them enough. Whatever is given to children should be done with caution, lest we spoil, harm or cause them to harm others. For example, a father who resides in South Africa exposed a gun to his 10 year boy

which this adolescent stole and later gave it to his friend who shot a friend with it. A Zimbabwean Newspaper reported as follows;

“The boy went into the house and took the pistol which had five rounds of ammunition. He then went to his friends and they began playing with it. As they were playing, the 12-year old cocked the pistol and squeezed the trigger while pointing at the 13 year old. He shot him on the stomach at close range and the bullet came out through the back” (the Herald of Thursday, 10 June 2010:2).

Furthermore, easy access to Cellphones, a popular mode of communication, seems to have brought with it some challenges to the Zimbabweans; particularly to adolescents. The Sunday Mail carried a story titled: Cellphones: Education System under siege.

“It is common these days for pupils as young as those in primary school to own such gadgets.....Cellphones usually come with responsibility, but observers note that many students have not grown to the level of being responsible.....It is now common for a person to be interrupted by the cellphone when praying, in a meeting, in a library, or even in a toilet... In a recent article published by The Daily Telegraph, two young Britons aged 12 and 13 were admitted to hospital for cellphone addiction. They could not carry normal duties without a cellphone and showed disturbed behaviours when deprived and were failing in school” (The Sunday Mail, 20-26 June 2010:4D).

These two newspaper extracts are examples of how affluent fathers in the Diaspora are surrendering their authority to children by exposing them to dangerous things. Fathers do almost everything to compensate for their absence. Unfortunately, children who do not have

those privileges feel inferior and disturbed when they see their peers managing life in a way that is different from theirs. The bible teaches us that God, our father, knows what to give his children before they even ask (Matthew 6:8). It is, therefore, important for the fathers to know the needs of their children even before children send a list to them. Adolescents are not responsible enough to be given too much freedom without guidance. Not all that children may need are necessary for them. It should be noted that when fathers provide without getting children to understand their situation out there, they allow great pressure on themselves. The author is aware that all this is done to compensate for their absence.

5.5.4 CHALLENGES OF THE DIASPORA

The reader should note that the contents or materials of a dream come from what we hear, see or continuously think of. Out of these dreams, we promise ourselves the benefits because dreams are considered as the royal road to integration (Nelson –Jones 1997 cited in Rukuni and Maunganidze 2001:47). Not all the fathers who left the country promised much to their children but children themselves expected a lot from them. The author assumes that some fathers might have promised a lot to their sons, as a way of creating a permissive environment for their departure. While on the other hand, they were anxious about how they would survive in the Diaspora without a job for some time. The promises and expectations created heavy loads on the fathers and excess demands from many other family members.

5.5.5 Shattered dreams and broken promises

The author learnt that although the departure of fathers was an anxious time for most boys; children themselves later realised that their fathers would not meet all that was required by

them. Some children and family members discovered that both physical and psychological needs are rarely adequately met by these men. At such times, the dreams and promises of these boys start to split into patterns of realities; exposing areas that need the father's social and spiritual roles at home. This can be picked up from the boy who wished that it would be good for his father to come back in spite of the material support that he received. The other boy said that no one would replace his father. These inadequacies cannot be revealed to others in the society because we live in a shame stricken society. Therefore, it is embarrassing to let society know that a father has failed to provide for his family when he is in the Diaspora. It is always difficult to share with anyone that his father has failed in life. It seems the absence affects both the fathers and the sons, despite the author's line of assessment.

5.5.6 Inadequate information and ignorance

The absence of fathers disturbed the adolescent boys in Zimbabwe because none of them had ever thought of the negative outcomes of the nonattendance of their emotional needs. In half of the situations, father- mother relationship has been eroded by distances as evidenced through various misunderstandings that are reported during the interviews (see table 5). The study revealed that three parents are always quarrelling over the phone for no apparent reason. The author engaged with one of the fathers who lived in the Diaspora. The man had decided to discontinue living in the Diaspora. One of the problems on this issue, was lack of trust that emanated from poor communication or inadequate information and ignorance of the cost of absence. It seems that when people are leaving for the Diaspora, they raise the hopes to their family members. For example, this man admitted that he was so focused on raising money to buy land to build a house, and overlooked everyday demands at home.

Most children do not understand the pressure that these fathers go through while in the Diaspora. Little information about the conditions and challenges is given by those living in the Diaspora. On the other hand, it may be difficult for those who are wishing to go, to seriously consider the information at face value, especially when other men are out there. The pressures exerted on fathers by the mothers, children and other family members cause conflicts between parents.

Children indicated that bad relationships between parents affected their studies very much. Children indicated that while the visits are important, the absence of their fathers affects them. Table 4 above, shows the benefits and challenges of the Diaspora.

5.5.7 A Longing for fathers

In this study, there are those fathers who informed the children of their plans when they were leaving the country. The second group consists of those who left when their children were still very young to remember what transpired. The third and last group consists of those who avoided telling children of their plans.

It is amazing that those children who visit and are visited by their fathers still miss them (fathers) a lot. They feel that it would be good to go and stay with their fathers in the Diaspora than to live with one parent. The most disturbing time is when the father and child separate after a holiday.

5.5.8 Never known what it feels to be with a father

All the children who never saw their fathers go to the Diaspora, long to meet with them. The author observed that all of these children found it difficult to stop weeping as they

spoke (see table 3). For them, it was difficult to imagine how a father looks like. The boys reported that they are disturbed to be asked or to talk about their fathers with anyone.

For example, Nicholas indicated that;

“I avoid anyone who wants me to say something about my father because it is not easy to grow up without him, no one can take his place. It is easy to talk about a parent who is dead, not one who is there but does not care instead cheats me. I do not even trust what my mother and grandmother tell me about this man. I do not know how it feels to be with a father. I do not know how it feels to be loved by him”

(Interview between the author and Nicholas on 13 May 2010).

Nicholas who is 13 years old repeatedly said that he does not know when his father left the country. His mother tells him that he went when he was 3 years old. His father communicates and has promised to come and go back with him to the United Kingdom.

5.5.9 Not told about my father

The boys in the third category know their fathers but felt betrayed and cheated by their parents. One of them said;

“It pains me when I think of why my father and mother did not tell me the truth that my father was leaving the country, just to tell me that he was in Australia. And when he came back in April of 2010 only for a week, he again said he was going to our rural home to see his parents. Three days later he phoned mother that he had arrived in Australia” (the author interviewed the co- researcher on 13 may 2010).

It is not easy for the boy to trust those around them. Although his mother appeared shocked, the boy still doubts her ignorance over his father's departure. The boy's major concern is on the denial of information by his parents about his own father. The boy doubts whether the parents love him since he feels that relatives and strangers know why the father went to the Diaspora.

5.5.10 Times that children miss fathers the most

All the boys indicated that they miss their fathers when they run out of money. They always felt bad during schools' consultation and prize giving days because other children met their fathers. Generally, all children reported that they missed their fathers in various ways; in spite of what they had done to them in life. It is clear that children want to see their fathers and know them, as indicated in table 3 above.

When fathers are out in the Diaspora, children find it hard to grow up in the absence of proper guidance. Ralph says;

“When Dad is there you feel safe, you are also aware that someone who can discipline me is around at least you hear a male voice which reminds you that you are not the boss of yourself...” (This was in an interview between Ralph and the author on 8 May 2010).

Some of the children said that they were not also sure whether their fathers will return to them. When fathers do not phone, the children panic. They fear for the lives of their fathers in the Diaspora. Tinashe, who is 16 years old, had this to say:

“When he does not phone me I assume that he is sick or has died so I get disturbed. There are other times that I fail even to eat, it is just boring” (Interviewed 8 May 2010).

It seems that boys miss their fathers in many ways. One would have thought that when material support was given, children would not miss their fathers. Whether the child is close or not to his father, he still wanted to see him regularly. The author learnt that children feel good when their fathers relate well with their mothers. One boy indicated in table 5 that the father is very supportive but he is not close to him and he sees nothing wrong in that. He said that he feels good when the father-mother relationship is good. When he wants anything he would easily tell his father through the mother. He, however, believes that his mother is more important in his life than his father.

To see the mother as more important or one parent to be more important than the other, particularly for a male child, shows that something is amiss in parenting. This is because each parent has a special role in the lives of their children because in emotionally close families, spouses draw their strength of caring for their children from each other.

Nevertheless, in this situation, it is clear that the mother’s tenderness and love has attracted him more in his life. The father’s material support alone, without love, is self - limiting in moulding a boy child into a male adult. Ignorance of male love in boys is traumatic, for, it increases confusion in the boy child when he is trying to shape his own son into a loving man. There is a possibility for this boy to be like his father or to be a feminised male; with its implications as cited below in item 5.

5.5.11 longing for security, love and guidance

It is clear that despite different views and experiences by the boys in the study, there are great variations on what they want their fathers to do. However, boys, generally, want to learn from their fathers what it means to be a man. They want to see their fathers at important occasions and to be loved by them. Relationships between parents are very important. It is through father – mother interactions that they learn to relate to people in society.

The children in this study pointed out that fathers should go with their children to the Diaspora. They felt that it is not helpful for families to live separately because this created social, emotional, physical and psychological challenges to them.

It is important to accept that children may not understand that fathers in the African family systems do not provide for the immediate families alone. They look after other members of the extended family. Therefore, it would not be easy for fathers to come back from the Diaspora without a job near or back home. Fathers are also missed by their own parents since they remain their children as long as they are alive. The differences, however, are in the levels of dependence compared to other members of the family. For example, children need someone who should provide them with security, food, love, and guidance while other family members may not lack love other than material support.

In this study, security, love and guidance are aspects that the churches need to consider seriously when designing a programme to follow. In order for adolescents to benefit from the intervention plan, they should be involved in designing a programme that they will be committed to. The model creates an awareness to a community of faith that has been found

wanting in the area of caring for boys whose fathers are in the Diaspora. The model emanated from inspiration and knowledge gained from the interviews with boys. It reveals to pastoral caregivers the need to be equipped in order to help children in needy situations when fathers are absent. The model further seeks to empower male adolescents to make use of the human resources within the community of faith and to look up to them as their role models and mentors. Men and male peer groups in the church can be of use in guiding them in their lives.

5.6 THE FATHER'S ROLE IN BUILDING AN INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF HIS SON

A father is exceptionally central to a boy at this stage for the purpose of building a boy's internal structure. The internal structure is the backbone that helps him to stand alone without support and walk away into the outside world without supervision. Therefore, children need the backbone that is made by materials that are provided by the father or by people approved by the father. During the period that the father is present with his son, he should vigilantly relinquish control in each crucial area of the child's life. He should give him the chance to plan and make decisions. When fathers give freedom to the children by leaving them without a backbone, they will be unfairly exposing them to the evil world without direction.

It is important for parents to help their sons grow up having been taught the importance of the attachment to parents and autonomy from them. In this way, they will go into the world with the full knowledge of the roots and strength of their backbone. This knowledge gives security and a peace of mind to a boy because he will have began his journey inward in

order to be at home with self in the external world. The child will know that he has been given strength and sent into the world by his father after proper guidance.

Jesus did leave the disciples with a backbone; which the Gospel according to John records as the word of God. It is his nature that he gave to the disciples at his departure as recorded in his prayer in John 17, when he said, “I gave them your word.” The gospel according to John states that Jesus is himself the Word of God;

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light for men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it” (John 1:1-5).

Jesus prays to the father that He gave the disciples the word which is the backbone (which is what he is) for their life in the world. The word was God. This same word that Jesus is made of, is the very word that, he, in turn gives to those he was given by his father. This illustrates that fathers give to their sons what they received from their fathers; whether negative or positive. However, the greatest thing that a father should give to his children is a father or himself. A “good enough father” is the one who gives to his children what he received from our Lord Jesus Christ. He should be present with his children in order to guide their entry into the world by giving them what is important for their survival in the global village. When children accept what God fearing fathers gave them, they, as a result, accept the one who their fathers worship as illustrated by Jesus in the gospel of John in the following way;

“For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them” (John 17:8).

We give to our sons what guides them in their lives. God does not leave his children without guidance, so are the earthly fathers to their sons. One should see that even at the time of his departure, Jesus left those he was given by his father, with Power. Equally, David gave to his son a charge,

“I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies....that you may succeed in all that you do and whenever you turn” (1Kings 2:2-3).

The implication of the charge is that a ‘good enough father’ is the one who walks in the way of the Lord and keeps Gods commandments. The author considers himself as a good enough father as he who knows what God wants for his sons. Every father, in one way or the other, will leave his son either through work, other commitments or death. Therefore, there are no other ways to build sons apart from training them in the ways they should go before they (fathers) decide to leave.

Fathers in Zimbabwe should be there for their sons and when they plan to go to the Diaspora, they should assess the environment in which their sons are to remain. Trusted people within their family should be given the tasks of moulding male children. Jesus informed the disciples that one of the close family members of the Godhead, the Holy spirit, would remain with them and those who will believe in his message (Luke 24:49; John 14:15- 20; Acts 2:1-11; John 17:20). Therefore, our sons should be taught that life is more

of an inner reality than an external appearance and more of a spiritual reality than material wealth.

5.7 SHARING FEELINGS WITH FRIENDS ABOUT ABSENCE

Sharing of feelings depend upon the nature of relationships between children and their fathers. In spite of having fathers who are absent, children in this study did not find it easy to share their experiences. This is because of the different circumstances that fathers out there find themselves in; as a result, children do not find it easy to share their feelings with whoever has a parent in the Diaspora. Table 6 reflects views on friends; while item 5.7 deals with the shame that makes these children feel unattractive to those who seem to be benefitting from the father in the Diaspora.

5.8 LIVING WITH SHAME DUE TO ABSENT FATHERS

When parents leave the country, society expects them to do what they would have failed to do in their own country. Most men who go to the Diaspora are aware of those expectations before they leave. The failure to meet the demands mounts a lot of pressure on them and their children. The pressure that goes to the fathers in the Diaspora makes them see themselves as failures, worthless and unlovable fathers.

It is generally believed that, he who has money is loved and respected; this can be evidenced by differences in the way many people attach value and respect to those who are well-to-do in Zimbabwe. There is a Shona saying that illustrates this view in the following way; *anemari ndiye mukuru*, meaning ‘he who has money is powerful’. For example, a child who has resources to look after his parents is popular in his family. Wimberly states

that we are living in a shame prone society. He, therefore, defines the feeling of being unlovable as shame. He describes shame in the following way.

“I defined shame as feeling unlovable, that ones life has a basic flaw in it...The cure for shame, I insisted, is finding relationships with significant others in which we experience some semblance of nurture and care without having to turn ourselves inside out, in ways that increase our shame, in order to meet other people’s expectations”(Wimberly, 1999:11),

Fathers in the Diaspora see the inability to provide as a major thing that lessens their value. According to Wimberly, the power of shame comes from our self-beliefs and self-convictions. He states:

“What we believe about ourselves shapes our behaviour towards ourselves, others, and God. Normally, what we believe about ourselves forms either positive or negative images, which we then act out in our lives. These images either nourish our growth and development or they contribute to our demise when they negatively affect our feelings about ourselves” (Wimberly, 1999:16).

According to Wimberly, it is the external pressures that cause shame to the family as fathers aim at meeting other people’s expectations. This is what Fowler (1981) views as the synthetic- conventional faith which most adults may be locked into and never move on to other stages in faith development (see chapter 2:9 on stage 3). These pressures extend to affect the father- child and father- mother relationship. For example, society talks about the family members with fathers in the Diaspora; especially when they do not appear to be living a luxurious life. Society expects that the living standards of these families should

reflect that fathers in Diaspora are now able to support their families better than when they were in Zimbabwe. It is, however, unknown by most people in Zimbabwe that not all of the fathers in the Diaspora are employed or have jobs that give them enough money to fully support their families.

It may also be difficult for children to easily understand that their fathers are struggling in the Diaspora, when their peers seem to be well supported by the Diaspora fathers. It would, therefore, make them doubt their fathers' love. When children are faced by such a situation, it would be difficult for them to share with others that their fathers are working in the Diaspora. The children find it difficult to share with others the pain of failing to live like others who can afford items such as Cellphones or a better life, when their fathers are also in the Diaspora (see table 6).

Two boys reported that they do not want their friends to know that their fathers are in the Diaspora because not much is realised from their fathers. Another boy, who is twenty –one years old, informed the author that all his friends are those with fathers who are either in the country or with fathers who are deceased. He said that he feels comfortable to be in the company of those who do not show off and that his father told him that he should live a simple life. He has no cellphone or other things that most of those with Diaspora fathers have. He has found friends whom to identify with; in order to deal with his shame.

5.8.1 Feelings of guilt in BOYS

The author observed through dialogue with the boys that the absence of their fathers has created feelings of guilt in their lives. It is because of these feelings that the author decided to briefly look at the categories subscribed to by Collins.

According to Collins (2001:131-140), guilt can be put into two categories: objective and subjective guilt. Objective guilt refers to legal status of a person who has broken a law, committed a crime, or violated some standard. In contrast, subjective guilt refers to the emotions or inner feelings, most often feelings of remorse, regret, or self-condemnation, that come because of one's action or thinking. It should also be noted by the reader that guilt feelings can be in theological, legal, social and psychological dimensions. Theological guilt involves failure to obey God. The failure comes as a violation of God's divine standards, disregard of His authority, challenge His goodness, reject His holy will, and dared to defy His truth. It is also a failure to trust God and His authority, but self.

Legal guilt is the breaking or violation of the law of the land whether one is caught or not, for example passing through a red robot.

Social Guilt: It often comes because we have broken unwritten but culturally expected rules. It occurs when we mistreat and fail to show love to another human being. Sometimes this mistreatment is also a violation of the law. For example, child abuse, theft, murder just to mention a few (Luke 10:25-37; Romans 1:29-30 James 2:1, 16-17; 1Peter 4:9). This shows that we are at times guilty of both social and theological guilt.

Psychological guilt often occurs when a person violates his own standards. A person may not have disobeyed God or violated any known law, but his own conscience which is an inner standard that monitors and enables us to evaluate every thought and action. The conscience is an inner voice that accuses or excuses us because of what we have done or failed to do, and sometimes it brings feelings of guilt and an awareness that we need to repent.

The guilt comes from what we learn from our early childhood. We learn what is right and wrong from our parents and we internalise those standards and cultural expectations of our societies, neighborhoods, and families in which we are raised. As these experiences become part of us, we form our world views and accept certain standards and mores as being the right way to do things. Each person is assumed to draw from the culture to create and sometimes to remould his or her own conscience. According to the bible, these standards of right and wrong are “written on the human heart” (Romans 2:15).

Children have felt guilt in one way or the other; due to the absence of their fathers. For example, they showed a feeling of guilt when they found it difficult sharing with friends or did not want society to know that their fathers are in the Diaspora. There is a sense of self condemnation by boys when they have gone against the internalised societal standards and expectations. They feel the parental conflicts are caused by their being in need of support; otherwise, parents are supposed to be together.

5.8.2 The Theological and psychological guilt feelings

Some children do not want friends to know that their fathers were in the Diaspora. The assumption is that friends would consider them as having money, when in actual fact, their

fathers were unable to meet particular needs. By not informing peers, children feel that the shame is reduced on their side, in spite of them feeling guilty. Some would feel that sharing may make them unpopular. Therefore, the guilt feelings can lead to unhealthy conditions in their lives.

The Psychological guilt feeling comes when children are aware that their fathers are out of the country in order to provide for them. Guilt feelings are unhealthy in people's life (Aden L & Brenner D 1989:105). The feelings can be both psychological and theological in that children feel they have caused their fathers to violate God's standard of being role models. In the interviews carried out, most of the children reported that their fathers went out of the country to work for them. One of the boys, Kudakwashe, who is 13 years old, felt that his father's absence was not necessary since it disturbed family relationships. Kudakwashe indicated, as he spoke through ~~between~~ tears, that he regretted that the Diaspora was disturbing his parent's relationships. He had this to say:

“I think dad has to come back home, we miss him and it is difficult out there and yet they are always quarrelling with mum, but he don't want to....it is better to be a day scholar otherwise they will divorce because of us” (Interview between Kudakwashe and the Author on 8 May, 2010).

Boys are not very open about issues that reveal some signs of parental weakness for they make them feel unpopular in their lives; as a result, they avoid discussing them. They, as a result, do not find friends helpful in their situations. Secondly, the silence by the church leaders and society may have made it difficult for the boys to connect with those who are facing similar challenges.

Literature on divorce has also indicated that children of parents who are divorcing, are, at certain times, affected and blame themselves for failing to help avoid the situation (Collins, 1988:462-463). They, sometimes, feel guilty for failing to reconcile their parents. Equally, Kudakwashe feels terrible for failing to mend his parents' bad relationship. Shame and guilt affect the child's positive world view; leading to unhealthy conditions and practices such as individualism and violence (see item 5.7).

Children who were open to friends about their relationships showed that friends would encourage and even lend them money. In spite of the boys being represented by a small percentage (25%), the discussion showed that they understand the importance of sharing experiences. When children are connected to each other, sharing their problems would help them deal with some of the social and psychological guilt that encroach their minds.

5.8.3 ANGER - A Seed for bitterness

The children who were not informed by their parents that their fathers were leaving the country, are disturbed. The other category is of those fathers who bade farewell but have not returned home. There is yet another category of fathers who left the country when their children were still very young to remember what they fathers looked liked and have not yet visited them. Consequently, all these children feel betrayed by the fathers and their absences make them doubt their love. Children, in all the above categories, are angry and bitter towards their fathers and other family members (refer to table 3 above). The last category is for those who have been provided for but have experienced bad father-mother relationships (see table 5 above).

The absences, as can be evidenced by the reports from the children indicate that fathers have robbed their children of an environment in which they are supposed to realise their freedom and potential. Children are supposed to be aware of what freedom means and how to recognise their potential through a relation with fathers. When the relationship is not there, children are angry with their fathers and God, since, as mentioned in chapter four, that they (fathers) represent God on earth. In such situations, they may ask why their fathers are unloving to them. The author interpreted the tears to mean a need to be loved. In our deep pain we need the hand of the one who cares to be extended to us; which in this case is lacking.

The relationship that existed between our Lord Jesus Christ and God, the father made Him to call when he is in anguish, to take away the cup of suffering. It is the father, as the head of the family, who is looked upon by the sons for help and it is him who can rectify his sons' situation. Children are angry because the father, who should provide security, masculinity and basic material needs, is missing. When children fail to respect their parents they contaminate their relationship with the creator and the men; in general.

5.8.4 Effects of anger and bitterness

The boys in this study are terribly angry with their fathers as already indicated in this chapter. According to Heinemann English Dictionary, **Anger** is defined as “a strong feeling of displeasure and often hostility.” The author sees anger as an emotional response to disappointment. Anger comes and is expressed in different ways because each person is different and what disappoints each person varies. The children are angered by how their

fathers have treated them at the time of leaving the country and during their absence. Anger can be controlled or hidden and surface sometime later if not dealt with. Not all anger is a sin but anger, if not dealt with, can lead to sin. Nyanjaya in his master's dissertation sees anger as another way a bereaved person can deal with loss. He states that;

“It is not a sin to be angry, if anger is handled properly it helps us in dealing with loss, but if it is mishandled, it leads us into sin or trouble. The bible cites moments when Jesus was angry with money changers, once or twice when he cursed a fig tree” (Nyanjaya, 2006: 20).

The writer of the Epistle to Ephesians warns fathers not to provoke children into anger, but instead, to bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The writer of Hebrews 12:15 caution us all on the effects of anger. When anger is inhibited, it can draw us away from the grace of God.

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son” (Hebrews 12:15).

This shows that when anger controls boys resulting from absent fathers, it would lead to bitterness which is sin. To have a bitter root judgement means to draw negative conclusion about the character or behaviour of another person, which are hard to bear, especially to someone close to us. In this particular study, boys are bitter with their fathers whom the bible commands us to honour for they are our role models.

The root of our bitterness would be traced back to the father-son relationship or unresolved anger of the past disturbance that was not dealt with. This is why in his letter to the Ephesians Apostle Paul states that;

“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Ephesians 4:25-26).

Paul, like the writer to the book of Hebrews, shows that it is human to get angry, but he warns that anger can destroy our relationship with God and other people. When allowed to dwell in us for a longer period, anger can lead to unhealthy conditions. The boys in the categories mentioned above, could not avoid getting angry with their fathers. It is important that they talk about the anger and find a way to go on with life. This is why a model in Chapter six is going to guide the boys in dealing with the situations that they may be unable to change. If boys fail to face their situation of anger and thereafter, deal with it, they will be like their fathers. Paul illustrates this when he states that the things we do not want to do are the very things that obscure our life.

“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me...” (Romans 7:14-15).

When we take what the Apostle Paul is saying to be of relevance to the boys’ situations on absent fathers, it shows that our boys are in a big trouble if their anger leads them into

bitterness. The warning is very clear that the bitterness that has its roots in our relationship with our parents would keep our sons in bondage for many years; feeding on them. Bitterness if not faced and dealt with, is an enemy in the lives of our sons for it drifts them from the grace of God and causes those they relate to, to stumble.

The nation is not safe when our sons are angered and bitter. Boys are in danger of repeating what their fathers and mothers did to them (refer to chapter three items 3.13 on David, Hitler and Mugabe). This will lead them to display violence to innocent people. It is until and unless they deal with their situation in a way that opens them to the power of God that they could be of benefit to themselves. Otherwise, every father will reap what he has sown in his son. A model alone without the Holy Spirit to guide them, is not enough and this is the reason a pastoral model would be of help in Chapter 6.

5.9 CONTRADICTORY MESSAGES IN THE CARING COMMUNITY

The church is the place where these wounded boys were found crying silently for help. The Methodist church in Zimbabwe has guided people on many situations through counselling and be given tangible and practical support. For example, it has cared for people through funerals and supported people in dire need of physical and spiritual help. Through its structures, it pulls together people of different ages together and has created church discussion groups or class meetings.

In this study, children indicated that the church has cared for orphans and has created a day when they pray for them and give gifts. They, however, quickly indicated that they would not need a special day for gifts but for prayers. The church has been found wanting in caring for children whose fathers are in the Diaspora. Children felt that this may be because

there are many children who are in need of material support in the community. Furthermore, it would be an embarrassment to the fathers who are in the Diaspora to learn that their sons are supported as destitute.

Furthermore, the church members see them as not in need of support (refer to table 7). The children themselves feel that many people do not see them as missing their fathers. The need for father's love may not be viewed as important when people think in terms of an African concept of the extended family. In Africa, it is still believed that it takes the whole village to bring up a child. With this concept at the back of their minds; many Africans may not consider children with fathers who are working in the Diaspora as lacking anything, especially when they are with the mother. The church had previously sent out contradictory messages through its members, by not praying for the children.

The author does not disregard the relevance and the spirit of this African concept, but wonders whether it is useful in many extended families due to urban circumstances of this study. In the urban area where this study was carried out, people live away from their relatives. Therefore, the concept may only remain in the minds of the urban nuclear families. It is, therefore, the role of the pastor, as a shepherd, to redirect the minds of the caring community to look beyond a rich concept to the changing circumstances. In these changing circumstances, the church should borrow some relevant parts of this concept. For example, the church can, through its structures, continue with the communal ways of bringing up the children whose fathers are absent. Chapter six will deal with the role of the caring community in detail.

5.10 **BOYS: Absorbed into feminine energy and power**

Almost all the boys indicated in some way that they are staying and influenced by mothers in many ways. Some boys do not associate with their fathers much though they valued material support and father–mother relationship. Figures 7 and 8 summarize their views.

Boys shared that it is difficult to be alone, with mothers, grandmothers or aunts. They feel that there are issues which need to be shared with fathers only. They all indicated that they consult their mothers on many other issues as well, just as they consult their peers on certain personal issues. In an interview with the author, Elvis had this to say,

“No one takes his role in my life he is a special friend so his absence makes me crazy, moody, lose concentration....” (Interviewed on 13 June, 2010).

When asked by the co-researcher (steward) what class position he attained last term he said, 35 out of the 50 students in his class. Elvis’ class position reveals how the absence of a father has an impact on academic performance; in particular on children. However, the reader should note that the same traumatic situation would lead other children to become bookworms, workaholics or addicted to some activity. Elvis visits his father in the United Kingdom every holiday but that seems not to be enough. He, like many of his friends, does not feel that it is okay to be disciplined by his mother. On this, he said that;

“Mothers at times beat you or insult you just because of the frustrations from their husbands...” (Interviewed Elvis on 13 June, 2010).

This shows that the absence of fathers affect the mother as much as it impacts on the development of the adolescents.

While Tinotenda feels that;

“it is not good to be always told that you are a problem just because your father is not here, this makes you feel guilty, I sometimes cry....” (Interviewed Tinotenda on 13 June, 2010).

Generally, raising a child has never been easy for many people in Africa today where historically, a child is raised by the whole community. It is therefore, stressful for the mother to be a model to her sons. Elvis has shown the pressure that is exerted on him by an already overburdened and stressed mother. Elvis and Tinotenda may, as a result of this pressure, fail to appreciate the role played by their wives or women in general when they are married, because of the experiences with their mothers. It is likely that these mothers may be dealing with their spouses through the sons; in that way, they will be destroying the sons' view of women.

Almost all the boys reported that they are in the custody of females except for one, who is staying alone. The author observed that out of the twelve children, he dialogued with seven boys who are in the custody of their mothers, three who are staying with their grandmothers, another who lives with an aunt while the 16 year boy is living alone. The boy who is staying alone has been exposed to the world in a very unfair way because the parents have given the boy early responsibility and freedom; which he is likely to misuse.

The author in chapter three indicated how a boy finds it difficult learning to be a man when he is always in the hands of women. He will be absorbed in the feminized energy. The loss of sense of a male identity or model in the likeness of a father exposes the boy to inner conflict which he has to resolve. Stephen Clark's description of a feminized male helps the

author by highlighting some of the effects of being in the woman world between childhood and adulthood.

Clark states that;

“A feminized male is a male who has learned to have or react in ways that are more appropriate to women. The feminized male can be normal as a male, with no tendencies to reject being male and no tendencies toward homosexuality, and yet he can have been so influenced by women or can have so identified himself with a world in which women dominate, that many of his interest and traits are more womanly than manly. Compared to men who have not been feminized, he will place much higher emphasis and attention on how he feels and how other people feel. He will be much gentler and handle situations in a “soft” way. He will be much more subject to the approval of the group, especially emotionally expressed approval (that is, how others feel about him and what he is doing, how others react to him). He will sometimes tend to relate by preference to women and other feminized or effeminate men, and he will sometimes have a difficult time with an all-male group. He will tend to fear women’s emotion, and in his family and at work can be easily controlled by the possibility of women (his mother, his wife, or co-worker) having an emotional reaction. He will tend to idealize women and, if he is religious, he will tend to see in women the ideal Christians or the definition of what it means to be spiritual. He will identify Christian virtue with feminine characteristic.....A feminized man may have a character in which the traits of gentleness and quietness are stronger than the traits of aggressiveness and courage” (Clark, 1980:636,638).

Clark has raised an important point when he describes how one can be a feminized male. One should note that in the past, when fathers worked away from home for many months or years, they left their sons with their wives and other males within the extended family. It was common practice for a child to grow with his father's brother or grandfathers. These males carried all the roles, which were supposed to be done by the one who was not there. Therefore, boys would not be feminized due to the absence of a father because there were human resources ready to mould boys into men.

The major difference with the contemporary environment is that children are left with mothers or women. This is because many of the children live far away from their male relatives. The absence of males, who take family cohesion as a major factor that qualifies them to mentor boys in the society, is missing. It should, however, be acknowledged that mothers have played a very important role in the life of children in Zimbabwe. In the study, many children indicated that they learnt traditional virtues from their mothers and grandmothers.

In Zimbabwe, men die earlier than women. For example, there are many women who are widowed compared to men who are widowers. As a result, some children are left with mothers and grandmothers. There are many other reasons as to why men die much earlier. Some of the reasons may be that; men are generally careless with their lives: for example, they are involved in drugs, murder just to mention but two dangerous activities. It is also common among Africans for a man to marry a young woman, because it is believed that women get older earlier than men. This means that men would die first and leave their young wives behind. Deaths of men may also be stress driven as indicated by the author in his master's dissertation

“A Pastoral Approach to Suppression of the Grief Process among Males leading to Death.”

In his research, the author indicated that men died due to suppression of the grief process when they are bereaved (Nyanjaya 2006). Male stress emanates from how men are socialised to express grief. The reader has, therefore, been made to understand where the grandfathers are in this study, when grandmothers seem to be looking after children with absent fathers.

5.11 LOSS OF ACCESS TO MALENESS

By using mothers and grandmothers as role models or guiding images in their lives; boys lose access to maleness. Instead, they become absorbed with the feminine power as they begin to move into adulthood. They approach adulthood with confusion which may make them find it difficult to live in the world that men operate. It would be difficult for them to feel comfortable when in the company of men. Boys should reach a point in life when they disengage themselves from their mothers in order to engage with the fathers. This will assist them to form their own identity when they finally disengage from their fathers. However, in this study, the author has observed that boys fear to distance themselves from the mother image without a clear male image. For example, the relationships with their uncles or grandfathers were not mentioned at all. The boys only talked about their mothers, aunts and grandmothers. This identification with mothers is an indication that reveals that boys remain imprisoned in the women world for a long time. Consequently, absence leads them to lose access to male images.

When boys revisit their childhood, they should remember clearly the images of their fathers - which they created in the process of growing up. The author in this study has

realised that the absence of fathers have created painful environments for the children; and these included situations such as growing up alone and growing up without a male model.

In the study, some boys indicated that fathers are not important in their lives. They like their fathers when they provide for them. These are boys who have regularly visited their fathers. This view differs with those who have not seen or met their fathers for a long time. It seems that these boys do not realise the importance of the father because they are provided for and have regular contacts.

The consequence of being in the woman world alone without understanding the man's world affects the boy child in finding relationship with other men. He would be less trusting to men. Therefore, if a boy is to be a man, he must be able to see and walk with a man, for no boy becomes a man by seeing himself in the image of a woman. This human image is developed in the journey that starts with a mother, and then continued by the father in the same environment in which both parents are present. Parental images do continue to exist in children as they grow up. These are the same images that they will portray to their offspring.

5.12 GROUD DISCUSSIONS

The author had a group session with all the boys. This session was not emotional when compared to the one to one dialogues on the same issues. This may be because the children did not want to express their painful situations in public. Secondly, it may be because the children had already related what they felt about the absence of their fathers. Whatever the case may be, children in the group shared the same feelings as was already done in the previous sessions. In the group, they encouraged each other to focus on their studies and

aim to do better academically. They discouraged each other from lamenting over situations that they have no control of or may not change.

Group work revealed that the sharing of painful situations has some benefits to children who have identical situations such as living in the absence of a father. It should however, be noted that some details that were shared in a closed session with the researcher would not be repeated in the group. This may be because trust had not yet been built at such an early stage. Psychological guilt feelings are difficult to express in public and be understood by others in the context of the individual concerned.

The Group discussion was very important because children asked questions which the author and the co- researchers themselves responded to together. The process helped children to identify with each other as they discussed issues that underline the absence of fathers as the common denominator.

5.13 OBSERVATIONS ON THE ABSENCES OF FATHERS

The author in this study has observed that parents are trying hard to care for their children. This is evidenced by the personal sacrifices that they make in an effort to provide and protect their children. For example, parents decide to separate for their sake, the mother taking the responsibility of being present while the father went away. Fathers are in the Diaspora in order to provide the material needs for them. One should be aware that no one would like to separate with his spouse for its own sake but for the sake of the family.

The children in this study pointed out that when parents decide to migrate to the Diaspora, they should go with them. This was subscribed to by almost all the children. They felt that it is not helpful for families to live separately because it created social, emotional, physical

and psychological challenges to family members. Most of the boys acknowledged the benefits and challenges faced through the absence of fathers in their lives. Children indicated that they feel insecure to grow up in the environment in which their fathers are missing, as stated by Keith;

“Seeing others with their fathers, you feel bad and ask why then does my father not do something here in Zimbabwe” (Interviewed Keith on 13 May 2010).

Children believe that their fathers should be around while, at the same time, fending for them. It is better for them to suffer when fathers are around.

The presence of fathers makes them feel safe. Moreover, it is important to see what their fathers do and learn from them. Three boys noted that the presence of the father created a learning environment for them. Representing this view is Tinotenda who puts it in the following way.

“I learn how dad does things without him telling me to, but by observing him without him knowing” (Tinotenda interviewed on 13 May 2010).

This shows that the absence betrays them of a very crucial way of learning. While most boys felt good to be with their mothers because of their love and softness, it was hard to face challenges in this cruel world without a male figure for a male child. Allen said in an interview:

“You ask yourself what father could have done in a situation where mum is stressed or yelling” (Interviewed, on 8 May 2010).

The question shows a vacuum that needs to be filled by the father. He wants someone to represent a male attitude and reaction to situations. It was amazing to learn that all the boys wanted to meet with the author as individuals; when time allowed. The boys further planned to have another group discussion which had nothing to do with the research.

The author has observed that fathers have purposefully gone to the Diaspora without realising the impact of their absence to their children. For example, they have supported their families without attending to the need for love of the children. Therefore, children may not know what to love may require or mean in their lives.

5.14 LIVING IN RISKY ENVIRONMENT

Boys are in deep trouble in spite of them appearing to be in control of the environment when their fathers are missing. They face serious problems which have been understood from their own point of views in this chapter. In spite of coming from the high density areas, the risk factors that surround these children do not exclude those in the low density areas. If the church ignores those in the low density areas, it will be neglecting and stigmatising the children living in other areas. It is not the boys who are risky to the society but the environments in which they reside, the groups they spend their energy with, and the absence of fathers which are a risk to the boys.

The major issue in this study is the impact that an absent father has on his sons; regardless of their locality. In this study, boys are the victims and survivors of the exodus of men and fathers to the Diaspora. The absence leaves the children in unstable and less supportive family environments which have been created by the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe.

Children do not all of a sudden become risky. It is when children are exposed to the risky environment that they take up risk behaviours. The risk factors in adolescents can be overcome by nurturing or offering a responsive environment. Factors in the nurturing environment include parents, other adults, and neighbourhood or community resources (Rutter & Rutter, 1993, Sameroff & Fiese, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992; Burt, 1998:24).

The reader has to bear in mind that the absence of a father can be only one of the factors to maladaptive outcomes in the life of child. There are many other factors that may affect the normal pace of child development; thus, leading to risk behaviours; two of which would be exposure to violence and being abused.

A caring community may modify the individual's response to a negative situation that under most circumstances would lead to predicted and unpredicted unhealthy outcomes.

5.15 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter revealed the emotional, psychological and spiritual struggles that boys experience during the absence of their fathers. Many of the boys were excited when they were told that fathers were going out of the country. While another group of children did not see or hear about their father's departure because they were very young at that time. The effects of the Diaspora are numerous for they impact children in ways that are unknown to us if we are not informed by them. The traumas that children experience are as a result of the absence as well as the pressures that come from the double roles mothers play in guiding them; her own and that of an absent husband. For, it is not only the son who misses the man in the Diaspora, but both the child and mother need the love from the head of the family.

When fathers are absent, children continue to miss them in spite of the material support that they receive from them. It seems that the tangibles alone do not meet the deep needs of one's being. This is because every person at whatever level has a need to be loved and for social interaction by those he trusts. Children are angered when the existential vacuum that is created by the absence of the father is not dealt with. When an adolescent male does not get assistance at this stage, he may be emotionally wounded and likely resort to unruly behaviour towards property, himself and other human beings. A sense of shame, guilt and bitterness, that has its roots in anger, creates unhealthy conditions in a son. This is because he will be looking for a male model while living in a women's world.

The next chapter comes up with a practical theology model of caring for the male adolescents. It is important to note that human beings tend to give to others what they have received from their parents, society and the almighty God. In John, Jesus illustrates this view when He prayed that:

“For I gave them the words you gave me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you.....” (John, 17:8).

The above prayer shows that, children offer to society what they learnt in their journey with fathers during childhood. The model in chapter six guides the church and community on the importance of creating a community of faith. This community should prepare and empower our sons to live in a risky environment without them being at risk and being risky to the society and themselves. Jesus, in John is aware of the environment in which Christians live and He prays for us in the following way;

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world (their environment) but that you protect them from the evil one (bad influence)” (John 17:15).

The prayer gives the church a task to confront society over the absence of fathers and design a pastoral model that cares for the children. Jesus wants his followers (the children) to be the light that shines in the world without taking them out of their environment. When adolescents are nurtured by the church, they will benefit the community in which our sons exist.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has guided the author to appreciate and understand how fathers in the Diaspora have supported their children materially. However, the cost of the absence on their sons could not be balanced with the material benefits that the children have enjoyed. The benefits have been outweighed by the trauma that children experience during the absence of their fathers. The emotions and tears have revealed that material support cannot compensate for the love and the presence children expect from their fathers. The deep hurt instilled in their hearts by the periods of absence angered them and led to traumatic experiences. The protracted period of living with one primary caregiver has imprisoned them into the feminized environment; thereby robbing them of a male identity. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to creating a practical theological model of caring for boys.

6.2 A PASTORAL CARE MODEL OF CARING FOR ADOLESCENTS

The shepherding model coined by Gerkin (1997:23-24), helps the researcher to create a model that shows the roles of God's people to the community. For example, Gerkin shows us how the priests, wise men and women offered counsel regarding issues of good life and personal conduct. He also states that prophets confronted people who deviated from the will of Yahweh. On the other hand, Fowler gives the structure through which faith develops and how an individual can easily be seen as having a mature faith in God. This has been revealed through this study that the role played by the church will help the adolescents to develop their faith when they are nurtured through love.

Equally, the Zimbabwean society has human resources that have carried out roles in the past; as already alluded to in chapter three (item 3.9). It is from such resources that the author seeks to design a model that draws its strength from biblical, African culture and contemporary practices. Gerkin (1997:118) subscribes to such a view in his pastoral care approach by dealing with an individual and the community, when he states that;

“Pastoral care involves not only the care of the individuals and families, but also the care of the community itself. Pastoral care also entails the thoughtful reinterpretation of the tradition that shapes Christian identity as that tradition is brought into dialogical relationship with contemporary culture and its impact on the community of Christians as well as its individual members” (Gerkin, 1997:118).

Gerkin shows us that pastoral caregivers should be aware of the communities that surround and have influenced individuals in their world views. The awareness helps him or her to interpret the social conditions in order to determine what affects people in the community of faith and society. Moreover, relationships in African cultures are very important for they include all the people that one interacts with and those in need. The African practices of caring should connect the reader to the parable of the ‘Good Samaritan’ (Luke 10:25-35). For example, when someone’s house catches fire it takes the whole village and visitors included, to put out a fire. Furthermore, it is within the African way of living to attend a funeral without being invited by the relatives of the bereaved. The above examples simply show the reader how the church can take advantage of the African practical ways of caring.

Therefore, the church should be viewed as part of the extended family not as unrelated to the extended family system. The early church in the book of Acts (2:42-47), portrays this picture when it gives us an account of the home fellowship of believers which led the

community to praise God. The church should work together with families in reconnecting these children to the traditional aspects of caring. It is with this understanding that the author engaged in dialogue with boys in order to deal with these human realities and deficiencies.

6.3 THE MINISTER AS A SHEPHERD

In the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, ministers as shepherds of the flock of God's people and have great influence on the members of the congregation. The minister's influence extends to the society in which he and his members reside. For example, he/she attends to situations that affect people in the society through his role of shepherding those under his care. Also, as representative of the Christian faith, the community solicits his presence when they are faced with situations that may require a representative of Christ. This makes it possible for him or her to guide the church that he/she leads to care for the adolescents by creating a permitting environment for the expression and receiving of care.

Seward Hiltner, when cited by Gerkin (1997:18), defines shepherding as "care and solicitous concern" This shows that the minister must be attentive and interested in the welfare of the adolescents in order for him or her to solicit support and care from the community of faith to guide them.

For example, in chapter 5, a child indicated that his father had asked a minister of religion to guide him. In spite of being aware of other human resources in society, the father in chapter five chose to invite the minister to guide his child. This shows that the father of this child is aware that the church has great influence in helping people to live purposely. The child informed the author that he found it important to be guided by the minister. He

indicated that the regular visits that he had so far made benefited him. He said that the minister prayed with him and sometimes shared many other issues in life. Gerkin helps the reader when he articulates the importance of care in the following way;

“...While singing can express care and acknowledgement or mutual need for care. Praying together can search for and celebrate the receiving of the care that only God can provide” (Gerkin, 1997:82).

This shows that prayer gives us confidence in approaching God. It is through prayer that we are at home with ourselves because of the care that God gives to those who meet with him in prayer.

A survey carried out on the role of the clergy on caring for the children whose fathers are absent, showed that little or no spiritual support is given to the boys in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Children expect the clergy to understand that the boys are missing their fathers and that spiritual support is just as important. Children in this study indicated that when there were problems between parents, the ministers normally attended to their mothers only. This shows that when the relationship between parents is bad, children are as well affected and need the minister’s support. The gospel according to John illuminates the role that the clergy should carry to the flock which includes the lambs when it states the charge that was given to the apostle Peter:

“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, Feed my lambs”.....Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus

asked him the third time, “Do you love me? He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said feed my sheep....” (John 21:15-17).

Here, Jesus is, first and foremost, concerned about the lambs and later the sheep. They were to be fed by the apostle. The above quotation also shows that the apostle is a man who should facilitate the care of the lamb and sheep through his influence to the community, and should be the one who feeds the flock, cares and is concerned about their safety and health. It simply gives an understanding of how Jesus feels about the flock; which includes children. It is from this understanding that the church should care for the young people in the church at individual and group levels in order to identify their joys and frustrations.

6.4 Listening beyond TEARS and hearing WORDS

The author in the journey with the children looks at ways that would lead to a model that protects adolescent males in their journey to adulthood. The children themselves are some of the valuable human resources that will remain under utilised if the church ignores their ability of coming up with a model. They are important in designing an intervention plan for their own situations. Gerkin illuminates this thought when he states the importance of the co-researchers.

“To care deeply for persons is to inquire with them, search with them, question with them about what the events of their lives mean at the deepest level. It also means to inquire with them into the ways in which their questions (and experiences) have been presented in the past and how those questions have been answered, most particularly with the people of the Bible” (Gerkin, 1997:125).

This shows that the results of this research emanated from the inquiries made in the journey with the children. It also indicates that when journeying with the children, the pastoral caregiver should listen to issues that affect them. Listening gives value and meaning to the situation in which the children find themselves. Listening should go beyond hearing what people say about their situations, but should take note of their emotions, tears and silence as they communicate their inner life.

According to Gerkin (1997), “it means listening for hidden conflicts, unspoken desires, unspeakable fears, and faint hopes...”Gerkin (1997:91) which the pastor should handle pastorally”.

The author had never thought that children who are living with their mothers would ever long for their fathers in such a shocking way. Listening to their experiences challenged the author’s previously held belief. The author had always thought that what were important in the lives of the children were material provision and mother’s love.

6.5 INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

African adolescent children are affected by the absence of their fathers just as much as their Western counterparts. However, in emotionally close families, the male adults are important in moulding of boys, though they cannot replace the father’s role. When love comes from a biological father, it is more valuable to the child because it makes him feel proud in the presence of his peers to show them his father. However, when it comes to moulding and mentoring children in the African environment, there is need to have men who can carry out that role very well when the father chooses them for their children. The father remains important in all that should be done to his son.

Therefore, the absence of fathers seriously impacts the children when father-mother relationships are bad. One child felt that having a dead father is better than having an absent one. This was because the boy felt that his father had not influenced him in any way. The boy felt that he has learnt nothing from his father apart from receiving messages that he will one day go back with him to the Diaspora to visit.

Despite the material support, the boy felt cheated and betrayed. Children expect fathers to protect them, and being hurt or emotionally harmed by them is a betrayal of trust. The harm would be carried through life and lead to traumatic experiences.

The author also learnt that some children, who are well supported materially, did not see the importance of a present father. They felt comfortable growing up under the guidance of their mothers. This was because of the feminine warmth and tenderness while missing the male strength and warmth which they did not seem to admire much. This shows that some children have unfinished issues with fathers that need to be dealt with, in spite of the material support received. Otherwise, these children will have difficulty in discovering a man in themselves.

However, some children want to grow up in the presence of their fathers so that they can learn from them and create a male identity from their interactions.

Generally, the boys feel that they cannot change their painful situation by lamenting over the absence of their fathers but to focus on their studies and do well. The author, however, thought that this idea without guidance may lead to emotional insensitivity and males who are introverts or task focused adults. The behaviour may also lead the child to be unfriendly

to women in order to have freedom from both same and opposite sex relationships. Therefore, a model should include the following dimensions.

6.5.1 The Father should know the friends of his son

Since this model does not just emphasise therapy but a way of caring for the adolescents whose fathers have left the country and those who are wishing to leave in the near future. It is, therefore, important that every father should be aware and prepared for a day when he will be away from his son. The fathers should guide their sons always. It is one of the full time jobs of the father to mentor and mould his son. This is done when he is still present with him so that when he is away, a caring relationship will already be in place.

Here are some guides for fathers before and after they leave them (sons) in the care of others:

- ❖ Teach them to walk with wise men.
- ❖ Discuss with them the biblical perspective of characteristics of a wise man. Examples can be drawn from Psalms (1:1) “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.

6.5.2 Examples of quality friends for adolescents

Adolescent males should have quality male friends who will help and encourage them in their journey to manhood. Quality friends are friends of Jesus Christ; as referred to in the Gospel of John 15:14 “You are my friends if you do what I command.” Moreover the bible gives many examples of good friends as indicated below;

- ❖ A good friend is not driven by instant gratification. But a bad friend says, Eat, drink, and merry, for tomorrow we will die (Proverbs 23:6, 20-35).
- ❖ A good friend is loyal, but a bad friend is fickle (Proverbs 24:21 and 25:19)
- ❖ A good friend speaks truthfully, but a bad friend “devises violence,” and his “lips talk of trouble (Proverbs 24:1).
- ❖ A good friend loves the law of God, but a bad friend is a lawbreaker (Psalms 1:1-2)
- ❖ Do not be misled: “Bad Company corrupts good character.” Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God- I say to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:13-34)
- ❖ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! (Ecclesiastes 4:9 -12)

Our sons are living in a world with many connections and also spend more time with friends at school and out of school. Therefore, it is the job of the father to know the friends of his sons and where and how they spend their time. To put it in another way; it is the role of the father to know the primary influence of his son. This is why the author believes that a father should consider his son’s environment from morning to evening. Material support alone without a plan for building an internal structure of our sons destroys them; as already alluded above. Fathers should equip their sons to be in the world of many voices. They are in the world but not of the world. They have to be equipped to interact, with no-believers, exposed to media, politics, peer pressures but still maintain their boundaries and fear for God. As a result, the father’s role will help them to follow the familiar voice of Jesus, their

friend and chief shepherd, through the help of male members of the community such as male teachers and members of the extended families; just to mention a few.

6.6 PASTORAL CARE FOR ADOLESCENT MALES IN THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The church is an important institution of care for God's people. It is through the church that believers show God's love and care for each other. Later, this love is expressed through the societies in which children live.

Gerkin (1997:95), informs Christian communities of the importance of engaging with people within their situations in order to effectively give care to them. It is through their community that children can be helped well because when therapy and care overlooks people's environment, it becomes irrelevant, particularly in Zimbabwe. The cultural practice of communal life among the people of Zimbabwe may be challenged by the modern person, but it remains in the hearts of its people. Therefore, care of the adolescents should take cognisance of the family network. In Zimbabwe, no one would like to die in church, hospital and particularly in the absence of relatives, but in a home surrounded by his/her own people and a community of faith. In the event that death approaches while in the hospital, he/she waits for or calls his own relatives or children before one dies. Gerkin submits to this thought when he states the role of a minister in the following way:

“...It is therefore not enough for pastors to become relatively competent psychologists and therapeutic counsellors if they are to adequately perform their pastoral role. They need also to become competent in helping people make connections between their lives of faith within the community and tradition that

identifies us as the people of God, and the day- to –day individual, social, and cultural realities of our lives” (Gerkin, 1997:95).

Therefore, the church’s role is to enter in dialogue with families where children come from. When the church engages and complements parental roles in nurturing boys, the world becomes a safe place for our sons. Children, when properly guided by the church and society, can be the light that shines in the lives of their families and society. When the church carries the role of caring for the children by cementing relationships, Practical theology retains the role of creating harmony in its interactions with the environment that people live.

6.6.1 Pastoral care as the care of individuals

While the boys are individuals with particular challenges in this study, they also form a community of children faced by a situation whose major variable is the absent father. The absence bred insecurity, lack of primary male role models, and lack of masculine love, care and guidance.

In the research journey, the children informed the author that they would want to meet him as individuals and then as a group to discuss issues that affect them. James Fowler (1981) is important to the author when he states that although adolescents have external influences, they are individuals who are unique in perspectives. The church should, therefore, encourage the clergies, youth workers and preachers to see these children as people who are in need of spiritual support at individual and group levels. It is, therefore, important that the adolescents whose fathers are absent to be considered as individuals. The pastor and his

leaders should inform church members of the need to care for individual adolescent males with the available human resources.

6.6.2 Pastoral Care for adolescent male groups in the Congregation

Group discussions are important in helping children to deal with various issues of life. Participants receive stimulation from others, with issues of other group members triggering their own. The frequency of the gatherings creates trust and confidence. When confidence is created; disclosure is encouraged and confidentiality is maintained. Group participation leads to better quality decisions, creates a healthy and conducive environment for the group members.

When leadership functions are vested in the group, it is stronger than when it relies on any single member of the group. This implies that through group participation, better quality decisions are made. When children do things together they feel secure. This is because the coming together of people symbolises unity, strength, love, and care and group identity.

This is a stage that James Fowler calls synthetic- conventional faith; because during this stage there is a reliance on external authority and its construction of meaning in interpersonal images. It is conventional in that it is seen as being everybody's faith system or of the entire community; synthetic in that it is non analytical: it comes as a sort of unified global wholeness. It is a conformist stage, which depends upon the expectations and judgments of others and does not form a separate identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain independent perspective, beliefs and values are tacitly held. Santrock summarises this thought when he states that;

“According to Fowler , although this stage is abstract than the previous one, young adolescents still mainly conform to the religious beliefs of others and have not yet adequately analyzed alternative religious ideologies. Someone’s behavior that involves a question of right and wrong is seen in terms of the harm it does to a relationship or what others might say” (Santrock, 2005:295 -296).

Youth workers should be present to guide the group leaders and to lead certain topics. This is because young people may have not yet reached a stage where they take responsibility for their religious beliefs and lives. When they are properly guided, they realise that they can choose the course of their lives without much influence from the outside. They analyse their course of action. For example, with proper guidance, they will appreciate the efforts of their fathers and the situation they find themselves in.

Guidelines on the issues of confidentiality and building of trust in members should be laid down. Lessons such as these can be discussed;

- ❖ The role of father,
- ❖ how to support the father when he is out of the country,
- ❖ how to relate to mothers when the father is absent,
- ❖ how to support each other in growing into adulthood,
- ❖ the role of male family members in the lives of boys when the father is absent,
- ❖ The importance of the church (helping the church to help us).

The reader should note that in the Methodist church, like in many other churches; youth groups that allow boys and girls to meet separately do exist. The youth group for boys in

the Methodist is called Boys Christian Union (BCU). Boys are grouped according to ages. For example, Junior BCU is composed of boys, who are between 6-12 years of age while senior BCU are those from 13 – 22 years.

The youth leaders together with the children they lead should pick topics that cover diverse issues that affect all boys today, without separating them from the existing groups. In that way, stigmatisation will be avoided. The youth leaders and advisors should be aware of the developmental challenges of children at this stage, because differences in opinion or non-conformity may make some feel unwanted or misfits of the group.

At this stage, children are likely to internalise the external expectations and standards; thereby, imprisoning self. In others, non-conformity to the external expectations and measurement may lead to anxiety, despair or hidden anger leading to compensatory intimacy to the commandment of love for God and hate of significant others. For example, children may literally interpret the bible passages such as those cited below;

...for whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother (Matthew 12:48).

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother... - yes, even his own life-he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

These biblical passages may make the adolescents believe that their love for God is more important than respect for parents who are non Christians. This is where the role of mature Christian youth advisors is important in guiding and caring for the group that is maturing at different levels.

6.6.3 Adolescent males' engagement with Christian man.

In the past, boys sat where men gathered in the evening to listen to stories and other conversations; as already cited elsewhere in this study. These were deliberate gatherings at which men fellowshiped and shared their wisdom and experiences with each other. Boys benefited through these gatherings and informal lectures. Since this way of disseminating important information to the children already exists within the Zimbabwean community structure of guiding children, churches can take advantage of the design. Children would benefit from Christian men to learn what men of integrity passed through to adulthood.

The Christian men should meet with boys at church to share with them how they grew up and how boys would grow up in the absence of their fathers. Men in the church should approach issues that affected them and what can affect the children today with honesty. They should reveal how other men in the family, church and community have helped them to grow in their Christian faith. There is need for the church to encourage all male boys in each congregation to have elders who would mentor them.

The bible guides us on this way of caring when the apostle Paul refers to Timothy in 2Timothy 2:1-2, as his son in Christ when he declared that;

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

It also records how Eli mentored Samuel (1Samuel 1:21-25). From these biblical examples, boys whose fathers are absent can benefit when men within the Christian community complement the role of the extended family by guiding them. The author is also reminded

of how Jesus at adolescence entered the temple courts. The bible tells us that his parents found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions (Luke 2:41-46). The above thoughts show how God fearing men can be of benefit to the adolescent males in each local church.

6.6.4 Pastoral care in training caregivers of adolescents

Training is an important component of pastoral ministry. Ministers have instructed believers formally and informally on Christian living and what it means to care – for the tradition of faith, for the community of believers, for individuals and families, and for the socio-cultural milieu of believing community (Gerkin 1997:94). Therefore, the training of men’s groups on caring for the adolescent males on various topics fits very easily in the minister’s programme.

The minister should take the task of training his or her male groups, youth leaders and advisors the skills on helping the adolescent males, whose fathers are absent, to discover the purpose and a male identity that is worth living for. Boys make wise choices when love and care are expressed in practical ways by the males they interact with at deep spiritual levels. For example, when Christian men reveal weaknesses and strengths in their interactions with them, children will appreciate their efforts in mentoring. Every opportunity these men spend with boys will definitely yield results.

The purpose of these groups is to reduce trauma in adolescent males as they grow into adult males when their fathers are absent. It is this relationship that helps them equip the boys to form a communal and an individual male identity of their own.

The training should take cognisance of how the Zimbabwean black African societies structured the training of a boy child. The training ought to include lessons on men of integrity, how to mentor a boy, the role of the community and parents to the boy child.

The parents of these boys should be made aware of the church's programme in guiding boys. The training aims at equipping men to be Christian mentors. The Christian mentors should note that children are also being guided by other male adults in the community and family; particularly in emotionally close families.

While training has been emphasised to men's groups and youth leaders, there is a need to create awareness to the whole congregation on the need to care for adolescents. When the whole congregation has an appreciation of the programme, its influence may bring other boys to church.

6.6.5 Working with the Whole family in sincerity

The African family system in Zimbabwe has existing structures that can be taken advantage of for the purpose of caring for the children whose fathers are absent. What is important for the fathers to consider before leaving the country are the males who would mould their sons. The departure of fathers is meaningful when they leave their sons with men of integrity to guide them.

In the past, it was not difficult to find male adults who would take up the role of mentoring children. One did not need to scratch his head about the one to leave the children with, instead, absent fathers were anxious about how they would achieve their dreams. Fathers should discuss their expectations and commitment to parenting with members of the extended family. Otherwise, there would be no need to leave children in risky situations. If

not, as suggested by the children in this study, it would be better for them to suffer together with their fathers here in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, it would not be practical for African men to leave and to follow the suggestions from the children because of their role as providers.

Fathers should inform other family members on how they feel about the future of their children. This will help them appreciate the importance of guiding these boys in the ways the father may so wish. The father should inform his sons; the purpose of going to work out of the country; the importance of a disciplined life and the roles that other male members in the family will play in their lives. When fathers discuss openly with their children, the foreseeable benefits, challenges and what should be done in response, they will have prepared them for their absence. Jesus in John's Gospel notifies the disciples of the conditions on which he was going to send them the power of the Holy Spirit when he said;

“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever- the spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans I will come to you” (John 14:15).

These conditions are important for the family members and children. This is why the bible cites the guidance that Jesus, in the gospels, gives to the disciples. While most boys felt good to be with their mothers because of their love and softness; it is hard to face challenges in this cruel world without a male figure for a male child. Boys should be helped to understand that they would not prosper if they do not listen to the advice of their adults in the family and Christian community.

6.7 THE BENEFIT OF THE RESEARCH TO ADOLESCENTS

The researcher met with the adolescents three months after the research interviews. This was upon the request by the boys that they wanted to discuss with him on a different level, other than that of the research. Secondly, because in the first session, children could not suggest a way that would enable them to create a male identity because of the emotions involved. It seems children were very emotional about the discussions because it was the first time that they had been afforded such an opportunity to talk about their experiences about the absent fathers.

In order for the adolescent males to live positively they:

- ❖ Accepted that their fathers are human beings who can also make mistakes and should be forgiven.
- ❖ Acknowledged that they cannot change their situation, therefore, they should appreciate that they have fathers who are supporting them from the Diaspora.
- ❖ Recognised that they should please their fathers by working hard at school work.
- ❖ Admitted that they should have good friends to guide them in life.
- ❖ Realised that they should have a positive attitude about their lives.
- ❖ Accepted that fathers will not find it easy to come back home, because the Zimbabwean situation does not promise early economic recovery that may create jobs for them.

The session helped them to be part of a community that is facing similar situations and gave them an opportunity to share views about the absence of their fathers. Lastly, the children felt that they can benefit from their guardians, family members and their teachers to be good children in the society when fathers are absent.

6.8 GUIDANCE AS A PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ADOLESCENTS

Despite the mistakes and other short comings encountered by children when fathers are in the Diaspora, the Researcher guided the children in the following way;

- ❖ Boys should strive to forgive their fathers in order to destroy the seed of bitterness that may lead to numerous pathologies in their lives also because Christ set forgiveness as a condition of being forgiven.
- ❖ They should not condemn or judge their fathers over the past short comings which may only be understood in their real context when discussed with elders in the family. For example, some practices that people follow are cultural expectations which fathers were fulfilling. These expectations may only be understood and dealt with by an individual and the society through dialogue and biblical examples of love.
- ❖ Discuss with some elders in the church and society to understand the African man's view of being a father. Adolescents were also asked to hear from the family members how their fathers grew up and their relationship with their fathers and the role they played in guiding their sons.

- ❖ In the event that their fathers do not communicate, a boy should discuss his pain with his father's brothers and sisters (your aunts) or a pastor. In Zimbabwe, one's father's brothers are his fathers because the brothers share the same parents and nurturing environments. The reader has to note that aunts are a source of strength to the nephews.

6.9 A RESEARCH WORTH TAKING

Taking a research on absent fathers due to migrant work; its traumatic impact to adolescent males in Zimbabwe benefited the researcher in the following ways;

- ❖ To understand that father's absence affects children emotionally.
- ❖ To recognize the impact of absence on his (author) children and discover a model to care for them as well.
- ❖ Boys need someone to share with their joys and sorrows on the absences of their fathers.
- ❖ The study taught the researcher that while people's situations vary, they all need someone to talk to in order for them to create and find solutions to their predicaments.
- ❖ Some relationships can be managed when people find guidance although not healed. For example, some children accepted that they still love their fathers despite the betrayal they experienced. This shows that, with time even those who have not yet come to terms with their situations may positively manage their situations.

It is important to continue meeting with young people and listen to what they are going through. Listening to people in difficulties as a group or individuals, is another way of caring. Lastly, the aims and objectives of the research were realised. The impact of absence on both the father and adolescent male was identified, community made aware, model was created, the boys were empowered and recommendations are, therefore, given below.

6.10 CONCLUSION

Migration of fathers to the Diaspora could not be resisted by men because of the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe. Fathers have left the country for greener pastures. The exodus of fathers to the Diaspora has created a vacuum in mentoring and moulding male children into adult males. The study that was carried out with adolescent boys indicated that fathers in the Diaspora are engaged in some form of employment. As a result, fathers are able to provide for their families back home. This group felt that the absence of fathers benefited them.

However, the absence of these fathers has made some children feel emotionally abandoned and betrayed, while others were disappointed by fathers who did not bid them farewell and are irresponsible. The feelings of these children make them fear involvement, limit father – son relationships, generate anger, bitterness and lack of any future dependence on their fathers. When children are angered and bitterness resides in them, they would go against their father’s potential assistance.

On the other hand, in the process of the study about the absent father, a Christian model of caring for the individual and community emerged. The church has been noted to be the only institution that would guide the society to value the job of caring for the people of God who

are in needy situations. When the church cares for the adolescents they will be caring for the body of Christ.

The author drew from Gerkin (1997) and Fowler (1981) the views of the church as a community of faith to signify a fellowship of love or community of love. For, it is only by Christ's love that we are forgiven by God through grace. It is through love that people are nurtured; miracles of spiritual and numerical growth are seen.

Acts 2; bears witness of the power in love fellowships. In sharing the gospel of Christ in love fellowships, each member becomes a part of Christ's body that spreads the gospel. The love fellowships make the church to be more than preaching or meeting points. It becomes a family where all members have the opportunity to share their experiences at fellowship and individual levels. People will not depend on one person for spiritual growth but on each other for spiritual nourishment.

Therefore, caring for boys whose fathers are absent requires both individual mentors and local communities that mentor them. The people will know through these fellowships, that the church represents Christ (John 13:35). Paul in his letter to the Corinthians equates a fellowship of love with a human body. He states that, there is no division in the body, but concern and sensitivity to the needs of one another. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it (1Corinth 12:25). The Methodist church has been found wanting by the boys in this study. Boys have indicated that the church was not aware of their pain. This shows that the church was unable to see the depressed and hear the silent voices in order to interpret the situation. This reveals that the church has some parts that need spiritual attention in order for the body of Christ to function optimally.

The above model in chapter 6 will help children who have bad feelings about themselves due to absence of their fathers. Children will open their hearts in love fellowships in order to be healed, nurtured, sustained and guided through love. Faith will be expressed in a more mature and responsible way when all is done in love.

Faith, in this study, is the act of love that guides individuals and communities to an expression of freedom and responsibility in trusting God's presence in human situations. It aims to increase love for one another and to God. For, it is only through Christ's love that healthy memories are created.

6.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

The church should take a lead in guiding the adolescents before fathers leave the country and when they are out of the country. The existence of male groups in the church should take up the task of complementing the role of the extended family in preparing them for adulthood. The church, therefore, should carry these responsibilities as part of the extended family that is unique but connected to families without competing with it.

Chaplains in the schools, youth leaders and advisors in the Methodist churches should pioneer the programmes that help adolescents prepare for adult life through; group discussions, dramas, and organise outings, share testimonies from those adults that have passed adolescent stages in the absence of fathers and debates focused on father and fatherhood.

Fathers, before they leave the country, should discuss with their children, in all honesty, the purpose of the departure. They should not raise their hopes by promising too much. This will help children to continue trusting them.

Adolescents should engage with adults in order to be equipped for life in the global village. Furthermore, adolescent males should invite other boys in order to form groups in which they can discuss issues that affect them from a Christian perspective. This is because adolescents are the experts in designing a model that affects them when fathers are absent.

African adolescent males need a path on which to travel by being guided by their biological fathers. Therefore, fathers should find a way of meeting them and honestly communicating with them when they are in the Diaspora. If, for any reason, they cannot come back to Zimbabwe, they should meet with their children in neighbouring countries for a holiday. In both ways, there is an aspect of expense which is either material or emotional. It is, however, important for the father to connect with his sons so that boys appreciate the efforts and love of their fathers when they (fathers) are unable to go with them to the Diaspora or come to Zimbabwe.

6.12 FUTURE RESEARCH

As a result of the lessons learned, the following fields of research have emerged:

- ❖ Absent mothers due to migrant work: its impact on boys in early childhood.
- ❖ Cross boarder trading by mothers; its impact on adolescent girls.
- ❖ Absent husbands due to migrant work. The Challenges faced by mothers in caring for adolescent boys and girls in Zimbabwe.

- ❖ Absent mothers and fathers due to migrant work: its impacts on adolescent children in Zimbabwe.

6.13

APPENDIX A

Absent fathers due to migrant work: Its traumatic impact toward adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

1. What was your first reaction when you learnt that your father was leaving the country? For how long has he been out? How often does he visit home? How does he communicate with you? Who are you staying with at the moment? What made your father leave the country?
2. What advantages are there for children when fathers work in the Diaspora?
3. What do you miss when your father is working out of the country (Diaspora)?
4. What activities do you share with your father when he is around?
5. During which times do you miss your father the most?
6. What role have friends played in the environment in which your father is missing?
7. How did the church and community help you to adapt to the environment which your father is missing?
8. Who is preparing you for adulthood in the absence of the father and how? *Or as a young man who is your role model in the absence of your father?* Or Who is your mentor?
9. What challenges do you face when the father is absent/ or How does the father's absence affect you?
10. In summary how do you describe what it is like to grow in the absence of a biological father? Would you mind saying more about your feelings toward your father when he is in Diaspora

APPENDIX B

Kushaikwa kwa anababa nokunda kwe kwemabasa ekunze kwenyika Idambudziko pakuyaruka kwevanakomana mu Zimbabwe.

1. Wakanzwa sei pawakaziva kuti Baba vako vari kuzoenda kunoshandira kunze kwe nyika? Vakaenda rini? Vanoshanya zvakandini kubva pavakaenda?Urikugara nani?
2. Zvinyi Zvakaita kuti baba vabude kunoshandira kunze kwe nyika?
3. Ndezvipi zvinhu zvaunodzidza kana una baba vako?Ndezvipi zvinhu zvingarasikirwe nevanakomana kana Baba vasipo?
4. Ndezvipi zvinhu zvaunoita kana zvaungade kuita pamwe naBaba kana varipo?
5. Ndedzipi nguva dzaunofunga Baba vako zvakanyanya dzingade huvepo hwa Baba?
6. Shamwari dzirikukubatsira sei pakuyaruka?
7. Chechi, mhuri nevavakidzani varikubatsira sei pakuyaruka kwako baba vasipo?
8. Ndiani arikukubatsira pakuyaruka,kana kukudzisa kuzova baba vakanaka muupenyu?
9. Ndezvipi zvinhu zvingasanganikwe nazvo nevanakomana kana Baba Vachishandira kunze kwe Nyika/Kusavapo kwa Baba kune zvakunoita here pakuyaruka kwako somukomana?
10. Ne upfupi ungatsanangure here zvazvinoreva kukura baba vasipo?

APPENDIX C

Absent fathers due to migrant work: Its traumatic impact toward adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Ananias has explained the purpose of an interview between me and him on the above research topic. I understand that his findings are to be used for his research project in a Doctorate Degree in Practical Theology. I also understand that I am free to ask for clarity at any stage of the interview.

I know and understand that:

All personal information shared by me will remain confidential throughout the research project.

Taking part in this research is voluntary and that no payment or compensation for participation will be expected.

I allow him to use my contributions in his research project.

I am also aware that his promoters/ supervisors will read the material

I am free to terminate the interview without any feeling of regret.

I am willing to share my experiences and views in this research project.

I prefer that my name /or Pseudonym be used in the report or any other publications resulting from the information I share in the research.

Name to be used

Signature of the participant

Signature of the researcherDATE.....

6.14 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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