

CHAPTER 4

GENDER AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the UNAIDS Executive summary of 2004 report on the global Aids pandemic, Aids has a face of a woman, with about 57% in Africa. HIV and AIDS was the theme of World Aids Day 2004. The gendered deadliness has occasioned the former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to mark 2004 as the International Year for Elimination of Violence against Women by calling for a bold transformation in men's attitude and behavior so that women become their equal partners.

Seeing women are the most infected persons, in this chapter I thought it was important for us to talk about gender and cultural practices. Let us visit some areas in which women are being discriminated against and how they are being treated as they pass through these transitional stages during rites of passage.

4.2 DEFINITION

Gender is refers to social and cultural interpretation that turns sexual differences into more than merely biological distinctions. Sex is said to refer primarily to the anatomical distinction between women and men made at birth, it is a term of biology and of physiology that is arguably neutral. Sex is male/female and gender is masculine/feminine. Masculine is associated with roughness, strength, football, colour blue, looking after cattle, reflecting cultural changes. Femininity is associated with delicate, passive, pretty, colour pink, caring emotional, and being nice (Berger, 1991: 18).

These are traditional gender stereotypes. Masculinity is matched with rationality, activity, public, and business while femininity is matched with emotionality, passivity, private, family/domesticity (Mcrobbie 1994:157). In the past, men were involved in hunting activities that took them outside the domestic center of the tribe, whereas women were involved in gathering food stuffs, preparing meals, child rearing, and craft related activities. Women's status was not equal to that of men.

Dube elaborates that gender is believed to be culturally constructed, which has to do with social relationships of men and women and can be reconstructed and reformed by society, for since it is culturally constructed it can be socially deconstructed (2003:86).

Gender is the effect of social definitions and internalizations of the meaning of being a man or a woman. Gender can therefore be radically changed through human action in which gender is redefined. According to most feminists, they see biology as significant. The social nature of how men and women are developed has motivated the preference for the label 'gender' instead of 'sex'. Chitando explains that gender often refers to biological sex while gender is refers to the culturally constituted forms of masculinity and femininity that produce the specific ways in which men and women are somewhat unclear characteristic. (2008:215).

Koninklyke Brill explains that sex refers to biological and physiological characteristics of the body. It contains two typical categories, femaleness and maleness dichotomy, where one is either male or female. The sex of an individual affects her/his way of life. The biological and physical characteristic entails probabilities of certain behavior . Gender represents a social constructive approach towards women and men. Gender also refers to behavior of social and

symbolic standards, femininity and masculinity. They represent two different modes of how women and men are expected to behave (Brill 2005:3).

Gender in a comparative perspective is best introduced with technical distinction between sex and gender. A person's sex is determined biologically by chromosomes. One's genital predominant hormones and secondary sexual characteristics (breasts, hair, body size and musculature) are fixed by chromosomes. Gender is culturally constructed, which is to say that being biologically male or female has different implications in various cultures. Sexual division of labour refers to the patterned ways in which productive and other economic activities are allocated to men and women where there is a sexual division of labour in various cultures. (Chapple, 2000:160).

One does not choose sex, it is based on God who created people, while gender can be determined by the beholder by following one's culture or not. Therefore we see rites of passage complement gender and sex roles. Medieval Theologians believed that men were superior to woman in terms of physical strength, moral character and intellectual ability Patriarchal ideology is of men's authority over women in marriage (Chapman 2004:37). Because of this mentality of the patriarchal world, women are not seen as equals, that is why they are mistreated and stepped on.

4.3 WOMEN IN SOLIDARITY

Post-modern African women theologians have also declared that African theology needs to be critical with its sources so that it should not be seen as promoting the oppression of women. Feminist theologians have encouraged women to break the silence on gender against women. African feminists have experienced or have observed how women have been treated as second class citizens of this universe. They promote the enculturation of Christianity by

interpreting the gospel message in a new way, which is both liberating and empowering, especially to their female colleagues and followers (Braidotti 1992:67).

Not only have women leaders managed to break through cultural barriers engaged in patriarchal culture, but they are also agents of change, for they have contributed to the evolution of a new concept of church which recognizes the varied talents and insights of both men and women. The road to their progress has not been smooth, but women have been able to surmount various odds in their attempt to shape new communities and new personal and collective values.

Women leaders are seen as liberators from ever-present fears of witchcraft, from the duties and tensions of the home, from the domination of men over women, from the burdens of traditional customs and innumerable taboos. Njeronge said that by telling our stories and experiences we began to break the code of silence, shame, guilt, deadly secrets, stigma and discrimination by naming the things that used to keep the conspiracy of silence thriving.

This is to say that feminism may find itself, not as the vibrant voice of postmodernism, but as the repressed, managed rupture of postmodernism, merely a part of speech within it. This strange tendency of authoritative marginality to flip over into its own dark side, the exploited and managed other, may in a sense be programmed by the conceptual map of centre and margin, which often lacks the particularity or flexibility to encompass all the worrying irregularities of actual political alignments and cultural practices (Connor 1989:262).

Here is the cry from feminist theologians as they address some cultural practices which women have passed through to achieve their status in the society. Breaking down barriers is the success and achievement of black women's writing

over the last few years, not just for the community of women it brings into being as leaders (Hall 1992:68). To expose some of the injustices which the male dominant world does, read some written stories of some African women theologians.

4.3.1 ISABEL APAWO PHIRI

Talked on Domestic Violence in Christian Homes (Phiri: 2000:77-95). Rape (forced sexual intercourse) is considered a traumatic experience. Women all over the world live in constant fear of being raped by strangers and people they know. There are different reasons given as to why men rape women and children. Men use rape as a weapon to show that they have power and they can dominate the weaker vessels. In war countries, women and children are raped as a sign of conquest by one group of soldiers against another. Women and children are in need of trauma healing. Therefore there is need to allow the process of telling stories to initiate healing from the trauma caused by gender violence.

One of the victims of rape narrated:

I was intelligent in my class, nobody could beat me in any of the subjects, and the boys of my class were very ashamed of failing to surpass me. I was always the highest. Three of the boys got hold of me when going home and one big boy raped me. I knew they wanted to show me that they were stronger than me. What a shame. This time of HIV/AIDS transmission I could have been infected with HIV. I was shocked. I wanted to stop school but I was encouraged to finish school as a challenge to those boys.

The transition from one state to another goes with the recognition of others. Boys want to prove their strength by molesting the girls or the women. Certain people want to make the rite of passage a big issue (Paterson 2009:82). Here is one of the Biblical narratives of rape by Isabel Apawo Phiri.

The biblical narrative of the rape of Tamar, daughter of King David, by her half-brother Amnon in 2nd Samuel 3:1-22, is gaining attention because of high rates of rape and child sexual molestation in Zambia and in Africa. The words of Tamar, “No my brother, do not force me, for such a thing is not done in Israel: do not do anything so vile! (Verse 12) have given women, especially those living with HIV and AIDS and survivors of rape, the courage to speak out the truth with power and to begin a new life. The Tamar narrative gives survivors of rape incest and those infected /affected by HIV and AIDS the courage to break the conspiracy of silence and secrecy surrounding their lives.

We are expected to act to end violence restoring dignity, health and to nurture peace in our lives. We have our God given right to be and to hold ourselves accountable and our leadership to end this madness. Very few women of faith have broken the silence over rape to seek healing and take control of their lives. There are many others who have not yet found the words to describe what happened to them, and they still live with fear and trauma. Sometimes people choose silence out of embarrassment or humiliation from the experience, knowing that society will silence them. Here is Thulani’s perspective of Tamar’s biblical narrative (Ndlazi 2003:21-27).

4.3.2 THULANI NDLAZI

According to Thulan’s perspectives, it seems when Tamar reported to her brother Absalom, he told her, “Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this to heart.” (2nd Samuel 13:20b), which was more like ignoring her fate although he nurtured his anger and planned his revenge for two years. Tamar’s pain was minimized in order to protect the reputation of the family. She was told not even to be angry. The end of Tamar’s story happened without her; Absalom killed Amnon. The process for achieving justice and restitution was taken out of her hands entirely and carried forward by her brother; it was men’s business. In

the end it was Tamer's perpetrator that her father David, mourned for, but not for Tamar.

We are aware of such abuses and when the victims reach out and seek help it is us who urge them to be quiet. The church has been failing to break this silence. We advise, urge and even chastise them sometimes against talking about their abusive experiences. Like Absalom, we are concerned about family reputation and unit. Sometimes we are worried about the reputation of our institutions and organizations such as churches and companies, to name a few. We choose to silence the victims instead of making sure that justice is served. We need to break the silence. Many women and children get abused and the perpetrators get away with crime easily simply because there is a deafening silence.

4.3.3 SOROJINI NADAR

"Text of terror" (Nadar 2000:59-75) is disguised as the "Word of God" the case of Ester 2:1-18 of the conspiracy of rape in the Bible. According to feminist analysis of Esther 2:1-18, virgins are gathered in the king's harem, from which he is going to choose a new wife. What we are not told is what happened to the bodies of all the virgins who went into the King's palace at night and returned in the morning, but did not return to the palace again until the king decided upon the women whom he was delighted with, and wanted to see again.

If we read the text carefully we will see that the king is spending a night with each of the virgins. Yet what happens to the virgins when they go in to the king's room at night nobody knows. I suggest that their bodies were violated and raped, being treated as a mere object of desire. In most cases you find most disabled women are raped, ending up with unwanted pregnancies if not HIV positive.

Most parents do not investigate the men who abuse their children; sometimes they do not believe their own children. As a result they suffer inside themselves without getting their stories heard. HIV and AIDS is killing them with very little support and care. Women with disabilities are denied many human rights including marriage, motherhood and personal fulfillment. It is even shocking that a disabled woman should marry (Baylan, 1991). Here we see that men are initiators of action and only men are the custodians of power.

4.3.4 FULATA LUSUNGU MOYO

When The Telling is a Taboo: The Phoebe Practice (Moyo 2000:16-21)

“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in the Church at Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saint and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me” (Romans 16:1-2). There is a practice among church tradition in some parts of Africa where a minister who has to manage more than one congregation is given a woman to offer hospitality to him in all manner of the minister's needs, including the most personal needs. They called it ‘Phoebe Tradition’. Within the church, among the Yao people, it is a secret practice that subjects women to offer costly hospitality that involves even the giving of their bodies in the name of service to the church, within the HIV and AIDS reality.

In many African societies it is very much done among the chiefs. When the chief is visiting his subjects in one of his area, the headman of that area has to select a woman who has to serve the chief in all his needs, including keeping him warm at night. The girl who was chosen thought it was a great honour for her to sleep with the chief. This is a patriarchal and hierarchical need to be cultured and fulfilled as respect and honour to the chief. Within the concept of community, the Christian practice of hospitality needs to be revolutionized so that its shared

service does not monopolize women into the service of patriarchal gluttony sustained by the conspiracy of silence by both the service providers and the users of such service.

However, the churches that practice sexual hospitality, called Phoebe Tradition, have read Paul's mention of Phoebe to the Roman church to mean that Paul was recommending her hospitality, which encompassed even her extension of sexual services to Paul and other people in the church. During Easter celebrations, a certain church tradition in rural Zomba has a pastor's conference where each male pastor is expected to come alone without a wife. Each is assigned a woman to take care of his every need. Most of the pastors looked forward to this time. The women who extended this type of hospitality do so in the name of giving service to the men of God. Some of the pastor's wives are aware of this practice but they suffer in silence. Usually these women have no power to make decisions let alone sexual ones. The church and some of these institutions have taught these women to be submissive to their husbands who are the heads of their homes (Mr Langani Banda of Muchinji Malawi shared the story 23rd May, 2007).

Relating this hospitality service with HIV and AIDS we can see that many women are in danger as they tender their services because they do not know the status of the men they are forced to sleep with. Also, even men can introduce themselves to HIV since they do not know the status of the women serving them.

4.3.5 ISABEL APAWO PHIRI

She narrates how some African women were seeking resources to combat HIV and AIDS by promoting Virginitiy Testing (Phiri 2003:12). Sub-Sahara Africa is the only region in the world in which more women than men are infected with HIV, with 55% of infected adults, being women and teenage girls in sub-Saharan Africa are five times more likely to be infected than boys. Therefore the virginitiy

test was done to combat HIV and AIDS. According to the Zulu culture in South Africa, it was important that a girl be a virgin at the time of the *lobola* negotiations, for this carried an additional cow for the mother. This cow was thanks for having looked after her daughter well for them. This test was not done for her but for the good reputation of the parents and her husband.

Some people saw that this was a bias test due to the following reasons:

- (a) Virginity test is an abuse of children's rights. Girls are forced by their parents to go for virginity testing; it is against their will. It is the same as genital mutilation. It is violence against women.
- (b) The venue of testing has also been another source of contention, because in open grounds it dehumanizes the girls. They are robbed their privacy. In Africa it is noted that group initiation of either boys or girls involves taking off clothes in the presence of the other initiates, and initiators.
- (c) The use of hands to check for virginity, have been criticized as a way of passing infections if gloves are not used.
- (d) Virginity testing is a means of fighting HIV and AIDS. This confirms the patriarchal argument that women are the source of HIV and AIDS.
- (e) It has been argued that virginity testing exposes the virgins to the risk of being raped by those men who believe in the myth that having sex with a virgin cures men from HIV.
- (f) Since the community does not demand a man to be sexually pure, then the husbands who will marry these girls who are allowed to have free sex with women will bring HIV to pure girls. In this way we see the girls, are not safe from being infected (Narayan & Petesch 2002:41).

Just as virginity is still observed by some African cultures and the Christian body, it was the same with the biblical world. The doctrine of virginity was taken very seriously. According to Hans Kung (2001:149-142) all the writers of that time rated virginity at the top level – 100%, widows at 60% and wives at 30%. This

was the criteria used for the level of carnality evident in the person's life. Virgins were seen beyond the nature of women but were leading angelic lives, they were treated as the glory of the church. Virgins had to be secluded from the world. All meetings with men had to be eliminated. Silence, obedience, modesty and penance were recommended over and over as the essential guardians of the virginal life.

Male solidarity is created by male initiations at puberty. Male puberty rituals are artificial because a boy's maturing into manhood has no clear demarcation. Hay & Stichter stated that girls enter adulthood dramatically with the onset of menstruation. The growth of breasts and pubic hair may occur over years, but girls are capable of reproduction once they menstruate. A girl is initiated when her menses begin through deprivation and are mutilated at puberty or earlier before marriage (1989:91).

Puberty in boys is signaled by the ability to have erections and is accompanied by a lowering in voice and the appearance of pubic hair and usually facial hair. But boys cannot reproduce until their sperms become visible. In most cultures boys are initiated in groups to inculcate sexual solidarity and the need to dominate women (Narayan & Petersch 2002: 103).

Men remain at home and marry imported women (in all such societies) who come from various tribes women, who are treated as subordinates by both men of the lineage and mother-in-laws; such women are deeply oppressed. Mother's right involves responsibilities for children while father's right involves ownership of children and women and lineage rights to own land - political and economic dominance. Men could only dominate women because they could not feel equal.

Culturally women have been socialized and schooled to please male sexual partners so as to ensure that they remain married to them. "It was important that a girl learned how to dance with her husband when having sex. The overriding

picture presented of women in Africa has been that of being at the mercy of her husband when it comes to sex. Whether the woman herself desires it or not, these realities in which women find themselves derogate dignity and the senses of full personhood (Narayan & Petersch 2002:41).

Childhood Socialization of girls and boys characterises the difference thus: According to Janne Brock, (1984:90) girls were taught to develop roots, boys were taught to develop wings. Girls, in other words, had few chances to master the environment, discouraging independent problem solving by premature or excessive intentions restricting exploration and discouraging active play (Block 1984:111). Boys, on the other hand were encouraged to develop premise system that presumes or anticipates mastery, efficacy and instrumental competence. Parents often tell girls not to try things because their efforts either do not make any difference or may result in failure or danger and, not to speak because no one will pay attention.

Parental behavior shows a relationship to development of mastery, and that relationship may differ between female and male children. From the time when parents describe newborn infant daughters as softer and finer than their newborn infant boys who are comparable in size and strength (Rubin et al. 1974) to the time when young boys are given toys that require skill, and perseverance to assemble and use, girls are given dolls, females are more likely, to encourage more dependence in daughters than in sons (Lytton and Romney 1991:93). Parents through their encouragement of sex-typed activities may encourage girls less than boys towards the sense of power that accompanies physical self-efficacy. Girls are taught that they are weaker than boys that they cannot depend on their bodies for certain strength related tasks.

Girls may be taught by parents to think of their bodies as sources of vulnerability and danger concerns about sexual activity and pregnancy. Often parents place

new restrictions on girls at adolescence, so that growing up is associated with a feeling of decreasing, rather than enhanced, freedom (Van Dyk 2008:152). According to Blinder, parents play an important role with respect to when their adolescent children become sexually active. Studies, such as by Jacobson & Crocket, suggest that children who are supervised delay sexual initiation, Parental supervision has been associated with reduction in the risk of adolescent sexual activity. Thus it is important to examine the role of parental supervision (2006:16).

In most schools teachers pay more attention to boys than girls and allow boys to talk and interrupt them more than the girls do (Sadker and Sadker 1985 94). Studies of primary and secondary school mathematics classes show that boys receive a greater share of the teacher's attention in class than do girls. Boys are more active than girls in providing answers. Boys have more non-academic conversational contact with teachers too. The school environment may provide females with socialization towards powerlessness not only through messages about academic success and failure, but also through messages about relationship and sexuality.

A young woman who is being sexually harassed by her teacher or professor is made to feel powerless in several ways; she feels that she has little control over her relationship, she feels that her achievement orientated behavior will make little or no difference to the academic outcomes that are controlled by the harasser. She is aware that she is not taken seriously as a whole person but is being related to mainly in the terms of her sexuality. Since sexual harassment of female students, is not a rare event but rather seems to affect directly at least one-sixth of female college students. Narayan & Petersch saw that, it must be regarded as part of the process through which females absorb the message of powerlessness in school situations and also the societies in which they are living (Harayan & Petersch 2002:41).

4.4 GENDER DISCRPTION AT THE PLACE OF WORK

Constructing gender identity through workplace discourse is that gender is an ever present consideration, though participants may not always be conscious of its influence on their behavior. We are always aware of whether we are talking to a woman or a man, and we bring to every interaction our familiarity with society gendered stereotype and the gendered norms to which women and men are expected to conform (Holmes 2006, Parry 2008: 27).

Men and women perform work differently or occupy different roles in the same occupation, e.g. women may teach introductory and service courses at a university while men supervise PhD students. Men publish more articles while women do less or nothing. Training is vital for promotion, and reduced access to training has probably had the greatest negative effect on women's chances of seniority. Women who have managed to get training have usually taken an initiative themselves and used whatever informal influences they have. House-work women are reported to be doing more than one task at once; washing the clothes, sweeping the house while keeping an eye on the children. It appears that domestic tasks are still gendered and women are more likely to be doing several things at once.

In so many African countries you see men sitting idle under trees, in bars or tea houses or soda shops or pubs while women walk for miles bent under burdens of faggots, fetch the firewood or vegetables for fodder, or with heavy water on their heads. Women do a day's work in the field or a factory, and still entirely maintain the household. But in a male dominated society, women's work does not give them a voice in public decision.

Women are typically few in number in the management ranks, Anne Jardim has stated that “women have only begun to occupy roles with real power, status and responsibility in the professional world in the last two decades.(1996:32).They are vested with little organizational power as compared with men. Findings show that women managers report greater stress than men managers due to conflicts with their partners. Child bearing and other home conflicts suggest that although career demands may be equal for both partners, married women managers still do not receive the support they need.

The extra burden of managing career and family that women face may result in negative mental and physiological health outcomes. Men managers still define the successful manager by stereotypical masculine characteristics, suggesting that women managers who do not exhibit these masculine attributes may experience stress-inducing roadblocks along their career pattern. Leadership qualities within this framework include willingness to challenge and take risks, ability to inspire, problem solving approach, toughness and standard measure seems embedded in an authoritarian and masculine perspective (Jardim 1996:32).

A majority of women managers are not married: they are single, divorced or widowed or have no children. Their career priority is lower than that of their husbands; they spend more time on housework and child care than their spouses and they have little leisure time for themselves (Jacobs: 1994: 5). Women do the caring jobs e.g. domestic work, caring for the sick, children, husband, elderly relatives. Most divorces happen because of some domestic issues; there is a relationship between gender and caring. The caring which starts with the rite of passage of motherhood extends into the future. Investment in femininity provides some status and moral position both in relation to working class and middle class women (Mills 2003:187).

UNDP (2000) showed that women have less access to income and possess much less worth. Women's economic position, often involving a greater or lesser dependence on men, is a consequence of the kind of work men and women do. To the extent that much of their labour characteristically does not command market value, they are dependent on those members of their household or kin group who operate in the cash economy. Where opportunities to gain marketable skills and education are restricted for women, then the possibility for combining non market with market-valued activities is reduced. Such dependence is expressed both within and outside marriage through sexual relations. Indeed sex has been referred to as the currency by which women and girls are frequently expected to pay for life's opportunities, from passing grades in school to a trading license or permission to cross a boarder (UNAIDS 1997:4) and also to obtain higher posts at places of work.

Sexual harassment is another challenge which makes life difficult for working women in several ways. First, most of the women had been sexually harassed (Paterson 2009:46). Secondly, however they have done in practice their success will provoke rumors that they have achieved their position through sleeping with someone, in a powerful position. Thirdly, married women's husbands' behavior is premised on sexual jealousy, at times obsessive, which limits their freedom of movement in ways that impact seriously on their job. If they are not married, on the one hand they are considered fair game (lacking husband with sexual rights over them) and on the other, their freedom of movement is policed in a more indirect way by assumptions about proper and improper behavior. The third linked assumption is that sex is separable from work. Each assumption is problematic for women (Gutek 1985:66). As one man expressed it, in principle a woman can refuse without repercussions, but in practice she cannot: the repercussions can easily affect a woman's career.

Some husbands of working women cannot understand or accept their wives' desires. Most women want emotional intimacy and special romance before sexual intercourse, while some men want the sexual intercourse to serve as the intimacy and romance taking place (Mansfield & Collard 1988: 51). There is a style of having early marriages in most Zambian societies, especially among the illiterate.

Chewe (1989:5) presented his paper at the national Conference on Zambia's Policy, May 17th. Chewe argued that Zambian women have not had equal socio-economic opportunities compared to their male counter-parts. He attributes this to tradition and lack of education or skills for wage employment. Chewe claims that in the sphere of education women have been and continued to be worse off than men. Their educational position has not changed radically since independence in 1964, especially in terms of technical and vocational training. He affirms that the 1980 census results revealed that women had more limited access to higher education than men.

Chewe recommends that the Zambian government, with the help of both local and international N.G.O's and donor agencies, should deliberately take measures aimed at improving the status of Zambian women through education and involving them in major economic activities and decision-making processes. He also suggested that credit facilities for economic activities be improved to enable the Zambian women to contribute to the development of Zambia (Chewe 1989:6).

4.5 GENDER AND EARLY MARRIAGES

There is debate which took place among some Zambian chiefs that said among other things, "early marriages should be allowed." According to the Post News

paper of Wednesday, May, 16th May 2007, Chief Simamba of Southern Province said people should be allowed to marry early because of the reduced lifespan in Zambia. He said nowadays girls as young as 12 years could be called women. “What can stop this girl that has passed ‘exams of maturity’ from getting married when she is just at home?” he wondered. He continued, saying, “its not illegal if both parents agree to allow marriage.” Lifespan has reduced to 36 and 37 years. Why should one wait to get married at 21? It’s not possible. He said he has no problem with such a marriage if it was properly arranged.

Some other chiefs and gender sensitive activists pointed out that these girls who marry at an early age, many of them have problems when giving birth, since their bodies are not fully developed. One of them narrated how his 15 year old niece was married to a 81 year old man. This was treated as an abuse of some kind. Girls should be encouraged to go to school and marry later when they understand the meaning of marriage. Parents should be taught the advantages of marrying a full grown up girl. Men should not take advantage of illiterate parents who are after money without thinking about the well-being of the girl. It seems that there is no law implemented in Zambia which forces the children to go to school. This can be the only way to avoid early marriages.

Cultural and social expectations, closely related to rigidly prescribed gender roles, are that women should marry at a young age. Because married couples are likely to have intercourse more often than unmarried couples, marriage at a young age, by itself, increases adolescent women’s risk of contracting Sexually transmitted infections including AIDS. Some men who are many years older than their adolescent wives probably feel even more entitled than the average married man to direct and control aspects of the relationship such as how to use condoms or other contraceptives and how many children to have (UNPF, GIRAH & State of World Population 2003:9). The risks associated with early marriages are evident in a study of sexually active women aged 13-19 in Uganda. The

study found that the HIV infection rate among married women was nearly triple among single women 17% Vs 6% (Kande-Lule, Sewankambo,& Morris 1997:89-100).

Young women often have less decision-making power regarding sexuality than adult women, especially because they tend to have older male partners. These men may be better off and able to provide the women with things that they cannot otherwise afford: clothes, cosmetics and even school fees. Young women are also often expected to be passive, which leaves them with little control over when, where, and how sexual activities occur, including the use of condoms (De Bruyn, 2000:13-17).

Biologically, young women are particularly vulnerable because their immature genital tracts may tear during sexual activity, creating a greater risk of HIV transmission. This is especially likely during forced sex. Social expectations may also lead adolescent girls to engage in anal sex to preserve their virginity. However, young men are expected to be sexually knowledgeable, which may deter them from seeking information for fear of appearing ignorant. They are also expected to be aggressive and in control of their sexual relationships.

Girls are weaker and more vulnerable to public abuse. Boys from the ethnic groups that undergo mukanda (the Lunda Luvale) are taught to think that they are superior to girls. Sometimes girls are beaten for refusing to have sex (Narayan & Petersch 2002:41). In defending this practice of beating girls, one boy said that the payment of dowry encouraged gender based violence because it made men feel that they had purchased their wives; boys were brought up to believe in their superiority over girls (Narayan & Petersch 2002:57).

Many young women marry older men; 55-92% of women aged 29 who are married before age 20 have husbands who are five or more years older than they

are. In most countries in West Africa and Central Africa, one third or more have husbands who are 10 or more years older than they are (UNAIDS 2004). This means that the husbands of many wives typically have been sexually active for several years and are likely to have had more previous sexual partners than their wives. Some young wives are likely to contract HIV or another sexually transmitted infection (STI) from their older husbands (McFadden 1988:189).

The Lunda and Luvala of Zambia have their own ceremonies to mark entry into adulthood. They also reinforce gender stereotypes, encouraging young men to assume dominance and young women to accept their lower status. According to Brill, after initiation it was observed that girls took less interest in school. Boys are at risk of infection or bleeding to death from circumcision and girls' genitalia are painfully manipulated to make them more attractive to men (2005:16).

For many poor less educated women, worldwide gender inequality can lead to high rates of STIs, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and maternal mortality and morbidity (Ilttmann 1995:42). This particular trend is for young women, who may suit men's sexual demands because they fear being beaten or they are in a subordinate position and have no alternative. Women with little power may not be able to refuse sex or to risk their partners using a condom even when they know the risk of getting pregnant or contracting an STI including HIV. For example in Uganda, one in four women and men believe that a married woman cannot refuse sex, even when she knows her partner has Aids (Blanc 1996:9).

4.6 GENDER AND SEXUALITY

According to Dr Felicity Edwards a Presbyterian theologian, "The theological understanding of sexuality is part of theological anthropology. Sexuality is an internal part of personal being. It is one of the components of the marriage situation, but prior to the marriage of a physically mature person is a sexual being, and one who is widowed or remains unmarried is still a sexual being"

(Verryn 1975:51). It is very important to address sexuality from the start, even at an early age of human developmental stages, so that humans can understand themselves as sexual beings both within the marriage situation and outside.

Han & Stichter (1984:88) pointed out that sexual differences are a fact of biology, but what significance societies attach to sexual differences is a human cultural creation. These differences in value and behavior assigned to women and men are embodied in gender roles. Thus, gender is a cultural construction. Female sexuality in all human societies is largely constructed in relation to a perceived male sexuality and pleasure, and it is ultimately linked to reproduction. Women tend to be socialized into a concept of sexuality which is often externally directed as a young woman, a wife, a lover, a mother.

Women are rarely allowed to construct and express their sexuality in a woman-centered sense for themselves as individuals and as a social group. Nevertheless, women have struggled and created spaces for themselves as women through the women's movement, and through their friendships as women, in spite of a sexist culture which insists that women are enemies to themselves.

These sexual forms are fundamentally oppressive to women because they restrict and control the expression of sexuality as a free form. "Sexuality is related to our personal lives and internalized forms of oppression. It is an important element in people's life and well being. It is a source of power and strength. When people are allowed to express their sexuality in their own terms and it is determined by their specific needs, it becomes a source of strength and empowerment" (Reyer 1991:26).

Gender stereotypes are generally adhered to, with most respondents seeing clear differences between rights and roles of men and women. The concept of

gender based violence is not well understood, many people believe that it is reasonable for a man to use violence to ensure that his wishes prevail over those of a woman. For instance, this means that a woman cannot insist on her husband using a condom even when she knows or suspects he is infected with HIV. This presents a very real threat to health (Brill 2005:18).

It is likely that men are mostly infected in casual sexual encounters either with heterosexual or homosexual commercial sex workers or in exchange of gifts. Many women are infected by their husbands or boy-friends. Most men object and demand to have sex without a condom even if they know or suspect their partners may be HIV infected. Men use all kinds of excuses to justify their refusal to use a condom, such as; “You don’t eat a banana with the peel on or a sweet with a wrapper.”

The most common form of sexual intercourse was said to be vaginal sex, because sex included the need to satisfy sexual urges, to strengthen social bonds, to demonstrate love to their partners and (for women) sometimes to make money .Valdiserri pointed out that there is a high likelihood that economically disadvantaged female addicts are propagating the spread of HIV through prostitution (1989:5). Men said it could not be possible for a woman to initiate sex, but that this would be done indirectly, using body language. They said if a woman did this very often, she might be suspected of having loose morals. Another suspicion was that the woman might have been pregnant by another man but wanted her husband to think he was the father of the unborn child (Brill 2005:46).

Polygamy is a society norm. They feel polygamy helps to prevent or reduce unfaithfulness, prostitution, STI, and HIV. According to Van Dyk (2001b:121) polygamy often provides a health alternative or solution to problems that are inherent in certain cultural customs. In some African cultures sexual intercourse

between a husband and wife is prohibited while she is pregnant so other women service the man (Green 1994:78). Who services the young woman when a man is in the homes of other women?

Most women have argued that men are very selfish people; they don't consider a woman as a human being who has feelings also. Men's world has taught women to accept everything even if they don't agree within their hearts. Women have been oppressed in so many ways, freedom is not part of them. Men feel that putting an animal in a cage is freedom. Polygamy does not prevent or reduce unfaithfulness or prostitution, this is why HIV and AIDS is spreading (Dolphyne 1991:14). Men think they are the only ones to have sex, and women should wait until men demand it. Are women not people like men to enjoy their sexual feelings? A person who has personal self-control is different with a person who is ordered to be self-controlled. This can be one of the reasons why AIDS is booming rapidly in Africa.

In Zambian tradition, when young women are prepared for marriage, they are told that the sustainability of the marriage union is their sole responsibility and hence they are told to hold on to their husbands even when they cheat on them with other women. One qualifying saying often said and very popular among the Bemba is "*Ubuchende bwamwaume taunaula ng'anda*" meaning a man's infidelity cannot be a cause for breaking of a marriage. But a woman's infidelity will make the break-up of the marriage. Therefore men believe African tradition gives them the right to have more than one woman. And this has been widely accepted in many societies as a way of life, resulting in some being equated to dogs and accepting infidelity as the behavior expected of any normal man. Women on the other hand, are expected to carry on as though nothing is amiss. Here is a trauma of a cheated wife, written by Sheila Manse Mwenya and stated in the Friday Edition News paper of 15th October 2004:

Seven months into our marriage I discovered my husband's girl friend was five months pregnant and I was devastated, to say the

least. When I discovered my husband cheated on me so early in our marriage, I cried everyday for two straight weeks. But I failed to leave him because I was afraid of what people would say. I also could not face my parents and family. So I kept it to myself and remained with my husband just to keep up appearance,” Sherry explained. “I was slowly entering into depression without realizing it. I started behaving so strangely. In the middle of the night or the early hours of morning I would waken and leave the house to start wondering around the township barefoot. I became violent. I was losing weight. Then I sought counseling at Y.W.C.A. gradually life started to normalize for me.

According to Y.W.C.A. very few women are ready to talk about their husband's infidelity, because in Zambian tradition that would mean disrespect. Women would rather sit and suffer alone without a shoulder to cry on. Many women believe all men are the same and suggest women should give a blind eye to their husband's infidelity. They should just pretend they do not know even when they know their husbands are cheating on them. A faithful woman is the one who knows what is right or wrong for her and who can control herself. Or a faithful man is one who can control himself, who has respect for others and who has genuine love. Some men said infidelity was the only way to prove fertility, since infertility was viewed as though a person was, dead.

The idea behind the biological issues related to marriage is that the male is a carrier of life. The woman, on the other hand, is the receiver of the life-seed and in whom the seed grows, eventually to be born in the form of a child. Because a woman is a receiver of the male seed, her main purpose in life is motherhood. She does not primarily exist for her own sake or in her own right. Her essential duty and purpose in life is to bear children. Since the husband is regarded as the bearer of seed, he becomes the destiny, the function and the activator of life (Verryn 1975:4).

Infertility was perceived to be almost exclusively a young female's problem, although some people knew that a man could be infertile without being impotent.

This belief threatens a woman's health, because she may be encouraged to have sex with a different man in case the infertility is caused by an incompatibility between her and her husband. Impotence and infertility are known to be prevalent among men. It is attributed to much abortion in the case of women, or someone getting hold of a root from trees where the woman lay at her initiation and singing to them to cause infertility. Impotent men in the community are despised and regarded as less important or someone without profit in the community. Impotence is believed to have several possible causes. These are said to include gonorrhoea, overwork, and the umbilical cord falling on the manhood (Raising, 1992:78-79).

Usually it is thought that childlessness goes hand in hand with deep sorrow and grievous disappointment, while the popular image condemns a childless marriage as an unhappy marriage. As in the case of most elements, childlessness is experienced as a lack, a deprivation of an important fulfillment for which one has hoped and upon which one has depended. It is all easily uttered, and for childless couples irritating, the argument is that childlessness saves one a lot of trouble and sorrow.

One of the issues that has come to the fore, in reaction to the manner in which HIV is requiring a reconstruction of female sexuality, is the dilemma being faced by single women who are sexually active. The enjoyment of a freedom won through insisting on the right to have sex and bear children outside of the traditionally defined family structure, and the deconstruction of a traditionally defined sexuality which emphasised male pleasure and male rights, is being undermined by the threat of HIV infection (Paterson 2009:79).

4.7 GENDER AND CULTURAL ISSUES

In discussion on the role of gender in the spread of HIV, the views of the church were expressed in the following words: 'treated like slaves', 'frequent rapes', 'inequality in relationship', 'African culture,' tradition must be obeyed', 'suppression' and poverty'. A general sense of male domination ran through the participants' views. The thinking of the participants is in line with the findings of UNAIDS which states that male domination, sometimes expressed in domestic violence, is common throughout the world and that this makes women vulnerable to HIV infection in direct and indirect ways (UNAIDS, September 2000).

In any discussion of gender, cultural issues and AIDS it is important to take note of the multicultural feminist perspective because it represents one of the dimensions of the theory underlying women's subordination (Adewunyi, 1999, Parry 2008 27). According to this theory, a combination of class, race, gender and sexual factors operate interactively and interdependency as systems of women's dominion. This reflects typical African women who complain that their husbands 'feed us and we are poor, and because we want to keep our marriage, we have to listen to our men'. As a result, women are in an inferior position because some societies allow only men to inherit property, thus giving men control of the productive resources of society.

It is widely acknowledged among the population that heterosexual monogamy is the exception rather than the rule. Men prove their sexual powers by sleeping with many women. Polygamy and various forms of friendship allow promiscuous practices such as wife exchange and may be pro-violent (Poewe:1985:10). According to Zinanga, in many countries marital rape is still not considered a criminal offence. A woman who has been beaten may accept it is as a manifestation of the love her husband or boyfriend feels for her, or a wife who has been raped by her husband may think that it was his right to do so and that it demonstrates that he is sexually attracted to her (1996:3-7).

Breaking the silence surrounding the cultural and sexual practices related in HIV infection may be a major step in the process of empowering people to live a safe life (Messer 2000:45). What then are the areas covered by silence, hidden under layers of guilt, and whispers by both the religious, and political in which speaking about them is a taboo? Postmodernism does not mean that we have to do away with the subject of politics but rather we ask after the process of its construction. The value of postmodernism therefore is that, like deconstruction, it shows clearly how arguments bury opposition. Its disorderly force is rude and impertinent in that it shows where power resides hidden and quiet and displeased at being exposed (Judith Butler 1992:69).

Although gender roles are changing rapidly in Sub-Saharan Africa, traditional stereotypes remain prevalent in many societies. Men are expected to be strong, providers, protectors and authority figures in the family and women primarily to be wives and mothers whose role is to grow and prepare food for the family. Sexual experimentation before marriage and having more than one sexual partner after marriage are still widely condoned for men, while women are expected to abstain from sex until marriage and to be faithful to their husband once married (WHO, Child Adolescent Health, HIV 2003:8).

Marriage is an exalted state of life sanctified by God from the beginning of man. "Yahweh God said it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help mate" to which God did through the rib of man and created woman. Seeing a woman on his side he appreciated the hand of God this man explained that, this is at last bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh she shall be called woman. (Gen 2:24)

Because of sin man's reason for marriage has been distorted. Men and women engage in sexual relations for an array of reasons that range from the pursuit of:

pleasure, desire for intimacy, expression of love, definition of self, procreation domination, violence or any combination of the above as well as others: How people relate sexually may be linked to: self-esteem, self respect, respect for others, hope, joy and pain. In a different context, sex is viewed as: a commodity a right or a biological imperative, it is clearly not determined fully by rational decision-making (Carovano, 1995:3-4).

4.7.1 MOST WOMEN ARE SEXUALLY STARVED

Cultural beliefs and expectations tend to make men responsible for deciding when, where, and how sex will take place, while women generally lack control over sex and reproduction. Women are very slow to reach an orgasm, as a result most men are always in a rush to leave the bed of matrimony starving the other partner, who was traditionally told only to service a man whenever he needs it. One woman complained that she has reached orgasm three times in twenty seven years of marriage. Her husband always says he is very busy or he is feeling sleepy and tired. As a result most women lose interest in sex faster before they even reach their menopause.

Many societies share the idea that women seduce men into having sex and those men cannot resist because their sexual needs are so strong. Women are always blamed for anything and yet they play a very passive role where sex is concerned. In some societies men are expected to have more sexual partners than women, including more extramarital partners, a tendency reinforced by male migration and mobility (Narayan & Petersch 2002:38). Such beliefs and practices are an obstacle to HIV/AIDS prevention because they deny men from taking responsibility for their sexual behavior.

The feminization of poverty has meant that women and girls increasingly have to exchange sex for love, money, food, shelter and other needs and that much of this sex is unsafe. Most sex workers do not enjoy sex because for them it is a

way of raising money. In many of the heavily affected countries, young men are often encouraged to start having sex from an early age and to have a number of different partners to prove their manhood. Young women are particularly vulnerable because their immature genital tracts may tear during sexual activity, creating a greater risk of HIV transmission. This is especially likely to be the case during forced sex (Harayan & Petersch 2002: 127). Because of what women go through, they do not look forward to entering the marriage world but some are forced by their parents. In the same way marriage, as Kung {2001:152} narrated that “in the ancient world marriage was regarded universally as a civic duty in order to repopulate. Young people had no choice. Their marriages were arranged for the benefit of both families and the young woman passed from the authority of her father to the authority of her husband. The male dominance of the male in marriage was not questioned. It was believed that women were made for submission, and any attempt to change opened a way to severe punishment.

4.8 AIDS, SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN AFRICA

Aids expose women’s vulnerability. Both men and women are affected by Aids, but women in particular given how gender relations configure with sexual behavior and economic security, They are the most affected beings. Gender relations not only underlie women’s particular vulnerability, they also inhibit women’s attempts to protect themselves and their families. If interventions around Aids are to be effective, they must address the factors which drive the epidemic. Such factors are deep-seated and intransigently embedded in the very power relations who define male and female roles and positions both in intimate relations or the wider society. Women and men need protection now and cannot wait for deep structural changes (Baylies, 2000:1)

Women’s vulnerability to Aids follows from social, but also physiological factors; the possibility of male to female transmission is estimated to be two to four times

that of female to male transmission concentrations (UNAIDS 1997). The reasons are: there is higher concentrations of HIV in semen than in vaginal fluid, a larger area of exposed female than male genital surface area, greater permeability of the mucous membranes of the vagina compared with those of the manhood and longer period of exposure of semen within the vaginal track.(Baden & Wach 1998).

Untreated sexual diseases. STI's can increase the probability of HIV transmission in both men and women by as much as ten times {Mac Namara 1991,Paker& Patterson, 1996 Parry 2008:147}. Behavioral factors complicate the situation, with women typically having poorer access to STD's care because of: distance, cost, adequacy facilities, and the way of stigmatizing the nature of the condition, all of which deter them from seeking formal assistance (UNAIDS, 1997).

In addition, repeated infections of gonorrhoea and other reproductive track infections through their associations with infertility (Mc Namara 1991:33) can sometimes push women towards greater sexual activity in an attempt to conceive, or, in contributing to the forced ending of marriage, can result in women being placed at an increased risk of HIV (Paterson 2009:94-96). This has a direct impact in reducing fertility. When a woman who is already infected becomes pregnant, however, the progression of HIV may be accelerated and complications of pregnancy and delivery increased.

While physiological factors increase the risk of transmission to women from unprotected sex and accelerate the course of illness in a woman who is living with HIV. Women's social location can also place them in the context of risk or inhibit their ability to protect themselves. Note that in a large measure a women's vulnerability to HIV/infection derives from their low status in society. Paterson (2009:94-95) describes women as a subordinate sector in referring to their low

status and powerlessness in connection with Aids. Women have limited control to determine their lives, lesser ability than men to control the nature and timing of sexual activity and frequent inability to negotiate change in sexual behavior.

4.9 WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

The New Testament teaching that relates to gender distinctively is complex. The biological differences between men and women are considered something to be overcome. God's creation of humans are male and female; is still regarded as good, yet in Christ there is no male and female, there is a fundamental freedom of women and men in Christ from pre-determined roles, thus also gender based discrimination (Genesis 3:28). When Jesus began his ministry he called the twelve male disciples representing the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel to be his associates. But he also issued a general call to discipleship to all regardless of gender. Women as well as men responded and followed him. They ranged from women of means who contributed financially to the support of Jesus and his disciples, to women of the most tragic circumstances whom he forgave and healed and liberated from demonic forces (Luke 8:13, Mark 16:9). Jesus called his women followers his own sisters and mothers in his new family of disciples they were all bound intimately around Jesus as doers of God's will (Mark 3:31-35); he also called them daughters (Mark 5:34) expressing their intimate relationship to God their Father (Abba).

Jesus also broke the patriarchal expectations for women's roles that were typical throughout Greco-Roman World. When Mary, sat down at his feet to listen to his teaching, and Martha did all the domestic work. Jesus did not criticize Mary or taking up a typical male occupation (Luke 10:38-42), he did not accept Martha's criticism of Mary for neglecting women's work and leaving her alone with all the

serving. He praised Mary for doing the one thing that was needful, for choosing the good position, and he defended Mary's right to it; it shall not be taken away from her. Thus Jesus teaches the sharing of both sexes. He does not regard women as unsuited to intellectual or spiritual pursuits.

In the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection from the dead women play the prime roles as witnesses, in contrast to the very circumstances scribed roles as regal witnesses that they could play in Judaism. Women were the first witness of the empty tomb and of the resurrected Jesus and they were sent by the Angels of the tomb and Jesus Himself to report to the disciples what they had seen and heard (Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-11, John 20:1-18). Their being assigned these roles is significant also in the light of the fact that a woman's word was commonly considered unreliable, as the reaction of the disciples to their report on the first Easter illustrates (John 4:39-42). The fact that the women are witnesses of the risen Lord means that they fulfill the prerequisite for apostleship which corresponds to Jesus sending them to announce his resurrection to the other disciples.

Jesus did not only associate with women but touched them and was touched by them even when they were ritually unclean. Jesus touched Jairus' dead daughter and she arose (Mark 5:21-43). The woman suffering from bleeding touched his clothing and her health was restored. Women and disciples remained with him during his arrest trial and death. It was a woman who first witnessed Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10). HIV/AIDS victims are discriminated upon like women and children during Jesus' time. If Jesus was here today he would eat with them and he would touch them. Jesus did not observe some of the rituals of purification which were to take place after touching a dead body.

What is modeled for us in the God-head between God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit? There is equality. There is no hierarchy in the trinity,

only absolute equality. What was laid down in the Garden of Eden when God Elohim, a plural unity, created man and woman in his own image were equal. Each of us is equal before God; men and women were made in the image of God. Jesus paid the supreme price for both with his death on the cross. For God so loved the world, not just the males, that he gave His only begotten son. A male soul is not more valuable than a female soul. A woman has absolute equality with men in God's eyes. Therefore she should be equal in our eyes as well. This is God's absolute for all of us.

The grace of the Holy Spirit has been used to sustain gender imbalances as they have demanded more from Christian men. Moreover, instead of being conceived as qualities of Christian character, especially expressed as fruit of the Holy Spirit's inner work, they have demanded more of women in their service to men than to God. Consequently, married women are taught not to reveal their husbands' failures and abuse. For example, a woman who is a victim of spousal violence is taught not to reveal that she has a black eye because of a beating she has sustained, but rather to lie by saying she hit a wall or something.

The main concern, to protect the dignity of the head of the family, does not take into account the whole question of the woman's dignity. She is pressured to safeguard this dignity of the other; she has neither time nor motivation to ask about her own dignity. The demand to protect the man's dignity is also a reality in the life of the church, the community of believers in Christ.

4.10 PAUL'S MINISTRY WITH WOMEN

Paul is being accused of being bias towards women because of the way he handled some issues when a problem rose. In both Ephesians and Colossians, Paul addressed the subordinate status of women and slaves in the same context. In the book of Corinthians, the topic of women, keeping quiet in the presence of

men, and women had to cover their heads when praying. People misunderstood Paul on both of these occasions this misinterpretation of the words, as if Paul was making moral standards for each woman to follow. Whilst Paul was just addressing the issues which arose during that particular occasion.

In Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” It is in this verse that Practical Theology with regard to the place of women in the church finds its critical moment. The church has understood this verse reflects the practical approach it has taken to the status of women today. Paul is only stating that in God’s eyes there are no social distinctions, and everyone can enjoy a station of dignity in the body of Christ, even a Gentile, a slave and a woman. Paul worked with women during his ministry, in Acts 18:18-19 Paul was accompanied by a couple Priscilla and Aquila as he sailed to Ephesus where he left them.

If women begin to acknowledge themselves as human and gain dignity as God’s image and decide to break the code of silence within the church, there will be a break-through in the efforts to bring meaningful healing transformation, particularly in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Therefore there is a great need to develop a theology of equality of women and men as bearers of the image of God.

Christian marriage should be built upon agape mutual companionship while economic security, social status and sexual pleasure should be inevitable benefits of such meaningful relationships. Both men and women should be given an environment that helps them to enjoy Christ's liberation and encourages them to attain fulfillment as they reach their highest potential in their service towards God.

The empowerment of women is important to the prevention of HIV and AIDS. Both cultural and Christian sexual education faces the challenge to work towards gender and sexual socialization and the emphasis should be on mutual love and companionship as the basis of a marriage relationship and sexual pleasure to be enjoyed by both men and women. This mutuality would help women to realize that they are not sexual objects at the mercy of men's sexual powers but that they are companions and partners in this act which is a holy and pleasure gift from God. Indeed the time has come for women and men in the church to purposefully release the sexual power of the woman. This power, together with gender equality, will help to enhance mutual love and thus contribute to the mutuality of sexual fulfillment, faithfulness and healing in heterosexual relationship culminating in HIV and AIDS prevention.

4.11 EMPOWERING WOMEN

It is necessary to educate women and give them the information they need about their bodies and sex. Ideally, education programs should start before young people become sexually active and should be combined with education about women's rights. By reaching pre-teens and older children, programs can affect their emerging norms. For example the very young (6 to 10 year olds) can be exposed to messages about healthy body image, body sovereignty (good touch versus bad touch) and support of people living with HIV and AIDS. Provide women with skills-training in communication about sex and how to use a condom and foster inter partner communication.

These programs can improve women's access to economic resources and ensure that they have property and inheritance rights, have access to credit, receive equal pay for equal work, have the financial, marketing and business

skills necessary to help their businesses grow, have access to agricultural extension services to ensure the highest yield from their land, have access to formal sector employment, and are protected in the informal sector from exploitation and abuse.

They can insure that women have access to health services and to HIV and STI prevention technologies that they can control, such as the female condom and microbicides. Increase social support for women who are struggling to change existing gender norms by giving them the opportunities to meet in groups, visible in communities, by strengthening local women's organizations and providing them with adequate power and by promoting sex and family.

These programs can also move the topic of violence against women from the private sphere to the public sphere, insuring that it is seen as a gross violation of women's rights and not a personal issue. They can promote women's decision-making at the household, community and national level by supporting their leadership and participation. To give them a voice, women need to be provided with the opportunity to create a group identity separate from that of the family, since for many women the family is often the social institution that enforces strict adherence to traditional gender norms.

4.12 SUMMARY

Rites of passage have been an issue of sorrow to most women in different societies in Zambia and in Africa at large. All the problems women encounter as they make themselves vulnerable to many things, including HIV and AIDS, might be considered. Changing the way of thinking of women is more like changing the whole world of development. Women are the ones who implement society rules and regulations by seeing that everything is well taught and well followed by the new generation. That is why it is important to empower women in many areas so

that they are able to produce children who can be morally fruitful with independent minds for society.

Women have found themselves victims of rites of passage since birth because the transition of change is taken more seriously as one passes through another stage. Some celebration and rituals do take place in order to give power and rights to the new initiate. Usually the new initiates have to play a passive role not talking with elders; they are not even able to ask questions if something is not clear. A discriminatory life for the girl-child starts at home, at school, at the college, and at the place of work; she is underrated as nothing. For her to rise at a place of work; she has to go through a; tough life; even if she has proper qualifications. Even those few who have risen they are never heard during decision making.

Boys are treated with respect while they are young and even as they grow up; as the carriers they get a position in society. They are also given the chance and space to explore on their own, while girls have no time and space to explore and usually this is done under guidance. Freedom and independence is never experienced for girls. As a result they are taught how to please their husbands when they are married. That is why there is need to teach girl-children and empower women according to their ability of understanding things, so that they will be able to stand on their own in time of problems or death of the spouse. During rites of passage as both boys and girls are growing up, they should be treated equally and should be given the same chance of education. Both men and women were created in the image of God, therefore they need equal treatment (Genesis 1:26).



CHAPTER 5

RITEs OF PASSAGE A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purification regulations for the African belief on Clean and Unclean are the ones which lead people in most societies to do certain rituals to meet the norms of the society. In order for us to understand why human beings do certain rituals as they enter the new phase of rites of passage in Zambia or in Africa, let us see what

their world view is like for us to discuss the following topics: African view of God, African view of sin, Causes of sickness, Healers and their roles, etc.

5.2. AFRICAN VIEW OF GOD

Most Africans have a belief in the hierarchy of "deities" for example the Ngoni and the Chewa tribes of Eastern Zambia. At the top is *Mulungu* Supreme Being who is a creator. The Supreme Being was believed to live far away, out of reach of man, and is transcendent. The Being who has created the world, and orders it. Who also listens to the prayers of the people he created. Next are the non human spirits who are closest to *Mulungu*, who are believed to control the natural phenomenal such as thunder, lightening, storm and rain. The third level is nature spirits embodying charms and amulets, and then spirits of the respected dead. These may act maliciously or benevolently, depending on how well they are treated. According to Bajo (1992:20-21) "Life is a participation in God, but it is always mediated by one standing above the recipient in the hierarchy of being. This hierarchy belongs both to the invisible and to the visible world. The invisible world, the highest place is occupied by God.

According to Mbiti, African's sacrifices and offerings to the ancestors are not worship but a symbol of "fellowship" because, though physically absent, the ancestors are still close to their families. Sacrifices and offerings constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among African peoples and examples of them are overwhelmingly many. In some cases sacrifices and offerings are directed to one or more of the following God, spirits and living dead. Recipients in the second and third categories are regarded as intermediaries, so that God is the ultimate recipient whether or not the worshippers are aware of that (1971:58).

5.3 AFRICAN VIEW OF SIN AND ITS ORIGIN

All African tribes agree that man was once innocent but became a sinner by offending God in one way or another. There are many legends explaining this fall. According to the Ashanti (Ivory Coast), God originally lived closer to men but one day withdrew into the sky because the mother of these men kept on knocking against him with her pestle. Then she tried to catch God by building a pillar of mortars. This couldn't work as the mortar at the bottom collapsed. The survivors gave up the idea of following God up into the sky (Mbiti, 1969:97). In an African view, it is God who withdraws from the people but in Genesis 1, it is man who withdrew from God after sinning, as a result of this initial disobedience, death and suffering came into the world (Mbiti, 1969:97).

Although the Africans believe that sin originated from man's first offence against God, in daily life sin is not committed against God but against the community - one's family or tribe which includes the ancestral spirits. Since it is the community which justifies an individual, it is the same community which feels the pain and guilt most. One is conscious of the shame and disappointment experienced by one's family - especially one's elders and the ancestors who are the originators and custodians of the laws and customs of the tribe (Blackly, Beek, & Thomson 1994:91). To the African, sin can either be an action or state, sins can be clarified under moral offence, breaking the taboos or customs and being in a state of ritual impurity. The impure state means the offender is passive, whilst in the other categories, the offender does something undesirable (Wagner 1949:207-210).

Moral Offences: The majority of the moral sins committed in the tribe are forbidden by moral laws found in the Ten Commandments, e.g. You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, etc. God spoke to African people's hearts way before He gave the law to the Israelites and continues to do so. *Breaking the taboos or customs:* The breaking of taboos seems to be the most common kind of offence found in the tribe. Breaking the taboos disturbs the harmony of

the community and the peace of the spirits e.g. It is a taboo for a woman to climb on the roof of a hut as it would be interpreted as an expression of her desire to kill her husband. *Being in a state of ritual impurity*: This category is where the offender is more or less passive e. g. It is taboo for an infant to cut its upper teeth first. Such events make a person ritually unclean and a ceremony must be performed to prevent certain disasters to befall him and the family.

5.3.1 THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

Since sin is primarily against the community or tribe, it is the same community which takes the responsibility to punish or chastise the wrong doer. The responsibility belongs to those who are physically alive, but especially to the ancestral spirits who are the custodians of the community (Blakely et al 1994:75). Expected calamities may include sudden death, growing thin, deformity of limbs, childlessness, sickness, accident, short life, madness, AIDS included. In fact every member of the family is carefully taught what sort of calamities or misfortunes may befall him for breaking certain taboos, morals or customs. Some straight-forward offences such as theft, murder or adultery may be dealt with at the chief's court and punishment is meted out by the same court. Also the spirits may still send punishment. At other times curses and spells pronounced against the sinner by the offended may be adequate punishment Bujo (1992:34-35).

If sin is an offence against one's ancestral spirits, family or tribe, it follows that these are the ones one has to deal with. One has to sacrifice an animal or offer a gift to appease them. Acceptance of such sacrifices is proof that their wrong has been pardoned and the sinner is assured that all will be well. Depending on the offence, proof of acceptance may include recovery from sickness, message in a dream or a diviner's reassurance (Metuh 1981:92).

Both the African and the Biblical understanding of sin brings suffering to man. Therefore we need to understand both an African view of suffering and Biblical view of suffering. When man sinned, God withdrew from him into the sky, leaving him to suffer the consequences of his fall. Man can no longer approach God directly; he has to rely on his ancestor or nature spirits to get blessings from God. Africans do acknowledge that man's suffering can be traced back to the original "fall" in their daily life. Suffering has nothing really to do with their relationship with God but with fellow human beings or non-human spirits. The African locates the causes of suffering through the following agents as is in accordance to (Moreau 2002:169).

(a) *Fellow human being (still alive)*: These can be classified into three groups: (i) ordinary people who can utter curses or blessings for other people; (ii) people who act as passive vehicles of dangerous mystical power because they have temporarily fallen into a state of ritual impurity, e.g. by breaking a rule of avoidance, taboo or custom or by committing a bloody crime, they can also bring suffering upon themselves if they neglect to perform a ritual to avert the mystical power; (iii) Specialists who practice antisocial secret magic (witches and witchdoctors) and who wield revenge for their clients (Ferdinando 1999:159).

(b) *Ancestral spirits*: Some people believe that some ancestors are agents of good, and any suffering that is linked with them is accepted by relatives as chastisement/punishment for wrong doing. Some ancestors are believed to be agents of suffering because their change from physical to a spiritual state is unwelcome by the deceased. The deceased wish to take revenge for their fate and evil treatment they had received from relatives when they were still alive. They feel the lives they are living now are the continuation of the bad life they formerly led, so they cause malicious harm (Blakely 1994:169).

(c) *Supreme Being (God)*: When the source of suffering cannot be successfully unraveled or when the suffering persists, Africans attribute it to the hand of God—as punishment or predestined evil. One must appeal to God, combined with other help such as divination, charms and sacrifices to ancestors. The more power one can command, the better (Blakely 1994:76).

(d) *Nature spirits and other non-spirits*. When nature gods are angry, they may withdraw rain, send locusts or diseases. To appease the gods, sacrifices and rituals must be performed at their shrines. The major tribal gods tend to be those which control natural phenomena; such as rivers, lakes, mountains, rain or epidemics Bujo 1992:36-37).

5.4 AFRICAN CAUSES OF SICKNESS AND HEALING

The cause of sickness and death is always linked to malevolent relatives who are still alive. If you consult a diviner, or witchdoctor, it will be discovered that the one responsible is an uncle, an aunt, a brother, a sister, or even a father. Causes may be traced back to the ancestors who may have been offended, e.g. by neglecting to offer sacrifices and libations to them (Blakely 1994:82).

Sickness can also be caused *by disobeying the taboos and customs of the clan or tribe*. This behavior angers the ancestors who are the custodians of such beliefs and therefore the sustainers of the tribe's well-being. According to Theron (2006:12):

Sickness is always a reaction of the total person to influences such as bacterial, spiritual, social or other factors. Simply because of our humanity every person reacts to, is part of, and becomes co-responsible for the dysfunction.

In the case such as cholera when the sickness affects the entire community it is usually linked to a great-great ancestor or chief or non deity (Munthali 2005:37). Sickness can also come through being *possessed by spirits*. The possession can be of bad spirits which may drive the patient mad and it is treated by exorcism. The Tumbuka call it vimbuza, the Ngoni call it vibanda, and the Shona and the Bemba call it mashabe. The sickness is associated by frequent body pains and headaches (Morris 1986:14-43).

5.4.1 THE ROLE OF HEALERS

Diviners: These are the discoverers of mysteries surrounding diseases. They are experts at unveiling the spiritual causes of sickness (Hestenes 2006:76). They trace the cause by manipulation of bones (Gehman 2005:92), or consultation of mediums.

Mediums: These are trained intermediaries who stand between the patient's relatives and the spirits who know the cause of the problem. Mediums may practice on their own, or they may assist the diviners, priests or witchdoctors in unveiling root causes of diseases (Blakely 1994:82, Hestenes 2006:76).

Disease and rain specialists: are those concerned with specific diseases? Some are personal doctors, military doctors, rain making specialists or epidemic consultants. Others specialize in protecting or strengthening homesteads, fields or crops.

Priests: Priests serve at shrines of family or clan ancestors and of kings nature spirits but can also practice medicine. They mediate between the people and the spirits (Gehman 2005:104, Morris 1989:34-54).

Destructive specialists (witches, wizards sorcerers, magicians etc.): These are enemies of the community, whose practices are mysterious and secret. They cause malicious harm. To take revenge, one is expected to consult a witch, sorcerer or magicians. A witch (woman) and a wizard (man) use supernatural techniques (e.g. spells) or natural means (herbs) (Gehman 2005:94).

5.4.2 SOLUTION TO SUFFERING

African's response and suffering may be classified under protective and preventive measures. *Protective measures* are those involving use of various types of charms and medicines whilst preventive avoidance mainly consist of avoidance and observance of taboos and other prohibition. *Avoidance* includes contact with persons in a state of impurity (e.g. a woman who has just given birth) or avoidance between in-laws (e.g. between daughter-in-law and father-in-law). Other forms of avoidance include abstinence from certain foods or from killing certain animals. States of impurity and violation of any form of avoidance are believed to be potentially dangerous to others or the agent unless appropriate measures are quickly affected. Sacrifices or rites must be carried out (Blakely 1994: 80).

The main purpose of protective and preventive measures is to deter suffering before it is experienced, the purpose of counter measures is to fight or neutralise the magic before it causes harm. To achieve this is by consulting the diviner to detect what or who is causing the suffering or threatening to inflict suffering. Once the cause has been detected, a counter attack is then launched. If the root cause is violation of a taboo, an appropriate rite of purification or reconciliation with the angered ancestor/god is performed. But if the root cause is a malicious person, a counter-attack is launched if it is a spirit or spirits, a ritual must be performed to destroy or ward them off (Munthali 2005:26-27).

5.5 CHRISTIAN'S VIEW OF SICKNESS AND HEALING

This depends on the correct understanding of God's dealings and healing which are theological experiences, not merely clinical perceptions. Although sickness and disease came into the world through man's fall according to Genesis, God goes further to show that in daily life, poor hygiene and sanitation can cause sickness. To help the Israelites live a disease free life God gave them a code of good sanitation and hygiene (Lev. 15). Hestenes (2006:70) states that:

Suffering and illness are believed to be caused by a negative movement of the powers. This can be caused by moral transgressions, broken taboos and bad relationships within the community as well as natural powers apparent in the environment.

The scriptures also tell us that in daily life sickness and disease can be a *direct consequence of personal sin*. The men described in Psalms 119:67 and John 5:1-16 became sick because of sin in their lives. Scripture gives good evidence to show that sicknesses can be caused *by sinful attitudes and thoughts*. James 5:16 warns Christians to confess their sins to each other so that they may be healed Blakely (1994:.85) says, those who have sinned the diviner (ng'anga) will lead them to confession to free themselves.

Some sicknesses come *from direct attacks from Satan*, For example, demon possession and deformation and all forms of harm caused by witchcraft and magic are (Matt.9:32; 12:22; Luke 9:37; 13:10-17). Many sicknesses and diseases can also be caused by other people's carelessness, sinful behavior and ignorance. In this case many innocent people suffer. The AIDS scourge, for example, is spread to thousands of children and adults mainly due to immoral behavior. Other people's carelessness and ignorance about good sanitation and hygiene can also lead to widespread sickness and diseases, e.g. cholera. In the Old Testament God promised to send diseases upon Israel if she departed from

the covenant, and good health and long life, if she obeyed God's command for example the book of Job.

Also sickness can be a result of *God's visitation*, either as judgment, chastisement or as a way of demonstrating His sovereign power and glory for example the book of Job. God wanted to show the excellence of his servant Job.

The scriptures are very clear about whom Christians should go to when they are sick. Christians can seek help from non-superstitious or non-occult herbalists and medicine men. Seeking help from medicine men was encouraged even if a Jew always had to remember that it was God who healed all diseases (Ex.15:26). Moses gave instructions on how they were to handle certain types of diseases, e.g. infectious skin diseases (Lev. 13,14 and 15). The Bible forbids a Christian to turn to witchdoctors, diviners, magicians, astrologers or fortune tellers (Deut.18:10-13, Blakely 1994:85).

The Meaning of Healing: Healing means the restoration of one to full health. This includes both physical and spiritual healing, for the Scriptures do not separate the two. The Lord Jesus' healing ministry was not just aimed at physical sickness but spiritual sickness as well (Blakely 1994:72). Sickness is a form of suffering which people go through throughout their life. Paul's thorn could have been chronic illness. Biblical healing talks about confession of sins, prayer and anointing of oil as in James 5:14-16, healing by the laying on of hands, and also use of sacraments in the second century (Hestens 2006:73).

With regard to the *use of herbs* or medicines to cure physical sickness, there are sufficient examples to show that this is a good and acceptable practice. Timothy for example was encouraged to take a little wine to relieve his stomach ailments (1st Tim.5:23). Hezekiah used a fig cake on his boil. The Good Samaritan used wine and oil to dress up the wounds of a man (Blakely 1994:42).

The second type of healing recorded in Scripture is *faith healing*. Faith healing means healing that is based on true faith in God as the Healer and may occur without the use of any herbs or medicines (Blakely1994:43). Prayer alone may be sufficient. The healing may be sudden or gradual. The purpose of miraculous healing in both Old and New Testament was to teach a double lesson: to show authority through the word of a person who performed them and to illustrate the word. God performed such miracles to demonstrate His power and glory or to chastise and teach His people. Theron (1983:110) stated that:

Wholeness is God's perfect will. He is both the Creator and Restorer of his creation. While we are waiting for our adoption as sons and daughters and the redemption of our bodies (Rom.28:23), we have to fulfill the church's call to practice healing as an integral witness to Christ 'in order to concretize his salvation and loving care and thus to glorify God (Du Toit 1883:110)'.

5.6 CHRISTIAN VIEW OF GOD

A Christian who has just known God through Jesus Christ as his personal savior, understands that, God is invisible, pure spirit. He is God, but reveals Himself or manifests His being in three distinct persons - God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In other words, God is truly one in three persons. Each person is self-conscious and self-directing, yet never acts independently or opposite to each other's will. Through His death on the cross Christ became a perfect sacrifice for our sins. God the Holy Spirit is associated with revealing truth to man. Without Him, all men cannot come to the true knowledge of God (John 14:26, 1 Cor.2:13). He convicts men of sins (Blakely 1994:44).

Christians look forward to a better and permanent life. When a Christian dies he goes to be with the Lord, waiting to be resurrected into immortality by the Lord. Between death and beyond the resurrection, the Christian knows no suffering of

any kind and cannot incarnate into another earthly person or living thing (John 11:11, Rev. 21:4) (Blakely 1994:29, Hestenes 2006:76).

Naidoo talks about the healing work of spiritual direction he explains that, Spiritual direction occurs in the context of prayer, and priority is placed on discernment of spiritual experiences (2006:141).

5.7 RITES OF PASSAGE

5.7.1 PUBERTY

5.7.1.1 CIRCUMCISION

In Genesis 17, 21, 34:15, Ex. 12:44, Jos. 5:2, circumcision is referred to as the sign of God's special covenant with his people. Submitting to this new rite was required for all Jewish males (Gen 17:14). According to Paul, being a Jew (being circumcised) meant nothing if the person did not obey God's laws. On the other hand, the Gentiles (the circumcised) would receive God's love and approval if they kept the laws requirement. Paul's goes on to explain that the real Jew (one who pleases God) is not only someone who has been circumcised (a Jew outwardly) but someone whose heart is right with God and obeys him a Jew inwardly (Saakana 1991:66).

Circumcision is to remove the fore skin of male children as a way of signifying Israelites' covenant relationship with God (Gen 17:10). Circumcision has value if you observe the law (Rom 2:25) circumcision is circumcision of the heart by the spirit (Rom 2:29). The circumcised believers could be translated as the Jewish believers (John 7:22). Circumcision was to be performed eight days after a baby's birth (Gen 17: 9-14, Lev 12:3). This rite was carried out on all Jewish males to demonstrate their identity as part of God's covenant people. If the

eighth day after birth was a Sabbath, the circumcision would still be performed (Saakana 1991:66).

God required circumcision (1) as a sign of obedience to him in all matters, (2) as a sign of belonging to his covenant people. Once circumcised, there was no turning back. The man would be identified as a Jew forever, (3) as a symbol of “cutting off” the old life of sin, purifying one’s heart and dedicating oneself to God, and (4) possibly as a health measure. Circumcision, more than any other practice separated God’s people from their pagan neighbors. In Abraham’s day it was essential to develop the pure worship of the one true God (Saakana 1991:67).

During the council at Jerusalem there were new teachings. Peter had to address the disciples (Acts 15:7-20) that, “unless you are circumcised, you cannot be saved.” This was applied to all Gentiles obey the laws of Moses. This brought some disputes and debate among the disciples when Peter addressed them that, God made a choice among them that the Gentiles might hear from their lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knew their heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to the disciples. He made no distinction between the disciples and the gentiles, for he purified their hearts by faith. They believed it was through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that they were saved, just as they did. According to Wainwright (2002:41):

Christian baptism and the Jewish rite of circumcision since Christian baptism is there regarded as mediating the “circumcision of the heart” for which the prophets had hoped rather than as fulfilling the external rite of circumcision which did not possess that spiritual meaning. In the passage Paul stresses the place of faith in the operation of baptism.

The physical circumcision was not regarded as very important for every believer to go through it. Therefore they came into an agreement that, they shouldn’t make things difficult for those who were turning to God. They just told them to abstain from food pollution by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

In Zambia we have the Namwanga, the Kaondes and the Muslem communities who are the ones who are known for this custom. They have almost similar reasons for performing this ritual. Those who have gone through it are seen as moving from one stage to another higher stage, where they are being entrusted with adult issues, which they should not disclose to those who are not circumcised. It instills and reinforces the general values which keep society going. Ideals like courage, endurance, and traditional learning are embodied in the rituals. They are also being taught their rights privileges, responsibilities, and duties as adult members of the communities (Bourdillon 1990:48). It also gives the family and the community pride to produce such courageous boys who have gone through tough conditions. This is a cooperate custom, which the chief or the headman has to be told so that he can bless the boys and also observe sexual relationship with his wife to save the boys. In this post-modern world there is a need to re-construct the traditional way of doing circumcision and the teaching which should include the dangers of HIV/AIDS (Saakana 1991:67).

5.8.1 MARRIAGE

In order to understand marriage we need to understand the institution of family. What is a family? According to Steinmetz, Clavan & Stein, (1990:12) the definition of a family is a unit of intimate, transacting, and interdependent persons who share some values, goals, resources, and responsibilities for decisions as well as a commitment to one another over time. The functions of a family are universal because it fulfills the four functional prerequisites that a society needs in order to survive: sexual intimacy, mutual interdependence and the sharing of resources, goals and values. Marriage comes from this institution called family. The scriptures in Genesis talks of a man shall leave his family and join the woman who also leaves her family to join the man. Then they make their own family through God's blessing. There is a strong covenantal implication in the foundational text of Gen. 2:24: 'that is why a man leaves his father and mother

and attaches himself to his wife, and the two become one.’ The man who leaves his father and mother is said to sever a covenant with them. When he attaches himself to his wife, he creates himself a covenant (Thatcher 1999: 68).

Joubert (1996:45) understands that, Christian marriage where men and women are equal before God, that marriage is a religious institution which is placed within the framework of the couple’s relationship with God and that marriage has an eschatological dimension which implies the temporality of marriage subject to the fullness of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Marriage is seen as a divine vocation, a calling to provide a family home whereby God is educating the human race for the coming of his kingdom and the doing of his will. Indeed sick homes and families are symbols of the kingdom of God, a variation on the sacramental theme (Airhart & Bendroth 1996 97).

Since God arranged an unbreakable connection between procreation and union, the attempt to separate them is a grave sin against God. Conjugal love is a very special form of friendship whereby the spouses generously share everything with each other. Thatcher (1999:191) pointed out that, A good relationship provides support, good communication, good sexual expression, companionship and eventually an opportunity to build a joint life together. God ordained marriage for the couple’s happy moments, which provides the service of the kingdom of God. Joubert 1996:45 further pointed out that sexuality is a matter in which man and wife carry equal responsibility. The Christian marriage carries an accountability and responsibility before God. Marriage is supposed to be lived in respecting the autonomy of each individual. Marriage in the post-modernity is becoming more and more independent, associated with romance and freedom of choosing partners. Couples exercise their freedom even in decision making. They realize that this is a covenant between a man and a woman and also before God.

5.8.2 POLYGAMY

According to Storkey, polygamy and polyandry relate situations which certain men or women have power over the opposite sex (1979:208). Polygamy is common in Zambia among the Ngoni, Tumbuka and Tonga people. A man marries many wives as a sign of power and wealth and also having more children is an admirable achievement in society. God's intention of marriage in (Gen 2:24) was one husband, one wife. Cornes (1993:56) states that:

Not particularly because he wanted to tell us about one particular marriage, that of Adam and Eve; not only because he wanted to prepare for the story of the Fall in chapter 3. But principally because he wanted to explain human marriage, marriage of his one day since the expulsion from Paradise. God created men and women in a certain way, to fulfill certain purposes, and this is why marriage is as it is.

The Bible contains the gospel but this gospel was revealed in the context of human cultures. One therefore needs to distinguish between the gospel that leads to salvation and the culture of the people that God was dealing with. Polygamy was a feature of the culture within which the gospel was revealed. The first biblical incident of polygamy is Lamech's marriage to two women, Adah and Zillah (Gen 4:19-20). May be Lamech married two wives to display pride and lack of dependence on God.

Sarai and Hagar were the two wives of Abraham although the Bible does not present this as a polygamous marriage but rather Sarai's desire to have a male child to inherit her father's property. This is what forced Sarai to let Abraham take Hagar as his second wife. Sarai's action was unacceptable cultural practice in Assyria (Gen.16:7-12, 17-20). Polygamy could result from the Levirate marriages which entered into to raise sons for a brother or relative who had died without leaving an heir. This cultural practice is found in many African societies, e.g. the Ngoni people, the Tumbukas, the Tonga people.

Even though polygamy is being practiced, it had its own problems such as insecurity among the wives and competitive lives among the wives, even going to an extent of applying a love potion to win the husband's heart. (Gen 29:16). In Africa it is very common especially in polygamous marriages for women to win their husbands' hearts by using some roots or leaves from trees. It brings hatred among the wives. It brings exertions on the part of the husband. Most times children are rivals too to name a few problems. Paul discusses the qualification of a deacon: he must be in a monogamous marriage. This suggests there was still the existence of polygamy. In Mark 10:1-2, 6, Jesus refers back to the creation of one man and one woman as representing God's ideal marriage in Gen 3:1-8 Hay & Stichter (1995:90) stated that, that is why most women have resolved to marry in church or legal marriage so that they can avoid conflicts.

Storkey (1979: 207) explains that, "Thus the male does not equal man, nor does the female; both are needed for the completeness of mankind. This complement is not narrowly sexual, but enters into all the groups and activities in which men and women participate." And when he talked about sexual truth which should be between husband and wife he concluded that, "sexual joy that lasts is only to be found when the act of sexual union tell the truth, and that means within it is a statement of a full, unconditional union of man and woman" (Storkey 1979:206). This is why polygamous marriages have a problem because truth among the husband and wives can never be achieved. There is always one who is always hurt.

Storkey explains the basic element in the Christian understanding of marriage is that it is a created structure of two people leaving, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen 2:24). There is a structural union, a holy estate into which partners enter. A man and woman recognize that God has made them for each other where they enter into a union

which they both need to respect. Each one's body becomes for the other (1 Cor 7:4). There is no room for polygamy or polyandry (:1979:208).

(1Cor. 6: 15-18) Do you know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! (16) Do you know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, the two will become one flesh (Gen 2:24). (17) But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. (18) Free from sexual immorality. Cornes explains what, Paul (16) is saying that they are much more deeply involved with the prostitute than they imagine. Certainly they are not married to them, but they have gone a long way towards the full union that marriage is. This is misalliance, this extramarital union, would be bad enough for anyone; but it is particularly ugly and morally obnoxious when it involves a Christian's body, since that body is a member of Christ (15). This can also concern a polygamous marriage. One man plus three wives cannot be one but four (Gen. 2:24). These other wives in a polygamous marriage according 1Cor (16) are regarded as prostitutes. Therefore, these cultural practices, of allowing a wife or a husband to sleep with another person to achieve certain purposes, violate the scripture's Christian principles (Cornes 1993:67).

5.8.3 THE FAMILY AS A VICTIM OF CULTURAL PRACTICES

There are so many things which have over run the family in this post modern world of social constructivism. Every member of the family is at risk, things are just getting too fast to take people to the world of unknown. When something is wrong there is always someone to blame but if something good happens it is always I did it. With family issues who is to blame or reward? Let us understand what is a family? A family is more than two people related to each other by blood or marriage. African communities value the roles of an extended family where an individual does not exist. It is believed that an individual exists because of people. Joe Kapolyo a Zambian pointed out that:

An extended family in Zambia is infused of all benefits of a fully-fledged social security without any bewildering red tape. The family is a refuge in both urban and rural areas, and the only institution providing some form of social security (2005:131).

Zambia is at the moment going through social problems such as. HIV and AIDS, poverty and patriarchal crisis which are rising e.g. child defilement, rape, domestic violence etc. Looking at some named problems above, all involve the family. How does society survive if the family is the one which is in trouble? Can the church alone stand up and take up the task of putting the family in its proper place in God's intended plan? Therefore, Magezi and Rouw (2006:64-79) suggested that: "Merging the African family and the church family systems" can provide an urgent need for Practical Theology in the context of cultural practice, poverty and HIV and AIDS in Africa.

An African Extended family is the same as the biblical Abraham's extended family comparing to Genesis 12:5. Abraham took his wife Sarai and Lot his nephew when going to Canaan. An inclusion of someone into the family or the family of faith brings a big commitment in one's kinship or body of Christ. It demands encouragement, support, and sharing with fellow members. The Bible portrays the family of God made up of brothers and sister saved by the blood of Jesus who are called the children of God (John 1:12).

The extended family emphasis is on sharing, meeting needs equally, and generosity strongly recalls the economic ethic of society and has roots in its household ethos. In this way even the body of believers is about to support the people in need. Kapolyo (2005:133) commented that:

One would have assumed that the similarity in attributes between the African extended family and the body of Christ the Church would make it easier for the African Church to live out the concept of fellowship

more fully. But sadly the reality in many places is that the experience of 'fellowship' in the natural family is so real and exclusive that it hinders and discourages fellowship in the church. The sense of solidarity stemming from common ancestry is so strong that it acts as a barrier to the idea of extending the same sense of community to total strangers. Tribal churches live on this weakness.

There are some cultural practices in the Zambian extended family which are distorted especially in marriage, where a wife is always treated as a stranger while the relatives takes the prime role in decision making. The aunts, grandmothers, members of society have to decide who should do what to whom? why? For example Tiyike's grandmother had to determine who had to do the ritual of *kuika mwana kumphasa*(strengthening the baby) with Tiyike, and also Malumbase's aunt had to decide for Malumbese to go for the initiation ceremony to the village where she was sexually abused by the *fisi*.

Barrenness has been an issue in most African families and is mostly the woman's fault. "Among the Batwana people they never believe a man can be infertile" (Gabobonwe 2005:68). A man is believed to be perfect and nobody can suspect him to be infertile. Only if he marries a woman who has a child already. This is where the top secret of *fisi* comes in to play. It is unfortunate that Tibale is blamed at the same time she is HIV positive. How does Practical Theology address such issues? According to Bujo (1992:115):

When marriage is discussed in Christian circles in Africa, the subject of "trial marriages" nearly always crops up a major stumbling-block. The reason for this is that, in African society, the achievement of life, as commanded by the ancestors, is an affair of the whole community. In the societies of Africa, a man who dies childless falls into oblivion. He will be unable to find happiness in the next world because, having no children to honor him, he is cut off from the family community.

Although trial-marriage (testing of the fertility of the woman before marriage) was a violation of Christian principle which says no sex before marriage, many theologians tried to solve this problem but they ended up with the attitude that they should not be very harsh on people within trial marriages since they are going to be married. Buhlmann was regarded to be too uncritical in deciding with the defenders of trial marriages, who suggested that marriage should be

done in stages of having a trial then later the church should accompany the couple until the official marriage (Bujo 1992:117).

It seems infertility is still a problem which the church is finding difficulty to address, as a result some marriages have resulted in divorce or polygamy (Bujo 1992:199). Gabobonwe after hearing the grievances of some couples with infertility problems suggested that: The church should take a crucial role to help the affected couples, move beyond an experience of barrenness and find meaning and purpose in a new life blessed and filled with God's grace. By being aware, the church must reach out more and bring new awareness every time and to every 'special day' that comes in a year e. g. Mother's day, Women's days, Christmas days and other such days. Such awareness will easily unlock doors of communications among members of congregations about this subject (2005:73). Since barrenness has psycho-social effects and the church can journey with the affected and ease these effects on individuals and their emotional functioning, emotional reactions and marital relationships (2005:88). This would help to calm down the pain from society. Selling expressed that, "before one spoke of a man planting seeds in a woman, we even still use the word semen in our vocabulary. Women, on the other hand provided fertile ground (2001:152).

Society accepts and even promotes a culture where the control of fertility and sexual experiences before and outside marriage are seen as legitimate. Many young people find themselves drawn into this culture and find it deeply attractive. The church in contrast to these trends, champions the values of fidelity, sexual dignity and the need to practice periods of celibacy and abstinence. It highlights the danger to the individual's integrity and dignity involved in the exploitation of the gift of sexuality. The church promotes the institution of life long, monogamous marriage and the place of a fruitful sexual union in this context (Selling 2001:157).

5.8.4 DEATH

Death is scary, death drains ones energy the moment one hears a loved one is dead. In most African cultures the body cannot be touched, the house where death has visited has to go through cleansing, even the members of the family have to bathe with some medicine to clean themselves. In the scriptures, Aaron's position among the Israelites was of standing between the living and the dead. This was a role of a priest as an intermediary (Numbers 16:47-48). His actions prevented further death among the people. Cleansing after contact with death (Num. 11:33, 14:37, 16:33-35) bodies had to be done. To come in contact with a dead body was seen as a major threat to the holiness of the camp along with the fear of uncleanness reaching near the tent of meeting (Num.17:13).

So God provided a ritual that would cleanse people who had been contaminated and enable them to approach the tent of meeting without fear of death. The ritual for cleansing is described in detail (Num. 19:1-22). Cleansing (Eze. 36:25) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean, I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

Death is considered to be the last stage of someone life while for others it is a transit to another life after this death. Most Christians believe in the resurrection of the body to eternal life for those who lived a life of faith in Christ. Bujo states that, "Through his death Jesus became the means of salvation. His resurrection also belongs essentially to the same message" (1992:81). The death and the resurrection of Jesus gives hope to Christians even as they are dying.

If the dying person is unconscious, the commendation may be to pray for the family and friends gathered around, as a way of their saying goodbye. People have been known to remember things said while they were unconscious; thus the dying person may be more present in the ritual than you think. If the person is conscious, some songs, prayers, and words leading to salvation can be shared,

and also words of encouragement from the Bible may provide one dimension of a deeply personal communication among those gathered.

When death is foreseen, the ritual care of the dying person's circle of friends and family can say some of the things to the dying person such as what they value most about her, what their favorite memories are, why they would want to sing a certain song. The pastor or family members can take this time to make sure that children also get a chance to tell how they feel about saying good-bye. According to Power (1990:146) "Christians who died continued to be partners in this hope, and this was the basis for their commemoration in the gatherings of the church liturgy or in visits to their places of burial." Christians remain hopeful to meet their beloved in an after life when they die too. Power (1990:147) encourages Christians that:

In short, devotion to the dead in this early period of church history is an expression of the abiding communion in a common hope that transcends the boundaries of death and that is rooted in the remembrance of the paschal mystery. This hope is expressed in such images as priestly people, parousia, final judgment, resurrection from the dead, the new heaven and the new earth, and the defeat of the ultimate enemy which is death itself. This is the most powerful and important of all.

This death is not seen simply as the physical ending of the life span but as a destructive force of storm which surprises and shocks the people always. According to Bregman, (1999:47). "Death is natural: it is a part of life. We should accept death as a natural part of life. Like birth, death is a natural event." He continued by saying it was faith and the liturgical expression of that faith that makes Christian funerals different from that of pagan. It was faith that saw to the preparation of the corpse in a setting of prayer; it was faith that expressed itself in psalms during the procession with the body; it was faith that rendered the church its immediate surroundings the Christian place of burial (1999:48).

Death does not simply end life. When it conquers, it is a power that makes nothing out of life, or makes life nothing. Today people more readily believe that hope for the overpowering of this destructive force on earth is closely allied with eschatological hope, in whatever this promises by way of divine finality.

5.9 THE DEMAND FOR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL CLEANSING

1.9.2 Clean and unclean

According to Exodus 21:23, clean is distinguished from “holy” clean as the condition of doing what is right with all society, while “holy” is the approach to God. Being clean simply makes a person fit and suitable for entering into the worship of God. Cleanliness is not the same as holiness. Without cleanliness there can be no Holiness. Thus to be holy one has to first experience the condition of ritual and ceremonial cleanliness by means of washing, fasting and abstaining from certain foods or sexual union. When we talk of holiness, it means a person is totally set apart for God’s use (Blakely 1994:405-407).

Most African societies believe that being “clean” brings blessings to the community while being “unclean” brings a curse to the society. Or why a mother may be unclean for forty days after the birth of a boy, eight days after the birth of a girl. After childbirth a woman is considered unclean, she is bleeding, child birth blood or menstrual blood is seen as dirty or contaminated. Approaching a wife after childbirth was violating the customs of the society. That is why when a baby is born it had to go through a ritual of *kuika mwana kumphasa* so that the baby can be protected from the sickness called ‘*mdulo*.’ The ancestors will be angry and will leave the baby without protection together with the mother. Tiyyike’s obedience to do the ritual was a sign of obedience even if she was putting herself in danger of HIV (Blakely 1994:405).

The period of uncleanness used to last twice as long after the birth of a girl in the Jewish culture. After the first week, the uncleanness may be said to be milder for the child if a boy, who must be circumcised. At the end of her purifying of the children of either sex sacrifices are to be offered, which are a combination of burnt and sin offerings to make atonement for her. These may be a lamb and a pigeon or a dove except in the case of poverty, when two pigeons or doves may be substituted. Birth, like menstruation, is naturally regarded as unclean and sometimes as demon-caused. (Gen. 17, 24:4, and 34:15). Hence the woman must be set apart for hygienic reasons.

According to African belief, “hot” can be compared to uncleanness and “cold” can be compared to cleanliness. *Mdulo* is a punishment inflicted by the ancestral spirits. It’s thought of as an automatic consequence of certain misbehavior. It is believed to be inflicted by the *mizimu* (*spirits*) and not caused by impersonal forces. Therefore if you commit adultery your child will die, a pregnant woman will die in child-birth, moreover God will be angry. This belief is rooted among many African cultures, e g. Chewas, Ngonis, Tumbukas, and Bembas etc. The symptoms of *mdulo* are said to be swelling of the cheeks, legs, swelling and hardening of the abdomen, even if the doctors diagnosed anemia due to hookworms, malaria, dysentery, bilharzias and chronic malnutrition (Blakely 1994:75).

Usually sexual activity, sexual fluids and especially menstruation are believed to be highly mysterious and powerful and therefore dangerous. This is expressed by classifying them as “hot”. People who have abstained for some time and above all small children are on the contrary “cool.

Among the Chewa and some other societies is the belief that salt is a medium by which the mysterious power spread from someone who is hot and can reach out to other people and cause *mdulo* (Masinga1995:12). A menstruating woman for

example is not allowed to put salt in the food she is preparing for her family. To put salt would cause *mdulo*. Salt was chosen to be a medium because it was an everyday and indispensable commodity. Salt is like the blood of the food and is associated with the bad blood of the woman during her periods. If a woman is adding bad blood, the salt also turns bad and has the same effect as the bad blood of the woman. Young girls who get mature with their first menstrual period are not to eat salt things until some roots are added to their food. They are not allowed to eat with anyone because they are believed to be contaminated with blood.

Some Christians believe they are delivered by the blood of Jesus. They feel salt has no effect upon them or any member of the family. Hygienically they observe cleanliness. Some women use a teaspoon to apply salt to some food.

5.9.3 HIV AND AIDS THE LEPROCY OF TODAY

Many human beings in all societies have bodily defects that cause them to suffer exclusion and isolation. In some African cultures, disability of any kind is seen as a punishment for evil deeds and as a result it leads to rejection. Orphanages are mostly full of disabled children who have been abandoned. Millions of people in Africa who suffer from HIV/ and AIDS are often treated as outcasts (Mash et al 2009:4-5). According to Matthew 8:1-4, we see that, in Israel, leprosy was ground for rejection. People with leprosy were officially certified unclean and excluded from society. When approaching healthy people, they were obliged to shout, 'unclean! Unclean!' so that the others could avoid being contaminated by contact (Lev 13:45-46).

The man with leprosy came to Jesus boldly and humbly although he risked ridicule and worse. In humility he knelt before Jesus and asked him to do what only He could. In response Jesus healed the man. He reached out and touched

him, something that no healthy man would do to a leper (Matt.8:3, Lev 5:3). Jesus also showed his respect for the law by directing the man to go to the priest in order to be restored to his true social status of being clean. This passage shows that Jesus has the power to deal with apparently incurable diseases and the compassion to restore desperate human beings struggling with social stigma, isolation, and loneliness (Mash et. al. 2009:27).

Mash et. al. (2009:21) Says discrimination, fear, denial stigma and rejection are some of the negative social responses that people living with HIV and AIDS and their affected families get from those close to them; in families, communities, places of work and churches. Such negative responses lead to anxiety and prejudice against the infected and affected groups. Both the infected and affected or even those suspected of having the HIV virus are rejected by their families, loved ones, communities, employers or churches Mash et. al. (2009:24) Says Christians must confront the sinful nature of stigma and then find hope in our scriptures and the traditions in order to communicate God's grace mercy and compassion in our actions. Our challenge is to act on what we believe in order that all may have life and have it abundantly.

5.9.4 A CONTAMINATED PARTNER

In 1 Corinthians 7:12-14, Paul rules that believing partners should not separate from their unbelieving partners simply because they are unbelievers. He argues that in marriage, as far as he is concerned, the unbelieving partner becomes sanctified through the believing partner. This type of sanctification is the fear of the defilement he is referring in 6:15 and is thinking of the way in which objects were sanctified by being in contact with priests in Exodus 29:27; Lev 6:18. He also sets to rest any fear that children of such mixed marriages are ceremonially unclean, stressing that they, too, are holy.

Mash et al. (2009:26) Says, Jesus Christ is the model of what it means to live a life that demonstrates the sinfulness of stigma. He himself was stigmatized. He bore the wounds of stigma on his body. Yet his entire life, his ministry, death and resurrection offer us a great resource for countering stigma. The Gospel show us a person who has a particular concern for the suffering, the sick and the marginalized, who moves with ease across social barriers, whose compassion is so profound that it touches, heals and gives new life to those who experience stigma disease and exclusion.

5.9.5 THE NAZIRITE

According to Acts 21:23-24, four men had made a religious vow because Paul was going to participate with them in the vow, (it seems Paul was asked to pay for some of the required expenses), he would need to take part in the purification ceremony for entering the temple. Paul submitted himself to this Jewish custom to keep peace in the Jerusalem church.

God instituted the Nazirite vow for people who wanted to devote some time exclusively to serving him. This vow could be taken for as little as thirty days or as long as a lifetime. It was voluntary. The vow included three distinct restrictions: (1) he must abstain from wine and fermented drink; (2) the hair could not be cut and the beard could not be shaved, but if someone dies suddenly in his presence, thus defiling the hair he has dedicated, he must shave his head on the day of cleansing, the seventh day, (Numbers 6:9) (3) Touching a dead body was prohibited. The purpose of a Nazirite vow was to raise up a group of leaders devoted completely to God. This was a way of maintaining purification (Blakely 1994:442).

In most African societies, shaving of the hair is done the following day after the burial. All the family members gather together, men, women and children of that

family. Two scissors are prepared, one for the men and boys and one for women and girls. It is believed that this is a way of cleansing the community of the dead man's spirit. All the hair being cut is collected and is being thrown in an endless deep hole. Some families even introduce some herbal water for everyone present to wash their hands. This is for protection of individuals from the dead man's spirit. This is also a way of purifying the family from the contamination of a corpse which has been present in one of the homes (Blakely 1994:402).

5.10 CHRIST ORDER FOR RITE OF PASSAGE

5.10.1 Luke 4:1-13; In nearly all religions the most important occasions in the natural progression from birth to death (rites of passage) are marked with special ceremonies and celebrations. In Christianity these rites include baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals. The ceremonies associated with rites of passage from one stage of life to another generally involve the separation of the person from his or her usual surroundings, his or her preparation for a new task or way of life in society, and finally his or her reception into this group, community or society. During such rites of passage the person may be exposed to danger in order to test whether he or she is mature enough to face this new life. In the case of the encounter between Jesus and the devil, the devil tested Jesus before the face of God in order to determine whether Jesus was truly human and truly the son of God.

In Luke 2: 21-23, it is a time of crisis in Jesus life and a point of transition. It marks a rite of passage. In Luke 2:42 and 2:52, Jesus was a twelve year-old child, who was increasing in wisdom and in years. In Luke 3:21, when he presents himself for baptism, he is thirty years old but still a private person. But In Luke 4:14, after completing the rites of passage, a dramatic change has taken place: he has become a public figure, a prophet in Israel, with a new, clearly defined role and status. Then there was an encounter between Jesus and the

devil (Luke 4:2). During this confrontation, Jesus demonstrated that he is worthy to bear the titles of Savior, Christ and Lord; that is he is totally loyal to God's affairs and able to function worthily. Therefore immediately after this rite of passage, Jesus unrolled the scroll, read from Isaiah 61:1-2, and declared, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21).

5.10.2 BAPTISM

According to Ramshaw (1987:35-36), baptism is a ground of our identity as Christians. Baptism establishes that identity by incorporating us individually into the body of Christ, which includes both the community that stands as surety for us and the worldwide church. All worship is a celebration of our common baptism, for it is a corporate enactment of our identity as those united in the death and resurrection of Christ (Weil 1983:45-46) The resurrection God's validation of Jesus as focus and symbol of the household from the onset of the gospels, Jesus total immersion in the changes initiated through his baptism underscored the belief that he did not exist apart from God and the establishment of God's household (Malina 1993:113).

John was baptizing the Jews. A strict, monastic sect of Judaism practiced baptism for purification, but normally only for non-Jews. (Gentiles were baptized when they converted to Judaism). When the Pharisees questioned John as who gave him authority to baptize people of God as if they were Gentiles, John said, "I baptize with water. "John was merely helping the people perform," symbolic act of repentance. But soon one would come who would truly forgive sins and something only the son of God, the Messiah, could do (Jn1:25-26). In Matt.3:6, Christian sacrament, was a ritual washing with water, symbolizing a cleansing from sin, linked with repentance and admission into the community of faith, symbolic for being filled with the Holy Spirit. In baptism a person makes the transition from being outside to being inside the Christian community, or as in when two people move from one relationship to another. The rite is ceremonious

or ritualistic, which marks a person's passage from one category to another (Weil 1983:70).

A religion has a ritual dimension. Christianity usually involves its followers in acts of worship, praying, singing, hymns, hearing the appointed passages from the Bible and such sacraments (rituals) in which God's grace is conveyed, as baptism and communion (the Lords' supper). Whoever is taking these two sacraments should go through a special heart cleansing (confession of the past deeds against God). The Bible talks about consecration or purification (Weil 1983:69).

5.10.3 LORD'S SUPPER OR HOLY COMMUNION

If baptism is the core of Christian identity, then Holy Communion is the banquet in which we receive the festal robe, the family meal to which our adoption entitles us. In it, we as the people of God exercise the priestly function to which we were anointed (Ramshaw 1987: 38).

The Lord's Supper began with Jesus taking some bread and offering a prayer of thanksgiving, followed by the declaration, "this is my body, which is for you and a command, do this in remembrance of me, which means that the practice will carry on (1Corinthians 11:23b-24). Then Jesus took the wine and made the remarkable statement that this cup is the new covenant in my blood (11:25). The bread and wine symbolize the start of a covenant that God is now entering into with human beings, a covenant that is very different from the old one. It is sealed with Jesus own blood. Jesus makes it clear that the passing of the cup should also be a regular practice, although he does not specify how often it should be done (Weil 1983:53). The partakers of Holy Communion should be careful not to eat the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner (11:27) through their lack of love, facetious spirit, and contempt for one another. To do this would be to sin against

Christ himself as much as it would be to sin against his church. It is thus important that before taking part in the meal they each check their motives as well as their moral and spiritual condition (11:28) (Weil 1983:43).

5.11 THE MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS WHICH PROPEL A PERSON TO DO THESE CULTURAL PRACTICES.

5.11.1 CULTURAL FACTORS

Culture plays a very important role in the society where beliefs and customs are concerned. As we know that culture is not static but it is dynamic, what was valued then may be discarded this time. The big black licking pot of these cultural practices, need to be addressed and responsibly acknowledged and faced. The cultural motives propel when the cultural interests are threatened, it is possible that the ritual maybe sought to achieve the communal stability then culture will dictate that the ritual should be done in order to bring harmony.

Blakely (1994:142-143) writes about tribal world view that “life is mysteriously rooted in and can be traced back to the supernatural world which is a part of the cosmic order.” Therefore Blakely argues that “the stability to commune with the spirit world, will determine how much, one can acquire and be able to control one’s own destiny, events, and nature.” In some African cultures the dead communicate with the living through dreams or spiritual visions as they dance and sing. Those who do not want misfortunes, follow these messages more serious than the Bible. The cultural practices may still be believed in by some older people who still pay allegiance to old traditions. It is also clear that, since the dawn of the new young and God fearing people, society may let the practice fade away.

5.11.2 RELIGIOUS FACTORS

African Traditional Religions sometimes attests to the belief among Africans of powerful dead or the living dead. Moreau (2002:166) states that it is a world of dos and don'ts and secrecy and scheming. In the quest to please the ancestors the African person can go a mile to sleep (sexual cleansing) with the person he does not love in order to appease the spirits which are very much feared in society. Sometimes they believe in washing themselves in medicines given by the witch doctors or herbalists According to Brakely et al (1994:199-202) an animal or chicken blood is needed for a sacrifice to purify the family or the community.

5.11.3 ECONOMIC FACTORS

Hunger for money, the business and economic world has been one of the most serious and common motivations. I Timothy 6: 10 states clearly that, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wondered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grief's." Here it is not money per say which is evil but the love that sends many money seekers to go out of their way. For example July 2009, on Zambia National Broad Cooperation (ZNBC) a witch doctor gave two money seekers from Angola poisonous medicine. One man died at the grave yard where they performed a ritual and the other was hospitalized and the witch doctor was brought to book by the policemen. Moreau (2002:166) stated that, a majority of business men are afraid of mysterious natural catastrophic happenings that render them out of control thus resort to economic motivation that promises more returns. In this world of economy, money ties up with power. Money speaks more than works.

5.11.4 PERSONAL FACTORS

According to Moreau (2002:169)

Many terms are used to describe power, power such as life force, vital force, life essence and dynamism. Power can be obtained by rituals, charms fetishes, ceremonies, witchcraft and sorcery or directly from powerful people or the spirits, and it is transferable. This all consuming concept of power is critical in our understanding of how traditional Africans assess the potency or the efficacy of any new religion. Christianity must develop a theology of power that addresses the traditional theological conception of power and recognizes how this law of power operates in traditional Africa.

In Africa many ordinary people also long for much such power and those who have gone deeper in their consultation with witchdoctors end up winning by scaring other people through magic power. This is scary as others have ended up bound to evil spirits and being slaves of darkness. Practical Theology through pastoral care and counseling should mobilize the powerful skills of empowering believers to discover their power store house in looking to Christ and his Lordship. In Christianity the Lordship of Christ is supposed to cover the need for power. The Scripture states that, “You dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world (1st John 4:4).” People of the community are ruled by fear and are looking in wrong places for power. Therefore there is need for the church to develop a theology that addresses this power which scares the community.

5.12 EVIL AGAINST GOOD

Means (2000:98) describes the way “Evil creates and builds on brokenness in the world by threatening attacking, destroying, and desecrating the integrity of the relational nature of life. Further, exploiting the natural occurring divisions within and between people, evil leads to increased fragmentation, alienation, and polarization which turn people against themselves, others and their natural environments, and their God. Evil works against reconciliation and healing is the chief obstacle and threat to the wholeness and interconnectedness of God’s

creation. Alienation becomes the order of the day when harmony is disturbed by cultural practices which cause pain in people's lives. Therefore the church through Practical Theology needs to care and counsel its people. "The ministry of oversight and nurture offered by a church community to its members, including acts of discipline, support, comfort, and celebration" (Gerkin 1997:126).

In most cases to talk about salient cultural practices is a taboo, it is like you are bringing a bad omen to the people who are affected. As a result this brings loneliness to a person who was involved in such a practice such as a sexual cleansing ritual which concerns someone having sex with the remaining spouse of the deceased. Guilt will also be the order of day. Such a person will need help and healing that even the church finds it to be a problem to deal with. Gerkin suggests "A primary function of the Christian Community is that of creating and maintaining a climate of relationship within which all members of the community are understood and cared for. To experience such a community is to overcome the loneliness that pervades contemporary culture" Gerkin 1997:126).

5.13 A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION ON RITES OF PASSAGE

There are many fears which surround people today and the way they behave or act. We have seen the similarities which trigger certain behavior which is found in the Bible and also in our culture. According to the creation story in Genesis One, we see ourselves created in the image of God, which means we are special people before God. God used soil to create humans (Gen1:26-27). God shared his responsibility towards nature with humans. Humans were told to care for nature and not to destroy it. There was a good relationship between humans and nature until the time when humans sinned against God. Fear developed and they started running away from God's presence. It is this very fear which has made humans to do certain rituals to purify themselves.

God loved humans so much that he provided a redemption story through Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15, John 3:16). Humans needed liberation from so many cultural practices which have led so many people to death. As humans, we are always tempted to be misled by our heritage and so be blinded to the will of God. People need detailed explanations about the kind of righteousness that pleases God (Romans 9:30-10:4). Paul explains how one can achieve this righteousness which brings true purification.

By faith in Christ, the way of salvation is not difficult and inaccessible, but easy to attain (Rom 10:5). What is required is to respond in faith to the gospel message by confessing that Jesus is Lord and by believing that God raised him from the dead (10:8-10). This righteousness is accessible to anyone who believes; Paul quotes from Joel 2:32, making the point that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Accepting Christ is the factor that unites people of all backgrounds. In order to attain this righteousness one has to hear the gospel and will be used by God to help others hear the same message (Romans 10:15b). Young (1986:48) quotes Robert who believed in the Christology to reach so many communities even in Africa. He saw Jesus identifying himself with the oppressed.

Practical Theology should come up with alternative rites or Christian symbols people can use to re-story the traditional cultural practices and rituals. Practices which deals with protection from mdulo (chest pains) evil spirits, witchcraft, dead person spirits etc such as kuika mwana ku mphasa, kutha cinamwali, sexual cleansing etc Instead of putting the baby to the mat, the baby can go through prayers with the parents and then anoint the baby with oil, or sprinkling water on both parents and the baby since water symbolizes cleansing. The same can be done to a new initiate and also to a widow or widower. Also Baptism and Holy Communion can be taken too by new initiate and also by widows or widowers since all these deals with cleansing of ones heart.

Cultural Practices which deals with pleasure like pulling of labia manola, dry sex, circumcision, and polygamy Bible studies, should be conducted to discuss cultural practices and the gospel. Then people will realize where they go wrong as a result they will treat their partners with respect and love.

Now people can confess their sins through Jesus Christ who is faithful and just to forgive them. The death of Jesus Christ was a very big sacrifice made for the entire human race. Jesus paid by his blood for human beings to be set free. He brought hope into their lives. Therefore many people who were still bound to rituals, sacrifices, purification rituals are now free in Jesus Christ. Jesus treated the marginalized equally. That is why he ate with women, touched them, healed them, spoke to them, although society treated them as nothing (Mash et al 2009:32).

In the ritual systems most of the Christians grew up in the church with Christian life-cycle rites which were provided for adults, such as marriage, child baptism etc. The normative pattern implied by the Christian ritual structure was baptism, confirmation, marriage, children, death (Ramshaw 1987:49). Most women who have been delivered by believing in Jesus Christ are now free indeed. Fear is no longer with them.

5.15. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN ADDRESSING CULTURAL PRACTICES

In order for us to assign or expect the church to do something for the people we need to understand what the church is ? A Systematic Theologian Wayne Gruden (1994:853) defines the term “Church” as “the community of believers for all times.” This definition qualifies only those believers who are really born again. Grudem (1994:855-856) states that the “Church is both the visible and the

invisible.” The visible church is what people can see when one is led by the Holy Spirit for example the assembly of the believers to worship God where the fruits of the Holy Spirit are portrayed. The invisible is mainly appreciated by God who sees the true heart of man if it has a genuine motive to worship God in Truth. The Christians who are led by the Holy Spirit to do God’s will. Erickson (2002:1041) points out that the word church means “belonging to God” or “gathering of God’s people” God’s people are those who have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus who died on the cross, through faith in him they are called children of God (John 3:12).

Erickson (2002:1044) pointed out that the church has a purpose to fulfill, while Brudem states the three functions of the church namely, “ministry of God, ministry to believers, and ministry to the world.” Ministry to God, worshiping God in truth and in spirit and having fellowship with God. Psalms 100:1-4 these verses express man’s position of exaltation to God. We also have a duty to serve the body of Christ, the believers we are accountable to God for their spiritual growth until they reach the stage when they can also care for others. Matt.12 28-31 talks about loving both God and man. Evangelism is to reach out to the lost people. This pleases God so much since He cares for each lost soul. That is why he gave each believer a task to fulfill which is to “go, teach people of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit...I will be with you” (Matt 28:19-20). As believers we need to care for others so that they can know who God is. Christians should take this task seriously so that even people who have AIDS can know God.

Practical Theology is to live and do theology with the people. When people are victims of cultural practices and are HIV positive what should be the response of the church to sustain people with the word of Hope. The church should provide its believers with an opportunity to walk with those who are suffering, to be

compassionate towards those who are called the “Eve” of this modern era who are looked on as if they are the ones who brought suffering in this world. When death is about to visit them they should be supported, strengthened and receive hope for the next life. The church is challenged to be a healing community of both body and spirit. The healing Community itself will need to be healed by the forgiveness of Christ.

Richardson (2006:50) urges the Church, “as an integral, responsible and caring part of the body of politic, the Christian Community must operate proactively and collaboratively in seeking improved structural provision for people living with HIV and AIDS. This can also include people who have been the victims of Sexual harassment, and divorce because they are infertile. Hendricks feels that people are called by God, to fulfill a purpose at a particular time and particular place where ever they are (2002:57).

The church and its theology are the conscience of society in setting moral and ethical standards. When a traumatic issue has transpired in a given situation of an individual upon hearing that he/she is HIV positive or he/she has gone through a traumatic cultural practice, family and society should act as mentors in some areas of life, the church must proclaim and profile the sanctity of life to be one word in programs of Christian education. Healing has to do with bringing wholeness, restoration and completeness, and bringing perfect health.

In this case of transforming societal values and purge the unwanted practices, time and space must be given to people and specify the issue from which they must refrain, otherwise the process can be self defeating. The process of talking to people about what they hold dearly and after that help them to renounce their bad ways at a voluntary level is a big success for deconstruction. The process of deconstruction must be given a chance, but somehow be controlled, as some may forever be begging for space and time to decide. Pollard (1997:73) is right to say, that insisting in giving people space and time for the process of change will

occur smoothly. Reason with the person or the people until the person is convinced to make a change. Practical Theology can help to develop a new paradigm within itself to enable appropriate counseling to address African cultural practices and to assist the people who have gone through these practices through Bible studies, conversation and discussion.

5.16 GENERAL CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The social-constructionist and narrative research sets the scene in motion and waits anxiously for the alternatives to develop. This is the action of hope in the lives of the hopeless. This is more like a Cinderella narrative which ends with a life of hope and joy. The Post Modern theology aims to provide fresh insights, answering the existing anomalies and providing new meaning by moving beyond modernism (Herholdt 1998:218). The whole world has been shaken with the coming of HIV and AIDS.

The study was divided into two main parts (a) Literature study and Empirical Research Interpretation. HIV and AIDS in Africa. Relevance and Contributions, Research aims and objectives, Research Question, Research Paradigm, Methodology and Research Design. The main aim of the research was to reach a holistic understanding of women's untold stories about salient cultural practices of African rites of passage, which promotes and hinders the spread of HIV and AIDS. Since culture is important for individuals as well as society, therefore HIV and AIDS programmers should incorporate culture into their programs of prevention, intervention and care. I therefore had to break down the main aim into the following objectives for discussion:

To explore and describe through an empirical study the nature of cultural practices which are in relation to the spread of HIV and AIDS among women and also the people of Zambia. Most people are very much affected by the influence

of their culture. This research was a bit tricky for me because to let people speak on salient culture practices is more like a taboo. Because most African cultures don't discuss sexual issues, these are things which a person might think do not exist and yet they are the top secrets which are swept under the carpet in most African societies. At first it was very tough for me to find some people who would open up and talk about these salient cultural practices described in chapter two.

After hearing the statistics of our Zambian community how it is burying people everyday, it has now become everyone's concern the way in which the community is losing its young people, our children and grand children. In order for me to seek the hidden stories of women I did not see the need for the people to continue keeping quiet hiding some root causes of death in their communities. Therefore I used the Reformed Church in Zambia Bible study approach to explore cultural practices and narrative approach to gather the stories of women who were victims of cultural practices.

To my surprise after the sub groups focus group discussions, most women came up and opened up to tell their stories of how some of their family members became victims of these cultural practices. The focus groups described how these cultural practices affected people's lives especially in this time of HIV and AIDS. I thought it would be important for Practical Theology to come up with a model which will address people's issues which they don't want to disclose, the real hidden story in them. Perhaps this model of focus group discussions can be a good model to let the sub-groups focus discuss the culture practices at length as people open up. It also enables all the group members see the areas of weakness in their lives which need to adjustment.

This is another way of seeing things through another eye where discrimination of age or gender is excluded. I deliberately included men in the first focus group because nearly all cultural practices are done by both men and women and in

some cultural practices men are indirectly involved e.g. *kukuna* the motive for women to do this is to please their partners to enjoy sex. If you wait to teach the youth tomorrow it might be too late.

The media is always faster than we expect, it is thus the right tool to use in order to disclose things of concern in our children lives. The sub-group focus group discussion allows an individual participant to know that she/he is not the only one who is going through such problems. It also encourages an individual to open up, as others shared their stories. There is a saying among the Ngoni people which says that “the person who is stepping on the other person won’t know until the person who is stepped on shouts, “you have stepped on me.” Not until the men in the patriarchal world are told that what they are doing to women is not right, (by the women themselves), the men will not realize their mistakes.

The culture of a group or society is the array of beliefs, customs, ideas, and values as well as the material artifacts, objects and instruments which are acquired by individuals as members of the group or society. Culture may differ but contain the same practices. Some elements of culture are universal. Culture gives the members of a society a feeling of unity with the group and enables them to live and work together without too much confusion and mutual interference. A rite of passage is a transition from one state to another. The whole life of humanity is associated in the four stages birth, puberty, marriage and death. It is believed that a person passes through three major phases of rite of passage, Separation, Transition, and Incorporation. Transition goes with pregnancy and initiation. Separation goes with funeral ceremonies and Incorporation goes with marriages.

To interpret the women’s untold stories of how cultural practices relate with the spread or the hindrance of HIV and AIDS. Rites of passage are performed differently in each society. Most of chapter two discussed some of the cultural

practices which promote the spread of HIV and AIDS and also some individuals gave their own personal stories as victims of a particular cultural practice. Some possible ways in which one can transmit HIV were discussed. Some alternative ways of achieving the motive behind that particular cultural practice without infecting the other person were discussed. The following are some of the cultural practices relating to “birth, puberty, marriage, and death: Many women, who have shared their stories in the second chapter, reflected how cultural practices had an effect on them. Many have died due to HIV and AIDS and left many orphans who need love, food, shelter and education. According to Muller (2000) people are not objects to use but are subjects who are to be respected and are loved by God.

When going through the passage of birth during Pregnancy faithfulness should be observed. Most African societies promote faithfulness when the wife is expecting after that the man can move with any woman as he wishes to. Also for the fear of sexual transmitted infection (STI’s), that can infect the mother and the baby. Long time abstinence which was seen as a way of family planning has now become a danger to people’s lives. A man was allowed to have another wife or extra marital affair as they waited for the baby to grow. Faithfulness to one partner promoted true love. The baby grows in a happy home and a good atmosphere. Most Christians are taught the advantages of one husband one wife. It pleases God and there is no life risk due to HIV and AIDS. Masturbation (self pleasure sex) was seen as an HIV and AIDS free practice, although some Christians saw it as destructive to the mind.

Initiation of boys and girls is done in most African societies when a boy or a girl has reached puberty stage he/she has to be initiated. This is a ritual integrating the child formally into a marital adult world. Initiation marked and effected the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin of manhood. Initiation ceremonies which are still done in some Zambian communities were looked as a good ground for moral and spiritual teachings.

The counselor needs to be updated with the latest information concerning HIV and AIDS. According to Sechefo (1981:17-18):

Circumcision stood foremost over any other performance it being the back bone of the nation itself. An adult failing to under go this ritual was looked upon as a renegade in the family, and an outcast in society... such a lad was utterly despised and condemned by all. He was excluded from any matter of social importance and maidens refused to offer him a hand in marriage.

The people who went through circumcision were the most important people, because they were now old enough to take care of their families, the society respected them because of their good behavior. They are taught how to care for their families especially wives. Therefore sex education needs to be taught in schools and in families, Christian parents need to play a very important role in providing sex education for children including HIV and AIDS, bad cultural practices which brings pain to the child. Children need to be empowered so that they can be assertive and make decisions in their social lives. Early marriages are quite an issue because most young girls are married to elderly men, this should be discouraged at all cost. Parents need to be addressed on the importance of education for their children.

Chapter three dealt with the interpretation of cultural practices and the stories of women who have been victims of cultural practices. The sub-focus groups pointed out some cultural practices which have influence on the spread of HIV and AIDS such as: Children are of special value to both men and women in African societies. Marriage without children is seen as if it is incomplete that is why the *fisi* practice is encouraged. This *fisi* practice was seen as dehumanizing to the woman who had to sleep with someone else. It was agreed that it had to be discouraged since it was seen as a clear mode of HIV transmission.

Polygamy is still practiced in Zambia in most patriarchal systems, it was seen as a mode of HIV transmission if one partner is unfaithful. People from different

societies are still doing the ritual of *kuika mwana ku mphasa* especially those not educated and are not strong Christians. *Initiation ceremonies* should be encouraged but balanced programmes should be taught to both boys and girls so that they can both learn their responsibilities. The counselors should be updated with new information about HIV and AIDS and the word of God should be stressed for character building. *Kutha cinamwali* (this cultural practice is now dying because of HIV and AIDS even though some people among the Chewa people feel it is good to prove that someone learnt what he was taught during a seclusion period it also dehumanizes a girl like Malumbase who went through pain. Pulling of labia manola is done by three quarters of Zambian women. Young girls are being encouraged to do it for future a purpose which they can't understand now. If one does not do it when she is young she is forced to do it before the wedding day. Some women pointed out that it devalues the position and the state of girls and women as though God did not finish making them and also the pain they go through to achieve this is not necessary.

It was suggested that both Christian men and pagan men should be addressed on the ills women go through in order for them to enjoy sex. So that they should not demand it if a woman is as natural as God made her. Some men folks pointed out that women should be free with their bodies not just to please the men folks. *Dry sex*, three quarters of men want their wives to be dry, even if most women don't like it. Most women fear that their marriages can end up in divorce if their men try to sleep with women who use herbs. as a result they are forced to serve their marriages even if they do not like it or are risking their lives through contracting the AIDS virus which can enter through bruises. *Sexual cleansing* is still happening in Zambia, even if some of the chiefs are discouraging it because of HIV, instead there are some suggested alternatives for the people to do without sexual ritual which is free from HIV infection.

Solorate (a substitute husband) after the death of a husband. It should be advised that the couple to be should first go for VCT so that they can know their

status or else it can be proper to discourage the practice. *Levirate* (substitute wife) is still happening in Zambia even if it is being discouraged because many women have died because of AIDS. It is expected that the couple to be should go for VCT before they marry. Most women should learn to break the silence in order to seek help. They should just maintain their good morals which will give them true freedom. Christians should set good examples to live clean lives as people who are exercising true freedom in Jesus Christ.

Some cultural practices which were regarded as good since they don't transmit HIV are as follows: *Masturbation* is proved to be a safer sex method even though Christians do not approve it. They feel one's minds should be set on things of God not on self pleasure which tortures the mind. Faithfulness during pregnancy is encouraged because they fear a partner who goes out with other women might bring some disease or death. *Red beads and white beads* as a sexual communication this is regarded as a good practice because it empowers a woman to say no when she does not want to have sex. This is something which most women cannot tell their husbands directly.

Chapter four explored some areas of life which need to deconstruct discourses laid in patriarchy, gender and culture in order to empower women to say no to all bad cultural influences which promote the spread of HIV/AIDS. Gender has been taken as an issue in nearly all the societies in the world. Gender refers to the culturally constituted forms of masculinity and femininity that produce the specific ways in which men and women are somewhat treated. There is sexual division of labor in various cultures, which makes women to be oppressed by their male folks. Women have been treated as second class citizens. African women theologians have voiced out on the injustice and violence against women. They are trying to empower women to break the silence which they were taught to keep quiet because it will embarrass their men folks. This is why most women need to go through traumatic healing. It starts in their homes, at school, colleges,

place of work boys/men are treated differently while girls/women are treated as if they don't exist.

Gender is the area where women are unfairly treated concerning so many issues. Women need empowerment for them to understand themselves and God's love for them. Therefore a solution needs to be found on how Zambian women can exercise their faith in God without fear in their hearts. We have seen similarities which triggers certain cultural influences found both in the Bible and also in African culture.

Gender sensitivity has exposed that, very few women reach the top levels as managers at their places of work, because there are so many factors which pull them down for example child bearing, and other home conflicts, negative mental and physiological health outcome. Most women have been sexually harassed, or their promotions bring rumors that they have slept with some bosses, husband mistrusts their wives which limits their freedom and movement in their jobs. The majority of women in Zambia have very little say when it comes to issues of sexual relationship. They even experience domestic violence directly and indirectly.

Women are discriminated from the time they are born, in the home at school at place of work. Most women are treated as sex workers and child bearers by men folks. When passing through a transition from one stage to another, serious moral teachings should take place so that nobody should die without full knowledge of what is happening in there lives. In cultural practices which dehumanize human beings, the church should take a major role to discourage them through Congregational bible studies, Men's leagues, Women's league and Youth fellowship groups.

The church by understanding the theology of God it should promote women's decision-making in the house-hold, community and national level by supporting their leadership and participation. To provide women with a voice with the opportunity to create a group identity separate from that of the family, since for many women, the family is often the social institution that enforces strict adherence to traditional gender norms.

Chapter five focused on the rites of passage as a theological reflection. Every human being wants to be known for being clean or righteous before others and before God. That is why people do certain rituals in order to achieve purity. Jesus Christ is known as a sacrificial lamb for humans so that all those who have faith in Him are set free from certain rituals. Christians follow the two sacraments which the Lord Jesus left for His believers who are Baptism and take Holy Communion.

Many people who are HIV positive have gone through many rituals to take away the unknown fear of stigma and discrimination. Some people have even learnt that when they sleep with a minor they will be healed from AIDS. Zambian pastors should exercise their authority to discourage all cultural practices which puts people in danger in order to achieve purity or cleansing. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that we can really be clean before God.

Churches and religious leaders should play an active role in educating and counseling the community about HIV and AIDS and strategies. Christians should be involved in life skills programs focusing on assertiveness and skills development so that they can empower themselves and be independent and be able to take responsibility and make decisions about their lives. Different skill training projects such as needlework, sewing, tailoring and designing etc, should be introduced in congregations so that women can learn to be self dependence. HIV and AIDS prevention and care strategies should take cultural practices of the

Zambian people into consideration so that society can fight together against HIV and AIDS. Christians should learn to be gender sensitive not to treat women as objects but equal partners.

Recommendation, I wish a specific research should be conducted for future research to study stories of women who have overcome some of these cultural practices should be collected and be heard by many women as an example of breaking the fears of the unknown. And also why Sub-Saharan Africa which is Christian mostly countries is more infected than Northern Africa which is mostly Moslem is less infected? Is it anything to do with cultural beliefs or what?

This research concludes that: Sub-Saharan Africa is the most infected part of Africa and women are more infected than men. The socio-economic and cultural practices have been an influence on the spread of HIV and AIDS in Zambia and many African countries. It seems scientific empirical evidence of the current cultural practices of the Zambian people, play a role in the spread of HIV infection. A narrative research approach was used and was effective to draw information and also the sub-group focus group discussions which had limited numbers of participants. The exploratory research design was used to gain insight into the role played by cultural practices in the spread of HIV infection in Zambia. This study looked much into the alternative stories which came up as substitute of certain cultural practices which triggers the transmission for HIV and AIDS. I will end up my thesis by quoting, Freedman & Combs (1996:11) who said:

It was through Erickson that we first encountered the belief that people can continually and actively re-author their lives. While the story of our relationship with the systems metaphor is one of change leading to an eventual parting of the ways, the story of our relationship with the re-authoring metaphor is one of consistence.

It seems Erickson was very much aware of the constitutive power of language. That is why an alternative story was very important to him because it brought



hope into the lives of the hopeless. Christian hope is in trusting Jesus Christ who died for all mankind. We can see how the family has been invaded by these cultural practices. All the victims of these practices feel guilty, unfaithful to the other partner, disobedient before God. Although some people like Akacha enjoys being a cleanser but the consequences are very bad if he becomes infected by HIV or the eschatological results of disobeying God. That is why there is a need for Practical Theology through Church leaders to address issues concerning cultural practices before one falls into them. The Reformed Church in Zambia Bible Study Method of addressing such issues is significant since every person is involved and can express their feelings towards these issues.